



## Upcoming plenary

When Canada's Catholic bishops gather for their annual plenary Sept. 14 - 17, a lengthy period of restructuring will come to an end with a change in how their conference is financed.  
— page 5

## Encyclical walk

Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* has inspired the world to become more aware of the environment and the changes occurring to the Earth. On an "encyclical walk," a group took a four-kilometre hike around the Qu'Appelle Valley's Echo Lake recently to contemplate *Laudato Si'*.  
— page 6

## I Spy

This week Gerald Schmitz takes a lighter look at a few current fictional spy movies which seem to be enjoying a renewed wave of popularity, capitalizing on a climate of fear and surveillance.  
— page 11



## Summer surprises

The church is truly breathing with both lungs, as Brent Kostyniuk was delighted to discover while on vacation.  
— page 12

## Servants of Jesus

Pre-schoolers and chocolate milk have something to teach us about Jesus' model of servant leadership, writes Bob Williston in his first column for Liturgy and Life.  
— page 13

## Climate of change

For both the world and church, this is a time like no other, writes Roma De Robertis, SCIC. "As billions face social chaos and ravages of climate change, our awakened response is crucial."  
— page 14

# Find a way to 'forgive' divorce: canon lawyer

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

Bishops who attend the synod on the family in Rome next month should find a way for divorced and remarried Catholics to be forgiven and allowed back into the communion line, urges one of the most senior and respected canon lawyers in Canada.

Writing in the summer issue of the influential American canon law journal *The Jurist*, Msgr. Roch Pagé suggests "granting a consat of divorce," similar to that found in some Orthodox churches, to Catholic couples whose marriages fail. In Eastern Orthodoxy, if church authorities are satisfied that all reasonable efforts to salvage a marriage were made, and that the divorced are truly repentant, they are readmitted to the sacraments and allowed a second, non-sacramental union.

This approach recognizes divorce as opposed to the Catholic Church position that marriage is indissoluble. As long as the church refuses to recognize the reality of

divorce, canon law judges will be stuck trying to find legal answers to a problem that is fundamentally theological, Pagé told *The Catholic Register*.

"If this is what the Catholic Church wishes, why not determine it directly and call it by its real name?" asks Pagé.

"(We're) doing the most we can to find a juridical solution to a theological problem. The theological problem is certainly the indissolubility of marriage. And more and more important, to what extent does the church apply its capacity to forgive a mistake?"

If a youthful couple make a promise they can't live up to, rather than try to find legal grounds to say they were never married and grant an annulment, the church should recognize the couple failed, forgive them and find a way for them to carry on their lives as Catholics, said the professor of canon law at Ottawa's Saint Paul University and at Catholic University of America.

"They failed. They recognize their failure, their sin. Why would we not forgive them?" Pagé

## Texas parish thrilled to have pope as surprise virtual guest

MCALLEN, Texas (CNS) — At Sacred Heart Church in McAllen, members of the community, most of them volunteers at a respite centre for immigrants at Sacred Heart parish hall, were invited to a special event by ABC

News, but were not informed in advance of just how special that event would be.

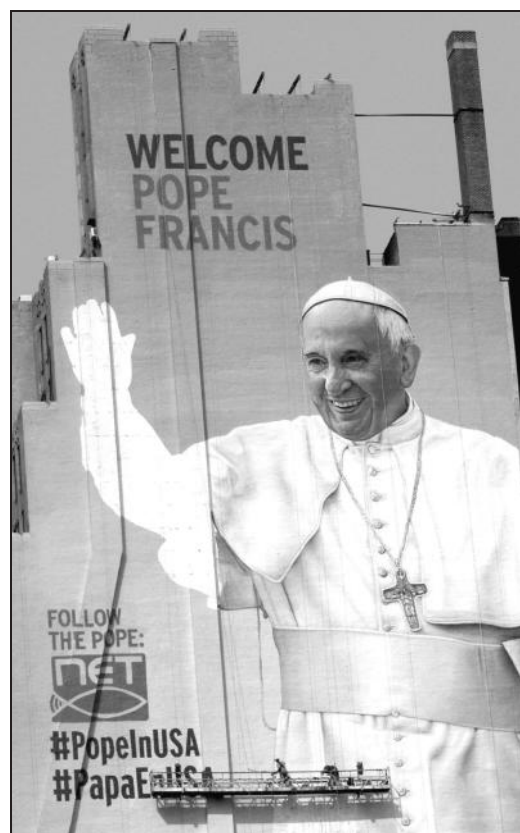
People started arriving at the church before 7 a.m., local time, Aug. 31. The event began at 9 a.m.

In Rome, where the local time was 4 p.m., appearing by satellite and speaking to the people in McAllen was Pope Francis by means of a "virtual town hall" arranged by ABC News.

"We are thrilled to have been a part of this morning's conversation with Pope Francis via satellite," said Brenda Nettles Riojas, communications director for the Diocese of Brownsville.

The audience was moderated from inside the Vatican by World News Tonight anchor David Muir. In addition to the group at Sacred Heart Parish in McAllen, the pope also conversed with homeless families in Los Angeles and with students at the Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Chicago, which serves low-income families.

— POPE, page 19



CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz

**LARGE MURAL OF POPE IN NEW YORK —** A 69-metre mural featuring an image of Pope Francis nears completion in New York City Sept. 1. The artwork was commissioned by DeSales Media Group, the communications and technology arm of the Diocese of Brooklyn, N.Y.



CNS/Francis Maalasiq, EPA

**REACHING OUT —** Pilgrims reach to receive communion as Pope Francis celebrates mass Jan. 18 in Manila, Philippines. As Catholics prepare for the world synod of bishops on the family in October, a number of church leaders and theologians are discussing ways to reach out to divorced and civilly remarried Catholics.

asked. "This is my deep opinion."

Pagé points out that there are no other sins the church refuses to forgive.

"Why don't we forgive such a mistake? Since we forgive so many other much graver mistakes — like murder?" he asks.

As long as the church fails to recognize the reality of divorce it will find itself ministering to

Catholics who refuse to recognize church judgments on the validity of marriage, said Pagé.

"Some, if not most, of them (divorced and remarried Catholics) have already solved their problem with regard to morals and canon law," he said. "They divorce. They remarry. If they go to

— EFFECTIVE, page 9

## D&P launches fall campaign for action on climate change

By Michael Swan  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — On the World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation on Sept. 1, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace launched its fall campaign demanding action on climate change.

Pope Francis declared the World Day of Prayer as part of his drive to persuade the international community to make substantial progress in limiting carbon emissions at the United Nations conference on climate change in Paris this December.

The Development and Peace Create a Climate of Change campaign will feature climate vigils from Oct. 23 to 25 and then culminate in a Catholic pilgrimage to Paris for the UN conference.

The campaign will be both spiritual and political, demanding the Canadian government commit itself to more ambitious carbon emission targets and encouraging Canada's Catholics to examine in prayer how their own lifestyles and levels of consumption contribute to environmental decay, said Josiane Gauthier, Development and Peace's director of in-Canada programs.

"Obviously, with the launch of

the new encyclical by the pope on ecological justice, it gives quite a bit of motor and strength to the idea that being Catholic is also about protecting the environment and nature and life in general," Gauthier said.

As a non-Catholic, scientific observer of climate change, University of Toronto geography professor Danny Harvey believes the campaign is on target.

"I really think we need a spiritual change," he said. "I don't mean a spiritual change necessarily in a religious sense, but in the sense of looking at ourselves and asking ourselves what matters in life, what is important in life? Learning to be happy with fewer material things and being able to appreciate the beauty of the world, the beauty of life and the beauty of meaningful human relationships — that's what I mean by a spiritual transformation. As long as we think that happiness is going to come through the acquisition of material things and we're pursuing it with all our might, which is what we're doing, then there is no hope."

Impressed by this summer's release of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' climate change encyclical, Harvey points out that science backs up

— CHANGES, page 5



# Pope Francis leads prayers for Care of Creation day

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Leading prayers for the safeguarding of creation, Pope Francis prayed that people would learn to contemplate God in the beauty of the universe, give thanks and protect all life.

During an evening celebration of the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, the pope prayed that God would “enlighten the lords of power and money so they would not fall into indifference, but would love the common good, encourage the weak and care for the world in which we live.”

Pope Francis announced in August that the Catholic Church would join the Orthodox Church

in marking the prayer day Sept. 1 each year.

In his opening prayer, he asked God to fill people with a desire “to protect every life, to prepare a better future so that your kingdom of justice, people, love and beauty would come.”

Although the pope led the service in St. Peter’s Basilica, he asked the preacher of the papal household, Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, to give the homily.

In his homily, the Capuchin, a member of the Franciscan family, referred to both Pope Francis and his namesake, St. Francis of Assisi.

Some environmentalists, he said, have blamed the Bible and

Judeo-Christian tradition for the destruction of nature, claiming the idea that human beings have “dominion” over nature gave them permission to use and destroy the earth.

But, he said, “the map of pollution” covering the globe coincides less with the places where people believe in God and more in places that underwent “unbridled industrialization aimed only at profit” or are subject to rampant corruption.

“No one can seriously serve the cause of safeguarding creation without the courage of pointing a finger at the exaggerated accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few,” the Capuchin friar said.

St. Francis of Assisi, he said, was able to recognize and contem-

plate God’s beauty in all created things precisely because he owned nothing and recognized that anything he was able to use, especially for food or clothing, was a gift of God.

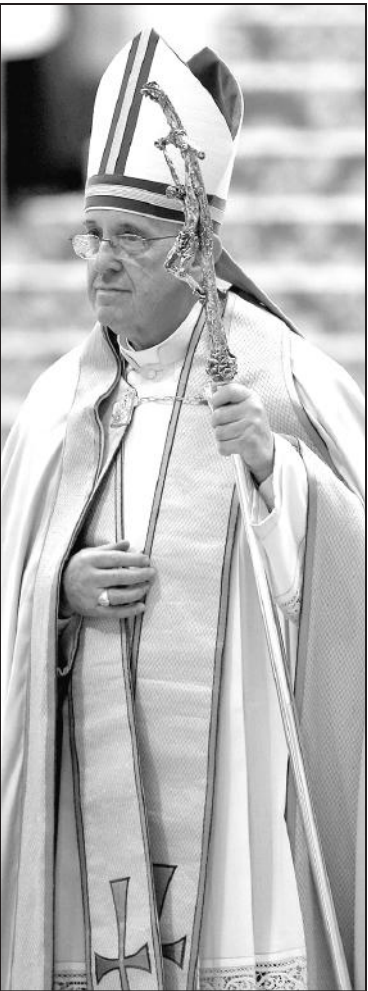
“Possession excludes, contemplation includes. Possession divides, contemplation multiplies,” he said. If one person owns a lake or park, “all the others are excluded,” but if no one owns it, thousands can enjoy it without taking it away from anyone.

Cantalamessa said that while the world St. Francis lived in was not facing the environmental emergency people today are facing, he still knew that if he took more than he needed, he was stealing from others.

“We must ask: Am I a resource thief, using more than my due and therefore taking it from those who will come after me?” the preacher said.

Pointing to Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si’*, the Capuchin said safeguarding creation is an “artisanal” activity, one that must begin with individuals and their daily actions.

“What sense is there, for example, in being worried about the pollution of the atmosphere, the oceans and the forests, if I don’t hesitate before throwing a plastic bag on the shore?” he asked.



CNS/Paul Haring

**PRAYER FOR CREATION — Pope Francis leaves an evening prayer service to mark World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation Sept. 1.**

## Don’t divorce theology, pastoral care: pope

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The church is called to embrace its past, present and future and to avoid the temptations to condemn or to legitimize everything just because it is new and different, Pope Francis told a group of theologians.

Theology and reflection should not be at odds with pastoral ministry and the lives of real people, he said.

In fact, theologians can help by “taking both the ecclesiastical tradition and current reality very seriously, placing them in dialogue with one another.”

The pope’s words were part of a video message he delivered in Spanish to theologians and others taking part in an international congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina,

Sept. 1 - 3. The Vatican released a transcript of his message Sept. 4.

The event marked the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the faculty of theology at the Catholic University of Argentina and the 50th anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council.

One of the Second Vatican Council’s main contributions was trying “to overcome this divorce between theology and pastoral ministry, between faith and life.” Often the two had been set against each other in “a false opposition” as two “separate realities,” he said.

“We not infrequently identify the doctrinal with the conservative and the backward, and, on the contrary, we think of pastoral ministry as adaptation, rolling back, accommodation — as if they had nothing to do with each other.”

This also creates a false conflict between those who are pastors “on the side of the people,” and academics “on the side of doctrine.”

Yet, the early Christian writers and theologians were also great pastors, he said.

“Doctrine is not a closed system devoid of dynamics able to raise questions, doubts, inquiries,” he said. Rather, Christianity is a living doctrine that is called Jesus Christ, whose life is “offered from generation to generation to all men and women and in all places.”

Safeguarding doctrine means being faithful to what has been received, he said, and at the same time, taking into account the person to whom it is being offered, and understanding and loving him or her.

After all, why is theology being done,

he asked, if not for “the people we have before us? Without encountering families and the people of God, theology runs the great risk of becoming ideology.”

The hopes, dreams, struggles, problems, worries and questions people have cannot be ignored “if we want to take seriously the principle of the incarnation,” he said.

People’s unrest, struggles and “the peripheries are not an optional, rather they are necessary for better understanding the faith.”

## Catholic doctors need encouragement

By Carol Glatz

ROME (CNS) — When St. John Paul II called for conscientious objection against laws legitimizing abortion and euthanasia 20 years ago, one Catholic doctor never imagined the struggle and sacrifice to carry out that duty would last for so long.

Dr. Robert Walley, a British obstetrician and gynecologist who founded and heads MaterCare International, organized the group’s very first world conference in Rome in 2001 on the question of conscience in maternal health care. And now, 14 years later, “the problem hasn’t gone away, it’s still here.”

To address the ongoing dilemma, MaterCare held its 10th international conference in Rome Aug. 31 - Sept. 4 to look at the problem of discrimination against Catholic obstetricians, gynecologists, midwives, medical students and health care staff when they object to training and procedures that go against their beliefs. Part of the World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations, MaterCare was founded in 1995 to serve mothers and their children.

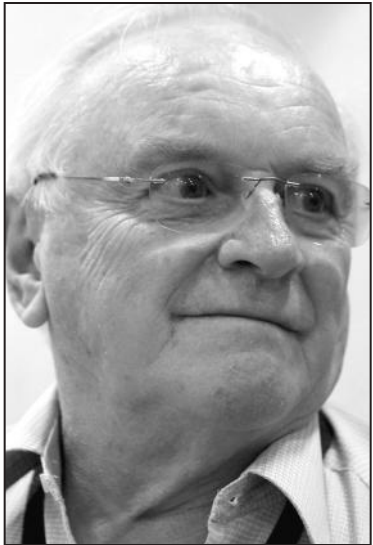
“In 1973, I had three choices” when he practised under Britain’s state-run National Health System: do the abortions, change his specialization or leave the country, Walley said. “So we left and went to Canada” to start life over with his wife and seven children to support.

While he was “prepared to accept that cross,” he said he felt he did not receive enough support or encouragement from the church and feels medical professionals

who become conscientious objectors are still “basically on our own.”

Catholic doctors need encouragement, he told Catholic News Service Sept. 1, because there is “an enormous amount of apathy and fear” about jeopardizing their job, career, reputation or even face jail time or fines if they follow their conscience or take a public stand.

Once upon a time, doctors and health care providers “had a covenant relationship with our patients” to respect and protect their health and life, he said.



CNS/Paul Haring

**Dr. Robert Walley**

“Now it is purely contractual, you must provide a service” based on an individual’s or institution’s demands, and if doctors don’t do it, they can be sued. If they do comply, he said, “nobody cares. But you just kill a person whether it be an unborn child or someone who is terminally ill.”

“The whole of medicine is

being turned upside down. ‘Do no harm’ is being thrown out the door for expediency,” he said.

Msgr. Jacques Suaudeau, a moral theologian who first trained as a medical doctor and surgeon, said in his presentation that many countries’ constitutions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights uphold the freedom of conscience, but say nothing about protecting conscientious objection.

“Conscientious objection tends, in fact, to be considered an act of individual rebellion, a break of what makes the solidarity in the country, a negation of the consensus,” he said. As a result, authorities often view the recognition of conscientious objection as “a concession, not an obligation.”

Legionaries of Christ Father Joseph Tham, dean of the school of bioethics at Rome’s Pontifical Regina Apostolorum University, said in his talk that St. John Paul II’s 1995 encyclical, *The Gospel of Life*, called Catholics “to push back in some way and change the law” or if it cannot be changed all at once, “to resist in different ways.”

Tham, who also is a doctor and worked as a family physician before pursuing religious life, said that Catholics must work to change people’s minds and ideas, because laws emerge from what people are already doing and feel is right, he said.

Dr. Natalia Suszczewicz, who is a resident at Holy Family Hospital in Warsaw, Poland, said patients cannot really have “informed choice” if their care providers do not receive an education and training that include more ethical approaches.



CNS/Reuters

**YOUNG MIGRANT DROWNED — A member of the Turkish military carries a young migrant Sept. 2, who drowned in a failed attempt to sail to the Greek island of Kos, in the coastal town of Bodrum, Turkey. Catholic aid agencies have urged Europeans not to turn against migrants seeking refuge from Syria and other countries, in what media reports describe as the continent’s greatest refugee movement since the Second World War.**



# ‘Death kits’ being prepared for Quebec doctors

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — News from PostMedia Sept. 1 that the Quebec government is preparing “euthanasia kits” for doctors does not surprise the head of a physicians’ group that opposes euthanasia.

Dr. Catherine Ferrier, president of the Quebec-based Physicians’ Alliance Against Euthanasia said she knew the *Collège des médecins du Québec* was “working on guidelines on how to euthanize a patient.”

“It was foreseen since the law was passed last year,” she said, noting Quebec’s euthanasia Bill 52 comes into effect Dec. 10.

Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) director Michele Boulva also said these guidelines, while shocking, were expected.

“Citizens who have not yet realized what the legalization of euthanasia will mean for them and their loved ones, will have a very difficult awakening,” Boulva said. “Families will obviously need to be very proactive and attentive to what’s going on with their loved ones in the hospital and make sure their family doctor is opposed to this practice.”

The euthanasia guidelines, reportedly developed in conjunction with Quebec’s governing bodies for nurses and pharmacists, involve a combination of drugs delivered intravenously to first, quell anxiety; second, to induce a coma; and third, drugs to stop breathing and to stop the heart.

The drug formulas will be available on a restricted part of the College’s website to doctors, nurses and pharmacists.

“None of this should have happened, obviously,” said Ferrier,

who is a family doctor with a geriatric practice. “If they are going to make it legal, doctors have to learn how to do it.”

But Ferrier said the Quebec government is “scrambling” because “when the law comes into effect a lot of people won’t be prepared” to perform euthanasia. “The system won’t be set up for it,” she said. A patient might demand euthanasia once the law comes into effect, but the hospital may not have policies set up yet.

Ferrier questioned whether enough doctors will be willing to kill their patients and whether nurses will refuse to participate. She also questioned whether the guideline that doctors administer the drugs and supervise the death is realistic.

“Doctors are not always known to always sit by the bedside of patients when they don’t have to,” Ferrier said. The more likely scenario is a doctor giving the injection, then leaving for the operating room or the next patient, leaving the process to the nurse, she said.

“I don’t think there is anything we can do to stop Dec. 10, unless federal government rushes something through but there won’t be a lot of time after the election,” Ferrier said.

“We have to keep it very much in the forefront of the public conversation,” she said.

The Physicians’ Alliance had launched a lawsuit against the legality of the euthanasia bill, given that the Criminal Code is federal jurisdiction. But Ferrier said the Alliance had to suspend the lawsuit after the Supreme Court of Canada struck down the Code’s relevant sections in the Feb. 6 Carter decision.

The Carter decision has left it

unclear whether it allows only assisted suicide or euthanasia, Ferrier said. But Quebec had plans to go ahead with its euthanasia bill before the Supreme Court decision.

## Pilgrimage leads to Millennium Cross

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The 16th annual pilgrimage to the Pro-Life Millennium Cross north of Aberdeen, Sask., on Highway 41 was held Aug. 30, featuring prayers for an end to abortion, speakers, information and displays, as well as the public witness provided by a relay of walkers along the 40 kilometres of highway from Saskatoon.

Constructed as a millennium project by the Knights of Columbus council at Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Parish in Saskatoon on land owned by Joseph and the late Rose Bayda, the cross site began with a 10-metre wooden cross erected in 1999, said master of ceremonies Adrian Olenick. The first pilgrimage to the site was held in October 2000, and in 2006 the current 30-metre steel cross was placed on the hillside.

This year’s event began with Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon blessing those who took part in the pilgrimage walk to the site.

