



Winnipeg synod

The faithful spoke and Archbishop Richard Gagnon listened as the synod for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg held the first in a series of listening sessions to address three questions.
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JOY

A new Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of formation was recently launched in the Diocese of Saskatoon.
— page 6

Mercy a challenge

"We need to learn the truth," said Archbishop Emeritus James Weisgerber, speaking of the historical treatment of Aboriginal people in Canada. Mercy is a challenge for everyone who claims to be a disciple of Christ, he said.
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Call of the Arctic

Canadians take pride in the mythology of the "True North," writes Gerald Schmitz, yet few have visited the Arctic Circle. This week he reflects on a July Arctic expedition.
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Sacred fire

While we don't often realize it, both the wise and the wicked feed off the same energy, and it's God's energy, writes Ron Rolheiser, OMI.
— page 10

Ukraine at war

With 10,000 dead in Ukraine's eastern Donbass region, Russian tanks and missile systems massing on the eastern border, two million internally displaced Ukrainians, Crimea already under Russian rule and the Ukrainian Black Sea fleet sunk or stolen, Rev. Peter Galadza is putting his trust in the politics of the beatitudes, writes Michael Swan.
— page 11

Port of Churchill

Recent events in northern Manitoba regarding the closure of the Port of Churchill should prove that, like highways, the fate of crucial rail lines should not be in the hands of private companies, writes Dean Harder.
— page 12

Benedictines offer refuge in a hectic world

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The world's Benedictines offer precious gifts by providing quality education, quiet refuge in a hectic world and loving hospitality to anyone in need, Pope Francis said.

At a time when the church is called to focus increasingly on the essential, Benedictine monks and nuns possess "a unique gift and a special responsibility — that of keeping alive spiritual oases where pastors and the faithful can draw from sources of divine mercy," the pope said.

The pope's remarks came in a speech Sept. 8 to abbots and conventual priors from 250 monasteries of Benedictine men from around the world as well as representatives of Benedictine women. They were in Rome to attend the Congress of Abbots Sept. 3 - 16 and to elect a new abbot primate to head the international confederation of monasteries Sept. 10. Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB, representing St. Peter's Abbey in Muenster, Sask., is in attendance.

In his remarks to the pope, outgoing Abbot Primate Notker Wolf highlighted some of the Bene-

dictine order's recent work: Many monasteries have been taking in migrants and refugees, offering them housing, employment and education; promising relationships have been formed with Buddhist monks and with Muslims; and around 160,000 students are enrolled worldwide in Benedictine educational institutions.

Pope Francis said the Benedictines' work in the formation and education of youth "is very much appreciated and highly qualified."

Thanks to their studies and experience of the Benedictine way of life, these students can become skillful experts in the values proposed by St. Benedict's rule, he said.

He praised the monks' efforts to live merciful and fraternal lives in their communities, which they do "through that industrious and eloquent silence that lets God speak in the deafening and distracted life of the world."

"Even though you live separate from the world, your seclusion is not sterile, rather it is an enrichment, not an obstacle to communion," he said, referring to his apostolic constitution, *Vultum Dei*



Courtesy of P. Novecosky, OSB

BENEDICTINE MEETINGS — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB, is seen at the Vatican Sept. 8 during a meeting with the heads of Benedictine monasteries from around the world. The Benedictines are meeting in Rome Sept. 3 - 16 to elect a new abbot primate.

Quaerere, on the contemplative life of women — a document that is also addressed "by extension to all monks," he told his audience.

The Benedictine charism of hospitality, he said, allows members to encounter people whose hearts are "lost and distant" and who may be living a moment of "great human

and spiritual poverty."

He urged them to not let the declining number of members in their monastic communities be a discouragement, but rather to be an impetus to hold onto "the zeal of your testimony" and the enthusiasm and courage needed to establish new communities.

"Your service to the church is very precious," Pope Francis said; "Even today there is a need for men and women who put nothing before the love of Christ," who receive daily nourishment from God's word, who celebrate the holy liturgy in a dignified manner and who work in harmony with creation.

Commission educates church about abuse

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Members of the pope's commission for child protection, including an abuse survivor, have been speaking with new bishops and major Vatican offices as part of a mandate to develop and educate the church about best practices.

Pope Francis also approved the establishment of a day of prayer for survivors of abuse, but decided it will be up to each nation's bishops' conference to decide

when the memorial should be held, according a press release Sept. 12 from the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

Members of the pontifical commission have spoken recently with officials at the Congregation

— UNIVERSAL, page 4

Anti-trafficking experts applaud decision

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — A 2015 anti-prostitution sting in Sydney, N.S., and a recent court decision upholding the release of the

names of alleged "johns," is applauded by anti-human-trafficking experts.

But there are concerns the landmark 2014 prostitution law that for the first time in Canadian history made the purchase of sex illegal and recognized that most prostitutes are victims exploited by pimps and human traffickers is not being evenly enforced.

"We know there is a lot of pressure from pro-prostitution groups and the sex industry to repeal the laws," said Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) policy analyst Julia Beazley. "But at this stage, the government has said only that they will be taking a good look at the legislation — something they are doing with several laws passed by the previous government."

Enforcement of the law depends on local police and Crown prosecutors, Beazley said. "Some jurisdictions have embraced the objectives and approach of the legislation and are enforcing it fully, as we're seeing in Cape Breton. But we're also starting to hear that some jurisdictions that had initially embraced the approach are now backing off, concerned that they

might end up with a bunch of cases on the books only to see the laws repealed."

"And still others have never enforced the purchasing provision, believing the laws wouldn't stand," she said. "This inconsistency was present even under the previous government, which had made its position very clear, but I think in the absence of clear direction from the current Attorney General of Canada, it's become even more of a concern."

But former MP Joy Smith, who played a leadership role in organizing the grassroots campaign to change Canada's prostitution law in 2014, warned of a "backlash" if the bill is repealed.

"A lot of these young girls who service these men are trafficked and they don't want to do it, they are controlled by traffickers," said Smith, who now works to combat human trafficking full time through the Joy Smith Foundation. "What about their shame?"

"The fact of the matter is we are in a new era in Canada: buying sex is against the law," she

— JUDGES, page 5



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

YEAR OF MERCY — Pope Francis greets Giuseppe Chiolo, 16, in St. Peter's Square during a Year of Mercy general audience at the Vatican Sept. 10. The pope administered the sacrament of confirmation to the young man, who is being treated in the oncology ward of a Florence hospital and had asked to meet the pope. "The love of God is boundless," he said. "Our whole life, although marked by the fragility of sin, is placed under the gaze of God who loves us," said Pope Francis.

Monastic life serves God, fires the imagination

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Though generally renown for Gregorian chant, curating libraries and offering quiet retreats, some Benedictine monks also brew beer, run farms or play electric guitar, like Abbot Primate Notker Wolf.

Ending his third and final term as leader of the confederation of Benedictine monasteries, the 76-year-old German monk also plays in a rock group, named Feedback, in his spare time, and performs classical and sacred music on flute.

A bestselling author, too, Abbot Wolf said he had seen his volume, *What Are We Waiting*

For? Heretical Thoughts on Germany, piled high next to a stack of Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*, at the Munich airport's newsstands.

It's not unusual to find monks pursuing such aesthetic or eclectic endeavours because they embrace creativity, he told Catholic News Service.

Having people from different backgrounds living, talking, working and praying together means "you are rather creative, I would say, in a monastery," he said.

But it also "shows that Christianity is at the roots of human culture," which means "it's so normal, so natural" that the Benedictine order's excellence in education, music, historical preservation or agriculture goes hand in hand with trying to live out the Gospel.

Committed to serving God and his creation, "Benedictines are close to nature," Abbot Wolf said.

For example, St. Ottilien Archabbey — his home monastery in Bavaria where he will return after living in Rome since 2000 as abbot primate and head of St. Anselm College — turns the manure from its 180 dairy cows into biogas, which they then sell to the local power company.

"We get more from selling energy than from selling our milk," he said.

There are some 250 monasteries of Benedictine men throughout the world, each one with its own culture, traditions and activities. The important thing, he said,

is that whatever the communities are doing, "we are doing it out of love for Christ."

At the Congress of Abbots Sept. 3 - 16, abbots and conventual priors from each of those monasteries were meeting at St. Anselm Abbey in Rome to elect a new abbot primate.

The abbot primate lives in Rome to serve as a liaison between the pope and the Benedictine monasteries, as well as directing St. Anselm Abbey, serving as chancellor of the Pontifical University of St. Anselm and running the residence where 120 monks from 40 nations live.

The abbot primate, he said, has no jurisdiction over other monasteries, which are all independent and follow their own traditions and cultures.

"I can't tell superiors, abbots what they can do," he said, but he attends their national meetings to help build unity and collaboration among the order's far-flung communities.

Abbot Wolf said the Rule of St. Benedict helps bring balance to one's life. While much of his work required lots of meetings and extensive travelling, "I know where I am rooted." Common prayer with his brothers, the eucharist and the liturgy are "my anchor," he said.

The strong contemplative nature of the Benedictine life doesn't mean the monks shut their eyes to the world's needs, he said.

"I think just to praise the Lord in church and see people dying"

without being moved to respond is not following the Gospel, he said. "We have to do something."

For today's Benedictine monks and nuns, St. Benedict's sixth-century rule means living out the Gospel together. It's a communal and constant team effort, he said, like a soccer or baseball squad would require, only here "you are training mutual love, training charity."

Community life is not easy, he said, but it is there "you can show you are a real Christian, to stand back and give the other the chance to live" in a generous, give and take of communal living.

Over the decades, he said he has seen a positive "change of mentality" in Benedictine communities, which suffered from what he called an "interpersonal crisis."

Monastic living was thought to entail fulfilling rules and regulations without taking care "of how the other person, your neighbour, is feeling," he said.

"But now they are taking care of themselves and the community" so they can still have "a sober community, but also a heartfelt living together."

This heartfelt hospitality also extends to everyone, he said.

When guests visit a monastery, he said, "they are also there looking for people with whom they can talk to about their life. They have a quiet place where they may discover again the sense of their life, come back to their roots and to eventually find their roots in God."



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

CREATIVE ENDEAVOURS — Pope Francis greets Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, superior of the Benedictine order, during a meeting with the heads of Benedictine monasteries from around the world at the Vatican Sept. 8.

Latin American coalition: mining causing damage

By Ezra Fieser

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (CNS) — Large-scale mining and extractive operations are failing to deliver economic benefits while causing environmental damage and human suffering throughout Latin America, said a coalition of church organizations and environmental groups.

The Churches and Mining Network, which includes Catholic bishops, priests and laypeople, leaders of Christian churches and environmentalists, said in a statement that governments, church leaders and civil society organizations need to find alternatives to so-called "mega-mining" operations.

"We are aware that defending Creation, in a predatory system whose highest purpose is profit and money, is an action that involves danger and the risk of death. But we are encouraged by the Gospel of Jesus, the encyclical *Laudato Si'*," and by the strength of the many communities affected by mining and other extractive industries," the network said in the statement Sept. 4, following a meeting in Colombia.

The 2015 encyclical said demand from richer developed countries was causing harm in the Global South, where the mining operations are carried out. "The export of raw materials to satisfy markets in the industrialized North has caused harm locally, as for example in mercury pollution in gold mining or sulphur dioxide pollution in copper mining," it said.

The network's statement, which was signed by roughly 50 members coming from at least 15 countries, comes amid heightening conflict between international mining companies and rural com-

munities, often populated by indigenous peoples.

A report released in June by the international non-governmental organization Global Witness found that 185 people were killed in such conflicts across the globe last year, the highest number on record. Nearly two of every three of those deaths occurred in Latin American countries, led by Brazil's 50 killings, according to the report.

On Sept. 1, Bolivia strengthened its control over mining operations after protests turned violent, resulting in the death of four workers and the South American country's deputy minister of the interior. Gold mining has been linked to a resurgence of malaria in Venezuela and environmental degradation of the rainforest in Peru.

"We are worried by the increase in criminalization and assassinations of those who are defending the land, like the case of our sister Berta Caceres, for whom we demand justice and call for a more just world for women, human rights activists and the victims of the extractives industry," the network said in its statement.

Caceres, a Honduran environmental activist and indigenous rights leader who won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in 2015 for her work in opposing a proposed hydroelectric dam, was shot dead in her home in March.

The Churches and Mining Network said governments have to do more to protect activists and that bishops, priests and laypeople should listen to the communities affected by mining.

"We call on the churches to take an active role in defence of our common home as this is a constitutive element of being Christian," the statement said.



50TH ANNIVERSARY — Honouring Star Trek's 50th anniversary, the Vatican newspaper said the overwhelmingly popular series gave the world a model of peace, tolerance and co-operation at a time of global tensions. The 50th anniversary of the original series premiered on Sept. 8, 1966, led by stars William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy and DeForest Kelley.

Vatican paper honours Star Trek on 50th

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Honouring Star Trek's 50th anniversary, the Vatican newspaper said the overwhelmingly popular series gave the world a model of peace, tolerance and co-operation at a time of global tensions.

The show — whose first episode aired Sept. 8, 1966 — began during the Cold War.

But "while builders of nuclear fallout shelters made buckets of money, especially in the United States, Star Trek proposed a true

model of co-operation," the article said.

Captain James Kirk and his faithful crew, it said, journeyed to distant galaxies and discovered new civilizations "in order to propose peaceful relations (built) on a foundation of equality."

Also significant and groundbreaking was the makeup of the crew of the starship Enterprise: an alien, an African-American woman and a Japanese man, it said.

"Today it might seem totally normal, but it's important to remember that America at the time

had recently emerged from a bloody war fought against Japan, too, and it was marked by deep racial tensions." It also struggled with tense "relations with countries beyond the Iron Curtain, far away just like Vulcan," the extraterrestrial planet and home of Mr. Spock — who was of mixed human-Vulcan descent.

The newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, said the show, which "marked an era," represents a "totally human star voyage in search of new ways of understanding one another. A voyage that is always needed."

Winnipeg synod begins with listening sessions

By James Buchok

WINNIPEG — The faithful spoke and Archbishop Richard Gagnon listened as the Synod for the Archdiocese of Winnipeg held the first in a series of listening sessions to address three questions: What do you appreciate about your church? What is your vision for your archdiocese? What should be your church’s priorities?

Among the positives were expressions of a church that celebrates ethnic diversity and collaboration. Among the challenges is the need for the church to reach outside itself, beyond its structures, to a commitment to build a just society through Gospel values.

There was much more said and heard at the 90-minute session at St. Paul’s High School Sept. 8, and there is much more to come at the nine additional listening sessions scheduled throughout the archdiocese until Nov. 5.

All are invited to express their opinion, including the baptized who are no longer active in the church and also, in the words of Gagnon, “those who do not know Jesus Christ.”

The sessions begin with a few minutes of silence to reflect on the three questions and, if one

chooses, to write brief responses on forms that are provided. The next 15 minutes are spent in group discussions, followed by the main part of the gathering, when all are invited to voice their feelings directly to Gagnon. The archbishop listens — and only listens — while others record what is said.

The spoken and written responses from the 10 sessions will lead to the next part of the synod, the Focus Commissions, which will identify main themes that emerge from the Listening Sessions and create reports to become working documents for the Synod General Sessions. The entire two-year synod plan can be seen in a slideshow on the Archdiocese of Winnipeg website; those who cannot attend a Listening Session can go to the website and respond online.

