



Euthanasia policy

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan has voted to release a draft guidance document on euthanasia and assisted suicide. A public consultation on the document will be open on the CPSS website until Oct. 20.
— page 3

Farmland Legacies

"How we farm has a considerable impact on everything around us," says Duane Guina, executive director of Farmland Legacies, a non-profit organization that provides beef to Saskatchewan food banks.
— page 6



Refugee fundraiser

A dinner and silent auction put on by St. Philip Neri Parish in Saskatoon raised some \$10,000 for the refugee committee's ongoing sponsorship efforts.
— page 6

Africa: the church

"The Catholic Church is more African than most Canadians realize," writes Michael Swan. This week concludes his three-part series on Africa.
— pages 8, 9

Upcoming synod

"Despite questionnaires and invited auditors, the upcoming synod on the family is still a synod of bishops," writes Isabella Moyer. "Is there any hope that the voices of families will be heard?"
— page 14

Changing church?

"Of all the many questions Pope Francis has raised in his brief papacy, perhaps none is as insistent, or as crucial to his legacy, as the debate over whether he represents a real change in the church," writes David Gibson.
— page 15



Love as generously as God does: pope

By Dennis Sadowski

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — Pope Francis urged the hundreds of thousands of people gathered for the closing mass of the World Meeting of Families to serve and care for each other as freely as God loves the human family.

The pope called upon the faithful to embrace signs that the Holy Spirit can work through everyone. He referred to the readings in the multilingual mass — from the Book of Numbers and the Gospel of Mark — in which members of the faith community questioned the work of those not part of their group and for prophesying in the name of God.

"To raise doubts about the working of the Spirit, to give the impression that it cannot take place in those who are not 'part of our group,' who are not 'like us,' is a dangerous temptation," the pope said. "Not only does it block conversion to the faith; it is a perversion of faith. Faith opens a window to the presence and working of the Spirit. It shows us that, like happiness, holiness is always tied to little gestures."

Illustrating his point before the mass, Pope Francis engaged in



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

POPE FRANCIS IN PHILADELPHIA — People snap photos of Pope Francis as he makes his way to the venue of the Festival of Families during the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia Sept. 26.

"little gestures" himself along the papal parade route to the mass, kissing and blessing many babies brought to him from the sidewalk

throngs by Secret Service agents, who themselves managed to crack smiles after days of maintaining a stern demeanour as they

guarded the pontiff.

Pope Francis recalled that Jesus encountered "hostility from people who did not accept what he said and did," saying they thought it intolerable that Christ was open to honest and sincere faith from men and women who were not part of God's chosen people.

"The disciples, for their part, acted in good faith. But the temptation to be scandalized by the freedom of God, who sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous alike, bypassing bureaucracy, officialdom and inner circles, threatens the authenticity of faith. Hence it must be vigorously rejected," he said.

"Once we realize this, we can

Binding climate justice agreement needed

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, president of *Caritas Internationalis*, said Holy See charitable agencies are urging global decision-makers to make binding agreements on climate change.

In an interview from New York City Sept. 26, where Tagle was participating in the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development Sept. 25 - 27, the cardinal said he hoped Caritas and CIDSE (*Co-opération Internationale pour le Développement et la Solidarité* or International Co-operation for Development and Solidarity) could "challenge the stakeholders and those who have authority to influence the decision-makers to exercise some political will, to move from just abstractions and rhetoric to implementation" that would include monitoring.

"That's what the Holy Father wants us to do," said the cardinal, who heads the Holy See federation of charities from around the world that includes the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP), which also had representatives in New York.

The high-level meetings were an opportunity to "reinforce some of the points raised by the Holy Father" in his address to the UN Sept. 25. "This is a followup, and since it is a more restricted group,

there might be even more opportunities for interaction," Tagle said.

The talks on the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs) are meant not only to discuss, but "to act and to learn how to set up mechanisms for monitoring the action," the cardinal said. "And finally we also want to achieve a more intercultural and inter-religious approach to the issue of climate change."

"Yes, we will be coming in as

the Catholic Church and Catholic organizations, but we want to engage non-Catholics and non-Christians in the whole discussion and action," he said.

Tagle said the church organizations face a challenge to keep Pope Francis' "integral ecological approach" that keeps "all these strands together — charity, justice, human dignity and caring for the environment."