Those assembled for the pilgrimage gathered around a giant rosary that circles the cross. Led by members of the Confraternity of Our Mother of Perpetual Help of Sts. Peter and Paul Parish, the living rosary included reflections on the sorrowful mysteries in light of the tragedy of abortion and the damage it causes.

The Quebec law does not require anybody to euthanize a patient, she said. “A lot of doctors will refuse to do it for either moral reasons or not wanting to get involved in the practice.”

The law does require a doctor to refer a patient to the director of the hospital, should he or she refuse. “I know a lot of doctors who won’t do that either,” she said.



Yaworski

**PILGRIMAGE — Bishop Brian Bayda of the Eparchy of Saskatoon begins the living rosary during the 16th annual pilgrimage to the Pro-Life Millennium Cross.**

“We pray for the mothers and fathers of aborted children: so many of them suffer deep grief and regret over a step they can never reverse. So many suffer in silence because others tell them that it is no big deal,” said the leader of the reflection during one of the decades.

“Silence always helps the oppressor, never the victims,” noted another reflection. “Let us pray that we may never be silent about abortion; rather, may we clearly speak up to save babies from death.”

Speakers during the afternoon pilgrimage included Shawna Arnold of Fountain of Hope, who gives presentations in Catholic high schools about the realities of abortion. She shared her own experience of growing up, suffering abuse and broken family relationships, and of the trauma of having an abortion at the age of 19, believing she had no choice. “The support I needed wasn’t there.”

The regret, despair, addiction and pain she experienced afterward was “as if I had killed my soul,” she said. Arnold also shared her path to conversion and healing, a long and painful journey to come to a realization of God’s love and forgiveness. A key step was her experience of a Rachel’s Vineyard retreat, she described.

“Before the retreat I could not forgive myself,” she said. “There was huge healing from God.”

Cathy LaFleche of Saskatoon Pregnancy Options Centre also spoke, describing services provided to pregnant women and their families: support, education and acceptance to help meet their emotional, physical and spiritual

needs. “We welcome, we embrace, we educate and we empower women who come to us in an unplanned or crisis pregnancy when they don’t know what to do,” LaFleche said.

Pregnancy Options Centre provides pregnancy testing, options counselling, prenatal education, parenting education and practical help by providing maternity clothes, baby clothes and supplies through an Earn While You Learn program, LaFleche described. The centre has developed partnerships with churches around Saskatoon and various community services such as Egadz and Healthy Moms Healthy Babies, she said.

Since January the centre has had 289 visits, with 65 new people. All visits are free and confidential. “In July alone we had 42 visits, and in August we had 39.”

Louis Roth of the Knights of Columbus In Support of Life Committee also spoke, as did Denise Hounjet-Roth of Campaign Life Coalition, who reported on upcoming events. She noted that the 40 Hours For Life prayers will happen outside Saskatoon City Hospital daily from Sept. 23 to Nov. 1 (rather than in Lent). The annual Life Chain public witness will be held on Idylwyld Drive in Saskatoon at 2:30 p.m. Oct. 4, she added. Hounjet-Roth also urged those in attendance to contact candidates running for the federal election Oct 19, to determine where they stand on pro-life issues.

Other speakers included Deb Larmour of the Eparchy Family and Life Office and pilgrimage walker Teresa Hiebert, who gave a report about Cana family camps now being sponsored by the eparchy.

## New rules worsen caregivers’ situation

By Evan Boudreau  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Changes to Canada’s Live-in Caregiver’s Program (LCP) promised to improve the immigration



Catholic Register/Boudreau

**SITUATION WORSENS — Changes to Canada’s Live-in Caregiver’s Program (LCP) promised to improve the immigration path have actually made things worse, says Kristina Torres, who came to Canada through the LCP in 2012, was laid off for the second time last October.**

path have actually made things worse, says Kristina Torres.

“The changes didn’t really do anything for us, it has just made it worse,” said Torres, a parishioner at St. Michael’s Cathedral, who spoke to media on Aug. 30. “It has put me in a trap and I don’t know what to do.”

Torres, who came to Canada through the LCP in 2012, was laid off for the second time last October.

One month later, Immigration Minister Chris Alexander promised faster processing times within the program and announced a number of changes, such as the removal of the live-in condition, which sought to improve conditions for caregivers. At the time, Torres was delighted by the news.

But the improvements never materialized, said Torres, who has been waiting almost a year for her

Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) process. As a temporary foreign worker, the process is required for her to gain new employment.

Torres is not alone in waiting. The Caregivers Action Centre says as many as 90 per cent of caregivers’ LMIA’s have been rejected since the new process was implemented.

“Without an LMIA caregivers in Canada cannot start new jobs and caregivers outside of the country can no longer come here,” said Karina Francisco, a spokesperson for the advocacy group.

Not only are the majority of LMIA applications being rejected, it is now the employers who are required to pay the \$1,000 processing fee. Torres said employers are reluctant to do so when so many are being rejected.

The group also claims that average processing times for permanent residency application, which those in the LCP can file after completing 3,900 hours of work, have doubled from 23 months to 46.

“Today the Filipino and immigrant community is calling out Chris Alexander for promising

— PROGRAM, page 8



# Alpha course an effective tool for evangelization

By Ramon Gonzalez  
Western Catholic Reporter

EDMONTON (CCN) — Alpha is an effective tool for evangelization as it provides the means for learning about Christianity and the basic teaching of Jesus Christ, says Josh Canning, the program's national co-ordinator.

"Alpha is effective in bringing people to Jesus so it is a deeply needed tool in the new evangelization," Canning said in an interview.

"The main purpose of Alpha is to give people an experience of Christianity and an encounter with the Lord."

Alpha is a series of interactive sessions that explore the basics of the Christian faith. Each session includes a meal, a talk and a small group discussion. It is being run around the world by major Christian churches in homes, workplaces, prisons, schools, universities and places of worship.

Canning was recently in Edmonton as part of a tour to promote the program.

"When I started (in 2014) I think there were around 96 Catholic parishes in Canada using Alpha. We are now closer to 140, which means a lot of parishes are seeing the potential (of the program) and grabbing on to it."

Few parishes currently run Alpha in the Edmonton archdio-

cese, although many did it in the past.

"Compared to other parts of the world where everybody knows Alpha it's still not that well-known in the Catholic Church," noted Canning.

"My job is to make Alpha known and to train people in running it, not just in parishes but also in high schools, youth groups and anywhere that people gather."

He said Alpha is currently running in a number of prisons across the country and "we should see it in seniors' homes, campuses and workplaces."

Alpha was run in a motorcycle shop and there is an Alpha course in a women's workout class.

"They basically get together,

eat their pre-workout smoothies and stuff, get on the bikes, watch the talk on TV and then they sit down and talk about it," explained Canning. "So there is a good adaptability to many places."

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish in Sherwood Park has been offering Alpha since the spring of 2013 and about 200 people have taken it, said co-ordinator Alana LaPerle.

"We have offered the program four times. We offer it now every spring and every fall. It's sort of an ongoing invitation."

LaPerle said Alpha is the best evangelization program she has seen.

Many public and Catholic schools in Alberta are offering the youth version of Alpha, including

Archbishop Jordan High School in Sherwood Park.

Alpha started in the 1970s in an Anglican parish in London, England, whose pastor thought that some new Christians needed a deeper understanding of the Christian message.

"So he started to meet with them in his own home. He would make dinner for them and then he would give them a talk and then he would encourage discussion about it," related Canning.

"It was a very popular program and lots of people, even people who had been Christians their whole life, wanted to be part of this program."

However, in the 1990s pastor Nicky Gumbel came in and he saw greater potential in the program. Gumbel saw that this could be more than just a program for new Christians. It could

be for anybody who has questions.

"He put an evangelical kind of lens on the program and developed it beyond his parish. He decided to make recordings and train other people in doing it and from there everything kind of exploded."

The program did well in Canada in the early 1990s but was not done with a long-term vision, lamented Canning. Many parishes ran it once or twice and then discarded it.

"We saw a good spark but then it died off."

In the past few years, Alpha has been revived as parishes see its effectiveness as an evangelization tool for lapsed Catholics and those with no faith. An estimated 27 million people around the world have done Alpha.



WCR/Gonzalez

**EFFECTIVE EVANGELIZATION — Josh Canning, left, Alana LaPerle and John Kivell promote the Alpha program as an effective means of evangelization.**

## Positive impact seen from TRC endeavour

By Evan Boudreau  
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Although a national poll showed Canada appears divided on the value of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Catholic Church leaders said a positive impact has already been felt among native communities.

"It was worthwhile for the native people in Canada," said Rev. Milton McWatch, pastor of Holy Saviour parish in Marathon, Ont., in the Diocese of Thunder Bay. His parish has extensive relations with local First Nations' communities.

"For the first time a lot of them were able to say, 'Hey, you know that residential school was really awful.' That has already had an affect and it is going to change the lifestyle, the culture, of the native people."

He said that by providing counselling and access to social workers during the years of consultation used to draft the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and 94 recommendations delivered to the federal government this June, a voice was given to thousands of residential school survivors.

"They had lost all sense of who they were and I would say that they lost their ability to speak until the Truth and Reconciliation

(Commission) came along," said McWatch, who has personally benefited from counselling in his life. "If that hadn't happened they'd still be wondering why am I so screwed up in life."

The commission was struck in 2008 to respond to allegations of abuse — sexual, physical and psychological — that occurred at the schools that ran for 150 years until the final school closed in 1996. More than 150,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit children went through the government-mandated schools that for the most part were run by church entities, more than 60 per cent of which were Catholic. Today, more than 80,000 former students of the schools are still living.

But not all Canadians see the value in the six-year process that followed a class-action lawsuit brought by residential school survivors against the federal government and the various groups which ran the residential schools.

A recent survey conducted by Angus Reid Institute found that only 48 per cent of those polled, more than 1,500, felt the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was worthwhile for Canadians in general while 56 per cent were "moderately optimistic" that the commission "will result in a better situation for Canada's Aboriginal people."

Saskatoon Bishop Donald

Bolen said that's a pessimistic view that ignores much of the "healing" which has already occurred due to the commission.

"There were truths that needed to be spoken," said Bolen, who helped draft a formal apology from the church to natives who had been through the residential school system. "We hear from the indigenous people that it matters to tell their story and it matters to them to hear an apology."

He said that holding the Truth and Reconciliation Commission caused a cultural shift toward building a "strong relationship on the truth" with Canada's First Nations.

Proof of this can be seen in the Diocese of Saskatoon, where a Diocesan Truth and Reconciliation Council has been established. The council is made up of 10 representatives from the church as well as 10 First Nations community leaders. They are to meet every two months for discussions on topics such as youth engagement, history from an Aboriginal perspective as well as missing and murdered women.

"I definitely think it was a worthwhile thing to be done," he said. "It was an invitation to change. There was very little sense (before the TRC) that we needed to build relationships, that we needed to walk together. We are trying to do that now."

## Youth version of Alpha touches many teens' lives

EDMONTON (CCN) — The Alpha evangelization program also has a youth version which has touched thousands of teens across Canada.

Called Youth Film Series, this version "is a beautiful piece of modern media," explains Josh Canning, Alpha Catholic Church co-ordinator. "If we want them to pay attention for 20 minutes, then it has to be very engaging."

The series replaced a youth program that wasn't video-based, Canning said. "It was kind of a big textbook."

More than 30,000 teens in Canada have gone through the Youth Alpha.

The film series is documentary style, explained Canning. "It's two guys talking to each other; all of a sudden they are in the Holy Land; it's word on the streets, discussions. So it's very fast-paced and engaging."

In a youth session the video is only 20 minutes long compared with 30 to 45 minutes in an adult session.

John Kivell, Alberta regional co-ordinator of Alpha, said at least 20 public and Catholic schools in Alberta have done the youth program over the lunch hour.

Archbishop Jordan High School in Sherwood Park has been offering youth Alpha since 2014.

"This is our third (term) offering Youth Alpha at the school, and we've reached about 200 kids," said Alana LaPerle. "We actually had waiting lists the last two times."

LaPerle said the kids come because they get religious education credits and free pizza. "But they stay because they love it," she said. "They say the program is fun and a great way to learn about their faith."

Added LaPerle: "We are turning non-Christians into Christians."

The Alexis Reserve on the north shore of Lac Ste. Anne is also presenting Youth Alpha, Kivell said. "Even the older siblings who aren't in school want to come and the parents want to come too." — Western Catholic Reporter

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# Bishops’ plenary to change way conference financed

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — When Canada’s Catholic bishops gather for their annual plenary Sept. 14 - 17, a lengthy period of restructuring will come to an end with a change in how their conference is financed.

Instead of assessing each diocese on a per capita basis to fund the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB), the bishops will vote on a proposed formula based on diocesan revenue, said CCCB General Secretary Msgr. Patrick Powers.

Taking place in Cornwall, Ont., this year, the plenary will be the final meeting presided over by CCCB President Gatineau Archbishop Paul-André Durocher who finishes his two-year term this fall. He will be succeeded by Hamilton Bishop Douglas Crosby, the current vice-president. Saint-Jean-Longueuil Bishop Lionel Gendron, the present co-treasurer, will move into the vice-president slot. Halifax Archbishop Anthony Mancini remains as co-treasurer. There will be an election for a new co-treasurer from the French sector, said Powers.

The plenary will also be the last for Powers who will finish his

second three-year term in October, after shepherding the Ottawa-based secretariat through six difficult years of cost-cutting, personnel changes and streamlining.

“I was brought in to do that restructuring,” Powers said. The restructuring “kind of comes to an end” with the change in financing of the conference.

Powers said he looks back on his six years “feeling I did the best I could do” in what the bishops had asked of him: “to make sure our conference was truly at the service of the bishops of Canada.”

Powers said he had to make tough decisions to let personnel go and hire new people with new expertise needed to better serve the CCCB’s mission.

During his tenure, the CCCB made a major change in its web presence, improving not only communications with the media and ordinary Catholics, but also internally between the bishops and the secretariat itself, Powers said.

He also oversaw a new partnership between the CCCB and Salt & Light TV, which will continue to broadcast live the plenary’s daily liturgy and a live news conference each day summarizing the day’s events. The revamped website and the partnership with Salt



CCN/Gyapong

**PLENARY DISCUSSIONS — Msgr. Patrick Powers and CCCB President Paul-André Durocher are seen at last year’s CCCB plenary outside Quebec City. This year’s plenary in Cornwall will be the last for these two men in their present roles.**

& Light have enabled the CCCB to carry video of the big celebrations in Rome, he said.

These included “huge events” such as the retirement of Pope Benedict XVI, and the conclave that chose Pope Francis, he said. Ordinary Catholics can tune into these events at any time via the CCCB website, he said. “It is an opportunity for us to help ordinary, everyday Catholics to be more connected with the major events of the life of the church.”

To mark the 50th anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council, Salt & Light will be screening a new documentary at the plenary hosted by the network’s CEO Rev. Thomas Rosica, interviewing the bishops who are still alive who took part either as bishops or as advisers. He will also include interviews with Canada’s two cardinals, from Toronto and Quebec City.

With 19 Canadian bishops planning to attend the World Meeting of Families Sept. 22 - 25 in Philadelphia, followed Sept. 26 - 27 with Pope Francis’ first visit to the United States, family will be one of the major themes of the plenary, Powers said.

The bishops who will be attending the synod on the family in Rome Oct. 4 - 25 will share with the plenary assembly what they intend to say at the synod, he said. Delegates from the English sector: Toronto Cardinal Thomas Collins and Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith; from the French sector: Gatineau Archbishop Durocher and Valleyfield Bishop Noel Simard. Alternates, in case a bishop can’t attend, are Vancouver Archbishop J. Michael Miller and Saint-Jean-Longueuil Bishop Gendron.

Powers stressed that the bishops will be speaking “in their own right” and not as representatives of the CCCB. Last year’s extraordinary synod invited presidents of episcopal conferences. “When the president goes, then he’s speaking on behalf of the conference,” he said.

“It is shaping up to be a fall that will be quite significant in the future of the church,” he said.

Another area of accomplishment in the past six years is the renewed relationship of the CCCB with its overseas development arm, the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP). Powers arrived at the conference at the height of a controversy concerning CCODP and some of its non-Catholic overseas development partners, prompted by online articles and blog posts charging some partners with activity contrary to church teaching on abortion and contraception.

The bishops and CCODP began a reflection together on Pope Benedict XVI’s social justice encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* to develop new guidelines. A special liaison committee was established to ensure good communication with the bishops and maintain the lay run character of the agency.

“It’s a wonderful thing to see how it’s all worked out so powerfully,” Powers said.

The bishops will meet CCODP’s new executive director David Leduc at the plenary, as Michael Casey has moved on after two five-year terms heading the agency.

Other highlights of this year’s plenary include a panel on euthanasia and assisted suicide; a discussion of the summary report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s findings on Indian residential schools; and the Christian Unity, Relations with the Jews and Interfaith Dialogue Commission will organize a panel on the impact of *Nostra Aetate*, the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on the Relations of the Church with Non-Christian Religions, 50 years later.

To mark the Year of Consecrated Life, the bishops will travel to St. Joseph’s Oratory in Montreal Sept. 17 for a special mass with religious congregations.

The CCCB’s English sector will mark the launch of a new liturgical book, the Book of the Gospels, to be carried in procession. Powers noted that, “since it is no longer allowed to carry the lectionary in the procession,” and the English didn’t have one, the CCCB produced one. It uses the NRSV Bible translation.

## Changes need to be made

Continued from page 1

Development and Peace’s call for action.

“Looking at it just from a scientific point of view, which involves no value judgments, we can say, ‘OK, you proceed along the current path there are a whole bunch of very negative consequences. To avoid these, you need to make certain changes. Those changes are not happening yet,’” said Harvey. “Then, of course, it goes beyond the science to ask, ‘Is that a moral or ethical question?’ That’s a non-scientific question. But to the extent that you think it’s wrong to kill other people, then that’s an ethical issue.”

With the backing of Canada’s bishops and inspired by *Laudato Si’*, Development and Peace grounds its idea of spiritual change in the teaching of the church.

“Do we love our children and grandchildren, and their descendants, enough to change our way of living and our economic systems?” asks Saskatoon Bishop Don Bolen, chair of the CCCB’s commission on justice and peace.

In his message to parishes and Catholic schools, Bolen stresses the part prayer and religious conversion will play in a successful campaign.

“Rather than resigning our-

selves to pessimism or apathy, let us daily ask God’s assistance in discerning what the world needs and what we can offer, by living wisely, thinking deeply and loving generously in the power of the Holy Spirit,” Bolen writes.

Lives, in fact, are at stake in the climate change debate, said Gauthier.

“When you’re taking an honest look at this you have to question it,” she said. “You have to say, I’m not sure our behaviour is what God intended for this Earth. We are destroying it. And it doesn’t make any sense to destroy it. It’s our home. That’s what the pope is telling us. It’s what keeps us alive.”

The people who deny that climate change is happening, or deny that there are human causes, will be part of the debate, whether climate campaigners want to repeat the old arguments or not, said Gauthier.

“I don’t think we can ignore climate denial,” she said. “It’s natural that people feel when they’re being questioned, that they feel a little bit threatened.”

Catholics may also discover they have allies in the fight against climate change — perhaps allies they would never have imagined. Gauthier points out that the pope has encouraged Catholics to conduct a dialogue about “our common home” with all kinds of people.

“We have to step out of our comfort zones and get together,” she said.

“This is the time when our members can shine and really connect with people whom they might not presume they have anything in common with.”

Create a Climate of Change campaign materials are available at devp.org and from parish Development and Peace groups.

## N.S. CWL helps Aboriginal women to become leaders

By Salt & Light staff

ANTIGONISH, N.S. (CCN) — The Aboriginal community of Nova Scotia makes up about two per cent of the province’s population. Yet unemployment rates among the province’s Aboriginal community are much higher than non-Aboriginal Nova Scotians. Overall 15 per cent of Aboriginals are unemployed and that number soars to 24 per cent among Aboriginals living on reserve locations.

The roots of these unemployment numbers are many and varied, and no one knows the source of the problems better than Aboriginal men and women living in these communities. Thanks to the support of Nova Scotia’s Catholic Women’s League, Aboriginal women in Nova Scotia will be able to develop their leadership skills to help build a better future for their communities.

Joan Bona, the provincial CWL president for Nova Scotia, told Salt & Light it took three years to find the right way to support a leadership program for Aboriginal women that would be offered by the St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department.

The St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department was founded in 1928 based on the outreach work of Rev. Moses Coady and his cousin Rev. Jimmy

Tompkins. The goal of the extension department was to bring further education opportunities to adults across Nova Scotia who otherwise might not have any chance to further their education. The extension department also partnered with various community organizations to develop leadership programs to benefit all sectors of Nova Scotian society.