“The synod is like a funnel,” said Gagnon. “It’s wide on top, to hear what is in your hearts, and the thoughts are discerned downward to more specific initiatives and goals.” The archbishop admitted it is a bit overwhelming. “Who’s going to do all this?” he asked jokingly, then answered, “We are.”

“I kept thinking this is a holy moment,” Gagnon said. “It is a



James Buchok

SYNOD LISTENING SESSION — Winnipeg Archbishop Richard Gagnon (far left) listens at the first of a series of Listening Sessions in the first phase of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg Synod.

holy thing to express those thoughts that we have. I looked at each of your offerings as little gems of faith.”

The next Listening Sessions took place Sept. 13 at St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Winnipeg; and Sept. 14 at St. Augustine’s Parish, Brandon. Listening sessions are

also scheduled for Oct. 8, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Kateri Tekakwitha Parish, Winnipeg; Oct. 13, 7 p.m. at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Winnipeg; Oct. 15, 1 p.m. at St. Viator’s Parish, Dauphin; Oct. 18, at 10 a.m. at Waywayseecappo First Nation; Oct. 19, 7 p.m. at St. Paul

the Apostle Parish, Winnipeg; with youth and young adults, 9:30 a.m. Oct. 22 at St. Peter’s Parish, Winnipeg; and Nov. 5, 10 a.m. at Christ the King Parish, Stonewall.

A session will also be held at *Chez Nous/Our Place* drop-in centre in downtown Winnipeg at a date to be determined.

Joyful, reverent priest takes bishop’s seat in Kamloops celebration

By Agnieszka Krawczynski
The B. C. Catholic

KAMLOOPS, B.C. (CCN) — A Vietnamese priest stood before an altar in a dimly lit arena, head bowed, as he prayed during the solemn ceremony that would make him a bishop.

A sea of more than 2,000 people watched as Rev. Joseph Phuong Nguyen was ordained and accepted signs of his new role as a bishop: a ring, a crozier, a book of the Gospels.

When the sacred rite was over, Nguyen stepped up to the podium and broke into a smile.

“I wish to be taller a few inches,” he characteristically joked as

he adjusted a microphone in the Sandman Centre arena in Kamloops Aug. 25.

He then read aloud one of many congratulatory letters, cards, and text messages he’d received in the last few months. “Dear Father Joseph,” he said, citing a letter from a boy in Grade 3.

“I am so happy that the pope has named you Bishop of Kamloops. I always thought that only big men are chosen to be bishop. You give me hope that as little as I am, I can be a bishop, too.”

Thousands, including 130 priests, 17 bishops, and several deacons, were at least smiling then, too.

“I humbly acknowledge my shortness in everything,” Nguyen continued.

“I believe that I am called, I am appointed, not because I am capable or worthy. It is not about my qualities. It is about God’s mercy. Merciful God has given me the Diocese of Kamloops as a gift, a great and precious gift. I hope and pray that my life, my sacrifice, my service here, may become a gift for this diocese.”

Rev. Fred Weisbeck, the chancellor of the Diocese of Kamloops, toasted his new bishop during a celebratory banquet later that evening.

“The first gift we receive from our bishop is the gift of his

smile,” he said.

This reverent and joyful bishop has travelled a long way and through much hardship to get to the episcopal seat.

He fled Vietnam, his home country, in 1987 after being thrown in prison and labelled a “henchman of the Vatican” by communists. His first attempt to escape the country by boat failed, and he was forced ashore, imprisoned, and tortured.

He succeeded on his second attempt and ended up in a refugee camp in the Philippines, where he suffered a serious car accident and was hospitalized for three months. Then he moved to Canada, seeking to become a priest while navigating a completely foreign country and language.

“Today I begin a whole new part of my ministry,” he said after his ordination.

Nguyen is stepping in as the head of the Kamloops diocese after Bishop David Monroe, its shepherd since 2002, retired at age 75 this year.

“He has lived his vocation in extraordinary service as a servant leader. I am very deeply grateful,” Nguyen said, thanking his predecessor.

The ordination ceremony recalled Nguyen’s Vietnamese roots: choirs from St. Joseph’s Parish in Vancouver and St. Matthew’s Parish in Surrey sang hymns in his native language.

Young children dressed in traditional outfits, with candles and wreaths in their hands, also did a short, simple dance during the ceremony.

“Today our hearts are filled with gratitude as we welcome our brother, Joseph Phuong Nguyen, a Christian man from a faraway

land whose life has shown a willingness to follow the call of Christ with a heart of faith,” said Archbishop Richard Gagnon of Winnipeg during the homily.

Gagnon had been a priest in the Archdiocese of Vancouver for nine years when Nguyen was ordained a priest in 1992 and began serving in a parish alongside him.

“Our brother has proved himself to be a man of dedication and service,” testified the spiritual head of Winnipeg.

“I’ve known this first-hand myself, when we served together in St. Jude’s Parish in Vancouver. I saw our brother as a man of tremendous dedication and hard work, but also with a great sense of humour.”

He urged the new bishop to pray for and collaborate with fellow priests, religious, lay faithful, First Nations people, other Christians, and people of other faiths.

“Now he is called to leave his boat, once again, and go to a new place, a new shore, with a new ministry, new responsibilities and communities.”

While the people of Kamloops warmly welcomed their new bishop, those who had travelled from Vancouver to witness the event said they were sad to see him go.

“We were so blessed to have him,” said Theresa Lorenzana, a member of St. Andrew’s Parish, where the new bishop once served as pastor.

“He’s funny, and he’s really good with his parishioners,” added her sister, Kris Lorenzana. “He was a really good parish priest. He was encouraging all the young kids to join the church.”



B.C. Catholic/A. Krawczynski

NEW KAMLOOPS BISHOP — Bishop Joseph Phuong Nguyen of Kamloops celebrates mass right after he is ordained a bishop. The solemn ceremony was held at a large arena inside the Sandman Centre Aug. 25 and attracted more than 2,000 people.

Catholic board teams up with hockey legends

By Evan Boudreau
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Catholic students will soon be learning about leadership and Canadian history through an innovative course developed in partnership with some of Canada's most iconic hockey players.

Members of the Team Canada squad that defeated the Soviet Union in the 1972 Summit Series have partnered with the Niagara Catholic school board in a curriculum initiative designed to use the eight-game hockey showdown as a teaching tool.

"From our standpoint there are a lot of lessons that we learned as Canadians and we want to give back," said Team Canada defenceman Pat Stapleton. "(The '72 Summit Series) had such an impact on the whole country. There isn't a day that goes by that somebody on that team isn't talking about it because they were asked questions about it."

The unique partnership with the school board developed out of a 2014 conversation with John Crocco, Niagara Catholic's director of education, following a speaking engagement by some members of Team Canada '72. The players had talked about overcoming adversity, the political climate of the time and the lessons they learned from the experience.

"(He) was impressed," said Stapleton. "Out of it came this agreement for us to provide the content of what happened . . . and they would provide the lesson. They have the expertise to do that, we're just guys who competed on a team."

Six teachers from the board worked with a group of players to develop material to be integrated into the social studies and Canadian history curriculum. It will be taught from grades 4 to 6 across the Niagara Catholic board.

The idea is to foster leadership skills and a historical understand-

ing of the Cold War context of what it meant to be a Canadian when the series was played. The players share their experience of competing behind the Iron Curtain.

"When we arrived in training camp we were Pete Mahovlich from the Montreal Canadiens, or Mickey Redmond of the Detroit Red Wings, or Ron Ellis from the Toronto Maple Leafs," Stapleton said. "When we got to Russia we were Pete Mahovlich of Team Canada, Mickey Redmond of Team Canada, Ron Ellis of Team Canada. We became Team Canada."

In addition to helping with the curriculum, team members will visit the school board to speak to about 350 student leaders.

"By student leaders we mean captains of teams and clubs . . . as well as all of our student council leaders," said Crocco.

"We are going to bring them together in the fall with the various players from the team. We are hoping to get it done prior to November."

In addition to the assembly for the student leaders, two meetings will be organized for the players to discuss team building with school administrators, said Crocco.

"Think about when a coach brings a team together or when captains bring their team together. Well, flip that now to principals bringing their staff together."

The key to successful team building in schools requires creative innovation, adaptability and resilience — characteristics demonstrated by Team Canada during the Summit Series, Crocco said.

Being role models for educators is something Stapleton said the former hockey players take seriously.

"We've got a time limit on ourselves," Stapleton said. "That's why it is important to give back, so that Canadians understand what we experienced and understand what it is to be Canadian."



Photo courtesy of John Crocco

CURRICULUM PROJECT — Team Canada members from the 1972 Summit Series (back row) pose with select students from the Niagara Catholic school board. The board struck a curriculum development partnership with the team.

Universal Day of Prayer proposed

Continued from page 1

for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, as well as at the Pontifical Ecclesiastical Academy, which trains priests for service in the Vatican's diplomatic corps.

Pontifical commission members, who were in Rome in early September, were also set to address the Congregation for Clergy and to speak at seminars for recently appointed bishops.

Marie Collins, a commission member and survivor of clerical abuse, was scheduled to be one of a number of commission members to address the Sept. 11 - 18 session of what is commonly referred to as "new bishops school."

Jesuit Father Hans Zollner, a psychologist and commission member, and Archbishop Charles J. Scicluna of Malta, a longtime abuse investigator, already deliv-

ered their talks on abuse by clergy and the importance of protecting minors and vulnerable adults during the early September seminar.

The commission has completed a template meant to help all church entities — from bishops' conferences to Catholic associations — in formulating guidelines in preventing and responding appropriately to abuse.

Pope Francis was set to receive the template "shortly," according to the commission press release.

At the request of a clerical abuse survivor from Canada, the commission developed a proposal for a universal Day of Prayer because "prayer is one part of the healing process for survivors and the community of believers" and public gatherings for prayer also help raise awareness about the issue, it said.

Pope Francis received the proposal and has asked "that national

bishops' conferences choose an appropriate day on which to pray for the survivors and victims of sexual abuse as part of a Universal Day of Prayer initiative," it said.

The reason a universal date was not set is because a number of bishops' conference around the world already have specific days set aside for penance and prayer for victims and their healing, Zollner told Catholic News Service.

For example, the church in Australia adopted the nation's own Day for Child Protection — Sept. 11 — to mark its Day of Prayer.

The Southern African Bishops' Conferences will dedicate Dec. 2 - 4 — days which fall during Advent this year — to penance, fasting and prayer, the press release said.

The commission said it has resources like prayers for mass, liturgical texts and other materials available on request as part of the Day of Prayer initiative.

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Kennedy will never be far from Catholic Missions

By Jean Ko Din
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — “Keep the missions safe,” Rev. Philip J. Kennedy told the staff of Catholic Missions In Canada as he ended his 10-year mission as president.

As Catholic Missions staff and friends from the Archdiocese of Toronto gathered together on Aug. 30 to celebrate Kennedy as he enters retirement, he reminded them that work for the missions is never done.

“Whether it’s a fire in a church or some flood or disaster or some parish in a far distant area that really needs help, it’s good to be able to come to the aid of the priests and the bishops and missionaries,” said Kennedy.

Catholic Missions helps to sustain and extend the Catholic faith in more than 600 isolated, poor and hard-to-reach communities in Canada. The organization’s fundraising support provides mission parishes with the resources for daily building maintenance, travel needs of missionaries, First Nations ministries, catechism programs and the education of seminarians.

Kennedy said his real job as



Catholic Register/Jean Ko Din

KENNEDY RETIRES — Rev. Philip J. Kennedy cuts a cake at his farewell in late August. Kennedy has retired as president of Catholic Missions In Canada.

president at Catholic Missions has always been to make it easy for the bishops and priests to con-

tinue their ministry in these small communities.

Kennedy said that for Rev. David Reilander, his successor, the most important job will be to make the organization’s presence known in these remote areas so

that the people know they are being supported.

The challenge, however, is to help these communities become more self-sustaining. Kennedy said this is especially true for First Nations communities. He said the work of Catholic Missions seems limited compared to what needs to be done to help fulfil the recommendations outlined in last year’s Truth and Reconciliation Committee report.

“They need to do things for themselves,” he said. “That’s a big challenge for us, to learn to step back and let them take responsibility.”

During his tenure leading Catholic Missions, Kennedy would spend most of his year travelling to the missions to meet with the communities face-to-face.

“Most of them are very happy with what Catholic Missions is doing. They’re always happy to see me,” he said.

Anne Hanley, Catholic Missions’ communications officer, said Kennedy’s devotion to the missions and its donors inspires the staff every day.

“Every morning, we offer morning prayer . . . his first two prayers every morning are for the missionaries and for the donors,” said Hanley.

“His devotion to them is so personal and heartfelt.”

Many of the staff at Catholic Missions has been working with Kennedy since he was first appointed in 2006. They have grown with him and seen his devotion to his work.

“He is always telling us stories about the missions,” said Patria Rivera, director of publications and communications. “He has always inspired us to work harder and to focus our strengths on making the job not only a job, but part of our vocation.”

In recent years, Kennedy’s health has been declining, but his dedication to the missions never wavered. In 2014, Kennedy was hospitalized for three weeks. Even on bed rest, he would call into the office to ask staff to bring him papers to work on.

“He always wanted to be here at work,” said Rivera. “It didn’t take that long for him to get back on his feet and he wanted to get back on his feet right away. He was not one for moping around and doing nothing.”

Kennedy always brought a positive energy to the office environment. Rivera said everyone in the office will miss his dry wit.

Moving forward, Kennedy said he will still be around the organization. Even as he settles into a parish in the Archdiocese of Toronto, he sees himself visiting the office every now and then.

Judges, police officers, not keeping up with laws

Continued from page 1

said. “These people that go to buy sex from young girls have no consideration for the young girls.”

In September 2015, in response to a growing prostitution problem in Sydney, the police force arrested 27 men and released their names in a news conference. One of the alleged johns went to court, claiming the release of his name before a conviction amounted to “public shaming” and a violation of his Charter rights under section 7.

In late August, Nova Scotia provincial court Judge Brian Williston rejected the challenge, citing the new prostitution legislation in his decision and pointing out the police were not releasing any information that was not already available to the public and the news media. However, mainstream news reports focus on the public shaming of the johns, citing civil liberties experts.

“If the media wants to report it, it has to be well balanced and talk to people like myself,” said Smith. “The sympathies are not with the johns who buy sex.”

“The fact that they were shamed, well that’s too bad,” she said. “What are they are doing behind the backs of their wives?

So they are caught and they feel ashamed.”

“I praise the police for doing their job,” she said. “That’s going to save countless lives of young girls.”

“Many judges and many police officers are not keeping up with the law of the land and are not enforcing it like these police and this judge did,” Smith said. “I praise them for doing that.”

Beazley said the media’s response “underlines the continued need for public education.”

“The new laws recognize that prostitution is a form of exploitation and violence against women,” she said. “But it will take time for the broader society, including the media, to understand the realities of prostitution.”

“(Sydney) is serious about targeting the demand for paid sex, and, as the judge said, the police actions were a response to the ‘need to protect society’s most marginalized and vulnerable members in focusing their attention on the men driving demand,’” she said.

Smith believes the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered and Indigenous Women and Girls will help put the spotlight back on prostitution as a form of exploitation and violence against women.