— EXPERTISE, page 5

— FAMILIES, page 19

Conscientious objection policy passed

By Mary Deutscher

SASKATOON — The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CPSS) has passed a controversial policy on conscientious objection. The policy passed by a vote of nine in favour, three against, with three abstentions at a Sept. 18 council meeting, despite having received criticism from a number of groups.

The policy was drafted in June and was open to public consultation over the summer months. Following 15 minutes of discussion, council members made only one alteration to the draft, changing the phrase "physician-assisted death" to "physician-assisted dying" under the assumption that this phrasing is preferred by palliative care physicians.

One council member warned that the policy as passed will put good physicians in jeopardy, and that the council should anticipate physicians being brought forward for disciplinary action.

Saskatoon Physician Dr. Sheila Harding expressed concern about patient welfare under the new policy. "I am deeply dismayed by this policy," Harding said. "It requires that, in some circumstances, doctors must intentionally harm our patients or risk discipline by our provincial regulatory authority."

The Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada (CMDS) is consulting its legal team to determine whether it will begin a legal application similar to the one that was begun against a conscientious objection policy in Ontario earlier this year.

In a recent letter to the *Prairie Messenger*, CMDS Executive Director Larry Worthen stated: "passage of this policy means that physicians who have conscience concerns about specific procedures will be discriminated against by the College simply because of their religious or moral convictions. Canadians' rights of conscience and protection from discrimination are guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms."

Concerns regarding the policy have centred on two main areas. First, the ambiguous wording in the requirement that physicians "make arrangements" for their patients to access treatments that the physician finds morally objectionable. Second, the requirement

— IMPLICATIONS, page 4

Pope canonizes Junipero Serra

By Cindy Wooden

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Canonizing the 18th-century Spanish missionary, Blessed Junipero Serra, Pope Francis insisted a person's faith is alive only when it is shared.

Celebrating a late afternoon mass outside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception Sept. 23, the pope declared the holiness of St. Junipero, founder of a string of missions in California.

Some people had objected to the canonization — like the beatification of the Spaniard in 1988 —

because of questions about how Serra treated the native peoples of California and about the impact of Spanish colonization on native peoples throughout the Americas.

Pope Francis mentioned the controversy only briefly, saying: "Junipero sought to defend the dignity of the native community, to protect it from those who had mistreated and abused it. Mistreatment and wrongs, which today still trouble us, especially because of the hurt which they cause in the lives of many people."

Vincent Medina, who has questioned the wisdom of the canonization, read the first Scripture

reading in the Chochenyo language of the Ohlone people of Northern California.

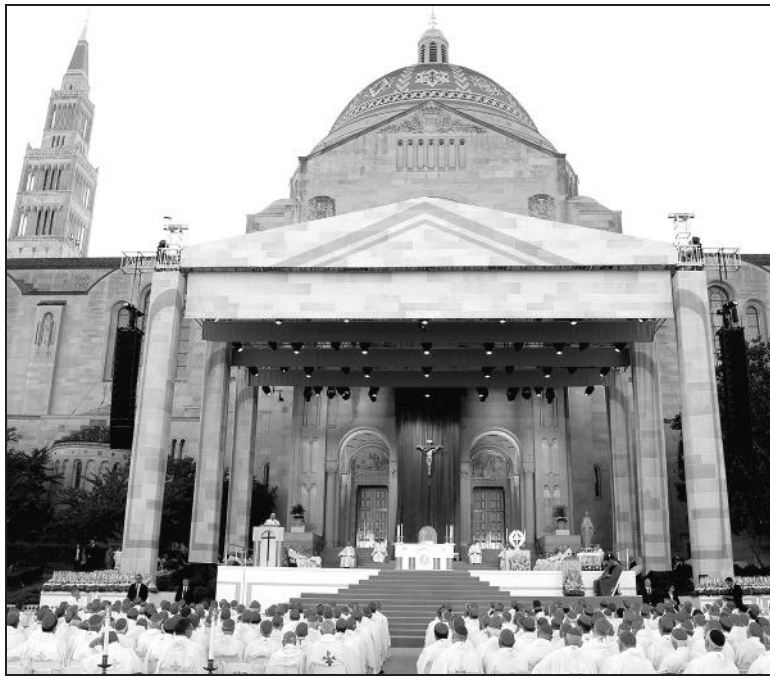
Before the formal proclamation of the missionary's sainthood, a choir and the congregation chanted a litany invoking the intercession of Jesus, Mary, the apostles and a long list of saints, including other saints who lived and worked in the United States, such as St. Frances Cabrini, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, St. John Neumann and St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the first American Indian to be canonized. The canonization of St. Junipero, however, was the first such ceremony to be celebrated in the United States rather than at the Vatican.