To develop the Aboriginal Women’s Leadership program the Extension Department invited Aboriginal women graduates of the university to identify areas within their communities that might be improved through leadership development. As a result of that brainstorming phase, four possible programs were identified: cultural agricultural traditions, women and cultural arts, girls and elder storytelling, and girls and nutrition.

St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department has already developed and delivered one of the four programs: cultural agricultural practices. Ten women took part in that program.

The university will develop the remaining programs, using the financial contributions of the CWL of Nova Scotia. The goal, said Bona, is to help Nova Scotia’s Aboriginal communities improve their economic situation by empowering women in those communities.

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# St. Blaise now a Catholic church

By Frank Flegel

LAKE ALMA, Sask. — Local Lutherans and Roman Catholics since 1992 have shared the little white church here, but on Aug. 23 the church building was blessed as St. Blaise and became a totally Catholic church. What was left of the Evangelical Lutheran community sold the building for the nominal sum of \$1, according to Bernice Bloor, chair of St. Blaise pastoral council. Title was transferred to the Archdiocese of Regina.

“We’re a small bunch, but mighty,” said Bloor, speaking with the PM. “We have about 15 families registered and about nine turn out regularly to mass.” Parish priest Rev. Anthony Pangan, SSS, said this is the first time in his years as a priest that the entire congregation has formed the parish council.

The hamlet of Lake Alma is straight south of Regina, a few kilometres from the U.S. border. The 2006 census said its population is 30 and the Rural Municipality of Lake Alma had a population of 250. Bloor said the Catholic population in the area is growing with the help of immigration but mostly from returning families.

“Quite a few of us have had our children come back to reside in the community and raise their family here, so we’re really hoping we can keep everybody coming.”

Lake Alma has been a mission parish of Radville for many years, said Bloor. Mass is held in St. Blaise every second week with a lay-led service between visits from Pangan, who is responsible for six area parishes.

Prior to 1992 St. Blaise was housed in an even smaller building on the west side of the community. It was moved in from the country but nothing was done to it. There was no water or electric service, said Bloor, so in 1992 the Lutheran community was asked and agreed to share the Lake Alma Lutheran Church.

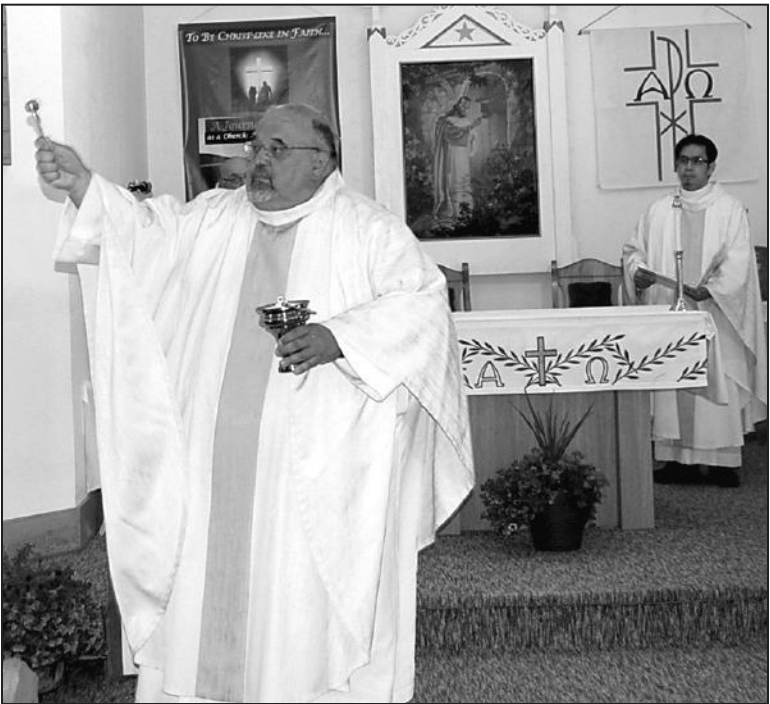
Archdiocesan vicar-general Rev. Lorne Crozon conducted the blessing service and concelebrated the mass with Pangan. “This wonderful gift of God is a sign of God’s grace here,” said Crozon in his homily,

“thanks to the Lutheran community for this wonderful facility.” A few from the Lutheran community also attended the service.

Crozon blessed with holy water and incense the altar, tabernacle, lectern and sanctuary and all the people who packed the church. Bloor said people came from all the other parishes served by Radville to help celebrate.

The church appears to be in good condition. Bloor says some work on the building is required, but they don’t intend to do anything for about a year to make sure the parish continues to be viable.

Following the service most stayed to take advantage of a breezy but warm and sunny day for a potluck picnic in an adjacent park.



Flegel

**ST. BLAISE — St. Blaise Catholic Church at Lake Alma is blessed by Rev. Lorne Crozon.**

## Family Services considers bylaw change in Regina

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Catholic Family Services Society (CFSS) is considering a change in a bylaw which would accommodate non-Catholics on the board of directors. Executive director David Sax, in an interview with the PM, said the majority of people who contact the service are not Catholic.

“You’re trying to be responsive to the community,” he said. “You’re trying to be relevant to

the community.”

Sax said it’s at the stage of exploring the issue, noting that Saskatoon Catholic Family Services bylaw states 51 per cent of the board have to come from the Catholic community. The issue was discussed at the recent CFSS Annual General Meeting but left it for further study. The board also reviewed and passed an updated job description for the executive director, anticipating an executive search following Sax’s announced

retirement date in early 2017.

The meeting elected a new slate of officers, with Adrian Fuchs taking over as president from Wayne Ingldaldson, who remains on the board as past president. Terrie Dumelie is vice-president and Lorne Kirzinger remains as secretary.

The meeting was told that, while CFSS is vibrant and healthy, a reduction in funds from Social Services has resulted in the loss of one half-time position from the Intensive Family Support Service, and the hours of service for the Youth Mentorship Program had to

be reduced. Sax said there is a large demand for the Youth Mentorship Program but it is difficult to find qualified male candidates to act as mentors and that has resulted in a waiting list of youth who want to access it.

“There is no problem getting female mentors and there is no waiting list of young females,” said Sax.

Mental health is a chronic problem in Canada, said Sax, but there is no capacity.

“There is no national strategy for children, seniors or mental services.”

CFSS is exploring new ways to be relevant in the community.

There remains a great demand for CFSS services, said Sax. “There are only four counselling services for non-paying clients and CFSS is one of them. There are waiting lists everywhere. There are not enough counsellors and not enough money to get more counsellors.”

There are, however, 122 paid counselling services available.

The CFSS webpage lists seven counsellors including Sax and a couple of unit managers, but there are 17 people working in four CFSS programs: Youth Mentorship, Families First, Intensive Family Support and Young Parent Program. The remaining seven staff are administrative.

## Encyclical Walk raises awareness

By Frank Flegel

FORT-QU’APPELLE, Sask. — Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*, has inspired the world to become more aware of the environment and the changes occurring to the Earth.

Some 32 people including Winnipeg Archbishop Emeritus James Weisgerber and Rev. John Meehan, SJ, president of Campion College, took a four-kilometre hike around the Qu’Appelle Valley’s Echo Lake Aug. 29 to contemplate Pope Francis’ encyclical. The seven-member organizing committee took turns giving a short reflection on the themes contained in the encyclical. They also talked about local issues, specifically those affecting the Calling Lakes of the

Qu’Appelle Valley.

“We talked about the sewage thing from Regina,” said Marian Grady, a member of the organizing committee and one of the walkers, “and some of the issues effecting First Nations people in the valley.” The City of Regina had released sewage into Wascana Creek in an effort to avoid a back-up of the city’s sewer system.

It was a warm day with the temperature in the low 30s, but walkers carried water and stopped often to cool down. Bert Pitzel, Regina archdiocesan co-ordinator for social justice, said he was extremely gratified about the walk.

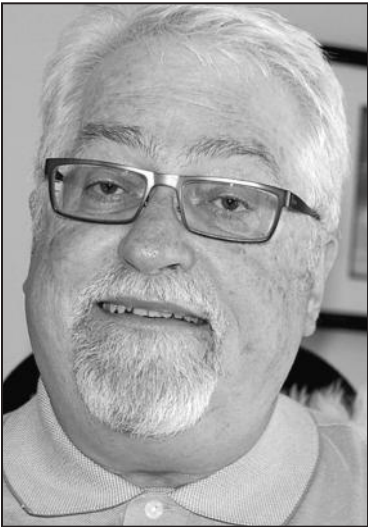
“There was such a solidarity that the people had as we walked together. Nobody was looking at their watches and everybody was sort of anticipating what the next

station would bring.”

The sites were located to emphasize the environment: the lakeshore, beside a roadway, sites along the pathway.

Trevor Herriot describes himself as a layperson environmentalist and was the catalyst who, along with Pitzel, organized the walk. “This happened the day after I retired from work. Campion College had a gathering to celebrate the release of the encyclical. We started talking about the things we could do and that’s how it started.”

Herriot said the walk was very successful. “We talked about our call to the care of creation as Christians. There was enthusiasm about the talks and lots of talk during the walks between the stations. There was also some good moments as we walked along: seeing pelicans fly over and looking at the vegetation and landscape.”



Flegel

**David Sax**



Flegel

**ENCYCLICAL WALK — Bert Pitzel, Regina archdiocesan co-ordinator for social justice, speaks to a group of walkers about some of the themes contained in Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*.**

The committee is determined that the Encyclical Walk not be a one-time thing. They expect to continue meeting and coming up with ways to engage more dialogue with parishes and other groups.

“You could do this in many different landscapes where you find a place that’s beautiful and full of nature, so people living around there can see the human impact that brings up all those themes the encyclical brings out.”

Herriot said following the gospel doesn’t mean just our human relationships: “It also means our relationships to other creatures who have a right to exist and their own intrinsic value under God’s creation.”

## Luttmer dies after illness

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — A lifelong battle with a genetic kidney disease finally took the life of Rev. Peter Luttmer, who died in July. He had been on medical leave from the Regina archdiocese since 1997.

Luttmer was raised on a farm near Zehner, Sask., and received his early education in a one-room schoolhouse. He attended Miller High School in Regina and received a BA from the University of Regina, entered St. Joseph Seminary, Edmonton, and was ordained in 1979 by Archbishop Charles Halpin. He served parishes in Weyburn, Claybank, Canora, Moose Jaw and St. Cecelia Parish in Regina before taking medical leave.

Luttmer was described as a courageous and kind man. He

travelled behind the Iron Curtain before the Berlin Wall came down to track down relatives, and was instrumental in bringing a cousin to the West. He was also an avid cook and gardener.

Luttmer had his life prolonged thanks to a kidney donation from his identical twin brother, Paul, a banker. Rev. Louis Abello, who presided at Luttmer’s funeral in Sedley, Sask., joked during his homily that the twins looked so much alike that you sometimes wondered whether you had gone to Paul for confession or Peter for a bank loan. The brothers celebrated their birthday on the feast day of Sts. Peter and Paul in June, though their actual birthday was in January.

Funeral services were held at Our Lady of Grace Parish, Sedley, and he was buried in the church cemetery.



# Summer Vacation Bible School held

By Paula Fournier

PRINCE ALBERT — The annual summer Vacation Bible School (VBS) in Prince Albert for children ages four to 12 took place July 6 - 10 at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

As a new deanery youth initiative, parishes in the city and surrounding area collaborated and organized the VBS. This year, to the happy surprise of the dozen organizers and volunteers, over 100 registrations were received.

The VBS program was created by Cat.Chat founders Gerald and Denise Montpetit from Bruno, Sask. They designed the program for families and children to experience the Catholic faith in a fun and faith-filled way. They offer five programs based on specific Catholic themes.

The program used this year — Cathletics: Training to be Champions for Christ — taught the similarities between working hard for the Olympics and train-

ing to live out one’s Catholic faith. Youth were inspired to set goals and to aim for a commitment to excellence in their faith based on the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes. The sports program taught virtues such as prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice.

On the last day, parents and families were invited to a mass, followed by a lunch. Rev. Travis Myrheim, pastor of St. Michael Parish in Prince Albert, spoke on the virtue of mercy.

“Mercy is how much God loves us. Each day we learned about a different virtue and how each of them makes us a better person. Virtues strengthen us and help us win the spiritual race and make it to today’s virtue, which is mercy. Real love is not easy. It’s like trying to get better at basketball: we have to keep practising how to love. Are you going to forget everything from this week? It’s not just about this week. It’s about practising over and over



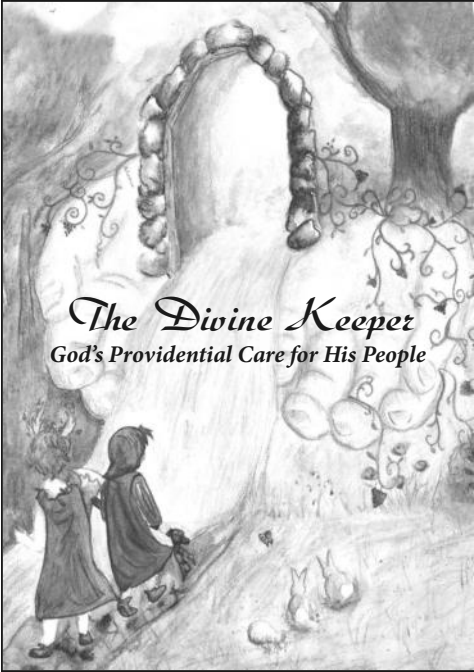
Fournier

**VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL — To the happy surprise of organizers and volunteers, over 100 registrations were received for the Vacation Bible School in Prince Albert this year. One of the co-ordinators attributes the success of the week to the committed adults who were willing to volunteer at the last minute due to greater than expected numbers.**



Tim Yaworski

**OPENING DAY — Go Make Disciples was the theme of an opening day celebration for some 2,000 Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) teachers and staff Aug. 28 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. Eucharist was celebrated with Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, vicar-general Rev. Kevin McGee of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, Rev. Sabah Kamora of Sacred Heart Chaldean Church, homilist Rev. Andre Lalach of the Ukrainian Catholic Parish of the Dormition of the Blessed Mother of God, and other clergy. Readings and prayers were proclaimed in several languages, including English, French, Ukrainian, Aramaic and Cree. After mass, the program included presentations by GSCS board chair Diane Boyko, director of education Greg Chatlain, GSCS Foundation chair Laurie Karwacki and keynote speaker Colm Leyne, diocesan co-ordinator of youth ministry.**



*Thank you to all who made  
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- Benedictines of St. Peter's Abbey
- Diocese of Saskatoon
- Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus Charitable Foundation
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- Numerous parishes
- Knights of Columbus Councils and Catholic Women's Leagues
- Culligan Water Matters
- Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools
- Wolfecroft Signs
- Our Priests who heard reconciliations during the day
- All the actors and helping hands involved in the drama
- All volunteers who helped with setup, take down and cleanup
- Many individuals and organizations for their prayers, resources, wisdom and time

*Above all, we praise & thank the Lord for providing all  
that is needed & Our Lady for her intercession.*

**Rock the Mount 2015 Organizing Committee**

read the Bible, go to church and continue to pray.”

Geri Woods, one of the co-ordinators for VBS, attributes the success of the week to the committed adults who were willing to volunteer at the last minute due to greater than expected numbers, and the assistance of Catholic school secretaries who helped with promoting the program in school bulletins.

The many families and kids who attended the week collected clothes and toys to donate to families evacuated during the devastating fires in northern Saskatchewan.

## Dewan awarded Our Lady of Guadalupe medal

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Rev. Gerard Dewan of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon was recently recognized for his outstanding contributions to the Institute for Priestly Formation in Omaha, Neb.

The Institute for Priestly Formation (IPF) presents its highest award, the medallion of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Spouse of the Holy Spirit, to women and men “for their generous response to Mary’s call to live Jesus’ own life through acts of charity and lives that give witness to Christian hope.”

The award was presented to Dewan, as well as to IPF supporters Sharon and Dr. Stephen Doran of Omaha, at a June celebration in Nebraska.

The IPF was founded to assist bishops in the spiritual formation of diocesan seminarians and priests in the Roman Catholic Church.

Dewan participated in IPF’s Spiritual Exercises Program (a 30-day retreat) in the summer of 2001, and then participated in the Spiritual Director Training Program from 2002 - 2005. The following year, he began serving as a spiritual director for IPF’s Seminarian Summer Spiritual Program, serving for nine summers. He has also served as a spiritual director and staff member of the IPF Spiritual Director Training Program at Mundelein Seminary in Illinois.

Due to increasing health problems and following a period of discernment, Dewan retired from active ministry this past March, but he continues to offer spiritual direction and engage in a ministry of intercession on behalf of priests, seminarians and those in need.

Dewan grew up as one of nine



Yaworski

**Rev. Gerard Dewan**

to hospitals and a variety of groups and institutions. Dewan has also served in several capacities at St. Peter’s Seminary and later as spiritual director at Kenrick-Glennon Seminary, St. Louis, Miss. He now lives in Saskatoon.

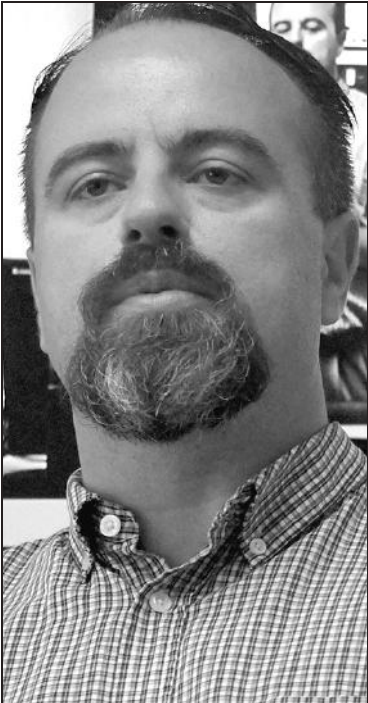
“The institute responds to the need to foster spiritual formation as the integrating and governing principle of all aspects of priestly formation,” he said. “To accompany priests and future priests as a spiritual director to ‘fall more deeply in love with God’ has been a great grace.”



# No genuine spirituality without religion: theologian

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Though it is common to meet people who say “I am spiritual but not religious,” theologian Colin Kerr begs to differ.



CCN/Gyapong

Colin Kerr

Many Christians today think religion and spirituality have nothing to do with each other, Kerr said in an August lecture at the Summer Institute of New Evangelization (SINE) at Saint Paul University.

“When someone says, ‘I’m

spiritual but not religious,’ that’s an insult to us,” the editor of the Catholic Review of Books said in a course on evangelizing in a post-modern culture. “It means: ‘You go to church, therefore you are not spiritual.’”

The whole burden of apologetics is to show that religion and spirituality are not either/or, he said. In fact, true religion is the basis for true spirituality. The laws and tradition of the Catholic religion are a “springboard” to spirituality and freedom, he said. Instead of “closing you off to grace,” they do the opposite. “They are like putting on running shoes to bigger and faster things,” he said.

The challenge is to show how the law, such as the Ten Commandments, or the Beatitudes and tradition are good words, he said. “These things are wings!”

“We aren’t always aware these rules make us happy,” he said. “If they are not making us happy, we are not understanding them right.”

Jesus talks about his way being a yoke, he said. A yoke keeps you moving in the right direction. “It’s not easy to get used to,” he said. “When I became Catholic, I thought ‘Catholicism is so hard.’ Some parts are hard, but I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

Comparing monogamous, faithful and virtuous marriage to adultery, for example, leads to better and happier outcomes, he said. “Life is hard; priestly celibacy

is hard; marriage is hard; religious rules are hard; truth is hard.”

But spirituality without rules seems fun; it has no burdens, he said. “It feels good to be spiritual.”

“Yet oftentimes, the hard things are the good things, the valuable things,” he said. “Sometimes when we get away with stuff we feel cheated.”

Kerr traced the intellectual roots of the idea one could divide religion from spirituality to German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, whom he dubbed the “Father of liberal Christianity.”

Liberal Protestants like Schleiermacher believe if you treat the Bible as an historical artifact, the way you would treat a manuscript by Homer or Aristotle, you can get at the truth it is conveying in its historical setting, he said.

This treatment rules out miracles or prophecies, so that in this view the prophet Isaiah could have had no way of predicting the birth of Christ, he said. “There is an a priori assumption there is no such thing as miracles.” Yet the Catholic view of the Bible through the lens of tradition that takes in the supernatural, sees God as able to inform an Isaiah about Christ.

Kerr contrasted Schleiermacher with Cardinal John Henry Newman, a former Anglican who converted to the Catholic Church through his study of history and Christian doctrine. It was very

important to him what the church taught and how it interpreted the Bible, said Kerr. He realized the church’s teachings were something he could depend on as true.

“He was able to see the continuity of Jesus’ handing on of his message,” Kerr said. “Jesus didn’t hand on his message and hope some smart scholars might come along and keep it alive.”