Book predicts bright future for Catholics

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Catholics in Quebec are more likely to hold a negative view of Muslims than Catholics across the rest of the country, according to a new book by Reginald Bibby and Angus Reid.

In *Canada’s Catholics*, Bibby and Reid find that Canadian Catholics who attend church once a month or more are least likely to hold negative views of Muslims, with 29 per cent of Catholics outside Quebec who attend church regularly holding a negative view of Muslims, compared with 49 per cent of Canadians as a whole.

However, 55 per cent of Catholics who attend church once a month or more in Quebec hold negative views of Muslims, and for those who attend less frequently the number jumps to 63 per cent.

For those proclaiming no religion, 38 per cent view Muslims negatively, while 41 per cent of other Canadians do likewise. In comparison, other Canadians hold negative views of Roman Catholics at a rate of 19 per cent.

These figures are “against the great Canadian ideal, and the Catholic ideal that we’re being accepting of people different than us,” said Bibby, a Canadian sociologist who holds the Board of Governors Research Chair in the University of Lethbridge’s sociology department. “We have a long way to go.”

Bibby said the high levels of negative feelings toward Muslims might be understandable given the context, and anxieties, around terrorism.

One area of improvement, Bibby said in an interview, is attitudes toward Jews, which in data going back to the 1970s, especially in Quebec, shows negative attitudes being very high. Now among Catholics in Quebec, Jews are viewed unfavourably by only 14 per cent of those who attend monthly or more and by 20 per cent of Catholics who attend less. For Catholics outside of Quebec, the number drops to six per cent and four per cent respectively.

The other two groups that fare badly in the survey among Catholics are Mormons and Evangelicals. In Quebec, 40 per cent of Catholics who attend regularly view Mormons unfavourably; 36 per cent of less frequent attenders do. In the rest of Canada, 17 per cent of regular attenders view Mormons unfavourably; 28 per cent of less frequent attenders do.

Evangelicals fare worst among those with no religion in Canada, being viewed by 44 per cent unfavourably. Thirty-two per cent of non-Catholic Canadians view Evangelicals negatively. Among Catholics outside Quebec, 19 per cent of the regular attenders view Evangelicals negatively to 20 per cent of the less frequent attenders. In Quebec, the numbers are 16 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

Catholics outside Quebec are the most likely to hold negative views of atheists at 39 per cent for frequent attenders and 20 per cent for less frequent.

“The people most actively involved are feeling the most antagonistic toward atheists,” Bibby said. “People in the no religion category typically return the

favour with 24 per cent negative toward Catholics.”

Overall, *Canada’s Catholics* paints a favourable picture for the future of the Catholic Church in Canada, largely due to the large number of Catholic immigrants coming into the country.

A Pew Research Centre 2015 study projects Christians will decline from 69 per cent of the Canadian population in 2010 to 60 per cent by 2050. Bibby said Catholics will continue to be by far the largest group among the Christians. The Muslim population will continue to grow from two per cent of the population in 2010 to six per cent in 2050.

Those with no religion are projected to go from 24 per cent of the population to 26 per cent in 2050.

The study shows the Catholic population in Canada is about 12.8 million people, or 39 per cent of the population.

The book predicts a bright future for Catholics because they will remain the largest religious group in Canada. Most Canadians remain Catholic inter-generationally and the immigration pipeline will bring many more new Catholics to Canada who tend to be a younger, more conservative demographic.

“In Canada’s increasing religious mosaic, Christians remain the biggest tile, with Catholics the largest group in that category,” Bibby said. “In the Canadian religious reality, Catholics will continue to constitute the majority,” he said. “They are league leaders, way ahead of everybody and that’s not going to change in the foreseeable future.”

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JOY formation program holds opening weekend

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A new Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation diocesan program was recently launched with an orientation retreat held at Queen’s House in Saskatoon.

“It was like the first day of school,” said co-ordinator Kate O’Gorman, who along with two other team members welcomed 15 participants to the inaugural JOY program. “One by one we all arrived — not knowing exactly what to expect, but carrying with us an openness to learn and a deep desire to immerse ourselves in the work of social justice.”

The JOY program has its origins in a diocesan-wide discernment about initiating the permanent diaconate in Saskatoon. During those discussions two years ago, a need for practical formation in providing outreach and service was identified as something that should be available to all the baptized. As a result, Bishop Donald Bolen established a committee to develop the JOY program, led by O’Gorman, who previously served as one of the co-ordinators of Lay Formation in the Diocese of Saskatoon.

“This diocesan pilot program has been a labour of love, born from a passion to pursue justice and live the Gospel in solidarity with the poor,” says O’Gorman. “For some time, it has been gestating in the hearts and minds of Catholic Pastoral Centre staff, committee members, program volunteers, agency partners and of course, lay applicants.”



Kiply Yaworski

JOY — A new diocesan formation program was launched with an orientation retreat Aug. 27 in Saskatoon that included an introduction to Catholic Social Teaching by Gertrude Rompré, director of Mission and Ministry at St. Thomas More College. The Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation is a 10-weekend program linking Catholic Social Teaching with experiential learning opportunities. Participants will connect with local service agencies, meet with those working in social justice fields, and walk with those being served, as well as working to broaden understanding and acquire practical skills for outreach and service.

The program will run from September to June, with participants coming together once a month to focus on issues of social justice, visit local service-based agencies, and work alongside people who experience life on the margins.

“Throughout the year we will also prayerfully consider our own baptismal call in the midst of the realities we encounter,” adds O’Gorman.

During the weekend sessions, participants will explore outreach related to human dignity, refugees, indigenous experience, anti-poverty, international development, health and elder care,

hunger and food, restorative justice, youth and family, and care of the earth.

“By connecting with nearly 30 local service agencies throughout the next 10 months, meeting with those who work in these social justice fields and being with the people they serve, we seek to broaden our understanding and become equipped with skills to engage in service outreach.

“The JOY program is embarking on a new adventure — learning what it means to walk in solidarity with one another and work together toward a safer, more just society where the dignity and

rights of all of God’s beloved are recognized and honoured,” says O’Gorman.

The orientation retreat Aug. 27 provided participants with grounding for the year ahead.

One topic was Catholic Social Teaching, presented by Gertrude Rompré, director of Mission and Ministry at St. Thomas More College. Sometimes described as “the Catholic Church’s best-kept secret,” Catholic social teaching is an integral part of the JOY formation program.

“Themes of Catholic Social Teaching will be woven into each weekend of the JOY program and experienced in concrete ways through the agencies we visit, the people we meet and the stories we hear,” says O’Gorman. “Catholic Social Teaching — along with Pope Francis’ ecclesial vision and the compassionate life and mission of Jesus of Nazareth — is the foundation upon which the JOY program stands, and which we will strive to embody.”

Another orientation session, led by Christine Zyla of the diocesan Office of Migration, raised awareness about possible unconscious assumptions and privileged perspectives.

“The experience of some of us is not the experience of all of us,” notes O’Gorman. “Inequalities and injustices based on race, economic status, gender, age, and ability are predicated on unconscious assumptions and beliefs that have been deeply and systemically entrenched. The formational aim of the JOY program is to awaken us to some of the assumptions we hold, so that we can enter as fully as possible into equitable relationship with those we meet along the journey.”

O’Gorman points to Pope Francis’ words: “Among our tasks as witnesses to the love of Christ is that of giving a voice to the cry of the poor” as a guiding principle for the JOY program.

“We are taking up the invitation through our involvement in the Justice and Outreach Year of Formation to respond to our baptismal call and meet our human responsibility to reach out to others. We will seek to grow and be transformed in humble service, discipleship, compassion and of course, joy.”

Those interested can follow along via Facebook, Twitter, and a blog at www.joyformationprogram.com

Paul and Carol Hill reflect on Mother Teresa

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Recently canonized St. Mother Teresa’s influence on the Hill family has had a positive impact to the benefit of disadvantaged Regina children. The Mother Teresa Middle School (MTMS) opened its doors in September 2011 with 17 students entering Grade 6. All are now in Grade 11 at different schools in Regina and at Athol Murray College of Notre Dame in Wilcox, Sask.

Paul Hill, chair and CEO of the Hill group of companies and chair of the MTMS board of directors, with his wife Carol, told a Sept. 6 gathering at Holy Cross Church the story of meeting Mother Teresa and how her influence led to the establishment of MTMS in Regina.

He said the group was so impressed that they asked how they could help her work. She essentially told them she didn’t want their money but to go back to their own community, identify a need and fill it. The eventual result was the initiative by the Hills to establish the MTMS school in Regina.

Hill noted that the concept had expanded to Winnipeg, where the Gonzaga School accepted its first students in September. He also described how a Hill business partner on a visit to Regina was convinced by Hill to visit Wilcox, about a half-hour drive south of Regina.

“He told me he had a dream

about Mother Teresa the night before he went to Wilcox. When he saw a statue of Mother Teresa in the cafeteria he was inspired to build a new girls’ dormitory.” The Mother Teresa Dormitory opened in 2000. “These are the kind of things Mother Teresa inspired,” said Hill.



Frank Flegel

Paul and Carol Hill

Carol Hill told a couple of different stories about Mother Teresa, one of which was meeting her in Australia in 1986. She was scheduled to speak there but was having difficulty in obtaining a visa in time for the date. A prominent businessman managed to pull some strings and get her into Australia. He then offered to drive her to the airport and he was surprised to hear Mother Teresa ask what she could do for him. Somewhat taken aback, he managed to ask her to teach him how to pray.

Paul stated how fortunate he and Carol have been in meeting two people who are now saints. There was one other person present who had met John Paul II and Mother Teresa: Gerry Moen, who as former national chair of Co-workers of Mother Teresa met them in Rome in 1978.

Mother Teresa School celebrates

By Derrick Kunz

SASKATOON — Staff, students and other members of the Mother Teresa School community gathered at the Cathedral of the

Holy Family for a special mass Sept. 4 to mark the canonization of the school’s namesake, who was known for her charity and service to the poorest of the poor in Kolkata, India.

Canonization is the final step in being declared a saint by the Roman Catholic Church. Mother Teresa is now St. Teresa of Kolkata — although, as Pope Francis commented at the official celebration in Rome, she will remain “Mother Teresa” in the hearts of many.

Principal Rick Garman welcomed all in attendance, including students, parents, the school’s first principal Bernard Bitz, Board of Education trustees, superintendents of education, teachers and division staff.

Rev. David Tumback, pastor of the Cathedral of the Holy Family, was joined by Rev. Michael Dechant, OMI, and Rev. Mark Blom, OMI, to celebrate the occasion with the school community. Tumback shared several stories illustrating the saint’s humility and service. He used an analogy of a poker player who is “all-in,” the term for betting everything on a single hand. Mother Teresa was all-in: she gave all she had in loving service of God.

Mass concluded with the singing of the school song led by Rhonda Baker who composed it. It states that we are all pencils in God’s hands, referencing a famous quote by Mother Teresa.

The school community handed out bookmarks made for the occasion and hosted a reception after mass.



Derrick Kunz

MOTHER TERESA SCHOOL — A banner featuring the face of Mother Teresa was on display at the Cathedral of the Holy Family for a special mass to mark the canonization of the school’s patron.

Spirit of mercy inspires Catholic educators

Urquico ordained to diaconate

By Derrick Kunz

SASKATOON — Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools’ nearly 2,000 staff gathered at the Cathedral of the Holy Family to celebrate the new school year the day before they welcomed students back into classrooms.

The annual gathering began with mass that included readings and prayers in English, French, Ukrainian, Cree and new Aramaic, reflecting the diversity of staff and students.

Board of Education chair Diane Boyko spoke of the hope she sees in the staff, students, for the division and for Catholic education in Saskatchewan. “I really want our staff to remember how fortunate we are, to see the good work they do day in and day out,” Boyko said. “I think staff feel a bit of anxiety. We ended last school year with budget cuts, and over the summer we have been hearing about ‘transformational change.’ It’s important to keep our focus on what’s important: our students, the good work we are doing, and being men and women of faith.”

Director of Education Greg Chatlain reminded staff of their roles as leaders. “What you do matters,” he said. “What you do to contribute to the Catholic education of every child who chooses to be with us makes a significant difference in their lives. It matters both in the short term and the long term. It matters to each child, to each family, to each co-worker and to the Lord himself.”

Mike Patin, an author, speaker, and “faith horticulturist” gave an inspirational keynote address. He referred to teaching in a Catholic school division as a calling, stating that educators see their vocation “through a slightly different lens — the lens of faith.”

Mixing humour with his Louisiana charm, Patin got staff to compile a list of reasons not to teach in a school division. He emphasized that the reasons to become an educator outweigh them all. “Everyone in a classroom has a story to tell and is worth a million dollars to someone,” Patin said. “In a class of 30 that’s \$30 million. We are all called to do what we do in a spirit of mercy.”

Long-serving priest celebrates 80th birthday

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — He stood at the door and greeted everyone personally who came to help him celebrate 80 years of life, 54 of those as a priest with the Society of Christ Fathers.



Frank Flegel

Rev. Marian Ogorek

Rev. Marian Ogorek was born in Lublin, Poland in 1936. “Yes, I remember the war,” Ogorek said in an interview with the PM. His brother was born in the summer of 1939 and the war started on Sept. 1. Ogorek lost no immediate family during the war, but several cousins perished shortly after the conflict began. After the war, the country was taken over by the communists.

Ogorek entered the seminary of the Society of Christ Fathers after high school. The communists didn’t much hinder the seminaries or the churches. “Poland is 95 per cent Catholic, so everything was open.” They didn’t have to go underground, as in some other communist countries.

He completed his studies and was ordained in 1962, and immediately assigned to Poznan, then Goleniow where he was vicar. He began his missionary work to Polish immigrants in 1970 with an assignment in the United States.

His first assignment in Canada was to Calgary in 1979, then back to the U.S. for assignments in several locations. He returned to Calgary for a few years, then went to Windsor, Ont., and another return to the U.S. before coming to Regina in 1993 from Houston, Texas. He remained parish priest at St. Anthony’s until 2012 when a bout with cancer took him into retirement.

According to current St. Anthony’s pastor Rev. Stanislaw Poszwa, Ogorek was twice near death. “He was anointed by Archbishop Bohan and other clergy.”

Poszwa said Ogorek stopped chemotherapy about a year ago and has been cancer-free since. He is currently priest in residence at St. Anthony’s and helps with sacramental ministry.

More than 100 people showed up for the party and after being greeted by Ogorek sat at decorated tables in preparation for the meal. “It’s all Polish food,” said Poszwa, who emceed the event and led the group in traditional Polish songs of blessing.

After the meal, the party enjoyed a slide presentation of Ogorek’s, dating back to his early years in Poland and service in the U.S. and Canada.

Ogorek thanked everyone for coming and received a blessing from the congregation, whom he blessed in turn.

As to his future, the affable priest shrugged and smiled: “Only God knows.”

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — “In the ritual, the first thing we have heard is the name, Arpee Urquico,” said Winnipeg Archbishop Emeritus James Weisgerber as he began his homily. “That is so significant, and that’s just not to make sure that he is here; it is God calling him by name. The church in the name of Jesus has determined that Arpee should be ordained a deacon.”

And so on Sept. 2 at Holy Rosary Cathedral began the second-last step for Urquico to become a priest. That is expected sometime in 2017 after he completes another year of studies at St. Joseph Seminary in Edmonton.