After the formal proclamation, Andrew Galvan, curator of Dolores Mission in San Francisco, brought a relic of St. Junipero up to a stand near the altar as a song was sung in Spanish accompanied by a drumbeat.

Catholics in the United States and throughout the world are indebted to St. Junipero and thousands of other witnesses who lived their faith and passed it on, the pope said in his homily.

St. Junipero "was excited about blazing trails, going forth to meet many people, learning and valuing their particular customs and ways of life," Pope Francis said.

A missionary's life is exciting and brings joy, he said, because it is not sedentary or turned in on itself. Sharing the Gospel is the way to keep experiencing the joy



CNS/Tony Gentile, Reuters

CANONIZATION OF JUNIPERO SERRA AT NATIONAL SHRINE IN WASHINGTON — Pope Francis celebrates mass and the canonization of Junipero Serra at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception Sept. 23 in Washington.

it brings and keeps the heart "from growing numb from being anesthetized."

More than speaking about St. Junipero, Pope Francis spoke about keeping faith alive and joyful, calling on all Catholics to be missionaries.

"Mission is never the fruit of a perfectly planned program or a well-organized manual," he told the crowd of about 25,000 people. "Mission is always the fruit of a life which knows what it is to be found and healed, encountered and forgiven."

Pope Francis insisted that Jesus

does not give Christians "a short list of who is, or is not, worthy of receiving his message, his presence."

Instead, Jesus embraced people as they were, even those who were "dirty, unkempt, broken," he said. Jesus says to believers today, like yesterday, "Go out and embrace life as it is, and not as you think it should be."

"The joy of the Gospel," the pope said, "is something to be experienced, something to be known and live only through giving it away, through giving ourselves away."



CNS/Paul Haring

POPE GREETS CALIFORNIA INDIANS — Pope Francis greets guests including California Indians following mass and the canonization of St. Junipero Serra.

Pope urges Congress to stop bickering and be a 'beacon of hope'

By Cindy Wooden

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The past, the promise and the potential of the United States must not be smothered by bickering and even hatred at a time when the U.S. people and indeed the world need

the pope of the Holy See."

The pope introduced himself, though, as a son of the American continent, who had been blessed by the "new world" and felt a responsibility toward it.

In a long speech, he gave the sense that he sees the United

States as a country divided, one so focused on calling each other names that it risks losing sight of how impressive it can be when its people come together for the common good. That is when it is a beacon of hope for the world, he said.

are, too — he pleaded for greater openness to accepting immigrants. A reporter had asked the pope in July about why he spoke so much about the poor and about the rich, but rarely about the lives and struggles of the hard-working, tax-paying middle class. The result of a papal promise to correct that was the speech to Congress and through Congress to the American people.

"I would like to take this opportunity to dialogue with the many thousands of men and women who strive each day to do an honest day's work, to bring home their daily bread, to save money and — one step at a time — to build a better life for their families," the pope said.

"These are men and women who are not concerned simply with paying their taxes, but in their own quiet way sustain the life of society," he said. "They generate solidarity by their actions, and they create organizations which offer a helping hand to those most in need."

Showing he had studied the United States before the visit — something he said he would do during the Rome August break — he used four iconic U.S. citizens as relevant models of virtue for Americans today: Abraham Lincoln, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton.

"A nation can be considered great when it defends liberty as Lincoln did; when it fosters a culture which enables people to 'dream' of full rights for all their brothers and sisters as Martin Luther King sought to do; when it strives for justice and the cause of

the oppressed as Dorothy Day did by her tireless work; the fruit of a faith which becomes dialogue and sows peace in the contemplative style of Thomas Merton," the pope said.

Describing political service with the same tone used to describe a vocation to religious life — "you have been invited, called and convened by those who elected you" — the pope recognized the weighty responsibility of being a member of the U.S. Congress.