Instead, Newman realized this continuity was “the point of the church,” Kerr said. Schleiermacher wanted to put doctrine in a second place to morality and spirituality, but Newman saw what would happen if you “make a disconnect between doctrine, or religion and spirituality.”

Spirituality without religion “quickly dissipates and turns into meaninglessness,” he said. People whose spirituality is not grounded in religion are vulnerable from pressures from powerful people who claim to have the route to happiness.

“Our job here is to figure out how religion leads to happiness and to make it understandable to others,” he said. The happiness that Christ promised is “not a happiness pill” but comes through eucharistic living, through sacrifice. “That is what he did and that is what we do.”

## Program needs reform

Continued from page 3

caregivers improvements but secretly shutting them out,” said Francisco. “His overhaul of the program has largely resulted in broken promises.”

The caregivers are pressuring the government to live up to the promises and truly reform the program.

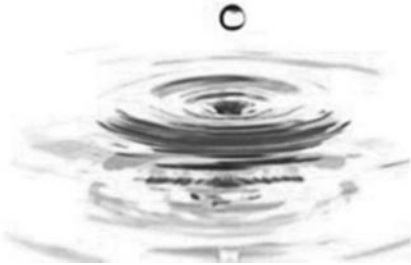
“It is the right time for them to consider putting the caregiver program through a . . . revision that would favour the caregivers and wouldn’t expose us into more vulnerability,” said Teta Bayan, who’s struggled to find suitable employment since first arriving from the

Philippines in 2012. “Canada has a great need for caregivers from child care to people with disabilities and the elderly with higher medical needs.”

She went on to say that those who enter Canada via the LCP should be granted permanent residency upon arrival and those currently working in the country through the program should be issued an open work permit, which would eliminate the LMIA requirement, immediately.

“This will promote equality and respect.”

The Ministry of Immigration told The Register they are looking in to the matter.



## A SACRED SPACE IN A BUSY WORLD

### GRACE-FULL TRANSITIONS

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**Register before September 11 and save \$10**

### HEALING TROUBLED HEARTS

**A Pathway to (W)holiness**  
**Part 1 – September 29 to October 27; 10 a.m. to 12 noon**  
**Part 2 – November 3 to December 1; 10 a.m. to 12 noon**  
*Carmen Hopf*  
Take an inner journey to see what joys and sorrows, surprises and challenges you may find in your own inner being. We will use the book *Healing Troubled Hearts* by Lyn Holley Doucet as a guideline. Daily spiritual reading and reflection will be part of this inner journey of discovery. **Part 1 is a prerequisite for Part 2.**  
**Part 1: \$65 includes the book Healing Troubled Hearts**  
**Part 2: \$50**  
**Part 1 and 2: \$110**

### A QUIET DAY AWAY

**Tuesday, September 22; Thursday, October 22; Wednesday, November 18;**  
**Wednesday, December 9; Tuesday, January 19; Tuesday, February 16**  
**9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**  
*PRC Team*  
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# Beware making Mideast Christians ‘collateral damage’

By Jean Ko Din  
The Catholic Register

MARKHAM, ONT. (CCN) — Christians in the Middle East should not be considered as collateral damage of the wars in Syria and Iraq, says Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II during his first apostolic visit to Canada.

Patriarch Aphrem, head of the Syrian Orthodox Church, said that western countries need to stop helping groups that, if they rise to power, will treat Eastern Christians as second- and third-class citizens.

“It is my duty and the duty of every Christian in the Middle East to make our voice heard,” the patriarch told The Catholic Register Aug. 30.

“I believe what’s missing here is the West is so focused on removing certain regimes in these countries, for example, removing Bashar al-Assad from Syria, that they do not see the side damage that they are causing to the communities there.”

The uprising against Assad contributed to the fundamentalist Islamic State forces sweeping in under the radar in 2014 and taking control of vast swaths of Iraq and



Catholic Register/Ko Din  
**Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II**

Syria and imposing its fundamentalist Islamist theology on these areas.

Under the secular government in Syria, Aphrem said Christians are able to practise their faith, but if the Islamic State push succeeds, they will become subject to extreme Islamic rule. That has been seen in areas the Islamic State has overrun where Christians are being forced to renounce their faith or die.

Aphrem, who was elected patriarch on May 31, 2014, has

spent his first year getting to know the Syrian Orthodox Church around the world.

“I’m here, first of all, to pay a visit to our faithful parishioners who have settled mainly in two areas, which is Toronto and Montreal,” he said. “I’m here to pray with them . . . to get to know them and to allow them to get to know their spiritual father and their servant.”

His visit to Toronto on Aug. 30 saw him bless a new church, St. Barsaumo Syriac Church in Markham.

He also met with religious and government leaders during a private banquet, including Cardinal Thomas Collins, Rev. Fady Bouktour of Holy Family Coptic Catholic Church in Etobicoke and Jason Kenney, Minister of National Defence and Multiculturalism.

The patriarch also visited Montreal on Sept. 4 where he met with Montreal Archbishop Christian Lépine, Bishop Paul-Marwan Tabet of the Catholic Maronite Eparchy of Canada and NDP MP Maria Mourani.

Although this is his first apostolic visit to Canada, he has made several visits to the country during his time as Metropolitan Arch-

bishop of the Eastern United States under the episcopal name, Mor Cyril Aphrem Karim.

“I see more and more of our people coming here from the Middle East,” he said. “I’m happy to see that there is a community to receive them here and of course a larger Christian community.”

Aphrem said Christians around the world must continue the discussion of a future as one church. This was a major issue he discussed with Pope Francis when they met in Rome in June.

Together, they discussed how the Vatican can play a role in influencing European governments to change how they do business concerning the war in Syria. They also discussed other important issues, such as encouraging young people to uphold their faith and fixing the date of Easter celebrations for both churches.

“I know (Francis) prays on a daily basis for Syria and he calls Syria, ‘Beloved Syria,’ ” said Aphrem. “In the coming Easter, there is going to be five weeks of difference and this is unacceptable, of course . . . and I told him that we would be the first church to join that effort if the Vatican does indeed fix the dates.”

# Effective pastoral ministry needed after decades of weak catechesis

Continued from page 1

the funeral of their new mother-in-law they will go to communion.”

But Pagé can expect stiff opposition. Eleven cardinals, at least four of whom will participate in October’s synod of bishops, have written a book that urges the church to maintain its current rules regarding marriage. The book of essays, titled *Eleven Cardinals Speak on Marriage and the Family*, has contributions from cardinals from Europe, Asia, South America and Africa. It urges extreme caution in considering any plan to allow communion for Catholics who have divorced and remarried civilly without an annulment.

Dutch Cardinal Willem Jacobus Eijk of Utrecht, who was elected to the synod, said it is neither pastoral nor merciful for the church’s ministers to pretend that without an annulment a civil remarriage is anything other than “a form of structured and institutionalized adultery.”

But one change in church practice absolutely must occur, he said. After decades of weak catechesis, “true pastoral ministry” means presenting church teaching, “transmitting and explaining its foundations more adequately and clearly than we have done in

the last half-century.”

Italian Cardinal Carlo Caffarra of Bologna, who was not elected to attend the synod, said showing mercy to civilly remarried couples without requiring their conversion — demonstrated by at minimum refraining from sexual relations with a new spouse — “is the mistaken pity of an incompetent and/or weak physician who contents himself with bandaging wounds without treating them.”

Venezuelan Cardinal Jorge Urosa Savino wrote that many societies no longer understand marriage the way the church does, but that does not mean the church should “yield.”

“The truth does not depend on acceptance by a majority. Neither does pastoral practice,” he wrote.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops President Archbishop Paul-André Durocher has discussed Pagé’s paper with his old professor of canon law and appreciates how clearly Pagé states the problem.

“On the one hand there is compassion for people whose marriages break apart,” Durocher said. “On the other hand, there’s the very clear teaching of Jesus that there will be no divorce among you (Matthew 19:3-12). So, how do you reconcile that teaching, a

very clear teaching of Jesus, with the compassion that we all feel for people whose marriages have broken apart and would like to somehow rebuild their lives while continuing in the church?”

Pagé’s opinions carry weight, but Durocher is waiting until the synod before making up his mind. He will be one of four Canadian bishops at the synod, along with Cardinal Thomas Collins of Toronto, Vancouver’s Archbishop Michael Miller and Valleyfield, Que., Bishop Noel Simard.

Durocher also warns that annulments, divorce and remarriage will not be the only subjects at the synod. How poor families cope in the economy, evangelizing the culture about Christian marriage and promoting the value of marriage to people who have lost hope in the possibility of a permanent and spiritual bond will be among the problems set before bishops from around the world.

While Catholics continue to divorce at rates more or less equal to the general population, fewer and fewer bother to seek an annulment. As judicial vicar of the Canadian Appeal Tribunal in Ottawa, Pagé sees every single Canadian annulment case come through his office for the original judgment to be either confirmed or revised. This year the Canadian Appeal Tribunal expects to see just 800 cases for the entire country.

“The number of cases decreases year after year,” said Pagé. “We should have a reflection on this phenomenon.”

Pagé opposes any easy solutions to speeding up the annulment process. Quick oral hearings rather than the full, documentary process and doing away with the higher court review of all annulments could lead to errors in rulings and other serious problems, he said.

In Pagé’s view, the problem

with getting annulments through the process in a timely way has to do with too few canonists working for Canada’s marriage tribunals. Many dioceses can’t spare priests from the frontlines to go study canon law. And many priest-canonists also have pastoral duties.

Lack of qualified judges is a problem in most Canadian dioceses, but Pagé’s criticism doesn’t really apply in Toronto, said Rev. Alex Laschuk, Toronto Regional Marriage Tribunal associate judicial vicar.

“I think a lot of dioceses are struggling to keep up with the workload,” Laschuk said.

Part of the problem is that on any tribunal, the code of canon law requires that priests outnumber lay judges. Pagé wants to see that requirement dropped so that more lay people can be assigned full time to tribunals while the priests are left to pastor parishes.

“It’s my point that a lay woman or man, qualified in canon law with a licence, masters or doctorate . . . Are they not judges? They are judges as much as I am,” said Pagé.

But on clerics outvoting lay people, canon law again rubs up against theology, said Laschuk.

“The church has the understanding of what’s called the power of orders and the idea that jurisdic-

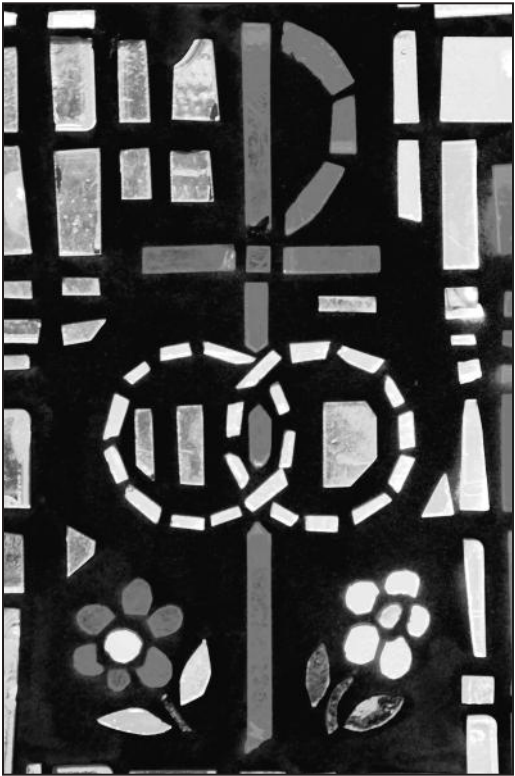
tion is tied to the power of orders. That’s really a question for the theologians to resolve.”

However, in some dioceses permanent deacons with qualifications in canon law are already being counted as clerical members of marriage tribunals. While deacons are

**FIND A WAY TO FORGIVE — A pair of wedding bands symbolizing the sacrament of marriage is depicted in a stained glass window at St. Isabel Church in Sanibel, Fla. Bishops who attend the synod on the family in Rome next month should find a way for divorced and remarried Catholics to be forgiven and allowed back into the communion line, urges one of the most senior and respected canon lawyers in Canada.**

ordained, they do not share in the governing function of the church hierarchy. Lay votes on a marriage tribunal should count just as much as deacon votes, said Laschuk.

(With files from Catholic News Service.)



CNS/Gregory A. Shemitz

## The Question of Life

Speaker: Alex Schadenberg, Euthanasia Prevention Coalition  
Thursday, September 24, 2015 | 2 to 4 pm and 7 to 9 pm  
Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain  
340 Provencher Blvd | Winnipeg | Admission is Free  
Sponsored by Life's Vision, Educational Resources  
www.LifesVision.ca

*Do we have  
The Right to End Life?  
How to respond to  
Euthanasia and  
Assisted Suicide.*



# Bergman: portrayer of nuns and saints, and more

By Kurt Jensen  
Catholic News Service

You must remember Ingrid Bergman.

The occasion of the Swedish-born actress' centennial — she was born Aug. 29, 1915 — has spurred lavish retrospectives of her films worldwide, including events at New York's Museum of Modern Art and the American Film Institute in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The anniversary also is being marked by a pair of exhibitions at the Swedish Embassy in Washington, a new documentary, *Ingrid Bergman: In Her Own Words* (Mantaray), and a commemorative postage stamp issued jointly by the U. S. Postal Service and Sweden's PostNord Sverige.

It's a worldwide observance as a result of her multifaceted canon. First, there are the early films made in her homeland between 1935 and 1939 (she had an uncredited role as early as 1932), then her work in Hollywood over the following decade — after which came European titles, mostly directed by Roberto Rossellini, from 1949 to 1954.

Bergman returned to Hollywood fare in 1956 with *Anastasia* and thereafter performed not only on the big screen, but on Broadway and for television as well, ending with a TV portrayal of Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir in *A Woman Called Golda*, completed shortly before Bergman's death on her 67th birthday in 1982.

Bergman's fame rests largely

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*Jensen is a guest reviewer for Catholic News Service.*



CNS/Guillaume Horcajuelo, EPA

**REMEMBERING INGRID BERGMAN** — Swedish-born actress Ingrid Bergman is seen on the official poster of the 68th annual Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, France, May 11. Bergman portrayed nuns and saints among her many roles in film.

on the output of her first Hollywood years, an extraordinary period that gave us *Casablanca* (1942), *Gaslight* (1944) and *Notorious* (1946) — as well as two Catholic-themed pictures, both of which are included in the aforementioned retrospectives.

In the sentimental drama *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945), Bergman's jovial school teacher, Sister Mary Benedict, gives boxing lessons to the bullied — when she's not too busy sparring verbally with Bing Crosby's musical cleric, Father Chuck O'Malley.

In 1948's *Joan of Arc*, Bergman plays the 15th-century teen mystic whose victorious leadership of the French army in the Hundred Years' War against England was

inspired by the voices of saints.

"Bells," the sequel to Leo McCarey's *Going My Way* (1944), was an immense success, and later became a Christmastime stalwart on TV. "Joan," by contrast — an independent, expensive and clunky Technicolor production directed by Victor Fleming — lost money on its original release.

Fleming's ill-received epic, which would turn out to be Bergman's last Hollywood venture for two decades, was re-edited into a somewhat confusing narrated version some years later. But its critical reputation has risen a bit since a 1998 restoration.

Both productions had clerical advisers. The *Bells of St. Mary's* used Msgr. John J. Devlin, the

pastor of St. Victor Parish in West Hollywood and the Los Angeles-area representative of the National Legion of Decency.

For *Joan of Arc*, distinguished French scholar Jesuit Father Paul Doncoeur was chosen. The editor of the journal *Etudes*, Doncoeur was considered the world's leading authority on the Maid of Orleans.

But that aspect of Doncoeur's long and varied resumé — he was also an officer of the Legion of honour, a pioneer of French scouting and, it seems, a backer of the collaborationist Vichy regime during the Second World War — wasn't the only reason he was selected.

Fleming and producer Walter Wanger had taken a dislike to Devlin. Yet they needed the impi-

matur of an unimpeachable church insider if their presentation of potentially sensitive subject matter was to pass muster with the Legion.

Doncoeur's scholarship had reaffirmed the church's own long-ago finding that French Bishop Pierre Cauchon (1371 - 1442), an English ally, had rigged Joan's 1431 trial for heresy. But the Hollywood Production Code, which the Legion helped enforce, forbade the negative portrayal of clergymen — Catholic or Protestant, contemporary or historical.

So a conundrum had to be solved. As a result, screenwriters Maxwell Anderson and Andrew Solt's script left out large swaths of the film's primary source material, Anderson's 1946 play *Joan of Lorraine*, in which Bergman had starred.

Among the excised lines was Cauchon's pre-emptory declaration that Joan "has freely admitted enough heretical beliefs and actions to burn all the virgins in Europe. In my mind she is condemned and the trial is over."

In the end, the screenplay hedges on the medieval prosecutor's actions, and labels him "Count-Bishop" Cauchon to make it clear that he had a political as well as a religious role to consider. Yet, as sneeringly portrayed by the hefty Francis L. Sullivan, Cauchon remains the heavy of the piece in more senses than one.

We know what Doncoeur thought of Devlin — and Bergman — because he wrote a remarkable series of letters during his Hollywood experience. They were eventually published in France in 1979, 18 years after his death.

— JOAN, page 12

## Traditional markers of adulthood beyond grasp of today's young people

By Caitlin Ward

I'm not going to say I feel old. No matter what your age when you say that you feel old, someone laughs at you and says you're not. Of course, you don't have to be old to feel old, and I'm not sure how you define "being old," anyway. Perhaps those are finer points of argument. So I'm not going to say I feel old.

Actually, I'm not sure that I do feel old. I think it's more that

### Basket Case Green Day

I've become aware that I'm older than I used to be. That might be a bit of a finer point of argument, too. Or it might just be a stupidly self-evident statement. It might be both. I can't tell. I haven't been sleeping much, lately.

More significant than any of these things, though, is the fact that I've spent a good portion of

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*Ward is a Saskatoon-based freelance writer who spends her days (and most nights) working at a small Catholic college. Her less eloquent thoughts can be found at [www.twitter.com/newsetofstrings](http://www.twitter.com/newsetofstrings)*

the past 10 years thinking about my age. On the one hand, this might be peculiar to me, but on the other hand, I think it might be a generational issue. I'm at the upper end of a generation, so I've been aware of and privy to the conversation around what people think of this generation. Thus, throughout my adult life, I've been made to think about who we, the dreaded "millennials," are.

Our adolescence has been extended, we're told. We're more dependent than previous generations, we're told. We don't behave like adults, we're told. At one point, I remember trying very hard to work out just how much of a grown-up I was supposed to be at 25. I couldn't figure out if I was mature enough for my age.

The trouble, in part, is that many of the markers of adulthood are slipping out of our grasp. Home ownership, car ownership, marriage, and children have all been signals of our arrival to adulthood. But housing prices are insane, cars are terrible for the environment, generationally we're the product of unconventional homes, and having children doesn't seem like the best idea when you can't afford to move out of your parents' house.

I'm sure this isn't the first time you've read about this — even in this column space. A few years ago, there was a flurry of articles about how useless we were as a group of people. More recently, there has been a push-back noting that we were handed a bit of a raw deal, and the fact that many of us live with our parents or a dozen roommates is as much a product of a depressed economy as it is a Peter Pan complex.

What hasn't come up very much, though, is how being under a microscope like this might be affecting us, as a generation. I probably have the conversation more than most. I work in higher education, so we spend a lot of time talking about millennials (the largest demographic of students) and overthinking things (we're academics; what else would we do?).

That said, though, it seems to be pretty hard to open a newspaper or a magazine without being presented with an article on "kids these days," for good or ill. As is often the case, older generations generally scoff at younger generations. That's not new, but perhaps what is new is the sheer number of column inches devoted to this scoffing. There seems

to me an irony in labelling this generation narcissistic. Yes, there's all the self-image issues associated with social media and projecting a particular personality online. But there's also the fact that we're the topic of conversation an awful lot. We're a cultural group that defies explanation but begs understanding. Of course we think the world revolves around us. You talk about us all the time.

I don't mean to be pat. The flipside of the self-obsession that attention breeds is the incredible anxiety that accompanies it. I don't think I know many people my age who aren't crippled by the anxiety that they are somehow doing this wrong, regardless of what it is they are doing.

That feeling seems to get stronger the older that you get, but I don't think it's limited to the upper end of my generation. Doing errands yesterday, everyone between the ages of 17

and 30 sang the words to *Basket Case* when the song came on, despite the fact that the album came out before some of the people in the car had even been born. It's a catchy pop punk song, but I think it might speak to us all a little too well.

Do you have the time  
To listen to me whine  
About nothing and everything  
All at once  
I am one of those  
Melodramatic fools  
Neurotic to the bone  
No doubt about it

CHORUS  
Sometimes I give myself the creeps  
Sometimes my mind plays tricks on me  
It all keeps adding up  
I think I'm cracking up  
Am I just paranoid?  
Am I just stoned?