The new deacon arrived from Philippines about five years ago after his cousin, Rev. Gerard Joy Montague, living in Prince Albert, convinced him to come to Canada as a missionary. He completed some studies in Philippines then came to Canada and entered St. Joseph Seminary. He spent a year of internship at St. George’s Parish, Assiniboia, Sask., where Weisgerber on April 3 officially accepted him as a candidate for priesthood.

Weisgerber spoke in his homily of two daily reminders of God’s call to love: recitation of the breviary and the observation of celibacy. The breviary is “the prayer of

the church” and is read every day. Celibacy gives freedom from family responsibilities, so the priest “can completely give himself to this life of prayer and service.”

Urquico responded in a loud voice to each question posed by Weisgerber during the examination of the candidate part of the ordination ceremony: to be obedient to his bishop, to observe celibacy, and preach the Gospel — adding at the end of the questions, “with the help of God.” That was followed by recitation of the Litany of Saints with everyone kneeling and Urquico prostrate on a rug below the sanctuary.

Montague and one of Urquico’s teachers, Rev. Robert Gauthier, vested the new deacon with a stole and the dalmatic (a loose-sleeved robe), after which Weisgerber presented him with the Gospels.

In recognition of Urquico’s heritage, the second reading for the day was in Tagalog, the Philippine language. The Regina Filipino choir provided some of the

music ministry, along with the Archdiocesan Women’s Schola, with Valery Hall as organist.

Several of his fellow seminarians and teachers journeyed to Regina for the ordination. His mother, who was unable to obtain a visa, watched the service through live streaming.

Following the service, Urquico thanked his teachers and friends for their support — particularly the people of St. George’s Parish, Assiniboia for allowing him to be part of their lives.

A reception featuring several Filipino foods was held in the cathedral auditorium immediately following the ceremony.



Jobin Family

SEVENTY YEARS — Alfred Parent and Cecile Jobin began dating in the fall of 1945, and married in August the following year. They had nine children, and the family has grown to include 26 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild. On Aug. 14, Alfred and Cecile celebrated 70 years of marriage with family and friends in Prince Albert.

Mercy a challenge for disciples of Christ

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — More than 1,000 Regina Catholic School Division teachers and staff heard two different historical perspectives at their Sept. 30 opening mass.

Winnipeg Archbishop Emeritus James Weisgerber spoke about changes in the lives of indigenous people when the Europeans began arriving on the prairies about 150 years ago, and Leah Perrault described how the church changed about 1,700 years ago and what it means today.

Perrault describes herself as a preacher without a pulpit. She holds a master’s degree in pastoral theology from St. Michael’s University, Toronto. Her day job is executive lead of Governance Advancement with Emmanuel Care (Catholic Health ministry of Saskatchewan). She was director of Pastoral Care for the Saskatoon Roman Catholic Diocese prior to her current position.

Perrault compared mercy to a wave: “It has no structure, it is energy that moves through us.”

The early church had no structure, said Perrault, but about 1,700 years ago began building structure in churches, education and health facilities. “They came to us for everything; now they come to us only for spiritual care.”

She described mercy as love for the broken by the broken, and went on to list the seven corporal and seven spiritual works of mercy. She noted that Pope Francis frequently references to mercy.

Weisgerber has a long relationship with Aboriginal people stemming from his time as parish priest in Saskatchewan’s Qu’Appelle Valley, where he served several First Nations. He described the

dramatic changes to their lives with the arrival of the Europeans.

“150 years ago the government invited people to come and be farmers on the prairies. ‘There’s nothing out there but buffalo,’ they said. But we know now there were people living here.” And they used the buffalo for everything, said Weisgerber; but in eight years the buffalo were gone. “What were they to do?”

In 1874 Treaty Four was signed. “And that’s about us, too,” he said. “We entered into it together.”

They were then pushed off to lit-

tle pieces of land — and these were a people used to roaming all over. They were starved, their children taken from them and placed in residential schools, and when all the children were gone that led to dysfunctional communities, said Weisgerber. The government controlled everything and it wasn’t until 1960 that they could vote and leave the reserve without permission.

We now blame the victim, he said. “We need to learn the truth.” Mercy is a challenge for everyone who claims to be a disciple of Christ.



Frank Flegel

PRAISE IN THE PARK — It was a rocking time in Regina’s Victoria Park Sept. 10 as eight bands from different faith communities beat out music for the glory of God. It was the annual Praise in the Park endorsed by the Regina Council of Churches and the Regina Ministerial Association. Children played at several activities in the warm sun as their parents and others sat on the grass, on blankets or lawn chairs and listened to the music. Faith-based organizations set up tents alongside the main venue, providing information on their activities and membership. Food was available from trucks parked nearby and an ice cream bicycle made its way through the park several times. Initial attendance was small, as the afternoon was competing with a televised Roughrider game from Winnipeg, but more came as the afternoon wore on. Pastor Charles Koojer of Sonlight Christian Reformed Church and Alex Coleman of Hallelujah Radio co-organized the afternoon.

When what’s in the imagination doesn’t match reality

Around the Kitchen Table

Maureen Weber



In the spring I heard an interview with CBC Radio garden specialist Lyndon Penner in which he enthusiastically encouraged listeners to plant sunflowers because they just “grow” without much prompting. I was skeptical, but decided to try it by the fence where we’d excavated a small area that had previously been a mess of stones and tree stumps. Since it was going to be a busy summer

and we wouldn’t have time to do much with this small plot (that’s just an excuse — we aren’t gardeners or landscapers), Russ decided it might be a cool idea to also sow it in wildflowers and see what happens. I planted a row of dianthus seedlings to make sure there was something in the meanwhile. I felt like The Sower in Vincent van Gogh’s famous painting: casting seeds from my bag with the brilliant sun bathing me in its yellow light. Actually, this little corner gets no light from the late-day sun, and I had paper packets of god-knows-what — weird seeds of

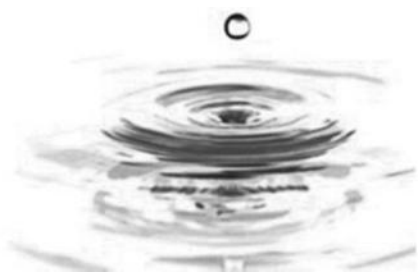

alien shapes, some with spikes like punk rockers, and some smooth. Except for the poppy packets. Do you know that the poppy seeds you plant are nothing like the ones you bake into a cake? I was surprised to open the packet to see — or rather squint at — the minute black spots inside. They’re so small they almost get lost in the whorl of one’s fingerprint. Scattering them is a challenge. Van Gogh is my favourite painter. I’ve always had a fantasy of becoming a painter in his style. With thick rich oil paints in yellows, reds and midnight blues, I would spill the colours that live in my mind onto a canvas. Maybe I could even paint the wildflowers that would grow in my garden, or vases of sunflowers picked from along my fence. All I had to do was wait. And we waited. It took weeks for anything to show up. Once green shoots did begin to grow, it was impossible to tell whether they were weeds or flowers (well, dill and dandelions are unmistakable), and we let it turn into a ragged plot lest we pull a potential blossom. I felt a bit ridiculous watering something that homely, but nobody could see me in the backyard anyway. Eventually we were able to pull the obvious weeds, but you would be amazed at the weeds that masquerade as flowers. Now it’s fall and my dream of a lush undulation of colour has faded with the reality of what is. But something else has happened. Late

in the season the dianthus imparts its sweet fragrance over the whole yard, and there are random colours — tiny pink star-like flowers, white baby’s breath and other white blossoms the size of pencil erasers, red-and-black-eyed yellow flowers that remind me of daisies, purple pansies that scowl, delicate things with cherry-coloured petals and miniature blue bell-like flowers with tons of buds at the end of tall, thin spaghetti-like stalks. And some poppies! Red, white, orange, and a pale purplish one with feathered edges, like a fancy dress. They last only a few days before their long, skinny stems sink to the ground, but oh, I take such delight in each one. The sunflowers did not fare well. Of many seeds planted, only about 10 stalks grew, but they are working so hard to produce that I cannot help but stand in awe of their efforts — and help them to stand, because they keep bending over. This little garden is not the grand Eden of my imagination. It would not inspire a painting and is not worthy of a post on social media, where cruel judgments are handed down by insecure, obtuse people. But looking at it brings to mind the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel: “Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy.” My garden has survived to give what it could manage, and in so doing has provided humble blessings I did not imagine. One should never discount the possibility of being surprised by holiness.



M. Weber

RAGGED GARDEN — Maureen’s flower garden is a reflection of the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel: “Just to be is a blessing. Just to live is holy.”



A SACRED SPACE IN A BUSY WORLD

SMALL THINGS: Illuminated through Mercy
Saturday, Sept. 24, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. *Gerry Turcotte*
Join author Gerry Turcotte on a lively journey through the small things in life and discover moments of mercy hidden among ladybugs and elevator buttons. Sharing stories from his recently published book, *Small Things: Reflections on Faith and Hope*, Turcotte invites you to ponder where the Spirit unexpectedly breaks into your life. Participants will have the opportunity to view a portion of the hand-scribed and illustrated Saint John’s Bible — an example of how creative expression enhances engagement with text. Come and see how beauty and laughter mercifully transform the ordinary into the extraordinary. **\$75 includes buffet lunch.**

SPIRITUAL BOOK CLUB
Mondays, Sept. 26, Oct. 24, Nov. 28, Dec. 12, Jan. 23, Feb. 27; 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Do you love to read and to share insight with other readers? If so, join us as we use our eyes of faith to see inspiration in the writing of a variety of authors. Books are provided at a discounted rate. Registration is required. **\$10** Sept. through Dec. **\$15** Jan. through June

YOGA WITH JULIE — Julie Jeong
Wednesdays, Sept. 28 - Nov. 30, Jan. 18 - March 22, 6:30 - 8 p.m.
The mindful movements of traditional hatha yoga invite the integration of mind, body, and spirit. Join us within a peaceful Christian environment to relax your body, become more fully aware of your breath and open your whole being to God. Please wear comfortable clothing and bring a yoga/exercise mat. **NEW!** Monday mornings, Jan. 23, 2017 - March 27, 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. **\$135** for each 10-week session.

BEING A PERSON OF MERCY
Friday, Oct. 14, 7 p.m. to Sunday, Oct. 16, 1 p.m. *Max Oliva, SJ*
Pope Francis’ emphasis on the “tenderness of mercy” is a welcome invitation to Christians. Mercy is the form love takes when it encounters suffering; mercy wants what is good for the one who is struggling. Jesus is the face of God’s mercy; as his followers, we are called to show mercy because God has first shown mercy to us. In this weekend retreat, we will consider mercy in three ways: God to us, we to others, and mercy to oneself. We will also explore the spiritual and corporeal works of mercy. *“Give thanks to the Lord, for his mercy endures forever.” — Ps. 136:1*
Suite: \$270 Single: \$230 Commute: \$185

MERCY IN TIMES OF TRANSITION
Thurs. Oct. 27, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. *Debbie Doornbos*
Times of transition can be challenging. Mid-life, retirement, job change, new babies, and new seasons in our lives may result in feelings of loss, grief, and uncertainty. This is normal. However, these times can also be seasons of hope. They are an invitation to practice mercy and compassion to ourselves and others. Regardless of what season of life you are in, come explore the transformational opportunity mercy offers us during life’s transitions. *“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.” — Mt 5:7*
\$60 includes buffet lunch

HEALING HEARTS: A Merciful Journey
Tuesdays, Sept. 13 - Nov. 1, 10 a.m. - noon *Carmen Hopf*
This eight-week series is an invitation to take an inner journey — a walk in the hidden valleys and hills of your own inner spaces. See what joys and sorrows, surprises and challenges you may find on your journey of becoming fully alive. The book *Healing Troubled Hearts* by Lyn Holley Doucet will be used as a guideline and resource. Daily spiritual reading and reflection, questions, and compassionate group listening and sharing are the structure for this journey. Maximum 10 participants. **\$120 for eight weeks.**

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER
2nd and 4th Wednesdays - began Sept. 14, 7 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. (drop-in)
Antoinette Voûte Roeder
Contemplative prayer attunes one to the silence within, the silence that met Elijah outside the mountain cave (*1 Kings 19:12*). Praying without words or images, breath guides us to an ever greater awareness of God’s Spirit-Breath vitalizing every moment of our lives. Each evening includes spiritual readings, sitting in silent prayer, and group sharing, within the context of a small community. All are welcome.

A QUIET DAY AWAY
Tuesday, Sept. 20; Wednesday, Oct. 19; Tuesday, Jan. 24; Wednesday, February 22
9:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. *PRC Team*
Step away from your daily routine to be re-energized and rest in God’s presence. The day begins and ends in guided prayer. The in-between hours are yours. A single bedroom is provided for your use. Ask for details about extending your stay. Liturgy in the Main Chapel at 9 a.m. (*optional*). **\$40 per session includes buffet lunch.**

WRITING CIRCLE
Tuesdays, Sept. 20 - Nov. 1, 1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m. *Carol Sebastian*
Cultivate your creative inclinations. Attune yourself to the creative spirit within and its desire for expression. Share inspiration and technique. Take time to put pen to paper. No experience necessary. **\$60 for seven weeks.**

LABYRINTH WALK FOR PEACE
Wednesday Sept. 21, 7 - 8 p.m.
Join us as we pray, sing, and walk the labyrinth in the name of PEACE. This annual event marks United Nations International Day of Peace. No registration required.

Please see our website for more details: www.providencerenewal.ca
or call 780-701-1854; 3005 119 St NW Edmonton, AB T6J 5R5

A summer reflection on the call of the Arctic

The Arctic seems to forever cast a spell over man's imagination . . . A corner of the world of ice-encrusted shores and unbounded frozen tundra, of endless days or continuous nights.
A land that is as unpredictable and dangerous as it is alluring and wondrously beautiful.

— Alexis Troubetzkoy, Arctic Obsession: The Lure of the Far North

By Gerald Schmitz

Canada is second only to Russia in its claims to the Arctic. Indeed much of Canada's total territory and coastline lies north of the Arctic Circle even if this huge expanse has a tiny population. Canadians take pride in the mythology of the "True North." Our political leaders have proclaimed northern visions and made ritual assertions of "Arctic sovereignty." (An excellent guide to the issues at stake is Michael Byers, *Who Owns the Arctic? Understanding Sovereignty Disputes in the North*.) Former prime minister Stephen Harper made a point of annual summer photo-op visits to Arctic locations. The Justin Trudeau government has made tackling climate change a policy priority, and it is in the high latitudes that its effects are most pronounced. Canadians living in the Arctic, notably the indigenous peoples who have made it their home for millennia, have an especially powerful case for demanding climate action. (See Sheila Watt-Cloutier's *The*

committee undertook a major study of Canada's role in circumpolar co-operation. But the summer trips alluded to above have been on my personal initiative. A decade ago I went on my first marine voyage through the Northwest Passage (stopping at graves from Franklin's ill-fated expedition on Beechey Island), sailing up to Grise Fjord, Canada's most northerly community on Ellesmere island, then across Baffin Bay and past Hans Island (disputed with Denmark) to Qaanaaq, Greenland's most northerly town. We sailed down the Greenland coast as far as Upernavik then crossed back over to explore the eastern coast of Baffin island — with stops at Mittimatalik (Pond Inlet), Kangiqtuqaapik (Clyde River), Oiklqtarjuak (Broughton Island), and Pangniqtuuq (Pangnirtung) — ending in Nunavut's capital of Iqaluit. Our ship, the MS Explorer, hit an iceberg off the Antarctic coast the next year and sank! Fortunately some 100 passengers and crew were safely evacuated and



Gerald Schmitz

TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR SUN — Kayaks and zodiacs transported the northern travellers to and from the ship during a two-week Arctic expedition.

ils of these waterways which, as the polar ice continues to thin and retreat in summer, will be increasingly open to commercial shipping and larger cruise ships. (An article about giant luxury liners plying the Arctic in the Aug. 1 issue of *Maclean's* was headlined "The One Per Cent Are Coming to Canada's North.")