Dialogue, he said, is the only way to handle the pressure and fulfill the call to serve the common good, promoting a culture of "hope and healing, of peace and justice."

For the speech, Pope Francis stood in the House chamber in front of Rep. John Boehner, speaker of the House and a Republican from Ohio, and Vice-president Joe Biden, president of the Senate. Both men are Catholics. Besides the senators, representatives and their invited guests, the attendees included members of the U.S. Supreme Court and members of President Barack Obama's cabinet.

Tens thousands of people watched the speech on giant screen from the Capitol's West Lawn. Gathered hours before the pope's morning visit, they were entertained by military bands.

In his speech, Pope Francis gave strong support to several concerns of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic faithful, including defending the right of people to publicly live their faith and join

political policy debates from a faith-based perspective.

"It is important that today, as in the past, the voice of faith continue to be heard, for it is a voice of fraternity and love, which tries to bring out the best in each person and in each society," he said. The dialogue the country needs must be respectful of "our differences and our convictions of conscience."

"Every life is sacred," he insisted, calling for the "global abolition of the death penalty" and the "responsibility to protect and defend human life at every stage of its development."



JOINT MEETING OF CONGRESS — Pope Francis addresses a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress as Vice-president Joe Biden (left) and Speaker of the House John Boehner look on in the House of Representatives Chamber at the U.S. Capitol in Washington Sept. 24.

a helping hand, Pope Francis told the U.S. Congress.

Making history by being the first pope ever to address a joint meeting of Congress, Pope Francis was introduced to the legislators by the House sergeant at arms Sept. 24 as: "Mr. Speaker,

the death penalty and unscrupulous weapons sales. He called on Congress to "seize the moment" by moving forward with normalizing relations with Cuba. And, again referring to himself as a "son of immigrants" — and pointing out that many of the legislators



CNS/Little Sisters of the Poor

POPE VISITS SISTERS — Pope Francis talks with Sister Marie Mathilde, 102, during his unannounced visit to the Little Sisters of the Poor residence in Washington Sept. 23.

Euthanasia policy consultation launched

By Mary Deutscher

SASKATOON — At a Sept. 18 meeting, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CPSS) Council voted to release a draft guidance document on euthanasia and assisted suicide. A public consultation on the document, Physician-Assisted Dying Draft Guidance Document, will be open on the CPSS website, www.cps.sk.ca, until Oct. 20.

The CPSS Council had a brief discussion at the meeting regarding the guidance document, which is based on recommendations prepared by the Advisory Group on Physician-Assisted Dying of the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FMRAC).

The document was drafted by a subcommittee of the CPSS, and is meant to guide physicians regarding assessment of the criteria outline by the Supreme Court of Canada in the landmark Feb. 6, 2015, Carter decision that decriminalized euthanasia and assisted suicide. The document does not provide clinical guidelines for performing these practices.

The document lists four criteria which were set out in the Carter decision: “(1) The patient consents; (2) The patient has a grievous medical condition; (3) The condition is not remediable using treatments that the patient is willing to accept; and, (4) The patient’s suffering is intolerable to the patient.”

The document acknowledged

that it is not possible to provide doctors with detailed instructions to confirm that patients meet the Carter criteria. However, the document does present eight issues that physicians should consider addressing with their patients when determining whether or not the Carter criteria are met: “(1) Current symptoms; (2) Loss of function; (3) Expectation of progress of symptoms; (4) Expectation of progress of loss of function; (5) Future suffering and available treatment; (6) Suffering and personality; (7) Suffering and personality-over-time (personal history); and (8) Environment.”

If a doctor determines that a patient meets the Carter criteria, the guidance document requires that the patient’s request for euthanasia or assisted suicide is consistent “over a reasonable period of time.” This time period “will be dependent on the patient’s medical condition and other circumstances.” This approach was adopted to ensure patients receive timely access to “physician-assisted dying.”

The document also specifies that the attending physician must “consult a second physician” who “must interact with the patient” to ensure he or she meets the requirements set out by the Supreme Court of Canada in the Carter decision.

Regarding conscientious objection by physicians, the document states that it “does not address the extent to which individual physi-

cians may be expected to ensure that patients seeking information about physician-assisted dying receive that information or the extent to which physicians may be required to refer patients to another provider if the physician is unwilling to provide physician-assisted dying.” It goes on to say that within the CMA Code of Ethics, “physicians can follow their conscience when deciding

whether or not to provide physician-assisted dying.”