I went to a shrink  
To analyze my dreams  
She says it's lack of sex  
That's bringing me down  
I went to a whore  
He said my life's a bore  
So quit my whining cause  
It's bringing her down

CHORUS (x2)



# Spies on the screen in a fearful post-9/11 world

## Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



“The Coming War with Russia” screamed the feature article in the Aug. 22 Ottawa Citizen, accompanied by a Ukrainian artist’s graphic image of Vladimir Putin composed of spent bullet casings. Every day brings news of another savage atrocity by the so-called Islamic State (ISIS), adding ammunition to the anti-terror agenda. Be afraid, very afraid, is the message of both irresponsible headlines and the politics of fear as played out in the current election campaign. No one wants to be seen as “soft” on the world’s bad guys.

It has come to this on the 14th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 on New York and Washington that led to western military interventions costing many thousands of lives and trillions of dollars. Indeed those interventions have arguably made matters worse than ever. Of course the actual dangers to Canadians can be overblown. The probability of a new cold much less hot war with Russia is remote. (I had no qualms about

and erodes civil liberties. After all, in protecting us from harm our spies are supposed to be safeguarding not undermining our democracy and its cherished freedoms.

The abuses of state spying have been exposed by excellent documentaries like Oscar winner Citizenfour and T(error), previously reviewed in these pages. Here I want to take a lighter look at a few current fictional spy movies which seem to be enjoying a renewed wave of popularity, capitalizing on a climate of fear and surveillance.

The spy movie is an established popular genre as evidenced by the longevity of its most classic character, James Bond (a.k.a. Daniel Craig who will bring 007 back to the screen in the latest episode, Spectre, to be released in November). Unfortunately few others match the style of the best Bond films.

At the ridiculous end of the spectrum is writer-director Paul Feig’s **Spy**, which has had a long summer run. With Melissa McCarthy playing the improbable heroine Susan Cooper, a frumpy middle-aged love-starved desk-bound CIA agent operating out of a bat- and rat-infested command centre, you know you are in for some outrageous comedy hijinks. Cooper controls a suite of high-tech surveillance gizmos that allow her to be the protecting eyes and ears of suave self-absorbed super-agent Bradley Fine (Jude Law)



©2015 Twentieth Century Fox

**SPY** — Melissa McCarthy stars as improbable heroine Susan Cooper in **Spy**, a comedy that has enjoyed a long summer run.

visiting Russia this summer and am contemplating an expedition to the Russian high Arctic next summer.) The recruitment of some troubled young Canadians to the cause of Islamist terror is a serious problem, but ISIS is hardly an existential threat to Canada’s stability and making war against it won’t be enough to put Syria and Iraq back together.

What should be as disturbing as the perceived threats to our society is the purpose served by hardline war-on-terror rhetoric which exaggerates and exploits them in order to justify mass surveillance by an expanded national security state that invades privacy

tasked with tracking down and retrieving a nuclear device coveted by assorted baddies including an arms-dealing Bulgarian femme fatale and imperious fashionista Rayna Boyanov (Rose Byrne) and slick terrorist kingpin (Bobby Cannavale). When Rayna appears to dispatch Fine and exposes the identity of other top agents — notably snarly braggart Richard Ford (Jason Statham) — Cooper is devastated. But she rallies when her hard-as-nails boss (Allison Janney) seizes on her anonymity and sends the game Cooper undercover into the field to do battle, secure the nuke and save the day. Which, of course, she does with



Mike Marsland/Getty Images for Paramount Pictures

**INDESTRUCTIBLE ACTION HERO** — Tom Cruise attends the July 25 U.K. fan screening of **Mission: Impossible — Rogue Nation** in London, United Kingdom. “Fifth time out is the charm as **Mission Impossible — Rogue Nation** offers enough intrigue and entertaining exploits to justify its generally good reviews,” writes Gerald Schmitz.

the help of a female sidekick from headquarters and despite the interference of a petulant Ford gone rogue.

The movie is an elaborate spoof of the whole spy genre and with McCarthy in the lead, backed by a brassy female boss, designed to puncture some male egos too, which is not a bad thing. There are some clever gags, plot twists and genuinely funny moments, though, fair warning, lots of the foul-mouthed profanity that has become epidemic in Hollywood movies. **Spy** is for laughs, not enlightenment.

The other espionage wide releases are thrillers with typically attractive male protagonists. Both are spinoffs from old television shows I loved to watch.

Much the more successful is the latest instalment of the **Mission Impossible** franchise from writer-director Christopher McQuarrie with indestructible action-hero Tom Cruise reprising the role ace field agent Ethan Hunt. Fifth time out is the charm as **Mission Impossible — Rogue Nation** offers enough intrigue and entertaining exploits to justify its generally good reviews. It starts off with Cruise doing a death-defying airplane manoeuvre as if to match the sensational aerial opener of Bond’s **Skyfall** from 2012. And the secondary characters of the stealthy IMF (Impossible Mission Force, not the real-world oft-maligned International Monetary Fund) — fellow agent William Brandt (Jeremy Renner) and sidekick Benji Dunn (funnymen Simon Pegg in a half-serious role) — get to prove themselves too.

Not only are Hunt and friends up against a shadowy sinister “Syndicate” dedicated to sparking global chaos, including by political assassination, but their own government turns against them. Specifically the CIA head Alan Hunley (Alec Baldwin) disbelieves the Syndicate even exists and prevails on the political masters to shut it down after which Hunt becomes the hunted. As Hunt is being pursued on all sides

he has to foil the dastardly designs of ex-British agent Solomon Lane (Sean Harris), a pale weak-chinned villain who is the face behind the Syndicate and who may (or may not) be controlling the lovely female operative Ilsa Faust (Rebecca Ferguson) whose action skills nearly match Hunt’s.

It all sets up some high-wire derring-do, captures and escapes, furious chases, excuses to visit locations from the Vienna opera house to Morocco. Eventually the preposterous plot involving encrypted data lands in the lap of the British prime minister who’s been misled by his sly and rather slimy intelligence chief. Hunt and the IMF are vindicated and reinstated as Hunley has to eat his words. The one ring of truth in the whole shebang is how the CIA concocts stories to cover its mistakes.

Guy Ritchie’s **The Man from U.N.C.L.E.** tries and fails to capture the magic from the TV series that played on the super-power rivalry between the CIA and the KGB. Part of the problem is the casting of the two crack agents from each side. Instead of Robert Vaughn as the shady American ladies’ man Napoleon Solo and David McCallum as the ruthless Soviet Illya Kuryakin we get the bland hunks Henry Cavill and Armie Hammer. Cold War chemistry isn’t what it used to be.

We’re back in the bad old days of 1963 but the loose-nuke threat comes instead from a cabal of rich Italian fascists led by the icily evil Victoria (Elizabeth Debicki), controlling a German scientist for nefarious explosive purposes while his daughter Gaby (Alicia Vikander) is stuck in Berlin behind the Wall. Solo and Kuryakin are ordered to work together to get to the dad and the device (though also to kill each other “if necessary”). That means extracting and enlisting Gaby who turns out to be a covert British agent answering to a wry handler played improbably by Hugh Grant.

Of course the fascists get smoked (literally) so on to the next assignment. That is the first mention of U.N.C.L.E. (United Network Command for Law Enforcement) and where the movie ends, signalling the inevitable sequel, **sign**.

Ritchie has previously attempted to remake the classic character of Sherlock Holmes (played by Robert Downey Jr.) into an action hero with a third such picture apparently in the works. But it’s the original Holmes whose sleuthing and powers of detection have inspired generations.

The Holmes film I can recommend is Bill Condon’s **Mr. Holmes** in which the famous solver of mysteries, superbly played by Ian McKellen, is a bee-keeping nonagenarian looked after by the war-widowed Mrs. Munro (Laura Linney), whose young son Roger is eager to assist him. Returning to his country retreat from a 1947 visit to Japan he’s acquired a herbal remedy to counter the effects of senility, hoping to recall the particulars of a tragic last case that provoked his retirement decades earlier. He also discovers a reason for an act of kindness that eases his regret.

That movie’s elegiac tone evokes a simpler bygone era when moral choices were clearer. Still we could use a Holmes-type investigator in today’s terror-obsessed world of deceptions, secrets and subterfuge, someone a step ahead of the surveillance state; the unconventional outsider, the free agent who seeks to ferret out the truth.

The next instalment of the popular Jason Bourne series (due in 2016) looks to tap into that role. Hints star Matt Damon: “it’s Bourne through an austerity-riddled Europe and in a post-Snowden world. . . . There are all these kinds of arguments about spying and civil liberties and the nature of democracy.”

The stakes are high in the fight against the purveyors of fear.



# Summer vacations manage to surprise and delight

## Both Lungs

Brent Kostyniuk



What I love most about summer vacations is the way they manage to surprise, even when it seems a situation could not possibly hold any surprises. Yet, that is exactly what happened again this summer.

Before I tell you about the serendipitous event, let me remind you what Both Lungs is all about.

The expression was coined by St. John Paul II who said the church must breathe through both lungs. In fact, he said it numerous times, and in slightly different contexts. One instance where he used the phrase was in the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* — that we may be one. Referring to the baptism of Ukraine in 988, the pontiff called it a key event in the evangelization of the world. “The great Slav nations of eastern Europe owe their faith to this event. In this perspective an expression which I have frequently employed finds its deepest meaning: the church must breathe with her two lungs!”

More than any pope since Leo XIII, Saint John Paul II understood the East and loved it. His grandmother was Ukrainian Cath-

olic, who perhaps instilled the bond he had for the East. However, the notion of both lungs isn’t simply a matter of East and West. It’s not about one side or the other. It is about being whole. Saint John Paul II saw appreciation of the East as not only essential for the life of the Catholic Church, but as a stepping-stone toward a restored universal Christian church. To that end, he was not afraid to express the need for communion with the East in strong language. “Our Eastern Catholic brothers and sisters are very conscious of being the living bearers of this tradition, together with our Orthodox brothers and sisters. The members of the Catholic Church of the Latin tradition must also be fully acquainted with this treasure and thus feel, with the pope, a passionate longing that the full manifestation of the church’s catholicity be restored to the church and to the world, expressed not by a single tradition, and still less by one community in opposition to the other; and that we too may be granted a full taste of the divinely revealed and undivided heritage of the universal church which is



B. Kostyniuk

**SUMMER LITURGY — Rev. Andrzej Wasylinko serves divine liturgy at St. John Vianney Church in Penticton.**

preserved and grows in the life of the churches of the East as in those of the West.”

Now, the surprise of my summer. In early August we travelled to Penticton where our daughter’s Ukrainian dance group *Kupalo* was performing at the annual Peach Festival.

Although there is no Ukrainian Catholic parish in Penticton, there is a “mission” parish served by Rev. Andrzej Wasylinko from Kelowna. Divine liturgy would be served at St. John Vianney Catholic Church on Saturday evening. St. John is a very welcoming structure, built in the modern style of 1965. The interior has a spirit of grace and peace — also coolness, which was most welcome on a 34 C day! For the divine liturgy the altar had been transformed with the requisite icons and candles, while small tables served for the *proskomidia* — preparation table — and

tetrapod in front. It was, I thought, a wonderful gesture of breathing through both lungs. Although obviously not a Ukrainian church, I felt quite at home.

After the divine liturgy, and in honour of the Feast of the Transfiguration, which was celebrated two days before on Aug. 8, Father Andrzej prayed a short *litiya* blessing the gifts of the harvest. The custom is an ancient one. In Greece and Romania, the harvest season traditionally began on Transfiguration. Grapes, in particular, were not eaten before Aug. 6. In some parishes, the first grapes would be brought to church for a blessing and distributed to parishioners. The *litiya* succinctly reflects all that a bountiful harvest means.

*O Lord Jesus Christ our God, you blessed the five loaves and fed the five thousand. Bless these loaves, this wheat, wine, and oil, and multiply them in this city and*

*in the whole world; sanctify all the faithful who shall partake of them; for it is you, O Christ our God, who bless and sanctify all things. And we glorify you with your eternal Father and your all-holy, gracious, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and ever.*

After the blessing, the small congregation of about 20 was invited to take a piece of the blessed bread and dip it in the wine. It was a custom I had never experienced. A basket of fruit had also been blessed and this was also shared with all present.

I left the church feeling as spiritually uplifted as I have ever been. Was it Father’s sermon, the intimacy of the small congregation and the shared food afterward, or perhaps the beautiful Okanagan weather? No, I rather think it was the realization that when we breathe through both lungs, we are all the better off for it.

## ‘Joan’ a dream for Bergman

Continued from page 10

Already in his mid-60s, and having been wounded in combat as a military chaplain in the First World War, Doncoeur was not easily impressed or intimidated by anyone in Hollywood. He called Devlin “a man very sure of himself, and unpleasant in his self-importance.” He also quoted Devlin as telling him, “Father, what I want is not historical accuracy; it is the service of the Catholic Church.”

“I have been told not to worry about this man,” Doncoeur added. Bergman, however, charmed the French priest instantly: “A very simple woman,” he wrote. “She wants to live the life of Joan as intensely as possible. I learned that she is a devout Lutheran who reads the Bible daily.”

He eventually quizzed her at length on her religious knowledge: “As a Swede, she had never even heard anyone speak of Catholicism; she was raised . . . without any contact with religion. It was in America that she discovered peoples, races, religions.”

Then, this observation: “She respects Catholicism, which she likes but is not familiar with at all.” That might be interpreted as an uppercut to Sister Mary Benedict. But more likely Bergman was merely trying to remind Doncoeur that actors are not to be confused with the figures they play.

“What attracts her about Joan is her love for France, for her people, for whom she sacrifices herself, her simplicity and her honesty. . . .

She has a very simple nature and I believe that she finds herself in Joan without having to become a character.”

After Joan of Arc, Bergman didn’t make another film in Hollywood until *Cactus Flower* in 1969. Anxious to achieve a more realistic acting style, she went to Italy to make *Stromboli* with Rossellini.

They fell in love while both were still married, she to neurosurgeon Petter Lindstrom. There was a brief but noisy scandal when Bergman became pregnant — and gave birth to Rossellini’s son — before divorcing Lindstrom.

Although immense sympathy for Bergman was expressed in the news media, the opposite sentiment was so widespread that it even reached the floor of the U.S. Senate — a fact for which Bergman got an official apology in 1972.

In her posthumously published memoir, *Ingrid Bergman: My Story*, the star wrote that she’d wanted to play Joan since childhood. That part of the story, her daughter Pia Lindstrom says, is absolutely true.

“My mother had a fixation with Joan of Arc. She played her in the theatre, in an oratorio (Joan of Arc at the Stake by Arthur Honegger) and a film. There was something in the idea of Joan — called to greatness by inner voices — that my mother responded to.”

“So much devotion that came to so little — for both the film and the filmmakers. It is poignant,” Lindstrom concludes.

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# Oppressing others is no way to benefit spiritually



Two sisters, ages five and three, were enjoying a special treat of chocolate milk at the table. The older one finished hers much more quickly. She then looked at her sister’s cup and said: “We should trade cups. You like the blue cup better and I like the pink cup” (still half full of chocolate milk!). She might have pulled it off if only their mother had not intervened with a lesson about respecting the rights of others. But it struck me with the force of a lightning bolt: How early does this human drive begin, this striving to “get the most,” “climb to the top by stepping on others”? I suppose the answer lies in how much we love the chocolate milk!

Joseph, son of Jacob, would have understood well the motivations of his brothers by hearing the first reading from the Book of Wisdom. It is the godless who say: “Let us test him by torture and death and see if he keeps his virtues through his suffering. If he does not, then he wasn’t virtuous in the first place!” We might hear echoes of this rationale from times gone by in a similar argument from perpetrators of the Spanish Inquisition, to the witch hunts of Europe in the Middle Ages, or even in the cries of the Aboriginal children taken from families and forced to attend residential schools in our own country. Someone in a position of power is playing the role of an oppressor to

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someone more vulnerable.

In today’s gospel we have the second of three predictions by Jesus of his arrest, execution and rising on the third day. As a dramatic contrast, it came on the heels of a “mountain top” experience with his disciples. As with many of Mark’s responses by the disciples, they still didn’t understand, but Mark says they were afraid to ask for clarification.

As if to underline their lack of comprehension even more, the disciples are caught in a dispute over position and pecking order in their group. Much like the mother in our first story, Jesus intervened in this conflict to bring some justice and right order to the situation. You can just imagine the “one-up-man-ship” conversation and its somewhat silly comparisons. “I was called first,” one might have said. “Yeah, but he put me in charge of the money,” would reply another. “Oh yeah? Well he called me ‘the rock,’ ” Peter would chime in.

Then Jesus did something they would never forget but would still find hard to put into practice. He says that we need to be servants if we are to follow him. We need to be last of all, not first. Then he takes a tiny child — a person with no possessions, influence, status or prestige. He says, “the one who welcomes one of these little ones welcomes

Twenty-fifth Sunday  
in Ordinary Time  
September 20, 2015

Wisdom 2:12, 17-20  
Psalm 54  
James 3:16 - 4:3  
Mark 9:30-37

me.” We could easily imagine their blank stares, confused looks and rolling of their eyes as they moved on. But the point was made strongly enough that they remembered to write it down! Hospitality is to be valued above competitive success. Serving has nothing to do with our calculations about what advantage will come back in return. It has even less to do with our moving up the ladder of success, recognition and power. Loving and giving to those who are powerless and can give nothing in return is the virtuous way of Jesus.

In the second reading James uses even stronger language to deter the ambitious drive of some who want to be counted as Jesus’ disciples. “You want something and you do not have it, so you are willing to commit murder.” We would do well to think of his use of the term “murder” in a much broader context. It not only applies to the taking of a life, but the wrongful use of power to diminish another person’s life in order to profit your own (i.e. taking another’s chocolate milk!). By the by, if you want to really wake up your “confessor” on a Saturday afternoon in the confessional, try accusing yourself of murder!

The great writer on mystical prayer Ruth Burrows writes: “Each of us has to look into our dark world, recognize the forces that blind us, the blind instincts, the compulsions, which, though they give the illusion of power, freedom, adulthood, ensnare us. We have to fight our way free, renounce the Dark Powers, learn to judge and act from our centre. Only then are we human and personal” (Guidelines For Mystical Prayer).

I think of the human and personal role of the mother of these two sisters and Jesus with his disciples. They restore order and justice to the situation by re-ordering the lives of those under their tutelage. But the principle of serving must be taught over and over again before it sticks. It could benefit us all to observe the grace of the other’s reception of the chocolate milk and take joy in their receiving!

Ultimately we learn this lesson through the humility of our own undeserving. What Jesus teaches is something deep about the grace of God. We do not earn it, we do not compete for it, we do not please God so much by our striving that God’s hand is forced to grant us our requests. Most importantly, we cannot benefit spiritually by oppressing others in any way. If we have the awareness of our own fragility, it can be transformed into deep compassion and understanding for others in their pain and isolation. Be a peacemaker! In your family, with your community, with your friends, find ways in our troubled world to sow peace by forgiveness, forbearance, tolerance and reconciliation. Don’t hanker for the chocolate milk of others! That’s how we become *servants of Jesus*.

## Human nature — sometimes it just seems to be all wrong



An American humorist was once asked what he loved most in life. This was his reply: *I love women best; whiskey next; my neighbour a little; and God hardly at all!*

This flashed in my mind recently when, while giving a lecture, a woman asked this question: Why did God build us in one way

and then almost all of the time expect us to act in a way contrary to our instincts?

I knew what she meant. Our natural instincts and spontaneous desires generally seem at odds with that toward which they are supposedly directed, namely, God and eternal life. A religious perspective, it would seem, calls us to reverse

the order described by that American humorist, that is, we’re to love God first, our neighbour just as deeply, and then accord to the human pleasures we are so naturally drawn to a very subordinate role.

But that’s not what happens most of the time. Generally we are drawn, and drawn very powerfully, toward the things of this earth: other people, pleasure, beautiful objects, sex, money, comfort. These seemingly have a more powerful grip on us than do the things of faith and religion.

Doesn’t this then put our natural feelings at odds with how God intended us to feel and act? Why are we, seemingly, built in one way and then called to live in another way?

The question is a good one and, unfortunately, is often answered in a manner that merely deepens the quandary. Often we are simply told that *we shouldn’t feel this way*, that not putting God and religious things first in our feelings is a religious and moral fault, as if our natural wiring was somehow all wrong and we were responsible for its flaw. But that answer is both simplistic and harmful, it misunderstands God’s design, lays a guilt trip on us, and has us feeling bipolar vis-à-vis our natural makeup and the demands of faith.

How do we reconcile the seeming incongruity between our natural makeup and God’s intent for us?