I certainly have no interest in that kind of deluxe tourism. But this July I decided it was time to undertake another much smaller-scale and more adventurous Arctic expedition, this time to the remote archipelagos thousands of kilometres above Scandinavia. It was with Quark Expeditions on the "Sea Adventurer" and originally the plan was to explore both Norway's Svalbard islands and those of Russia's Franz Josef Land. When Russian permission was not received, that was changed to an in-depth circumnavigation of Svalbard plus a thrust further north to

the edge of the polar icepack. It probably turned out for the best as, with the benefit of mostly ideal conditions, we were able to do more and longer landings in spectacular coastal settings that offered a great range of Arctic flora and fauna. Zodiacs (small motorized rubber dinghies) transported us to and from the ship, and some also did sea kayaking.

We boarded the Sea Adventurer on July 5 at Longyearben on the main island of Spitzbergen after waiting hours for an enormous cruise ship (3,000 passengers to our 69) to vacate the pier. This isolated community of 2,000 souls is one of only two in Svalbard, which has no historical indigenous population (it was discovered by Willem Barents in 1596), and at latitude 78°13'N lies over 2,000 kilometres from Oslo by air. The town was founded by an American coal miner. Some mining continues. There is a church, a university college, and an outstanding museum. Of planetary significance is the Global Seed Vault which, con-

structed to withstand any potential disaster, holds some three million known crop varieties. Our voyage under 24-hour sun took us to one stunning landscape after another of mountain peaks and great glaciers as well as sites of historical relics — from mining, whaling, even ill-fated attempts to reach the North Pole by hot-air balloon. Everyone was excited to see polar bears, of course. The first two on land were quite thin, lone females searching out birds' nests for meagre sustenance. The next two were big robust males on the pack ice, one still feasting on a seal. Awesome. On that banner day, when we reached a furthest north of 81°22,' we also had the rare delight of watching a pair of blue whales — earth's largest creatures — around our ship. The furthest northeast we ventured was to Kvitøya ("White Island") which is almost completely covered by a permanent icecap. Overall we would sight some 25 bears, including several mothers with cubs, Arctic foxes, groups of reindeer with calves, bearded seals on ice floes, huge walrus haul-outs and females swimming with calves. The birdlife was extraordinary — brightly beaked puffins, rock ptarmigan, predatory Glaucous gulls, the steep nesting cliffs of kittiwakes, little auks, and guillemots in the hundreds of thousands, and more. The brief summer is bursting with life and colour; the boggy tundra carpeted with all manner of flowering vegetation —

moss campion, mountain avens, purple and yellow saxifrage, Arctic poppy, to name but a few. We were issued expedition parkas (and boots) but had days so sunny and mild (up to 15 C) that a long hike could be done in little more than a T-shirt. Even on days with fog or raw winds, the atmosphere was never less than captivating. Every day was a learning experience that included daily recaps of everything seen and a range of lectures on Arctic subjects. Among our excellent guides, operating zodiacs, some bearing firearms as a precaution against bears, were experts in marine biology, ornithology, geology, history and photography. And as I have found on previous voyages, one meets really interesting fellow passengers. I especially enjoyed my conversations with Steven and Jane Bahls of Rock Island, Illinois, where Steven is president of Augustana College. Jane has written a superb blog of the trip which can be accessed at: <http://www.janebahls.tumblr.com/>. I have also posted an album of photos to my website at: <https://gerrystakes.shutterstock.com/pictures/5358> I was one of only three Canadians on this northern voyage, not unusual as I've observed earlier. Given our country's Arctic reach and responsibilities, I hope that in coming years more Canadians will answer its call and be inspired by the wonders of God's creation.



Gerald Schmitz

CALL OF THE ARCTIC — A polar bear is seen on the pack ice July 9 during Gerald Schmitz's summer trip around Svalbard, a Norwegian archipelago between mainland Norway and the North Pole.

Right to be Cold: One Woman's Story of Protecting Her Culture, the Arctic, and the Whole Planet.) And yet very few Canadians have ever been anywhere north of the Arctic Circle. No doubt the remoteness and the expense of getting there are a factor. However, it seems that rather few Canadians have a desire to experience the Arctic. No one will question a southern escape during our winters, whereas going to the frozen north during our summers will strike many as an odd choice. Having been on three High Arctic summer voyages (and one to the Antarctic), my sense is that even when these take place primarily within the Canadian Arctic, Canadian participants are distinctly in the minority. Most of us seem to take for granted what others find so rare and special. I admit to being fascinated by the tales of polar exploration since I was a kid. And I've had professional opportunities to visit Arctic communities, notably in 1996 when the House of Commons foreign affairs

subsequently picked up by a Norwegian ship after drifting for five hours in lifeboats. There's a good reason on-board safety drills are mandatory. In 2010, author Kathleen Winter went on a voyage similar to mine of 2006, though beginning further south in Greenland at Kangerlussuaq and ending in the Northwest Passage. Her trip was also accompanied by noted Inuit cultural activist Aaju Peter, filmmaker John Houston (son of James Houston, who brought Inuit art to global attention), as well as musician Nathan Rogers, son of the late Stan Rogers who wrote the iconic ballad about the passage. Winter wrote about it in an evocative memoir, *Boundless: Tracing Land and Dream in a New Northwest Passage*. When her ship ran aground in Coronation Gulf, passengers and crew were stranded for three days until they could be transferred to the Coast Guard vessel Amundsen and ferried to Kugluktuk (Coppermine). It's a reminder of the potential per-



Gerald Schmitz

TAKING A BREAK — A bearded seal lounges on an ice floe at Monaco glacier July 8.

Our choices now mark a path for our descendents



Liturgy and Life

Michael Dougherty

A new crop of elementary students made the transition to secondary school a few weeks ago. These 13-year-olds will be in their late 30s when 2040 rolls around. If we today cannot effectively deal with the implications of climate change, resource depletion and global poverty they, by then, will have to face possibly the most dramatic challenges ever faced by humanity. The future of our species, indeed all of creation, could depend on the choices they will make.

We have a pretty good idea now what they will see before them — the outlines of their issues lay before us now. One major warning sign is the gross inequality that permeates and distorts the relationships among our global family. Did you know that the Democratic Republic of Congo has a per capita GDP of only \$770 while Canada’s was \$45,553, according to the IMF in 2015. Twenty-one countries have even higher per capita GDPs than Canada. The average global income, though heading toward \$10,000, hides a growing inequality both within Canada and globally among nations. This wealth gap, this unequal distribution of the bounty of the earth, lays at the heart of many of the conflicts and conundrums we now face. If this trend continues unchecked, how grave will its consequences be in 2040?

In the first reading the prophet Amos, writing during the reign of the Kingdom of Israel’s Jeroboam II in the

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

eightth century BC, railed against the social corruption and the oppression of the poor and helpless then afflicting his land. King Jeroboam had nearly restored the whole of the former northern realm of Solomon by conquering Syria, Moab, and Ammon. An artistic revival followed the economic development triggered by the kingdom’s expansion. Peace and prosperity did not guarantee justice. Amos calls out the rich and content. By their neglect of the needs of the poor, he sees them precipitating their own descendant’s downfall.

Pope Francis in his social encyclical *Laudato Si’* shares this perspective. “We here in the Global North need to grow in the conviction that a decrease in the pace of production and consumption can at times give rise to another form of progress and development. Efforts to promote a sustainable use of natural resources are not a waste of money, but rather an investment capable of providing other economic benefits in the medium term. . . . We know how unsustainable is the behaviour of those who constantly consume and destroy, while others are not yet able to live in a way worthy of their human dignity.”

Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time September 25, 2016	Amos 6:1a, 4-6 Psalm 146 1 Timothy 6:11-16 Luke 16:19-31
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Paul writing to Timothy, whom he mentored and travelled with, urges him to “fight the good fight of the faith.” The logic of our consumer society tempts all of us to place our wants before others’ needs. The pursuit of “righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, gentleness” will keep us on the right tract and allow us to hear the cry of the poor.

Can we hear the litany of social concerns arising in our own communities and country? Did you know that more than one in seven Canadians live in poverty? That 62 per cent of children living in the North are food insecure? Precarious employment has increased nearly 50 per cent over the past two decades. Three million Canadian house-

holds are precariously housed, that is, living in unaffordable, below standards, or overcrowded housing conditions. In 2014, 64.1 per cent of food bank users were from Canada’s First Nations communities. Twenty-one per cent of single mothers in Canada raise their children while living in poverty. What are the global facts? These and many other cares call out to us. (<http://www.cwp-csp.ca/poverty/just-the-facts/>)

Luke in the gospel shares the cautionary parable Jesus told of the rich man and Lazarus. Dives, as the rich man has come to be known, obviously knew Lazarus during his lifetime. If he did, Dives also surely knew of his crying needs. Ignoring those needs resulted in the unbreachable chasm opening between Lazarus and Dives after their deaths. The parable prods us to consider what can we do to address the problems of poverty and injustice around us now.

How can we respond to the challenges laid before us by Amos and Luke? At the local level every community I know of offers anti-poverty initiatives we can support. What about globally? Did you know that the world spends over \$1.7 trillion dollars a year on arms? How much would it cost to solve the world hunger crisis? The price has been estimated by the United Nations to be \$30 billion a year. What would be the cost of providing clean water for all? According to the WHO to improved water and sanitation services for everyone would cost around US\$22.6 billion per year.

Cardinal Basil Hume once said, “Either we invest in arms and death or we invest in life and the future development of the peoples of the world.” The choices we make individually and those we make collectively through our governments mark the path we have chosen for our descendents.

“Like our responses to the global environmental crisis, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to social challenges have proven ineffective. Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity” (*Laudato Si’*).

The wise and the wicked both feed off of the same sacred fire

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



See the wise and wicked ones
Who feed upon life’s sacred fire

These are lines from Gordon Lightfoot’s song *Don Quixote*, and they highlight an important truth: both the wise and the wicked feed off the same energy. And it’s good energy, sacred energy, divine energy, irrespective of its use. The greedy and the violent feed off the same energy as do the wise and the saints. There’s one source of energy and, even though it can be irresponsibly, selfishly, and horrifically misused, it remains always God’s energy.

Unfortunately, we don’t often think of things that way. Recently I was listening to a very discouraged man who, looking at the selfishness, greed, and violence in our world, blamed it all on the devil. “It must be the anti-Christ,” he said, “How else do you explain all this, so many people breaking

basically every commandment.”

He’s right in his assessment that the selfishness, greed, and violence we see in our world today are “anti-Christ” (though perhaps not the Anti-Christ spoken of in Scripture). However, he’s wrong about where selfishness, greed, and violence are drawing their energy from. The energy they are drawing upon comes from God, not from the devil. What we see in all the negative things that make up so much of the evening news each day is not evil energy but rather the misuse of sacred energy. Evil deeds are not the result of evil energies but the result of the misuse of sacred energy. Whether you consider the devil a person or a metaphor, either way, he has no other origin than from God. God created the devil, and created him good. His wickedness results from the misuse of that goodness.

All energy comes from God and all energy is good, but it can be wickedly misused. Moreover, it’s ironic that the ones who seem to drink most deeply from the well-springs of divine energy are, invariably, the best and the worst, the wise and the wicked, saints and sinners. These mainline the fire. The rest of us, living in the gap

between saints and sinners, tend to struggle more to actually catch fire, to truly drink deeply from the well-springs of divine energy. Our struggle isn’t so much in misusing divine energy, but rather in not succumbing to chronic numbness, depression, fatigue, flatness, bitterness, envy, and the kind of discouragement which has us going through life lacking fire and forever protesting that we have a right to be uncreative and unhappy. Great saints and great sinners don’t live lives of “quiet desperation”; they drink deeply sacred energy, become inflamed by that fire, and make that the source for either their extraordinary wisdom or their wild wickedness.

This insight, saints and sinners feed off the same source, isn’t just an interesting irony. It’s an important truth that can help us better understand our relationship to God, to the things of this world, and to ourselves. We must be clear on what’s good and what’s bad, otherwise we end up both misunderstanding ourselves and misunderstanding the energies of our world.

A healthy spirituality needs to be predicated on a proper understanding of God, ourselves, the world, and the energies that drive our world and these are the non-negotiable Christian principles within which we need to understand ourselves, the world, and the use of our energies: *First*, God is good, God is the source of all energy everywhere, and that energy is good. *Second*, we are made by God, we are good, and our nature is not evil. *Finally*, everything in our world has been made by God and it too is good.

So where do sin and evil enter? They enter in when we misuse the good energy God has given us and they enter in when we relate in bad ways to the good things of creation. Simply put: We are good and creation around us is good, but we can relate to it in the wrong way, precisely through selfishness, greed, or violence. Likewise, our energies are good, including all those energies that underlie our propensity toward pride, greed, lust, envy, anger, and sloth; but we can misuse those energies and draw upon life’s sacred fire in self-serving, lustful, greedy, and wicked ways.

Sin and evil, therefore, arise out of the misuse of our energies, not

out of the energies themselves. So, too, sin and evil arise out of how we relate to certain things in the world, not out of some inherent evil inside of our own persons or inside of the things themselves. The wicked aren’t evil persons drawing energy from the devil. They’re good people irresponsibly and selfishly misusing sacred energy. The energy itself is still good, despite its misuse.

We don’t tap into evil energies when we give in to greed, lust, envy, sloth, or anger. No, rather we misuse the good and sacred energy within which we live and move and have our being. The wise and wicked both feed off the same sacred fire.

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

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Ordinary Ukrainians just want their dignity back

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

With 10,000 dead in Ukraine's eastern Donbass region, Russian tanks and missile systems massing on the eastern border, two million internally displaced Ukrainians, Crimea already under Russian rule and the Ukrainian Black Sea fleet sunk or stolen, Rev. Peter Galadza is putting his trust in the politics of the beatitudes.

Along with about 1.2 million other Ukrainian-Canadians, Galadza understands just how easily his country is sacrificed on the altar of power politics and strategic interests.

"If you're a poor country, you're going to be sacrificed," Galadza said. "But you see, from a Ukrainian Catholic perspective, this gets frustrating. Because throughout their history Ukrainian Catholics have frequently had no one to turn to, except the church. They have tended to believe — sometimes naively, but they nonetheless believe — that an institution grounded in the politics of the beatitudes will sooner or later step up to the plate and defend the underdog."

On Dec. 5, 1994, the Russian Federation, the United States and Great Britain signed the Budapest Memorandum, which guaranteed Ukraine's security and its borders in exchange for Ukraine signing onto the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear weapons state. When the Soviet empire collapsed, Ukraine found itself in possession of an enormous nuclear arsenal. By giving up the weapons, Ukraine had hoped for a peaceful, independent future.