In a letter to the *Prairie Messenger*, CMDS executive director Larry Worthen expressed his concerns regarding the policy, particularly as it relates to conscientious objection. “[The document] acknowledges that there may be a policy in future that requires physicians to refer for assisted dying,” wrote Worthen.

“This will make it impossible for many Roman Catholic and other physicians to practise medicine.”

Worthen also expressed concern for vulnerable members of society: “The other disturbing component of this document is that people with disabilities and/or people with psychiatric illness will be able to access assisted

— SUICIDE, page 9

Northern bishops face immense challenges

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — As six Northern Canadian dioceses prepare for a transition from missionary to normal dioceses, their bishops say they face immense financial, social and personnel challenges.

The dioceses of Whitehorse; Mackenzie-Fort Smith; Churchill-Hudson Bay; Moosonee; Grouard-McLennan; and Keewatin-Le Pas are presently under the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. But a process of consultation is underway to see the dioceses move to normal or “common law” status under the Congregation for Bishops. Because they are not self-supporting, the change would require more direct help from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

“The conversation has been going on for a couple of years, ini-

tiated by the Congregation, that maybe it’s best for Canada to be taking responsibility for these dioceses,” said the new CCCB president Hamilton Bishop Douglas Crosby. “The dioceses agreed to that, with the hope that, and desire that the Canadian dioceses in the south would assist not only with financial support but with personnel as well.”

During the recent CCCB plenary in Cornwall, Ont., Sept. 14 - 18, two northern bishops told their stories, “sensitizing the bishops to the real situation in the North and the need for this kind of support,” Crosby said.

Archbishop Murray Chatlain and MacKenzie-Fort Smith Bishop Mark Hagemoen gave slide presentations Sept. 14, illustrating the immense joys of ministering in the North, as well as the huge challenges.

Travel costs within a diocese can be exorbitant — a return flight from Yellowknife to Cambridge costs \$2,230; food costs are double or triple what they are elsewhere in Canada; salaries for priests, religious and lay staff “continue to rise and outpace income,” the bishops reported.



CCN/Gyapong
Archbishop Murray Chatlain

ed by the pope,” said outgoing assistant general secretary Bede Hubbard in an email. “Those being consulted in this process are the six mission dioceses in the North, the CCCB, and the Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, with both the Congregation for Evangelization and the Congregation for Bishops responsible for bringing the recommendation eventually to the Holy Father.”

Hubbard said the Congregation for Evangelization has been remitting back to Canada a portion of the monies Canada collects for missions, an amount of about \$55,000 per diocese that the CCCB would have to make up, “not a huge amount in terms of expenses for travel and living in the North, but still helpful.”

The Congregation would like to send all the money from the Mission Sunday Collection to missionary dioceses in the Global South, he said. “At the same time, bishops in southern Canada have indicated that it could be time for the church in Canada to take care of its own mission territories, but for that to happen it would be better if the six mission dioceses in the North were part of the ‘common law’ for dioceses in general.”

He pointed out both the bishops and the Congregation “recognize that while the six mission dioceses in Canada’s North are not fully self-sufficient, they are not in the same situation as the mission dioceses in the Global South.”

The northern dioceses receive a great deal of help from Catholic Missions in Canada and its French-language counterpart *Missions chez nous*.

“Over the coming months and years, the CCCB will be working with both organizations, as well as other Canadian Catholic organizations, to explore how best to assist the church in the North,” Hubbard said.

Syro-Malabar bishop’s challenge is unity

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

MISSISSAUGA, ONT. (CCN) — A gathering of the scattered happened in Mississauga Sept. 19 with the ordination of the first bishop for Canada’s Catholic Thomas Christians from India.

There are about 35,000 Eastern-rite Syro-Malabar Catholics, mainly from India’s southern Kerala state, in Canada. They have until now had to rely on Latin-rite bishops, principally Toronto’s Cardinal Thomas Collins, for pastoral care. Now they have their own bishop in Jose (pronounced Joe-sh) Kalluvilil.

More than 1,000 Syro-Malabar Catholics from across Canada gathered for a rich, colourful and long rite of ordination presided over by Cardinal Mar George Alenchery, the major archbishop and head of

the rite worldwide. The congregation was too large for any of the Catholic churches available in Mississauga, so the ceremony had to move to the Coptic Church of Virgin Mary and St. Athanasius.