We need to understand human instinct and human desire at a deeper level. We might begin with St. Augustine’s memorable phrase: *You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you*. When we analyze our natural makeup, natural instincts, and natural desires more deeply, we see that all of these ultimately are drawing us beyond the more immediate things and pleasures with which they appear to be obsessed. They are drawing us, persistently and unceasingly, toward God.

Karl Rahner, in trying to explain this, makes a distinction between what we desire explicitly and what we desire *implicitly*. Our instincts and natural desires draw us toward various explicit things: love for another person, friendship with someone, a piece of art or music, a vacation, a movie, a good meal, a sexual encounter, an achievement that brings us honour, a sporting event, and countless other things that, on the surface at least, would seem to have nothing to do with God and are seemingly drawing our attention away from God. But, as Rahner shows, and as is evident in our experience, in every one of those explicit desires there is present, implicitly, beneath the desire and as the deepest part of that desire, the longing for and pursuit of something deeper.

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Ultimately we are longing for the depth that grounds every person and object, God. To cite one of Rahner’s more graphic exam-

ples, a man obsessed with sexual desire who seeks out a prostitute is, implicitly, seeking the bread of life, irrespective of his crass surface intent.

God didn’t make a mistake in designing human desire. God’s intent is written into the very DNA of desire. Ultimately our makeup directs us toward God, no matter how obsessive, earthy, lustful, and pagan a given desire might appear on a given day. Human nature is not at odds with the call of faith. Not at all.

Moreover, those powerful instincts within our nature, which can seem so selfish and amoral at times, have their own moral intelligence and purpose: they protect us, make us reach out for what keeps us alive, and, not least, ensure that the human race keeps perpetuating itself. Finally, God also put those earthy instincts in us to pressure us to enjoy life and taste its pleasures — while God, like a loving old grandparent watching her children at play, remains happy just to see her children’s delight in the moment, knowing that there will be time enough ahead when pain and frustration will force those desires to focus on some deeper things.

When we analyze more deeply God’s design for human nature and understand ourselves more deeply within that design, we realize that, at a level deeper than spontaneous feeling, and at a level deeper than the wisecracks we make about ourselves, we in fact do love God best; love our neighbour quite a bit; and, very happily, love whiskey and the pleasures of life quite a bit as well.



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# Embracing our call to create a climate of change

By Roma De Robertis, SCIC

For both the world and church, this is a time like no other. As billions face social chaos and ravages of climate change, our awakened response is crucial. Soon Pope Francis will address the United Nations General Assembly in New York. His recent encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, pleads for lovingly urgent action for Earth, our common home.

The pope's visit comes as the 193 UN member nations are set to endorse the Sustainability Development Goals. Agreed upon after widespread consultation, the 17 goals are to be attained by 2030. They seek to engage all countries to end poverty and protect the planet today and in future.

Yet endorsing goals is one thing, and implementing them another. As people of faith, we celebrate both "vocation" and "advocacy," arising from the common Latin root word for "call." Our Christian commitment calls us to partner with others to advocate for social, economic and ecological justice and ensure our federal government lives up to its

*Based in Saint John, N.B., Roma De Robertis is social and ecological justice and peace co-ordinator with Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception and a member of the SCIC leadership circle.*

international commitments.

For example, in July the UN Human Rights Committee concluded the state of human rights in Canada has seriously deteriorated since the committee last reviewed Canada's record a decade ago. At least 26 human rights organizations submitted separate reports to the independent committee.

The UN committee expressed serious concerns about new anti-terrorism legislation; the chill on freedom of expression and association; failure to regulate activities of Canadian corporations operating abroad; failure to provide health care to all refugees and migrants; and indefinite detention of those who are not citizens.

It also expressed concern about lack of progress on such long-standing issues as pay equity, discrimination and violence against women and Canada's relationship with Aboriginal peoples. The committee called for a national inquiry into murdered and missing Aboriginal women.

It also called on Canada to develop a well-structured dialogue with civil society (including non-governmental organizations or NGOs) to ensure that defending human rights in Canada is respected and supported. This includes needed reform of income tax legislation now limiting the ability of charitable groups to pursue advocacy. (Sources: CBC News and joint statement by 14 non-govern-

mental groups, including Franciscans International. Ottawa, July 23, 2015.)

The role of concerned citizens and NGOs is crucial. My religious community, Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception, belongs to the North American Sisters of Charity Federation which engages an NGO representative at the UN. Advocating with others, she raises awareness about global concerns, inspiring federation sisters and their associates to respond actively and responsibly.

From Aug. 25 - 27 I participated in an international NGO conference at the UN in New York focusing on the role of civil society. During the UN's 70th anniversary year, the conference was organized by the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation. Sponsors included the permanent mission of Canada to the UN.

The conference theme was Honouring the Past, Recognizing the Present, Imagining the Future. In particular, the gathering emphasized greater inclusion of young people in NGO participation, decision-making and leadership. Presenters noted today's young people will be most affected by outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This fall Canadian Catholics have a unique opportunity and responsibility to advance the intent of the international goals while responding to church teach-

ing. The Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace is launching a new campaign called Create a Climate of Change. It focuses on countries in extreme poverty in the Global South, recognizing those least responsible for climate change suffer its gravest consequences.

The campaign also asks

Canada to do more to reduce the world's carbon emissions. It encourages the Canadian government to adopt a fair and binding agreement at the UN climate change conference in Paris in December ([www.devp.org](http://www.devp.org)).

With an imminent federal election, we're called to deeper

awareness of intertwined social, economic and ecological concerns locally, nationally and globally. Our informed faith response flows from church teaching, including Catholic social teaching recently expanded by Pope Francis to embrace the full, interconnected breadth of God's creation.



Yukiko Sudo

**UN CONFERENCE — In August Roma De Robertis, SCIC, participated in an international NGO conference at the UN in New York with the theme Honouring the Past, Recognizing the Present, Imagining the Future.**

## Larson farm in Manitoba is grounded in Benedictine tradition

By Paul Paproski, OSB

Inspired by the Rule of St. Benedict and the Catholic Worker Movement, St. Peter's Abbey Benedictine Oblates Craig and Carol Larson manage The Parkland Worker at their home in Swan River, Man. The Parkland Worker is a Catholic Worker Farm grounded in the Benedictine tradition, according to Craig Larson.

"We follow a structured regimen of prayer and spiritual reading promoted by the Rule of St. Benedict, one of the oldest guides to Christian discipleship still in use in Christianity today," Craig said. The Benedictine tradition strives to fill the human need for inner and outer harmony through a life centred in prayer and work. Benedictine Oblates are laypersons who are attached to a Benedictine monastery and strive to enrich their baptism by living the Rule of Benedict at home and work.

The Larsons grow apples, hay and haskap (a nutritious fruit that tastes something like blueberries and raspberries) for both their own use and for giving away to others in need. They process and weave wool blankets and rugs that they both sell and give away. The weaving makes use of wool that might otherwise be thrown away and it provides an opportunity to do joyful work, he said.

The Catholic Worker movement was born on May 1, 1933, when journalist Dorothy Day, a Benedictine Oblate, and philosopher Peter Maurin, began publishing The Catholic Worker. The newspaper emphasized justice and mercy, and the dignity of every

person, Larson said. The Catholic Worker Movement promotes non-violence, voluntary poverty and works of mercy. There are hundreds of Catholic Worker Communities throughout the globe, he commented. The impoverished and oppressed are considered to be personal responsibilities for members of the Catholic Worker movement. Catholic Worker communities, for decades, have protested against injustice, war and all forms of violence.

"People have come to us innumerable times looking for feed for stock and are unable to pay. Christ teaches to give to those who ask. It's really that simple," Larson commented. Haskap is incredibly high in nutrition and is researched and promoted by the University of Saskatchewan. The Larsons want to share it with others.

"Some years ago we began wondering if it were possible to get this super-food (haskap) freely into the diets of people who may have the least access to it. We chuckle when we think of the ridiculousness of giving away the best food Canada has to produce to those who might feel they least deserve it. Dorothy Day used to say, 'We are not called to be successful. We are called to do the work of God.' And we do it in God's time, as God provides. We just get up and pray and go to our work and seek to adore God in the midst of it all. And that's more than enough; that's everything," he commented. The Larsons have lived very simply for their 37 years of marriage, always striving to provide for both their needs and the needs of others.



P. Paproski, OSB

**Craig Larson**

The Parkland Worker is another step in the spiritual journey for Larson who was raised in a pietistic offshoot of the Lutheran Church. He served as a pastor for 28 years in a variety of Protestant churches. When he was in his 40s, Larson realized that "at heart" he had always been Catholic. Larson read some books of Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk and spiritual author. Larson recalls Merton writing: "The clearest water is found at the source of the stream." He discovered Merton in 1976 and ever since then Merton has been an important resource for Larson's spiritual growth. Larson was fascinated with Merton's writings and saw parallels between Merton's background and his own life. Merton wrote nothing new, Larson remarked, but he did remind us of the vitality and life-giving elements of the church that are still available today.

The early Christian writers also made Larson realize, even more, his Catholicity. The historical community of mystics convinced him to begin to learn to let go of both his modern rationalizations of his faith and of his ego. Letting go enabled him to begin the process of deepening his awareness and love of God, and letting it grow infinitely beyond any capability to creatively plan ministry in the church in the post-modern world.

"I also cannot remember a time when I did not want to genuinely and compassionately help other people. What else is there to life? Building up my own ego? Definitely not! There is nothing that can be compared with the satisfaction of helping others," Larson remarked. He added that he was always inspired by the character and spirituality of so many Catholic clergy and lay missionaries who carried out their work with a spirit of genuine self-abandonment.

One of the blessings of Catholicism is the sacraments which Larson, now a Catholic, looks on, not as nouns, but as verbs which bring us into deeper contact with Christ who is not meant to be passive or hidden. Everyone is invited

to act as Christ and that might involve sacrifice. Sacraments have a definite and immediate impact on what Larson is called to do next.

The parish of St. Claire in San Clara, Man., has invited the former Protestant pastor to be its lay presider when the priest is away, and give reflections on the readings.

"I am happy to serve the church in this way. The substance of most of my reflections emerges from the work of St. John Chrysostom, who is considered perhaps the greatest preacher to have ever lived, and who is brilliant equally in his understanding of both the gospel as well as human behaviour, and this applies today. But in spite of this honour, I am a labourer at heart."

The Parkland Worker embraces the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, and the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12). The Larsons pay special attention to the social encyclicals issued by the church. They were very encouraged by the recent encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*. The Larsons welcome people of goodwill to join in their prayers and labour as they compassionately provide for the needs of others.

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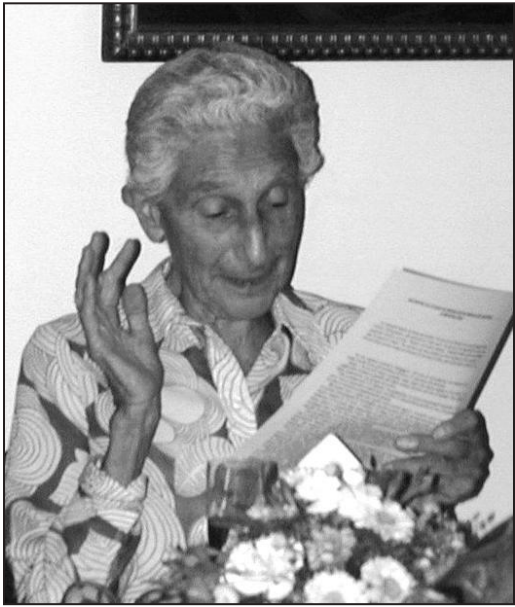
# What dialogue looks like: Jewish-Christian relations

Leading up to the October anniversary of the historic document *Nostra Aetate*, the *Prairie Messenger* is featuring “capsule biographies,” which are also posted on the “Catholic-Jewish Relations” section of the *Scarboro Interfaith website* ([http://www.scarboro-missions.ca/JC\\_Relations/dialogue\\_partners.php](http://www.scarboro-missions.ca/JC_Relations/dialogue_partners.php)). By October there will have been featured material on numerous individuals — Jews and Christians, men and women — who have played key roles in drafting the conciliar declaration, or who have led local, national or international efforts to put *Nostra Aetate*’s vision into practice, through various forms of dialogue, action and scholarship. This is the seventh in the series.

### Dr. Lea Scazzocchio Sestieri (1913 - )

(Largely translating the work of Dr. Marco Morselli in Italian: <http://moked.it/blog/2013/05/31/un-secolo-di-vita-con-lea-sestieri/>)

If there were an award given for the longest life lived in the field of Jewish-Christian relations, it seems quite likely that the prize would go to Dr. Lea Sestieri. Dr. Sestieri, one of Italy’s most respected and prolific scholars in the modern Jewish-Christian dialogue, turns 102 this year and, until very recently, was still very involved in the community, offering her reflections rooted in a long, rich life which has witnessed the birth — and the flowering — of that inter-religious friendship, in Italy and elsewhere.



Dr. Lea Scazzocchio Sestieri

A native of the Eternal City (Rome), Lea Sestieri was born on May 31, 1913, one of five children born to Sabatino Settimio and Margherita Toscano; one of her paternal uncles donated the building where the Italian Jewish Centre is today located. In 1931, she enrolled in the Arts and Philosophy faculty of Rome’s *La Sapienza* university, specializing in Semitic languages. One of her professors there, the noted biblical scholar Umberto Cassuto, was impressed by her passion and her intelligence, and recommended that she pursue studies at the Italian rabbinical college, as an auditor — thus becoming the first woman to study there (she also served as the rabbinical college’s librarian). Later in her life, Sestieri would say that much of her passion for dialogue came from seeds sown during her years at the rabbinical college.

A year after her graduation in 1935, Sestieri married Umberto Scazzocchio, who was serving at the time as the secretary to the Roman Jewish community.

Shortly afterward, the newly married couple moved to Eritrea

(in Ethiopia), where Scazzocchio worked as a lawyer and Sestieri taught in the local Italian college, as well as supervising the conservation of rare Ethiopic manuscripts in the national library. The year 1938 saw the birth of their son Claudio, but also the implementation of a series of racial laws which led to Sestieri’s dismissal, and meant that Scazzocchio was forced to work in secret, for “Aryan” colleagues. Sestieri’s brother Giuseppe had already emigrated to Uruguay, and was able to obtain a visa for the family, and so they fled westward, travelling through France and Spain, and into Portugal, where they finally managed to set sail for South America.

Rev. Giuseppe Ricciotti, one of Sestieri’s professors at *La Sapienza*, had written a letter of recommendation for her, and she was named to the chair of Greek literature at the University of Montevideo (Uruguay). During this period, she devoted her energy to a wide range of teaching and writing about biblical and religious topics in various South American institutions.

While in Uruguay, Sestieri founded and edited a magazine for the Sephardic Jewish community, called *Amanecer* (The Dawn), hosted a popular radio program about Italian news and culture, and was actively involved in leading the expatriate effort to fight Mussolini’s Fascism back in Italy. She then began a diplomatic career which would eventually take her to Argentina, Brazil and Switzerland. In each of those countries, she was actively involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue, offering lectures and teaching courses whenever possible. Between 1968 and 1970, Sestieri taught Greek language and literature at the Beersheva campus of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, as well as courses in Italian at the University of Tel Aviv, before moving with her husband to Locarno (Switzerland) for 10 years.

In 1979 she returned to her homeland of Italy where she was invited to serve as a professor of post-biblical Judaism at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome. She became editor of a series of books in Jewish thought and Jewish-Christian relations (called *Radici*, Italian for “roots”), was one of the founders of Rome’s *Amicizia ebraico-cristiana* (Jewish-Christian Friendship Association),

offered lectures at Rome’s SIDIC Centre (International Jewish-Christian Documentation Service), and took part in the important series of Jewish-Christian dialogues sponsored by Italy’s Camaldolese religious order. She has published numerous scholarly books and articles, including a number of articles in the *Quaderni* (Notebooks) of Turin’s Jewish-Christian Friendship Association.

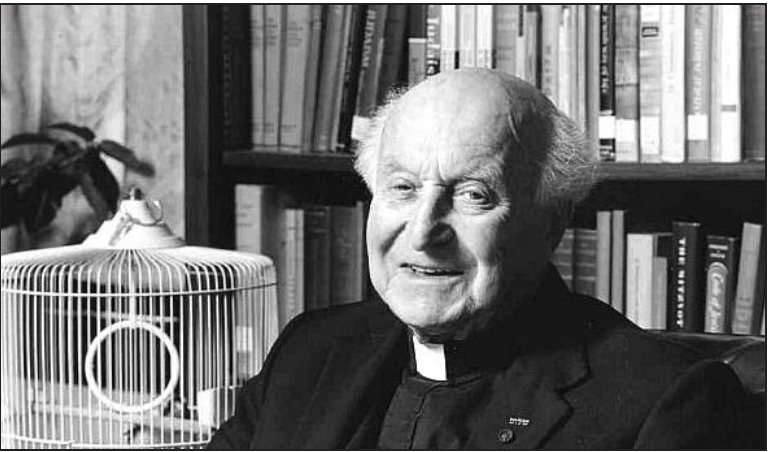
To mark Sestieri’s 90th birthday in 2003, the Jewish community of Rome organized an academic study day in her honour and, for her centenary in 2013, she was honoured and praised by leaders of Rome’s Jewish and Christian communities. Speaking of Pope John Paul II’s pilgrimage to Israel in the year 2000, Sestieri wrote: “My own point of view comes from dedicating much of my time — for nearly 50 years — to reconciliation between Jews and Christians, trying to help non-Jews understand who we are, and what the Judaism is that we live and practise. . . . As someone involved in that work, I sense that the footprints left by the pope’s trembling steps in Israel cannot now be erased, and are bound to become an intrinsic part of the church’s reconciliation with the (Jewish) people who provided its roots — roots without which it could never have been born.” And, as she said in a speech on her 90th birthday: “The most important thing of all is action.” Well into her second century now, Dr. Lea Sestieri continues to inspire another generation of young scholars and interfaith leaders with her writings, her advice and her example.

### Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher (1904 - 1993)

Today there are several dozen centres around the world dedicated to studying the relationship between Christians and Jews. But it was Msgr. John Oesterreicher who deserves the credit for establishing the first of them, creating a new type of institution to reflect a new and very different way of thinking about how Jews and Christians could — and should — relate to each other.

Johannes Maria Oesterreicher was born into a Jewish family on Feb. 2, 1904, in Mesto Libavá, in the region of Moravia, which is today part of the Czech Republic but which was, at that time, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He began medical studies at the University of Vienna, but his reading of Cardinal John Henry Newman, coupled with a lifelong fascination with the story of Jesus, led him to choose to become a Catholic. He studied theology at the universities of Vienna and Graz (Austria) and he was ordained to the priesthood in 1927, initially serving as a parish priest.

Newly ordained, he watched the rise of Nazism in Germany in the 1930s, and decided to do what he could to oppose Hitler’s ideology; he founded an institute, and a journal (*Die Erfüllung*, “The Fulfillment”), that countered Nazi anti-Jewish propaganda by demonstrating its irreconcilability with Christian teaching. When



Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher

the Nazis invaded Austria in 1938, he was considered an enemy of the state for his views, and was interrogated by the Nazis. He fled, initially to London and Paris (where he continued to broadcast anti-Nazi sermons) and, eventually, to New York, where he arrived toward the end of 1940. Working as a parish priest, he continued to write and publish, including a book exploring the life stories of seven Jewish philosophers who had converted to Christianity.

In 1953 he arrived at Seton Hall University (in South Orange, New Jersey), where he established the Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies, the first university centre of its kind, dedicated to a scholarly exploration of the links between Judaism and Christianity, and promoting friendship and dialogue between those two faiths.

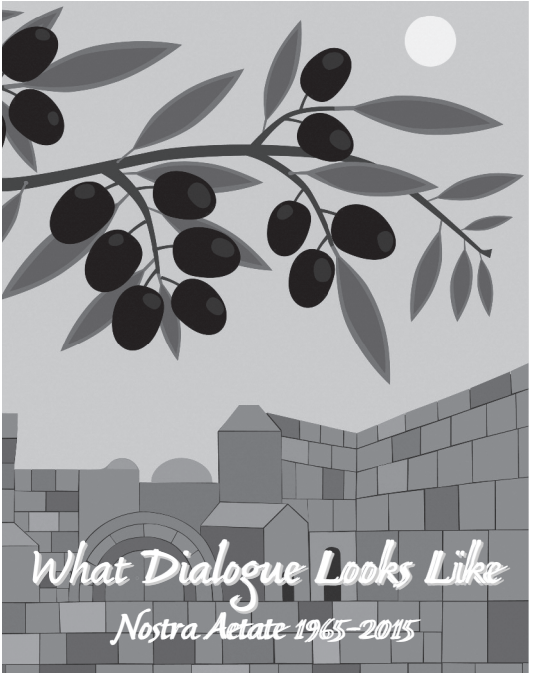
In the lead-up to the Second Vatican Council, Oesterreicher (named a monsignor in 1961) and a group of his colleagues submitted a memorandum to the Vatican, suggesting that a document on Judaism should be part of the discussions at the upcoming council. Together with similar requests from several other institutions of higher learning, that memorandum contributed to Pope John XXIII’s decision to include a document on the Jews as part of the conciliar agenda. Oesterreicher was formally asked to be part of the team that would draft the document.