No such luck. For more than two years Ukraine has instead faced Russian soldiers in its territory trying to break off pieces of the country in the name of protecting and uniting Russian speakers.

"It is a hot war where people are dying every day, where Russian forces are shelling Ukrainian territory every day, Ukrainian soldiers are dying and being wounded," said Orest Zakydalsky, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress' senior policy adviser. "We are working constantly to keep this an issue that the public is aware of."

When the perogies are served and the dancers line up for North America's largest Ukrainian cultural festival in Toronto's Bloor West Village Sept. 16 - 18, the dancers, singers and cooks will be thinking about their bleeding nation on the eastern edge of Europe — even if they are two, three or four generations removed from immigration to Canada.

The Toronto Ukrainian Festival will open with an ecumenical prayer service where Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Ukrainians will bow their heads for their missing cousins, aunts and grandparents who have been displaced, injured or killed in the fighting.

"It can't help but run through the festival," said festival volunteer Sonia Holiad. "It's not something you can ignore."

But many Ukrainian-Canadians find themselves wondering why the media can't muster much interest in Ukraine's war.



CNS/Alexander Ermochenko, EPA

A NATION AT WAR — In this March 2016 photo a man stands in front his damaged house after shelling in the Ukrainian town of Makeevka.

"It really has slipped from the headlines. People might think that everything is hunky-dory and it's not," said Rev. Andriy Chirovsky. "It is very frustrating precisely because we are constantly aware of how disastrous the situation is and how dangerous it continues to be."

Ukraine's war with Russia ought to matter to everybody, said Galadza.

"Is no one able to connect the dots?" he asked. "How the hell are you going to convince people in the Middle East not to seek nuclear weapons? How are you going to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear arsenal when this is how a country is treated when it does give up its nuclear arsenal?"

A false picture of the war as a mostly internal conflict between an Orthodox, Russian-speaking eastern half and a Catholic, Ukrainian-speaking, Europe-oriented western half drives Chirovsky nuts.

"To say that Ukraine is a Catholic west and an Orthodox east is completely inaccurate. I mean the Ukrainian Greco-Catholic Church has parishes in (pro-Russian stronghold) Donetsk. We have monasteries in Donetsk. We have an exarchate in Donetsk. We have a bishop for Donetsk. It's ridiculous to speak in those terms . . . 60 per cent of the Ukrainian troops on the Ukrainian government side are Russian speaking."

A 2006 survey by the Razumkov Centre, a Ukrainian NGO, found 62 per cent of people living in Ukraine's Russian-speaking eastern provinces considered Ukraine their "fatherland" against just 20 per cent who identified with Russia.

The religious dimension of the war is hard to avoid, but even harder to understand. The biggest church in Ukraine is the Ukrainian branch of the Russian Orthodox Church. It has 12,000 parishes, 45 dioceses, 186 monasteries, 20 schools and colleges and perhaps as many as 10,000 clergy. Moscow's Patriarch Kirill is seen as a political asset by Vladimir Putin's regime, and Kirill has spoken about the Russian Orthodox Church working in harmony (a semi-theological concept in Orthodoxy called "symphonia") with Putin. Kirill even called Putin's rise to power

a "miracle of God."

If Putin is going to be the protector of Russian language, heritage and culture worldwide, there's no way to separate any of that culture or heritage from Russia's Orthodox Christian history. But in Ukraine, Russian Orthodox parishes are beginning to distance themselves from Moscow. The head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine, Metropolitan Onufri, has stepped back from Patriarch Kirill's more stridently pro-Russia statements.

Russian Orthodox in Canada and the United States are tired of Russian nationalist tirades from the pulpit and are seeking refuge in Ukrainian Catholic parishes, said Chirovsky.

"They've come to me and they've said, 'I just can't go there any more. Constant harrangues from the pulpit against those Ukrainians . . . Can I come to your church?'"

As a parish pastor, Chirovsky doesn't wall the liturgy off from politics.

"At every liturgy I pray and I pray out loud, I give a petition, that our brothers and sisters in Ukraine might be freed from external aggression and from internal corruption," he said.

In Ukraine for a global synod of Ukrainian Catholic bishops, Eparch Ken Nowakowski of New Westminster, B.C., stumbled upon a different religious response to the war. He was visiting a small town where he had gone to ordain a deacon who will eventually serve as a priest in his diocese. There, he was invited by local women to pray the rosary with them for victims of the war.

"For the last three years, every day at 8 p.m. these women gather," Nowakowski told The Catholic Register. "I found out that they're not unique. In most of the villages there are some form of everyday prayers for the people who are at the front. It was very moving, very intense for me. You can see that these women — some of them have relatives at the front, some of them don't — nevertheless, this is their way of contributing to those who are at the front."

Nowakowski finds that in Ukraine it is easy to see past the artificial divisions of Ukrainians

into Ukrainian speakers and Russian speakers. The church — Catholic and Orthodox — finds itself faced with the wounds of a nation as they are manifested in families and communities.

"I think that the religious leaders are very much, I think on all sides, trying to support those people who are at war, support those people who have been wounded," he said. "There's been around 10,000 men killed in the war and their bodies are returned to western Ukraine. If you consider that your average parish priest then will be preparing for the funeral, will have to deal with the funeral. And, as is the tradition in the Ukrainian churches, both Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic, there's a nine-day service after the funeral and then a 40-day service and then a one-year anniversary — those priests are very much affected, as are the parishioners, by what's going on."

sary — those priests are very much affected, as are the parishioners, by what's going on."

At the synod in Lviv, Nowakowski was presenting a new program called "The Vibrant Parish." It fits into the Year of Mercy with a theme of *diakonia*, service to others.

"In many ways this program is essential, especially for our parishes in eastern Ukraine and in those affected areas," Nowakowski said. "Because it's what we do as a family parish. We have the Word of God, we have liturgy, we have prayer, we need leadership. So we see ourselves in this framework."

Ukraine should be an example for the world, said Galadza.

"We've never had an empire. We have never invaded other countries. We don't have some kind of jingoistic, national pride that would incline us to hold on to nuclear weaponry," he said. "It's the fact that Ukrainians have frequently had no one else to turn to that they turn to our Lord. It's that fact that I think can teach us a lot in Canada."

Ukraine's not a perfect country. Corrupt billionaires and politicians have too readily directed their poor country for personal gain, said Chirovsky. But ordinary Ukrainians "simply want to have their human dignity back," he said.

"They want to live in peace, in an independent Ukraine which has never waged an offensive war against anyone," he said. "That's one thing I'm very proud of as a Ukrainian Christian. Ukraine has never waged an offensive war in all of its history. It's always been defensive. Ukraine has not tried to acquire anyone else's territory. I'm proud of that as a Christian."



Courtesy K. Nowakowski

UKRAINIAN SYNOD — The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Patriarchal Synod was official opened recently with a celebration of the divine liturgy at the historic St. George's Cathedral Sobor in Lviv, Ukraine. His Beatitude Sviatoslav was the main celebrant. The bishops of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church from Ukraine and Western and Central Europe along with their brother bishops from North and South America and Australia were joined by His Beatitude Gregory III Melkite Catholic Patriarch of Antioch and All the East, and Alexandria and Jerusalem. The synod meetings ended Sept. 11. The synodal theme this year was *Diakonia* — service to others. Seen in this photo are Eparch Ken Nowakowski and His Beatitude Gregory III.

Education for First Nations a reconciliation priority

Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



It was a truly impressive event on Parliament Hill — with barely a politician in sight!

I was listening to young James Bay Cree students speaking on why they wanted a safe school for themselves, their sisters and brothers, and other northern Ontario communities. With them were some Ottawa-area grade school students, with their teachers and parents, happy to lend their support. Their conviction and enthusiasm converted me then and there to support the Shannen’s Dream campaign for educational equality and equal school funding for all Canadian children.

The larger story has now been told in Charlie Angus’ book *Children of the Broken Treaty: Canada’s Lost Promise and One Girl’s Dream*. While the struggle to get a school in an isolated First

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

Nations community is engaging, Angus frames the current situation in terms of ruptured treaty commitments, residential school horrors and ongoing wilful government neglect. The author’s personal knowledge of this history arose as his family housed Shannen and Serena Koostachin when they came south to attend high school. (Angus also served these communities since 2004 as the member of Parliament for Timmins-James Bay.)

Reading this book will leave you angered and frustrated, but also better equipped to begin the work of reconciliation with indigenous peoples that our country, and our faith communities, so desperately requires.

Treaty 9, signed in 1905, committed the federal government to provide education for the Aboriginal children of the region. Here began “the long-standing pattern of obstructing treaty obligations under the guise of saving money for the government.” The Department of Indian Affairs obtained the power to remove children from their communities, but then handed responsibility for education to churches. Bureau-

crats set the transfer payments so low “it institutionalized the abuse and deprivation that followed.”

St. Anne’s Indian Residential School was established by the Oblates, assisted by the Grey Nuns, in Fort Albany. Sadly, “the Oblates underbid the Anglicans for access to Cree children” since they were given fewer financial resources than granted to the Bishop Horden School at Moose Factory. St. Anne’s has a recognized and dark history of abuse, and was shut down in the mid-1970s. By 1976, Attawapiskat got its own school — but shoddy construction of diesel fuel lines to the school and teachers’ units caused thousands of gallons of leakage. Soon the teachers were getting headaches and their students getting sick from the toxic cocktail.

A new school was promised, but revoked by the Conservative government in 2007. A 2009 study by the Parliamentary Budget Officer reported that of the 803 federal reserve schools across the country, less than 50 per cent were listed in good condition, and 21 per cent had not ever been inspected! Since 1996, when Liberal Finance Minister Paul Martin imposed a two per cent cap on all spending for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the situation worsened. Angus states, “First Nations students are underfunded between 20 and 50 per cent compared with students in the provincial systems.”

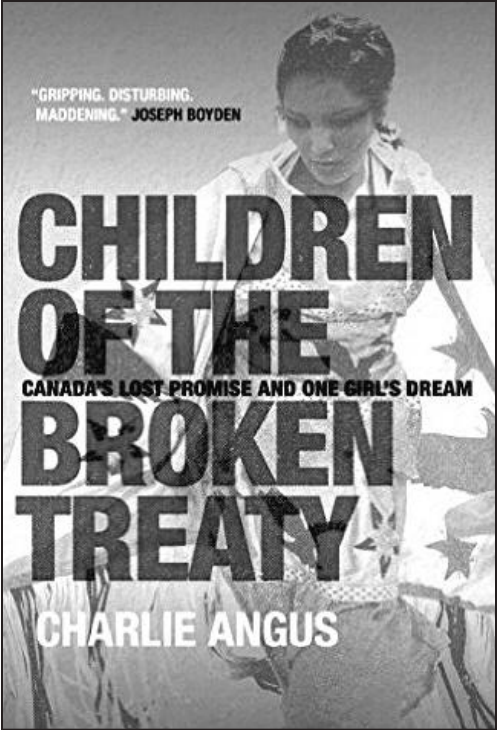
So youth began the Attawapiskat school campaign, with hundreds of southern schools

responding to YouTube and social media pleas of Cree students they had never met. I was thrilled to learn that the first southern school to engage was one I attended — Neil McNeil Catholic boys school in Scarboro.

Shannen Koostachin was an irrepressible student leader of “the largest youth-led children’s rights movement in Canada’s history,” according to Dr. Cindy Blackstock. Shannen unfortunately died in a 2010 highway accident, and her photo hangs in an exhibit in Winnipeg’s Canadian Museum of Human Rights.

While Attawapiskat got their school, the Shannen’s Dream campaign continues, until equality of funding for all First Nations schools becomes a reality.

If Canadians desire real reconciliation with indigenous peoples, we must join efforts to redress the inequities in First Nations education, child welfare funding and other issues. People of faith were justifiably disappointed when the news broke this spring that the almost 50 Catholic entities involved in residential schools fell far short in raising the funds they hoped to contribute to the residen-



This is the cover of *Children of the Broken Treaty* by Charlie Angus.

tial schools settlement. In September, the federal government must reply to the questions Charlie Angus posed in Parliament: how much money was raised of the \$25 million target, and how much actually went to school survivors, and how much of the total compensation owed was considered an expense, legal cost, or administrative fee of the church?

Let’s agree with Truth and Reconciliation Commissioner Murray Sinclair, who stated, “Education got us into this mess, and education will get us out.”

Government needs to take back ownership of Port of Churchill

By Dean Harder

Most of us take for granted that the majority of our roads and highways are publicly funded and built at cost in order to serve the overall public good. There is no clamour asking why those roads are not being given away to private companies to let road barons profit from them. For good reason! If anything, recent events in northern Manitoba should prove to us that, like highways, the fate of crucial rail lines should not be in the hands of private companies.

The Port of Churchill and the Hudson Bay Railway that serves it have real potential to benefit the communities they connect to — if they are publicly owned and managed to serve Canada’s greater public interest. Both are vital infrastructure with important and irreplaceable roles in both our economy and social fabric.

Churchill is the Canadian prairies’ only ocean port. It provides an additional route for grain transportation. Utilizing this corridor reduces pressure on the West Coast and Thunder Bay to help prevent logistics bottlenecks when there is a bumper crop. From a farmers’ standpoint, the port can also counteract the inefficiencies caused by vertically integrated grain companies shipping exclusively to their

Harder is a National Farmers Union board member. He farms with his family on their grain farm near Lowe Farm, Man.



Wikimedia Commons/Ansgar Walk

WORTH SAVING — The Port of Churchill in Churchill, Man., is a port on Hudson Bay. The port was originally owned by the Government of Canada but was sold in 1997 to the American company OmniTRAX to run privately. The port and railroad freight operations have been shut down, but Dean Harder argues that the port is worth saving.

own grain terminals at Canada’s other ports. Shipping grain over the rail line that serves Churchill reduces maintenance costs for prairie highways in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. It also supports the line’s economic viability, providing northern residents and tourists a gateway to the North that is less expensive and more environmentally friendly than air travel.

In spite of all these benefits, the future of both the port and the railway are uncertain. OmniTRAX abruptly closed the Port of Churchill on July 25, 2016, and the fate of the rail line that connects to the rest of Canada is now up in the air. Today’s situation is the result of a dangerous domino effect set in motion by OmniTRAX’s negligence combined with a series of missteps by different governments. It can be traced back to the privatization of Canadian National Railway in 1995, the give-away of the Hudson Bay rail line to American-owned Omnitrax in 1997, and the removal of the farmer-run single desk Canadian Wheat Board in 2011.

To secure the port’s benefits for future generations of Canadians, the federal government should take back ownership of both the Port of Churchill and the Hudson’s Bay Railway. In addition, it needs to take measures to ensure the port remains viable for the communities connected to the rail line and farming communities that are within its catch basin.

Northern communities, local workers, businesses and farmers who rely on the line must be part of the decision-making for the publicly owned entity that replaces OmniTRAX as owner and manager of these facilities.

As they do with roads and highways, the federal and provincial governments must commit to investing in the rail line and port infrastructure in perpetuity. There should never be risk of potential selling off of line assets.

An adequate grain catch basin fed by both CN and CPR railways must be secured to bring grain to the rail line serving Churchill. Storage facilities must be secured and, if necessary, built, to ensure grain is available to feed the port

during its operating season. The railway must be set up to actively facilitate rapid grain movement in years with large crops. Allocating railcars to serve Churchill must be a priority during its active season.