Oesterreicher, who had fought so passionately against Nazi anti-Semitism, had a great sensitivity for the Jewish people, to whom he still considered himself linked by bonds of blood and affection. Oesterreicher brought both his own personal history, and his scholarly background, to the discussion, and to the drafting of a document that would eventually become the declaration *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time), on the Catholic Church’s relationship to non-Christian religions. Many historians suggest that he is largely responsible for its fourth and longest chapter, which is devoted to Judaism, and which developed theological themes that

Oesterreicher had been discussing with colleagues for a number of years.

Following the Council, Oesterreicher continued his work in Jewish-Christian dialogue, as a consultant to the Vatican’s Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (until 1968) and to the American Catholic bishops’ Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations. He lectured widely on related topics, edited an influential series of studies called *The Bridge*, and published a number of books, including *The Israel of God*; *On the Old Testament Roots of the Church’s Faith* (1963), *Brothers in Hope* (1970), *The Rediscovery of Judaism*; *A Re-examination of the Conciliar Statement on the Jews* (1971), and *The New Encounter Between Christians and Jews* (1986). Also in 1986, transcriptions of some of his wartime anti-Nazi messages were published as *Wider die Tyrannei des Rassenwahns* (Against the Tyranny of Race).

In 1975, Oesterreicher established the Graduate Department of Judaeo-Christian Studies at



Seton Hall, dedicated to fostering better understanding of the Jewish tradition on the part of Christians, and appreciating Judaism as a living, dynamic religion. Msgr. John Oesterreicher, a pioneer who had devoted his entire life to improving relations between Jews and Christians, died at the age of 89, on April 18, 1993 — only a few months before the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the State of Israel. The bulk of his papers are today part of the Monsignor Field Archives at Seton Hall.



# Holding tension: foster inquiry rather than judgment

By Marie-Louise  
Ternier-Gommers

It's not every day that I can say I know someone in the "higher ups." But now it has happened. As co-ordinator for an ecumenical network of women in ministry, I have the great pleasure of knowing a wide array of incredible, faith-filled and gifted women serving Christ and his gospel in various churches and ministries. Often I feel like sitting at their feet learning, soaking in their wisdom and beauty. One of these women, a pastor in rural Saskatchewan, has just been elected as the new Moderator of The United Church of Canada. I've had the privilege of working with Rev. Jordan Cantwell on a few ecumenical projects and have been impressed with her personality, her integrity and her giftedness.

I dare say that Jordan and I take a mutual liking to one another as women of faith and colleagues in ministry. There is, however, one area of Jordan's life that I genuine-

ly struggle with, and that is her marriage to another woman. It is not that I dislike gay people, but I sincerely struggle to understand the concept of same-sex marriage from its theological, anthropological and biblical perspectives. I truly do not know what I seem unable to grasp; moreover, I find very few circles in which respectful discourse on the subject is possible without the smugness of the Christian right or me being labelled homophobic by the same-sex left, both sides at times lacking humility and respect.

Various parts of the world are clearly choosing to move same-sex marriage into the cultural and social mainstream. However, the Christian churches remain divided over the questions this rising tide is raising, or even resist wading into the questions, which in turn creates an insidious kind of dishonesty and shadow-world. What gives me hope that we can engage in honest and respectful conversations, however, are people like Jordan.

In a recent media interview Jordan is quoted as saying: *One of the things I bring that has been affirmed in me is an ability to hear diverse voices and hold them together and hold them with respect. There is a lot of diversity in our church and there's a lot of diversity in our world. And I try to bring curiosity before judgment, into situations where there's deep disagreement . . . I actually find that often, underneath what looks like really disparate views are some shared concerns.* — Rev. Jordan

Cantwell in The Star Phoenix, Aug. 14, 2015.

Sometimes we speak of someone as being "generative." Such a person constantly generates life and energy as opposed to draining it. When applying this to the spiritual and ecclesial realms, we can ask what makes someone mature in the areas of faith and church. It is precisely this kind of generativity that I see in Jordan's personality and ministry. A mature believer creates spiritual energy rather than diminishes it, even in situations of disagreement and conflict.

Living generatively, of course, is not easy, especially in painful or conflictual situations. We do not live in the best of all possible universes. This is true in families, communities, and churches. We are forever caught in situations less than ideal, full of tension and fraught with potential for every kind of strife and conflict, self-pity and bitterness.

What are we to do when this happens? Spontaneously we are tempted in one of two directions: fight or flight. To run away and distance ourselves from the tension — "This isn't worth it!" Or to stay, but grow bitter and resentful and become, ourselves, a centre of anger and tension while regarding anyone disagreeing with us as the enemy. Neither of these is particularly generative.

There is, however, a "third" way, and that is to help carry that situation and transform it, or as Jordan put it in the above quote, *"to hear diverse voices and hold*

*them together and hold them with respect.*" In this third way we neither flee nor grow bitter, nor turn those who disagree with us into enemies of the worst kind.

Would that we could learn to stand together in the tension and hold it, just like Mary did under the cross of Jesus — neither fleeing, nor bitter, nor weak. The gospels tell us that, as Jesus was being crucified, Mary stood under the cross. What was she doing there? Overtly, it would seem, very little. She was not trying to stop the crucifixion, protest it, or even defend her son's innocence. She did not, it appears, say anything at all; she just remained standing. That was significant. Standing, for the Hebrews, was a position of strength. Mary did not collapse under the cross in weakness; neither, it would seem, was she bitter.

So what was she doing? I'd like to think that, under the cross, Mary was helping to hold, carry and transform the tension, bitterness, anger and darkness of that moment. Unlike the crowd, caught up in spontaneous emotion, she did not give back in kind — anger for anger, hatred for hatred, bitterness for bitterness, an eye for an eye, unfairness for unfairness. Rather, like a water filter that purifies bad water by taking out and holding within itself the impurities, and then giving back only the pure water, she held the anger and hatred and gave back only graciousness and love.

Real transformation in any relationship — friendship, marriage,

family, church, community — takes place only when we remain standing in the situation, holding within ourselves the injustice and bitterness, the misunderstanding and condemnation, not giving back in kind, but instead giving back graciousness, blessing, and love. That, by the way, is exactly what Jesus did on the cross: return mercy for murder, forgiveness for violence.

Would that we all, for and against same-sex marriage, learn this posture in our dealings with one another. I have a long way to go, but I certainly want to be such a person, especially with those who make choices, in any life situation, that I find challenging. I want to foster a posture of curiosity and inquiry rather than resorting to judgment and condemnation. Love too is an orientation, the foundational orientation: God is love, and those who live in love, live in God (1 John 4:16). Such is truth — a relationship of love: *"Truth is a relationship. As such, each one of us receives the truth and expresses it from within, that is to say, according to one's own circumstances, culture, and situation in life"* — Pope Francis.

So Jordan, my friend now in the "higher ups," welcome to the new ministry our gracious and loving God has entrusted to you. May that lovely Divine Spirit continue to stir your passion, and may you, like Solomon, be granted "an understanding mind, the ability to discern good from evil, and wisdom to see God in the face of your enemies" (see 1 Kings 3:3-14).

*Ternier-Gommers, wife, mother and grandmother, is a retreat leader and spiritual director, freelance writer and author of two books. She has worked in diocesan and parish ministry, in ecumenical dialogues and ministry, and co-ordinates an ecumenical network of women in ministry. Visit her website at [www.prairie-encounters.ca](http://www.prairie-encounters.ca) and her blog at <https://graceatsixty.wordpress.com>*

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# Where there are humans, there are always mice

## Around the Kitchen Table

Donald Ward



Of *Mice and Men* is a famous novel by John Steinbeck. It comes from two lines in an equally famous poem by Robert Burns: *To a Mouse, on Turning Her Up in Her Nest with the Plough*. Legend has it that the poet was ploughing a field when he turned up the mouse’s nest and spontaneously uttered the poem with the plough still in his hands. The lines in question are: “The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men / Gang aft agley,” which can be paraphrased as “The best-laid plans of mice and men / Often go awry.”

The lines, or parts of them, often turn up in literature, whether as titles or as phrases in the text. Sidney Sheldon’s 1997 novel, *The Best Laid Plans*, takes its title from them, as does a novel of the same name by the Canadian author Terry Fallis. I ran across the phrase recently in another novel, and I remember reading it, sometimes misquoted, in other books.

Burns’s poem has become part of the culture, so much so that people quote it without knowing its source. This is true of a great deal of literature, of course, but *To a Mouse* strikes a particular chord in the human heart, perhaps because the mouse is so ubiqui-

tous. Wherever there are humans, there are mice.

I have experience of this. When my family lived on an acreage we routinely shared the premises with a gang of mice. We trapped them and poisoned them, but others showed up as quickly as we could eradicate their kinfolk. I suppose they thought they knew a good thing when they saw it: warmth and shelter and an endless supply of free food for no outlay. They weren’t bright enough to realize that trespassing on human property meant death.

More recently, we were sharing our house with a pair of mice who somehow gained entrance while we weren’t looking. I wouldn’t mind so much — indeed, I probably wouldn’t know they were there — if they weren’t such filthy creatures. The mouse is small and furry and cute, and it often features as a character in children’s literature, but of all the animals on earth, it is practically unique in that it doesn’t mind fouling its own nest; wherever it goes, it leaves the signs of its occupation. It is a virtual poop machine.

My daughter Brigid, who has been sleeping in the basement,



Design Pics

**THE BEST-LAID PLANS** — A famous poem by Robert Burns, *To a Mouse, on Turning Her Up in Her Nest with the Plough*, has become part of the culture so much so that people quote it without knowing its source, writes Don Ward. “*To a Mouse* strikes a particular chord in the human heart, perhaps because the mouse is so ubiquitous. Wherever there are humans, there are mice.”

found mouse droppings everywhere, including her bedspread. She managed to banish the creatures from the basement, but the mice found a way onto the main floor, where they proceeded to decorate the space beneath the kitchen sink. We trapped one and there was great rejoicing, but it soon became apparent that it had not been alone.

Its partner was a stealthy animal and difficult to trap. Perhaps it was the equivalent of a genius in the mouse world. I have run across such mice before. One of them lived in a friend’s home for nine months, avoiding every trap and poison and becoming increasingly bold as it assailed the seasons. It would scurry down the

hallway while the family were in the living room watching TV, or across the kitchen floor while they were preparing a meal. When it finally stopped making daily appearances, the family didn’t know if it had died or if it had moved on to greater challenges.

At one point Brigid had set a total of five traps. She put peppermint oil in strategic places — mice dislike the aroma — and for several weeks the house smelled like a Lifesavers factory. But the droppings beneath the sink were daily renewed.

We had three separate types of trap, and one of them eventually caught our mouse. But it didn’t kill it. The trap in question had jaws but not a snapping mecha-

nism, and the mouse’s hind foot was caught in the jaws. Brigid, my gentle vegetarian daughter, was beside herself. “It had little elbows,” she said, “and tiny hands,” and of course the poor creature was frantic.

Though she had been adamant in her determination to get rid of the animal, she couldn’t bring herself to kill it. She compromised by setting it free in the alley. It looked right at her, she said, perhaps in gratitude, and sat taking stock of the world for a while before scurrying away.

Whether it finds its way back to the house remains to be seen. For the moment, we are a mouse-free zone. But, as they say, the best-laid plans of mice and men. . . .

## Mother’s crocheted gift of love has deep meaning for daughter

By Alma Barkman

“I’ve been crocheting something special for you,” Mom said as we drove along the rural highway that sunny September day. “Remind me to give it to you when we get there.”

Ever since Dad died, she had busied herself by crocheting.

“So what have you made this time?” I asked as we left the main highway and turned south along the gravel road. “Oh, you’ll see,” was all she said.

Mom had been visiting me in the city and we were driving back to the big old farmhouse she still called home. On either side of the road, combines were gobbling up the last of the prairie wheat crops. When I opened the car window a crack, the familiar smell of grain dust drifted in on the autumn air.

We were now passing through the little village where I’d gone to school. A mile west and the old home place came into view. It seemed so withdrawn now, sitting quietly under the tall elm trees that shaded it. I pulled the car to a stop beside the clump of basswoods and opened the trunk to get Mom’s suitcase.

“The house always gets so stuffy when it’s been closed up for a few days,” Mom said as we entered. “Leave the door open.”

She tugged at the pull chain of a light bulb and set about making a fire in the kitchen stove. I watched her light a match and hold it to the crumpled newspaper. Before long a crackling fire chased away the autumn chill. “Would you like a

cup of tea before you drive back to the city?” Mom asked.

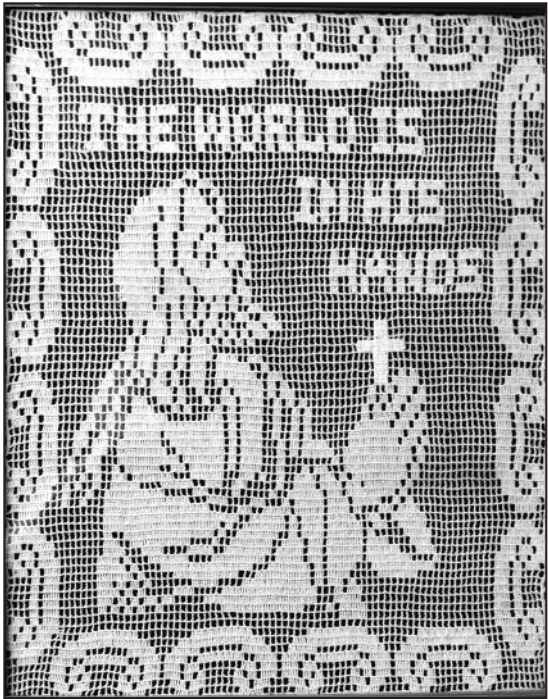
She took down her Brown Betty teapot from the top of the McClary wood stove while I went out to pump some fresh water.

“Oh yes! Before I forget I must get that piece of crocheting I did for you,” she said as we waited for the tea kettle to whistle. Returning from a back room, she began to unroll a large piece of blue tissue paper on the dining room table. “Don’t tell me!” she suddenly exclaimed.

“What’s wrong?” I asked, hearing the deep disappointment in her voice.

“I put so much work into this and now look!” She pointed to the tiny puncture marks in the paper. “All that work and I bet a miserable little mouse ruined it all while I was gone!”

She quickly finished unrolling the blue tissue



A. Barkman

**TWICE TREASURED** — A cross stitched in where a mouse nibbled at a crocheted picture makes a gift from Alma Barkman’s mother even more meaningful.

*Barkman is a freelance writer who lives in Winnipeg (almabarkman.com).*

paper. Spread out on it was a large piece of filet crochet, a type that is made up of tiny little squares, some open, some filled in.

“It needs to be framed against a dark background to make it stand out, but can you tell who it is?”

By looking carefully, I could see a picture of Christ, his hands folded in prayer. Above him were the words, “The world is in his hands.”

I looked at the picture again, trying to imagine how long it had taken her.

As Mom went to the kitchen to steep the tea I noticed her wipe away a tear with the corner of her bib apron. “I should have known better than to store it away where a mouse might find it.”

“I don’t see any damage,” I said hopefully.

“Look again.” Her hunch was right. Closer inspection revealed several cut threads, right at the tip of Christ’s fingers.

We sat in silence for awhile, drinking our tea, when suddenly I had an idea. Her eyes brightened as I shared it with her.

We visited a bit more and before I left she said, “I’ll get right busy on that little piece of crocheting.”

A few days later the postman delivered a parcel. When I opened it, there was the familiar blue tissue paper protecting the picture of Christ. Pinned to a note in my

mother’s handwriting was a tiny crocheted cross. “Your eyes would be better than mine to do the rest,” was all it said.

That evening, using a needle and white thread, I carefully placed the tiny cross in Christ’s hands, stitching so as to mend and cover the broken threads. I was pleased with the results. Not only was the repair almost unnoticeable, the picture now had double the meaning — a reminder of both the great sacrifice Christ made on the cross *as well as* his intercessory prayers on our behalf. Just as Mom had suggested, I framed the piece of crocheting over a dark background so the image would stand out. She was delighted. Instead of being ruined, her picture had been restored.

Mom has long since passed on, and today, when visitors pause to admire the picture she crocheted, they never surmise the damage that was once inflicted by a hungry little mouse. I tell them about it only because it represents that deeper story of how the cross has reconnected the broken threads of my own life. Granted, there are still those little doubts that sometimes nibble away at my faith in God, especially when I view all the damage occurring in the social fabric of our country. But when I look at Mom’s picture, I still believe, as she did, that “the world is in his hands.”



## Knights aid to Middle East

At its supreme convention in Philadelphia in early August, the Knights of Columbus announced a new initiative to help persecuted religious communities in the Middle East. Recently, they announced details of their aid. The Knights are financing a one-month’s supply of food for more than 13,500 families from Mosul and Nineveh who fled to the Erbil area in Kurdistan.

Chaldean Archbishop Bashir Matti Warda of Erbil was one of the guests at the convention. Providentially, he and I were in the same shuttle from the airport to the convention Aug. 3. Another guest at the convention was Melkite Archbishop Jean-Clement Jeanbart of Aleppo, Syria. Both spoke movingly of the drastic conditions their people are facing today.

In his remarks, Jeanbart blamed the current persecution on the wars in the region. “There was no per-

secution before the war,” he said. He suggested the backing of revolutionary regimes “is giving money and weapons to the people who are slaughtering us and raping our women.”

Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson told the delegates that 80 per cent of the religious persecution in the world is directed at Christians and a terrible microcosm of this is the persecutions in Syria and Iraq. “In Iraq, an estimated 125,000 Christians have been driven from Mosul and its surrounding area,” he said. “In Syria, an estimated 700,000 Christians have been displaced.”

To date, Anderson said, the Knights have given \$3 million toward humanitarian assistance for Christians and other religious minorities in the Middle East. The Knights pledged an additional \$1 million, and invited others to contribute to their fund.

The food packages for the 13,500 families will contain rice, sugar, cooking oil, tomato sauce, beans,

wheat, pasta, cheese, fish, meat and tea.

At the same time, the Knights of Columbus will begin airing a TV commercial that features an Iraqi priest who now runs a refugee camp near Erbil, and who previously was kidnapped and tortured by extremists. The commercial can be viewed at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHegSk2omdE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHegSk2omdE).

Anyone wishing to assist with the relief efforts can donate by visiting [www.christiansatrisk.org](http://www.christiansatrisk.org) or by sending your cheque or money order payable to Knights of Columbus Charities at PO Box 1966, New Haven, CT 06509-1966. The memo portion should indicate that the cheque is for Christian Refugee Relief.

Warda said the families fleeing to Erbil live in tents, in schools, hospitals and churches. With the winter season just around the corner, their conditions will continue to deteriorate. Some help is on the way — but it’s only a start. — PWN

# Political leaders are saying nuthin’ about important issues today

By Bishop Fred Henry, Calgary

Despite the great recent excitement about the resurgence and success of the Toronto Blue Jays, I want to focus on and apply something once said by Casey Stengel.

Stengel was a longtime major league New York Yankee (and Mets) Hall of Fame baseball manager whose unique way with the English language became known as “Stengelese.” He once said, “I’ve always heard that it couldn’t be done, but sometimes it don’t always work.” That’s typical Stengelese.

Casey held a position on the board of directors for a California bank. According to a story that originally appeared in the Wall Street Journal, Casey described his duties this way: “There ain’t nuthin’ to it. You go into the fancy meeting room and you just sit there and never open your yap. As long as you don’t say nuthin’ they don’t know whether you’re smart or dumb.”

Stephen Harper, Justin Trudeau and Thomas Mulcair are saying “nuthin” about many of the issues that Canadians are debating and trying to figure out how to address. Have they not heard that “man does not live on bread alone”? Are they smart or dumb?

### 1. Tax cuts/credits

Conservative promise: A permanent home renovation and tax credits for service clubs. Comment: what if you don’t have a house or can’t afford a membership or don’t fit socially?

Liberal promise: Tax cuts on middle class incomes. Specifically, drop the federal income tax to 20.5 per cent for Canadians earning between \$44,700 and \$89,000. Comment: what about those who don’t even make \$44,700?

NDP promise: Innovative tax credit to defray the cost of machinery and equipment. Comment: what about those who don’t have a job, any job training incentives?

Although there is no official measure of poverty in Canada, and Scripture reminds us that you will always have the poor with you, why are we not doing more to eliminate poverty? This is not a blue, red, orange or green issue. However, it is time for prospective leaders to lead.

Too many Canadians have a very low income. I don’t know how people can live in dignity with our low minimum wages across our country and yet every attempt to hike it, even marginally, meets enormous resistance.

The Pay-Day Loan business is

thriving but cutting off the oxygen supply of the poor.

It is encouraging to hear of extra money being promised for Aboriginal education, child care and family support but what about recent immigrants, the sick, those with disabilities and seniors?

Many Canadians don’t have enough to eat and homelessness is widespread. Why are child poverty numbers so high in Canada, in double digits, and higher than some other economically advanced countries?

### 2. Physician-assisted suicide/euthanasia

The Supreme Court of Canada struck down S.14 and S.241b of the Criminal Code. It also created a new interpretation for Section 7 — “right to life” — of the Charter, and it used ambiguous language in its decision. I share the opinion of many that the Supreme Court decision was irresponsible and dangerous. The Supreme Court held the decision for 12 months. Therefore, the current law is in place until Feb. 5, 2016. What’s going to happen then? Hello, is anybody there?

The clock is ticking. Canada faces a decision of historic importance and potentially momentous change. Whether we support or

oppose a lethal injection option, we need to talk and hear what our leaders propose.

What are they prepared to do to increase access and provide quality palliative and hospice care?

What do they think about the protection of the conscience right of health care workers?

The establishment of a panel, prior to the dissolution of parliament, is not enough. Why are our prospective leaders so mute? Is there some kind of agreement or conspiracy not to raise this issue?

### 3. Refugees

For the past several weeks we have seen thousands of refugees flee the terror and violent life in

Libya, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. Most are flowing into overcrowded humanitarian camps and seeking entry, one way or another, into Europe.

What should we be doing to alleviate the suffering? Canadians have a great track record re refugees and, although we are trying to find room for refugees, the process is just too slow.

Canada has promised to take in another 10,000 Syrians over the next three years. Terrific! Should Canada accept more refugees? What can be done to speed up the process?

I would hope that before we vote, our leaders will say “sumthin”.

## Supreme Court leads us to the wrong ethical garden

By Sylvain Lavoie

It is ironic that the decision by Canada’s Supreme Court judges to allow physician-assisted suicide was announced not that long before spring, a time of planting, growth and new life.

Within that context, a garden can serve as a metaphor to explore the ethical implications of the Supreme Court decision and physician-assisted suicide.

In the biblical Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve walked in an intimate, loving relationship with God in the cool of the evening. However, they succumbed to the temptation to do their own stubborn self-will and to decide for themselves what was right and wrong. Their tragic actions shattered that intimate relationship with their creator and introduced the reality of human suffering into the world.

At the other end of the spectrum is another biblical garden — the garden of Gethsemane. Here, regardless of the cost to him, Jesus submitted his will to the Father, sweat blood, and stayed faithful to his commitment to reveal to the world the depth of the Father’s love.

From the time that Jesus got off his knees in that garden, to the time he died on the cross some 18 hours later, Jesus did not do any-

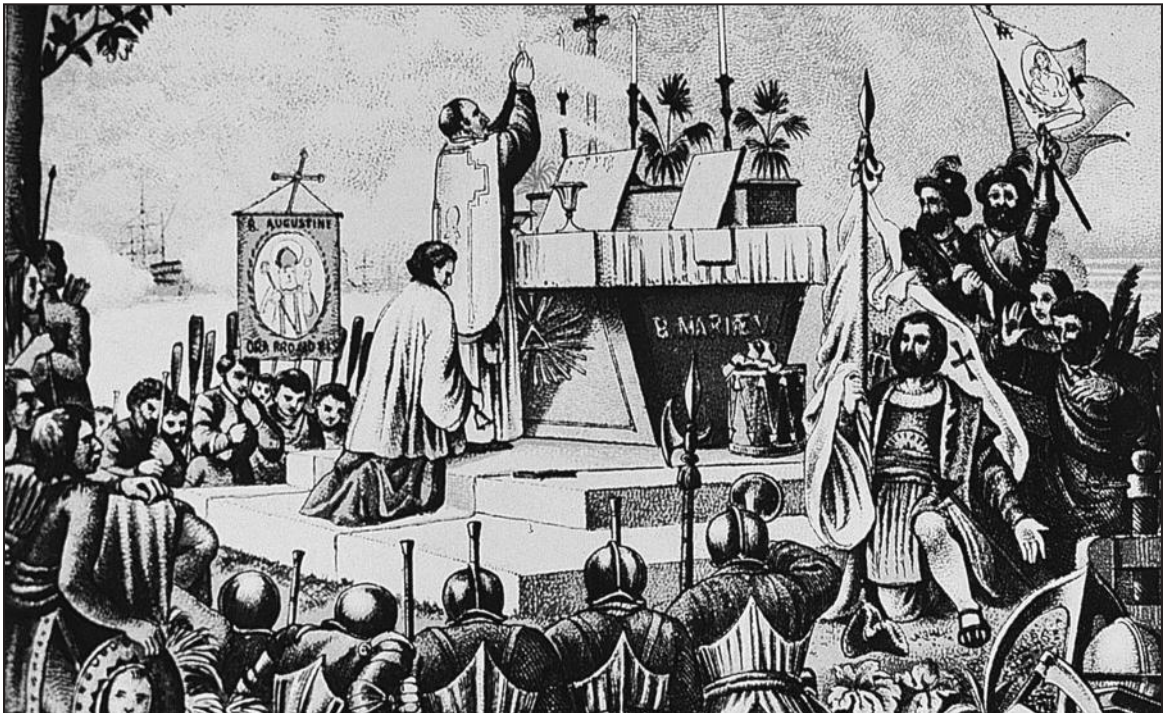
thing — everything was done to him. That was his *passio* (being done unto). Yet during that short time he did more to redeem the world than during all his amazing ministry of teaching, healing and even raising the dead back to life.

A key element of his *passion* was to give meaning to human suffering. To accept some suffering as he did, without resentment or bitterness, is to be redemptive ourselves and to actually live in the reign of God. There are some lessons in life that we learn only through human suffering. A life that is too easy leaves us superficial. It is suffering, and how we go through it, that deepens our compassion and shapes our character.

Our lives are marked by three stages: first, a time of asking essential questions about career, vocation, location, lifestyle, etc.; second, a time of generativity, giving our lives away once we are settled in a career; and finally, a time of radical passivity, giving our deaths away. Unless our lives are cut short by an accident, this is an important stage that involves dying in a way that will be a blessing to all who know us. How we die is as important as how we lived!

When Jesus died on the cross, blood and water (eternal life) flowed from his side. When we accept some redemptive suffering as he did, without bitterness or resentment, blood and water will flow from our casket as people bid farewell to us at our wake and

— SPIRITUALITY, page 19



‘THE FIRST MASS’ DEPICTED IN OIL PAINTING — The Diocese of St. Augustine will join the city of St. Augustine, Florida, in celebrating the 450th anniversary of the first permanent settlement of European origin in what became the continental United States. A Mass of Thanksgiving was celebrated Sept. 8. An oil painting depicting The First Mass in 1565 in St. Augustine previously hung in the city’s cathedral prior to a fire in 1887. In 2014 Notre-Dame-de-Quebec church in Quebec City marked the 350th anniversary of the foundation of the first parish in North America outside of the Spanish colonies — a century after the settlement in St. Augustine.



# Pope challenges Canada on justice

The CCCB Commission for Justice and Peace has released a new resource entitled: *A Church Seeking Justice: The Challenge of Pope Francis to the Church in Canada*. Pope Francis has spoken with great frequency and passion about justice issues. There is a temptation to say that much of what he has spoken about doesn't apply to us here in Canada.

But the CCCB's Justice and Peace Commission begs to differ. *A Church Seeking Justice* lays down some initial principles which have guided Pope Francis's social teaching, then explores his teaching in three areas: human dignity and labour; war and peace; and economics. In each of these areas, Pope Francis extends a strong challenge to us in Canada.

The full document is available in English and French at: <http://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/media-room/4268-a-church-seeking-justice-the-challenge-of-pope-francis-to-the-church-in-canada>. Included in the text are a series of text boxes which focus on the Canadian context and draw attention to situations of injustice and inequality.

Here is an excerpt from the document:

1. A few days after the conclave that saw him elected as Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis met with the thousands of journalists who had gathered in Rome and told them the story of his choice of the name Francis. He related how he was seated next to his good friend Cardinal Claudio Hummes in the Sistine Chapel as the votes were being tallied, and when the votes reached two thirds, Cardinal Hummes embraced him and said: "Don't forget the poor!"

Pope Francis related: "those words came to me: the poor, the poor. Then, right away, thinking of the poor, I thought of Francis of Assisi. Then I thought of all the

wars, as the votes were still being counted, till the end. Francis is also the man of peace. That is how the name came into my heart: Francis of Assisi . . . who gives us this spirit of peace, the poor man. . . . How I would like a church which is poor and for the poor!"

2. Pope Francis has more than lived up to Cardinal Hummes' word of advice. Not only has he not forgotten the poor, he has reminded the rest of us almost daily of God's undying concern for those trapped in poverty, prisoners, refugees, the unemployed, and for many others on the margins and peripheries of society. Our first pope from the global south, Pope Francis's way of

applying Gospel teaching to daily living was forged in the cauldron of the slums in Buenos Aires. There he cultivated a pastoral approach to people characterized by listening and presence, simplicity and solidarity, proclaiming a Gospel of joy, and walking with "el pueblo fiel de Dios," the faithful people of God, with their needs. . . .

4. (The) call for a direct, personal relationship with the poor, summons the church both to acts of charity and to work for justice, which Pope Francis understands as bound together, and not to be separated. He challenges our practice of giving by saying that the world needs something more from us than a few sporadic acts of generosity. He calls us to promote the integral development of the poor, working for access to education, health care, employment with a just wage and, on another level, working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty; yet without overlooking the small daily acts of solidarity which meet real needs of those we encounter. . . .

6. By pointing to real people and specific situations, Pope Francis highlights the urgency of the present moment, and invites an energetic and emotional response to counter the "globalization of indifference" which has developed. . . . The urgency is not only at a personal but at a structural level. Pope Francis speaks of social and economic trends and tendencies which, "unless effectively dealt with, are capable of setting off processes of dehumanization which would then be hard to reverse" (EG 51).



Gamache

## Brothers

Whatever you do,  
  
so can I,  
  
thinks little brother.  
  
I don't know  
  
what will happen  
  
when school starts.

By Donna Gamache

# Immigrant shares his story with pope

Continued from page 1

The event was staged in anticipation of Pope Francis' Sept. 22 - 27 trip to the United States. Since the pope is visiting only Washington, New York and Philadelphia, the virtual town hall gave him a chance to speak with people in places he wouldn't be able to visit.

In McAllen, Pope Francis spoke with a 19-year-old man, who shared his experience as an immigrant. He told the pope that he is grateful to work and attend college so that he can help support his parents and siblings because of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

A woman from El Salvador, who was wearing an electronic monitoring device around her ankle, asked for a blessing for her toddler son, who has problems with his vision.

A young girl from El Salvador, who travelled 26 days with her mother to the United States, cried when remembering how she and her mother were subjected to threatening moments during the journey. She drew a large picture for Pope Francis that said, "Te

amo Papa" ("I love you Father") and showed it to him on camera.

Sister Norma Pimentel of the Missionaries of Jesus, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley, who started the respite centre, was introduced to the pope from her seat in the church.

The pope asked her to

approach the microphone so he could meet her. Pope Francis thanked her and the respite volunteers for their hard work.

"The pope loves me very much," Pimentel said. "Those words will stay with me forever. What a wonderful experience and affirmation for all that we do."

# Spirituality deals with pain

Continued from page 18

funeral. People will leave, sad that they had lost a loved one, but also energized and inspired by the way we both lived and died, especially giving our deaths away as a blessing to all.

One definition of addiction is the attempt to avoid legitimate suffering. Good spirituality is all about what we do with our pain. The temptation to short-circuit human suffering out of fear of a pain that we do not understand or value, is to cheat ourselves of the opportunity for deep and profound spiritual growth in faith and love for God,

for life, for others and for ourselves.

A much more positive approach to death and dying is to make the best palliative care for the dying possible — to do less than that is to renege on our responsibility as human beings to live life to the full and care for others, especially the most vulnerable.

The decision by the Supreme Court judges to allow physician-assisted may seem compassionate, but it is a false compassion that masks an underlying motive of convenience and unwillingness to accept some suffering in our lives.

That decision takes us to a garden, true enough, but it is the wrong garden.

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Cost: \$96/12 weeks or \$10 drop-in.

**Tai Chi Chih Joy Through Movement** — Donna Aldous.  
Friday, Sept. 25, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. OR Saturday, Sept. 26, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Cost: \$80, includes lunch; \$140, program, bed and breakfast.

**Spiritual Days — 12-Step Retreat for Men**  
Brad B. and Brian B. Friday, Sept. 25, 7 p.m. - Sunday, Sept. 27, 1 p.m.  
Cost: \$260, program, room and meals.

**The Book of Exodus** — Paul Fachel, OMI.  
Oct. 7, Nov. 4, Dec. 2; 10 a.m. - noon. \$15/session or \$20/nine sessions.  
With lunch \$25/session or \$210/nine sessions.

**A Day Away** — Gisele Bauche.  
Second Wednesday of the month: Oct. 14, Nov. 12, Dec. 9.

**Dialoguing with Pope Francis**  
Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers, MDiv. cand.  
Saturdays 9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Oct. 24: Synod on the Family —Voices on the Margins  
Nov. 21: *Laudato Si* — Why is it so hard to change?  
Dec. 13: Year of Mercy — Challenges and Opportunities  
\$60/day (includes lunch) or \$150 for all three days.

**Transitions: Journey of Transformation Through Grief and Loss** — Sarah Donnelly, MDiv.  
Thursday, Oct. 22, 7 p.m. - Sunday, Oct. 25, lunch. Cost: \$390 (live-in).

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# Stop anti-Christian persecution, pope pleads

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — “Do something to put a stop to the violence and oppression,” Pope Francis asked the international community after calling attention once again to the fate of persecuted Christians, especially in the Middle East.

After reciting the Angelus Aug. 30, Pope Francis told thousands of people in St. Peter’s Square that, the previous evening in Lebanon, martyred Syriac Bishop Flavien-Michel Malke was beatified.

“In the context of a tremendous persecution of Christians, he was an untiring defender of the rights of his people, exhorting all of them to remain firm in their faith,” the pope said.

“Today as well, in the Middle East and other parts of the world, Christians are persecuted,” the pope said. “May the beatification of this bishop and martyr fill them with consolation, courage and hope.”

Departing from his prepared text, Pope Francis told people in the square, “There are more mar-



CNS/Marko Djurica, Reuters

**MIGRANTS WALK TOWARD HUNGARY —** Migrants, hoping to cross into Hungary, walk along a railway track near the village of Horgos in Serbia, toward the border it shares with Hungary.

tyrs (today) than there were in the first centuries” of Christianity.

He prayed that the beatification would “also be a stimulus for legislators and those who govern so that religious freedom would be guaranteed everywhere. And I ask the international community to do something to put a stop to the vio-

## One smile from a family can warm coldest city: pope

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The smile and love of a family can light up the world, bringing warmth and hope to communities that have become cold, lifeless and depressed, Pope Francis said.

“No economic and political engineering is able to substitute this contribution from families,” he said Sept. 2 during his general audience talk in St. Peter’s Square.

Unlike the ancient city of Babel’s “skyscrapers without life,” he said, “the Spirit of God, on the other hand, makes deserts bloom.”

The pope’s catechesis on the family looked at the importance of Christian families living out their

faith and sharing it with others. By experiencing God’s love, families “are transformed, are ‘made full’ ” to overflowing with a sense of going outside themselves to embrace all people, especially those in need, as brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, he said.

Understanding what is real love and affection, which can never be bought or sold, “is the best inheritance” one can receive from one’s family, he said. The “grammar” of love is learned in the family, “otherwise it is quite difficult to learn.”

But people are asked to live their family life within God’s plan, he said, and in “obedience to the faith and in covenant with the Lord,” which protects families, “freeing them from selfishness,

safeguards them from breaking down, brings them to safety for a life that never dies.”

Families living in covenant with God “are called today to counter the desertification of communities in the modern city,” Pope Francis said.

Today’s cities have become barren places because of “a lack of love, a lack of smiles.” One can find plenty of entertainment, lots of things to do “to kill time, to have some laughs, but love is missing,” the pope said.

The father or mother who can smile despite being busy with work and family — theirs is the family that is “able to conquer this desertification of our cities; this is the victory of love of the family,” he said to applause.

“We must get out of the towers (of Babel) and vaults of the elite

in order to once again spend time in homes and places open to the multitudes, open to the love of the family,” Pope Francis said.

This “communion of charisms” of men and women living the sacrament of marriage or consecrated life “is destined to transform the church into a place fully familial for an encounter with God,” he said.

Families living out the Gospel and God’s love are “a blessing for the people: bringing hope back to the world,” he said. Their example and actions are able to do things thought to be “inconceivable.”

“Just one smile miraculously eked out of the desperation of an abandoned child, who starts a new life,” Pope Francis said, “explains the workings of God in the world to us better than a thousand theological treatises.”



CNS/Paul Haring

**POPE FRANCIS EMBRACES BOY —** Pope Francis embraces Simone Zanini, eight, while greeting the disabled during his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Sept. 2. The pope said the smile and love of a family can light up the world, bringing warmth and hope to communities that have become cold, lifeless and depressed.

“Life is a process of accumulation. We either accumulate the debt or the value, the regret or the equity.”

— Jim Rohn

## Ratzinger students discuss God-language

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Celebrating mass with his former doctoral students and a new generation of scholars of his work, retired Pope Benedict XVI focused his homily on the importance of finding “truth, love and goodness” in God.

Now 88, Pope Benedict has met annually since the 1970s with what is known as the Ratzinger Schülerkreis (Ratzinger Student Circle), which is made up of bishops and scholars who earned their doctorates under him in Germany.

The schülerkreis gathers for a week of theological discussions; the topic this year was “How to speak about God today” and was by Msgr. Tomas Halik, a Czech theologian and winner of the 2014 Templeton Prize.

The retired pope did not join his former students for the discussions in Castel Gandolfo, but spent

the morning with them Aug. 30 in the Vatican’s Teutonic College where the Joseph Ratzinger-Benedict XVI Roman Library will open to scholars in November.

In the day’s Gospel reading from St. Mark, Jesus says, “Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person; but the things that come out from within are what defile.”

According to a post on the Ratzinger Foundation website, Pope Benedict said he remembered that when the same Gospel was read three years ago at mass with the schülerkreis, Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schonborn of Vienna, one of the retired pope’s former students, had asked whether perhaps it is true that people also must take measures to purify themselves or protect themselves from what comes from outside.

The retired pope said the answer, found looking at the entire Gospel, would indicate that

people must take precautions to avoid “the many illnesses, even epidemics, which threaten us.”

However, “exterior hygiene” is not enough, he said, because it is “the epidemic of the heart” that leads to corruption and other attitudes “that make people think only of themselves and not of what is good.”

“What makes a person pure? What is the authentic source of purification? How does one achieve the hygiene of the heart,” Pope Benedict asked.

Jesus himself told the disciples that his word would make them pure, he said. “The Word is much more than words because it is through words that we encounter the Word, Jesus himself. And we encounter the Word also in those who reflect it, who show us the face of God and reflect his meekness, his humility of heart, his simplicity, his love, his sincerity.”

lence and oppression.”

The beatification liturgy for Malke was celebrated in Harissa, Lebanon, Aug. 29, the 100th anniversary of his death. Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan presided at the liturgy; Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes was present.

As the Ottoman Empire crumbled in the early 1900s, there were waves of violence and persecution against Christian minorities, especially the Armenians and Syrians. Malke was the Syriac Catholic bishop of Gazireh, which today is the city of Cizre, Turkey. Although advised to flee, the bishop stayed with his people and was arrested.

Amato said the bishop was told that if he converted to Islam, his life would be spared, but he refused and was beheaded.

In his homily, Younan pointed out that on Aug. 29 the Catholic Church commemorates the beheading of St. John the Baptist. Referring to the 1915 Armenian genocide and what is happening today, especially in Syria and Iraq, the patriarch asked, “Why?”

“The secret of suffering one does not understand. It accepts the spirit of Christ,” the patriarch said.

Last summer thousands of Christians in Mosul and the Ninevah Plain in Iraq, including nearly 40,000 Syriac Catholics, were driven out by Islamic State militants. The militants have posted multiple videos of beheadings.

Younan denounced the passivity of world powers “that boast defending freedoms and abandon to their fate the people” who took the risk of staying in their homelands.

He stressed that not only Syriac Catholics are under threat, but all the Christians of the East — Chaldean, Assyrians, Maronites, Melkites, Armenians and that “when the persecution is not physical it is moral.”

“Where is the conscience of the world?” he asked.