The mere existence of the needed facilities is not enough, however. Grain movement is essential for port viability. Therefore a grain logistics oversight system must be in place to make all the parts work together effectively. A farmer-first orderly marketing agency is needed to secure a strong export market for grain handled through Churchill, along with good prices for farmers. Logistics oversight, together with the marketing agency, would ensure the port’s viability by meeting or exceeding a 500,000 tonne annual throughput.

In short, we need to replicate the function of the single-desk Canadian Wheat Board to ensure both the railway and the port are viable by providing a consistent and reliable flow of grain through the port. Assurances from the private grain merchants are paper thin and do not benefit farmers’ bottom line.

With the right plan, the Port of Churchill can be a thriving entity that supports thousands of people and hundreds of businesses while bringing vibrancy to our North. Governments must ensure that the rail line and Port of Churchill belong to the people and must not be sold off or given away ever again.

Churchill is our Canadian Prairie and northern port. We are all Churchill.

Paris clinic aims to tackle an age-old practice

By Elizabeth Bryant

ST-DENIS, France (RNS) — Miriam clearly remembers the day she was cut, bundled by two village women into a bathroom at the age of seven, where a third performed the procedure. “It was very, very painful,” the young Malian woman says softly, as her two tiny children pinch her cheeks, crying for attention.

She still gets bouts of pain, especially during sex. But she is far more concerned for her five-month-old daughter and lives in fear that the baby will eventually suffer the same fate.

“All my sisters were cut,” Miriam says. “The same with their children. It’s a practice in my village.”

The 27-year-old mother is not in Bamako, Mali, but at a new women’s centre outside Paris that is among the few in France to offer holistic treatment for victims of female genital mutilation, or FGM. Among the clientele, Miriam’s story is chillingly mundane.

Up to 60,000 women in France, and an estimated half-million or more across the European Union, have undergone FGM, the cutting or removal of the labia or clitoris that carries painful and sometimes fatal consequences.

The practice is largely carried out by Muslim and some Christian communities, although it pre-dates both religions and is not sanctioned by the Quran.

Worldwide, where the UN estimates about 200 million women and girls have been cut, prevalence rates are shrinking in some places.

But in the European Union, the migrant influx is actually increasing FGM numbers, and the same is happening in North America, experts say — although patchy reporting and resources make it difficult to gauge the problem, much less find comprehensive solutions.

With one of the EU’s highest counts of FGM victims, mostly within its large, West African community, France has arguably adopted the region’s toughest response, including prison terms of up to 20 years for perpetuating the practice. It is also a top European country of refuge for those at risk of FGM, which can be grounds for asylum claims.

“France is definitely one of the leaders in terms of prosecutions and legal recourse,” says Natalie Kontoulis, communications and advocacy officer for End FGM European Network, a Brussels-based umbrella group. “But evidence shows fear is not a good enough motivator to stop a practice that has been around for hundreds or thousands of years.”

Staff at the women’s centre know this first-hand. The brainchild of a French-Lebanese doctor who spent years treating abused immigrant women, the centre opened its doors recently in one of France’s poorest and most ethnically mixed regions.

“Many of the women who come here are victims of domestic violence,” including sexual abuse, says the centre’s midwife co-ordinator, Mathilde Delespine. Others come for more mundane sexual issues.

The cheerful, chalet-style building, where walls are dotted with

portraits of female activists, offers an array of specialists under a single roof. It is part of an adjacent public hospital, where some 14 per cent of annual births are by women who have undergone FGM.

On a recent afternoon, Delespine ushers Miriam (she asked that her real name be withheld for fear of reprisals) and her children into a small examination room. The young Malian immigrant has travelled from Spain, directed to the centre by a French NGO. Her husband cannot find work and wants to return to Mali.

“I told him I won’t go,” she tells Delespine. “I don’t want my girl cut.”

Delespine probes gently. Does she love her husband? She suggests how Miriam might still get sexual pleasure, and makes appointments with the centre’s gynecologist and psychologist. Finally she examines Miriam’s tiny daughter and writes out a certificate attesting that she has not been cut. The document is designed to make it more difficult to take the baby from French territory to a country where FGM is practised.

Many of Europe’s FGM victims were cut before immigrating, experts say, or during holidays back in the “home” country. A



RNS/Elizabeth Bryant

PUTTING A STOP TO A CHILLING PRACTICE — Midwife Mathilde Delespine speaks with a Malian woman at a new women’s centre outside Paris, France. The woman is afraid her child will be excised, as she was.

small number are cut in Europe, activist Kontoulis says, although evidence is often anecdotal.

“The cutters often come for a short period of time, they cut a load of girls and then they go back to their homelands,” she says. “So they’re hard to find, and the community closes ranks and won’t disclose them.”

FGM is illegal across the EU, where the European Parliament estimates 180,000 women and girls are at risk each year. Yet few countries strictly enforce national laws or establish measures to turn back the tide, activists say.

“Many member states do have the political will, but they’re not putting their resources where their mouth is,” Kontoulis adds.

In some cases, that is changing. Judges in Britain, which has among the highest cutting rates, are beginning to issue FGM protection orders. In Belgium, grassroots organizations are creating tools to help health care and other professionals detect risks and take preventative action.

France has jailed more than 100 people under a general penal code that sets sentences of up to 10 years for cutting — and up to 20 if the victim is a minor. Both cutters and parents can be sanctioned, even if the cutting takes place overseas.

But cracking down is only part of the answer, activists say. “If we

want to eradicate the practice in France, we need to convince the communities to abandon it,” says Marguerite Bannwarth of French NGO Equipop, which fights FGM in France and West Africa.

Equipop trains community activists in France’s immigrant community and works with local NGOs to change mindsets in Mali’s western Kayes region, in which many of these immigrants were born or have ties. In some cases, experts say, home communities have abandoned cutting, while the diaspora continues the practice.

Many French health care and social workers are not trained to detect FGM, activists say, much less track its victims.

Back at the women’s centre, Delespine jots down numbers of local NGOs that can help Miriam find a place to stay and eat, at least for now. Her long-term fate, and that of her daughter, is uncertain.

“We see this often,” Delespine says, referring to the destitute women who knock at the centre’s door. “Most have been here just a short time and want to protect their children.”

“Of course, education is a better option, but the judicial response can be one answer,” Delespine adds. “It’s important to use the law to say this kind of violence is unacceptable.”

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Protect the environment

Pope Francis is reiterating his call for care of the environment, and religious leaders are echoing his concern.

In his message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, Sept. 1, Pope Francis proposed adding the care and protection of creation to the traditional list of corporal and spiritual works of mercy (PM, Sept. 7).

As a spiritual work of mercy, the pope said, care for creation requires “a grateful contemplation of God’s world,” while as a corporal work, it calls for “simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness.”

When we hurt the earth, we also hurt the poor and thus commit a sin against creation, against the poor and against those who have not yet been born, the papal message explained.

Pope Francis came back to this theme in an audience Sept. 8 with participants of a Latin American conference on the care for creation. The Sept. 7 - 8 conference, “America in Dialogue: Our Common Home,” was held in Rome and sponsored by Organization of American States and the Institute for Inter-religious Dialogue of Buenos Aires, as well as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The conference addressed *Laudato Si’*, his encyclical on the environment.

He told the delegates religions can play an important role in protecting the environment and

defending human rights in their countries, their communities and their schools.

The world, he said, is looking at religious believers to see their reaction to protecting the environment and human rights. Members of different religious communities must work alongside non-believers so that “we may give effective responses to the many plagues in our world.”

Religious communities also must stand together in condemning acts of violence and terrorism in the name of God, he said. These actions have caused “religions to be pointed to as the ones responsible for the evil that surrounds us.”

Pope Francis told the participants that the emphasis on God’s mercy and love during the Holy Year provides an occasion to fight for creation, so that it may be a home “where everyone has a place and nobody is excluded or eliminated.”

Meanwhile, The Churches and Mining Network, which includes Catholic bishops, priests and laypeople, leaders of Christian churches and environmentalists, met in Santo Domingo and issued a statement Sept. 4 (see story, page 2). It pointed out that large-scale mining and extractive operations are failing to deliver economic benefits while causing environmental damage and human suffering throughout Latin America.

It called on governments, church leaders and civil society organizations to find alternatives to so-called “mega-mining” operations. The statement was signed by roughly 50 members coming from at least 15 countries. It emphasized heightening conflict between

international mining companies and rural communities, often populated by indigenous peoples.

A report released in June by the international non-governmental organization Global Witness noted that 185 people were killed in such conflicts across the globe last year, the highest number on record. Nearly two of every three of those deaths occurred in Latin American countries, led by Brazil’s 50 killings, according to the report.

In Bolivia, four workers and the country’s deputy minister of the interior were killed in recent violence. In March, Berta Caceres, a Honduran environmental activist and indigenous rights leader who won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize in 2015 for her work in opposing a proposed hydroelectric dam, was shot dead in her home.

Environmental degradation includes mercury pollution and a resurgence of malaria from gold mining in Venezuela, destruction of the rainforest in Peru and sulphur dioxide pollution from copper mining.

People in the Global North are largely unaware of these issues. Out of sight, out of mind. They are interested in profits made by their companies and use of the raw materials. Communities in the Global South, who don’t receive the economic benefits promised and who lose control over their natural resources, are the losers.

The World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation needs to be followed up by an examination of and change in “simple, daily gestures” in our lifestyle. — PWN

Reality of education spending in Saskatchewan vs. rhetoric

By Deani Van Pelt and
Jason Clemens
The Fraser Institute

It’s that time of year again when parents across Saskatchewan are sending their kids off to school after the summer break. And when parents meet in the schoolyards and drop-zones for the first time in months, conversations may turn to “cuts” in education funding, the elimination of an education assistant, the state of class sizes, or perhaps even the closing of a school.

So it’s an opportune time to understand the reality of educa-

tion spending in Saskatchewan versus the convenient rhetoric.

It’s easy for administrators, politicians, and other apologists for public schools to blame the observed problems on a lack of funding. It allows education leaders to point the finger at someone else. The reality, however, is that the public school system in Saskatchewan has received large increases in funding over the last decade, which implies that the problems in the education system relate to organization and management rather than funding.

First, some facts about education spending on public schools in Saskatchewan. According to data from Statistics Canada, total spending on public school education in Saskatchewan has grown from about \$1.5 billion in 2004 - 05 to \$2.5 billion 2013 - 14, the most recent year of available data.

That’s an increase of almost \$1 billion in education spending on public schools in just a decade. (Unlike Saskatchewan’s provincial budget, we’ve added pension and capital spending into overall education spending totals.)

Furthermore, because it ignores enrolments, that \$1 billion increase underestimates the real increase in education spending in the province. Statistics Canada data indicate that over the same 10-year period, enrolment in public schools in Saskatchewan declined 1.5 per cent, from roughly 176,000 students to about 173,000 students.

Accounting for the higher spending levels and lower number of students means that the per student level of spending in public schools increased 39.0 per cent between 2004 - 05 and 2013 - 14 (and this data accounts for the effects of inflation).

Specifically, per student spending in public schools in Saskatchewan increased from \$10,476 in 2004 - 05 to \$14,562 in 2013 - 14. No other province spends as much per student, and no other province experienced a percentage increase as high as Saskatchewan over that period.

Simply put, Saskatchewan is spending considerably more money now, on a per-student basis, on public schools than it did a decade ago.

This is not to say that individual schools, school districts, and

— RESOURCE, page 15

Aleppo has become a dark city: Jesuit

Rev. Ziad Hilal is a Syrian Jesuit priest who spent several years serving the Christian community in the Syrian city of Homs. He spoke Aug. 12 with international Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need, to report on his recent trip to Aleppo, Syria’s second-largest city, which is hotly contested between the regime and opposition forces.

What was the situation like in Aleppo?

There is electricity for maybe one hour, two hours a day, but not every day. Then it is a dark. Some people use generators to get electricity for a few hours. But from midnight until morning it is black — a dark city — and nothing happens.

The city is divided between the opposition and the government, and people cannot move between the different parts of the city. For many that meant not being able to go to work, losing jobs, and losing their homes.

Are there any signs of hope?

The churches and Christian organizations provide a sign of hope. There are many services, funded by Aid to the Church in

Need, Jesuit Relief Services, other agencies, as well as the local bishops, to help Christians to stay in their land — and also to offer aid to the Muslim people. For example, there is a local soup kitchen that gives out 7,500 meals a day; it is run by both Christians and Muslims, and many of the beneficiaries are Muslims.

The problem in Syria is not between Christians and Muslims — and this relief work shows how our church is working for reconciliation.

Can you give us an example of how families are suffering?

There are many poor families without work. One Catholic family has three children — ages seven, eight and 14 — working in a restaurant. Their father has died,

we don’t know how, and their mother is also working.

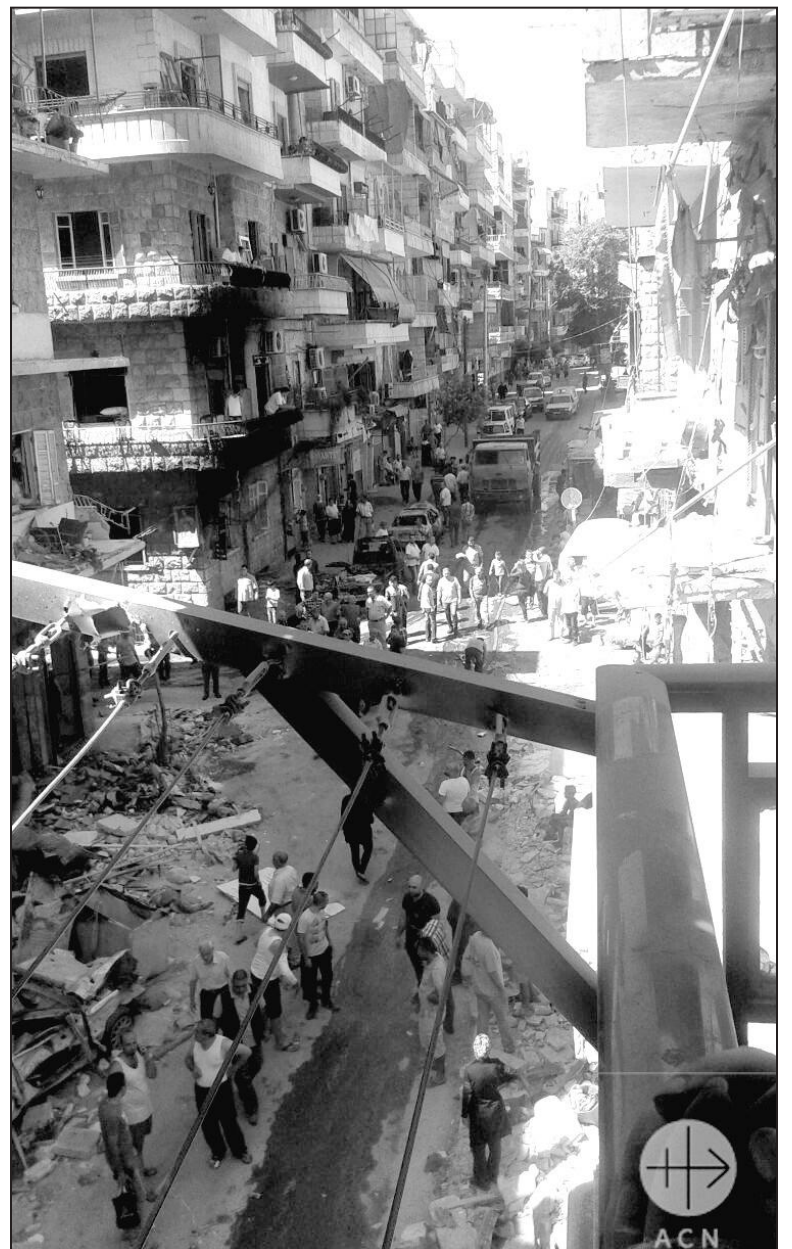
I choked up when the owner of the restaurant told me he could not say no to these children, even though business is slow — it’s because they are helping their mother, the man said.

What can you say about the military situation? Rebels have driven deeper into the city, reports say.

It is chaos now — and not only in Aleppo but throughout Syria; there is fighting everywhere; we speak a lot about Aleppo but let’s not forget the other cities. It is the same situation; our country is divided now.

The only way out is through dialogue among Syrians themselves. Using weapons we have not been able to arrive at a resolution. We have to work for peace — that’s most important. This is our cry today: that peace in Syria is possible.

This is the only hope for us.



Aid to the Church in Need

CHAOS IN ALEPPO — The state of Aleppo “is chaos now — and not only in Aleppo but throughout Syria,” says Rev. Ziad Hilal, a Syrian Jesuit priest who spent several years serving the Christian community in the Syrian city of Homs.

Farmers had good relations with Aboriginal neighbours

The Editor: It is an exceedingly sad and troubling incident which involved the shooting of a young Aboriginal man on a farm property owned by Gerald Stanley near Biggar, Sask.

The details of why the car in which Colten Boushie was a passenger and had driven onto Stanley's property has not been clearly established at this time. But, it is alleged that Stanley fired a shot into the vehicle, killing Boushie. Stanley pleaded not guilty, was charged by the RCMP for second degree murder, and released on bail.

It was really a disappointing experience to read some of the online racist remarks against Aboriginal people living in this province. The worst one suggested that Stanley should not have left witnesses!

It was a surprise to learn that we have people in this province who are that racist.

In Canada, and in this province, we have families that have come from different cultures, languages, religions, etc. Racism is not acceptable. It does not contribute to a peaceful neighbourhood.

Aboriginal people lived in this province hundreds of years before we (the whites) settled on their land, and pushed our Aboriginal neighbours onto reserves.

In the early 1950s some of us farmers from the Cudworth area visited elders on the One Arrow reserve to negotiate an agreement to produce grain crops on their land. We met with two elders that had wonderfully descriptive names: Almightyvoice and Paintednose. We were young and anxious to be courteous. In speaking to Almightyvoice, one of us inadvertently addressed him as Mr. Almightynose. For a moment there was a stunned silence. Then our Aboriginal friends burst out in laughter and we then joined them. They had a good sense of humour.

We farmed the land that we had leased on the reserve for two or three years. But left it, since it was too much of a hassle to move machinery a distance of about 30 miles. During that time, we had Aboriginal and Métis working with us there and helping us on our own farms. They were good people and hard workers. — **Leo Kurtenbach, Saskatoon**



Design Pics

Moss

Gratitude spills
over suffering
like moss
over stones
that forget
their edginess,
their certainty,
and soften
beneath the verdure
of living long
with the lesson.

By Nancy Compton Williams

Archbishop Hayes fondly remembered

The Editor: It was sad to see in your Aug. 24, 2016, issue that the former Archbishop of Halifax, James Hayes, passed away.

On one occasion, Rev. Leonard Sullivan, then stationed in Ottawa, took Archbishop Hayes to the Parliamentary Restaurant in Ottawa to have lunch with then MP Les Benjamin. Archbishop Hayes was dressed in "civvies." Father Leonard introduced the archbishop to Les by saying, "I'd like you to meet a friend of mine, Jim Hayes," to which Les replied by saying, "Nice to meet you, Jim."

As they were eating lunch, a Conservative MP from Halifax went by and made a special point of speaking to the archbishop. Next, Robert Stanfield from Halifax and then leader of the Conservative party, wheeled around when he saw him and spoke to the archbishop. By this time, Les Benjamin was wondering to himself, "Hey, who is this guy?" Finally he found out, to his astonishment, that he was the Archbishop of Halifax.

This little anecdote is simply another example of the respect in which Archbishop Hayes was held. — **John S. Burton, Regina**

Resource challenges not due to lack of funds

Continued from page 14

even the province as a whole are not struggling with K-12 education. Indeed, many parents (including the two authors of this article) are acutely aware of resource challenges at our local schools.

But the explanation for these individual resource challenges cannot be a lack of money. And it certainly can't be from a cut in education spending, which, as

noted above, has actually been increased dramatically over the last decade.

Rather, for an explanation for resource challenges in Saskatchewan's public schools, look to how the system is organized and managed. Public schools suffer from the same incentive and organizational problems as any other government agency or department, which leads to the misallocation and wasting of resources.

Archaic regulations, union

monopoly (which helps create misaligned incentives for both bureaucrats and educators), lack of responsiveness to parental demands, and centralized, prescriptive curriculum are just a few of the many handcuffs holding back Saskatchewan's public school systems. Consequently, the problems in Saskatchewan public education require a fundamental restructuring rather than simple complaints about a lack of resources.

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Retired pope says governance wasn't his gift

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While retired Pope Benedict XVI said organization and governance are not his strong suits, he also said, “I am unable to see myself as a failure.”

In a book-length interview with the German author Peter Seewald, Pope Benedict said that when he resigned he had the “peace of someone who had overcome difficulty” and “could tranquilly pass the helm to the one who came next.”

The new book, *Last Testament*, will be released in English by Bloomsbury in November.

Pope Benedict insisted once again that he was not pressured by anyone or any event to resign

and he did not feel he was running away from any problem.

“My weak point perhaps is a lack of resolve in governing and making decisions,” he said. “Here, in reality, I am more a professor, one who reflects and meditates on spiritual questions. Practical governance was not my forte and this certainly was a weakness.”

Pope Francis, on the other hand, “is a man of practical reform,” the retired pope said. His personality and experience as a Jesuit provincial and archbishop have enabled him to take practical organizational steps.

The retired pope, who is 89, said he had no inkling that then-Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio would be elected his successor;

“no one expected him.”

“When I first heard his name, I was unsure,” he said. “But when I saw how he spoke with God and with people, I truly was content. And happy.”

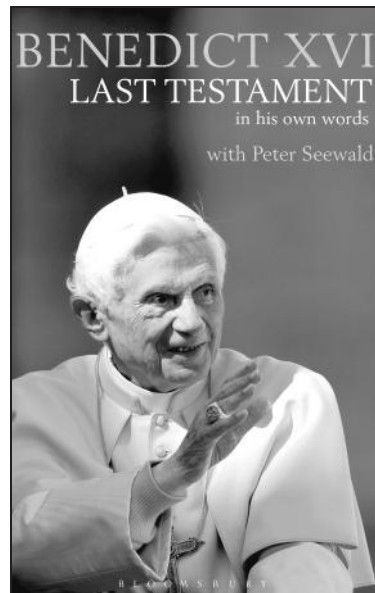
Pope Benedict said it made no impression on him that the brand new pope chose to appear on the balcony of St. Peter’s Basilica without wearing the ermine-lined red mozzetta or cape. “What did touch me, though, was that even before going out onto the loggia, he tried to phone me.”

Electing the first Jesuit pope and the first Latin American pope, the College of Cardinals showed that “the church is moving, dynamic, open, with the prospect of new developments before it,” he said. “What is beautiful and encouraging is that even in our day things that no one expected happen and they demonstrate that the church is alive and brimming with new possibilities.”

Seewald also asked Pope Benedict about reports that during his pontificate there was a so-called “gay lobby” in the Curia and the group protected certain priests by threatening to black-mail others.

The retired pope replied that a commission of three cardinals he had named to investigate a major leak of reserved documents and conduct an administrative review of Vatican offices and procedures identified “a small group of four, perhaps five persons,” which a few Vatican officials and the media later would refer to as the “gay lobby.”

“We dissolved it,” Pope Benedict said.



CNS/Bloomsbury

BENEDICT INTERVIEW — This is the cover of *Last Testament*, an interview retired Pope Benedict XVI did with German author Peter Seewald.

The retired pope, who has had a pacemaker since 1997 and can no longer see out of his left eye, told Seewald that preparing for death is part of his daily routine. It’s not a matter of getting his earthly affairs in order, he said, “but of preparing to pass the ultimate examination before God.”

With a view to writing a biography, Seewald said he conducted his interview with Pope Benedict “shortly before and after” his resignation in February 2013. The book contains more than 500 questions and answers, covering the childhood of Joseph Ratzinger, his seminary and university years, his teaching career and his work at the Second Vatican Council. Seewald also asked about his years as a bishop in Germany, his work as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and his papacy.

Pope Benedict reviewed the text and approved its publication,

Seewald said. The two met May 23 at the *Mater Ecclesiae* monastery in the Vatican Gardens, where the retired pope lives.

The only writing the retired pope does these days, he told Seewald, is a Sunday homily each week.

But writing any more than that, he said, “would simply be too arduous for me now.”

Insisting “my hour had passed and I had given all I could,” Pope Benedict said he never has regretted resigning, but he does regret hurting friends and faithful who were “really distressed and felt forsaken” by his stepping down.

While a pope, like any Christian, is called to take up his cross and follow Christ — including bearing criticism and even scorn — the retired pope said, “that doesn’t mean, however, that he must die by the sword.”

As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he served 24 years as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, working very closely with St. John Paul II.

Despite their closeness, Pope Benedict said he easily rejected the idea of taking the name John Paul III when it became clear in the conclave of 2005 that he was about to be elected St. John Paul’s successor.

“I felt that would be inappropriate because a standard had been set there, which I couldn’t match,” Pope Benedict said. “I was a different character, cut from different cloth. I had a different sort of charisma, or rather a non-charisma.”

In response to Seewald’s repetition of the aphorism that “the loving God corrects every pope in his successor,” the retired pope said Pope Francis’ “direct contact with people,” the way he wades into a crowd, is probably a correction, as is “the courage with which he exposes problems and searches for solutions.”



CNS/Wolfgang Kumm, EPA

VULNERABLE TO TRAFFICKING — Internally displaced women gather in early February at New Kichigoro camp outside Abuja, Nigeria. People displaced through violence “are extremely vulnerable to trafficking,” said Albert Mashika, regional co-ordinator for Caritas Africa.

Data needed to help deal with trafficking

By Bronwen Dachs

ABUJA, Nigeria (CNS) — A lack of reliable data on human trafficking in Africa hinders aid reaching people who desperately need it, said the continental co-ordinator for *Caritas Internationalis*.

People displaced through violence “are extremely vulnerable to trafficking,” Albert Mashika, regional co-ordinator for Caritas Africa, said in a Sept. 6 telephone interview from Abuja, capital of Nigeria.

“We need to gather our own data to strengthen our work and ensure that it is evidence-based,” Mashika said, noting a lack of expertise and resources in Africa to deal with the enormity of the problem.

More than 130 representatives of faith-based organizations, international and regional groups, and law enforcement agencies from 43 countries met in Abuja for a Sept. 5 - 7 meeting organized by Caritas with the Pontifical Council for Migrants and travellers.

Participants included Cardinal John Olorunfemi Onaiyekan of Abuja; Comboni Missionary Sister Gabriella Bottani, co-ordinator of Talitha Kum, a Rome-based international network of religious sisters working to end human trafficking; and the Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammad Sa’adu Abubakar, one of Nigeria’s most influential Islamic leaders.

Trafficking of children, traf-

ficking for sexual exploitation and for domestic servitude were among the topics discussed at the meeting.

“People in general are not aware of the extent of human trafficking and the impact it has on our cities and villages,” said Mashika, who is based in the West African nation of Togo.

Trafficking is particularly rife in conflict-ridden countries, he said, noting that the uprising in Nigeria of the extremist group Boko Haram has had “ripple effects” on other countries in the region, including Chad, Niger and Mali.

“Social cohesion is destroyed” as people leave their homes and villages to escape the violence and “these are circumstances in which trafficking flourishes,” Mashika said.

Poverty is the “most visible issue connected to trafficking,” but there are many underlying problems, including “corruption, mismanagement of resources, and lack of transparency in governance,” he said.

“It is crucial that the church increases its efforts” to combat trafficking and that it strengthens its ties with other faith and humanitarian organizations doing the same work, he said.

“The resources for this work are limited, so we need to make sure that we work in areas that we can put our competencies to their best use,” he said.

Providing assistance to victims

of trafficking is “our main focus as church,” Mashika said.

According to *Caritas Internationalis*, 60 million people were either refugees or forcibly displaced in 2015.

“Driven by a desperate need to survive and desire to build a better life,” people forced to flee conflict, poverty and persecution “are particularly vulnerable to both sexual and labour exploitation,” Caritas said in a statement.

Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila, Philippines, president of *Caritas Internationalis*, told participants Sept. 6, “Slavery starts when people do not respect their own humanity, their bodies and their spiritual potential.

“They see themselves, and consequently other persons, as mere instruments or objects to attain some goal, especially money, profit, influence or power,” the cardinal said. He was quoted in a Sept. 7 blog post by Michelle Hough, Caritas communications officer.

Hough said trafficking victims are “men working to pick Europe’s strawberries in hothouses in southern Spain for little pay and no rights” and “women tricked into prostitution and walking the streets of towns and cities around the world.”

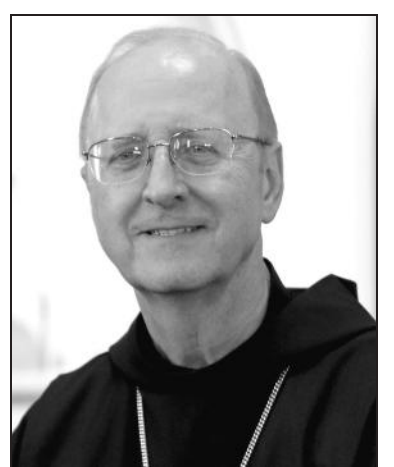
They are “Thai fishermen who’re kept in cages on boats without pay and often without food so they can catch fish that ends up being served in the world’s restaurants,” she said.

Benedictines elect abbot

ROME (CNS) — Abbots and priors from Benedictine men’s communities around the world elected U.S. Abbot Gregory Polan of Conception Abbey in Missouri to be abbot primate.

The 66-year-old Scripture scholar and translator was elected Sept. 10 in Rome during the Congress of Abbots (see stories, pages 1 and 2). His election means the monks of Conception Abbey will have to elect a new abbot to succeed Abbot Polan, who has led Conception Abbey since 1996.

The abbot primate is not the superior general of the Benedictine order because the monasteries are independent. Instead, the abbot primate is called to represent the monks at international gatherings, promote the unity of the abbeys and priories around the world and serve as a liaison to the Vatican.



CNS/Conception Abbey

Abbot Gregory Polan

As abbot primate, he also becomes the abbot of St. Anselm in Rome and chancellor of the Benedictine’s Pontifical Athenaeum of St. Anselm and its Pontifical Liturgical Institute.

You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing and grace before I dip the pen in the ink.

— G. K. Chesterton