The procession into the church was led by a marching band, more than a dozen altar servers, the Knights of Columbus followed by at least 30 priests plus bishops from both the Eastern and western rites. They processed with ceremonial umbrellas while at least 100 women of the community in matching saris spread rose petals along the way. At the door of the church they were greeted by traditional drumming with cymbals.

Kalluvilil becomes exarch of the Syro-Malabar Exarchate of Canada. Exarchate is a designation reserved for mission territories that do not yet have the full

structure of an eparchy or diocese. But Alenchery told *The Catholic Register* he is confident Canada’s Syro-Malabars will quickly proceed to full eparchy status.

“My greatest challenge, I would say, is just to bring the people together,” said Kalluvilil.

While about half of Canada’s 35,000 Syro Malabar Catholics are in the GTA, the population is spread over six provinces, served by 21 mission centres. Kalluvilil will start off with just three priests of his own, relying upon bi-ritual priests lent out by Roman Catholic bishops to provide sacraments.

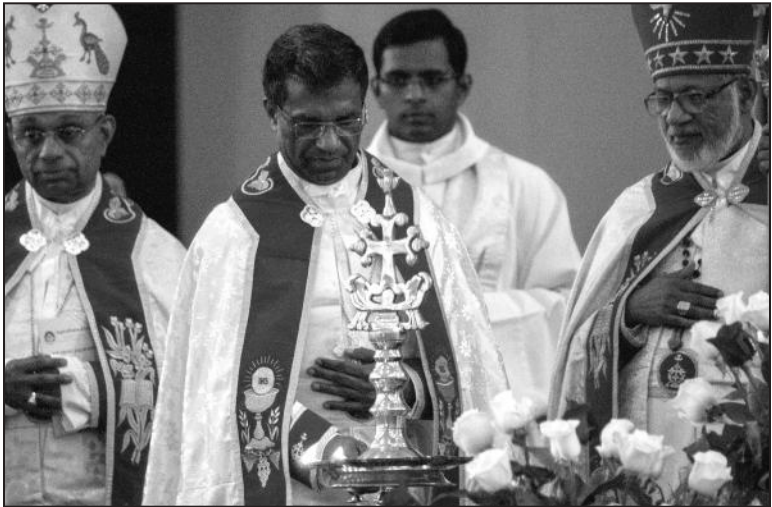
Kalluvilil attended a synod of the Syro-Malabar bishops in India in early September, where he received assurances that Indian Syro-Malabar bishops would make priests available for at least temporary duty in Canada.

“Kerala is known as God’s own country,” Kalluvilil said. “Why they say that is (because) it is rich in vocations. A vibrant Catholic community is there.”

Early on, Kalluvilil hopes to recruit Indian seminarians to commit to ministry in Canada. But his ambition stretches to starting his own seminary or a seminary program in concert with the Toronto School of Theology.

“Within a couple of years it is my dream to have priests from this soil itself,” he said.

Sixty-year-old Kalluvilil has been in Canada two years as pastor of the St. Thomas Syro-Malabar Mission on Lawrence Avenue east of Victoria Park in Toronto. He



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

ORDINATION — More than 1,000 of Canada’s Syro-Malabar Catholics were present Sept. 19 for the ordination of Bishop Jose Kalluvilil, the first bishop of that Eastern Rite in Canada.

— COUNTRY, page 4

Vaccination objections are on the rise in Ontario

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — A 50 per cent increase in the percentage of parents making religious or conscientious objections to getting their kids vaccinated could translate into an extra 10,000 unvaccinated children in Ontario's public and Catholic school systems, a new study shows.

The study by epidemiologists at Public Health Ontario found that between the 2003 - 04 and 2012 - 13 school years, the percentage of seven- and 17-year-old children with religious and conscientious objection exemptions from getting the standard vaccinations for measles, mumps and rubella had risen from 1.05 to 1.54 per cent of students.

With just over two million kids in the combined public and Catholic education systems in Ontario, 1.5 per cent of students would translate into more than 30,000 unvaccinated children. The 50 per cent increase equals to about 10,000 more unvaccinated kids.

The study published online Sept. 16 as a Canadian Medical Association Journal open paper doesn't explore the precise religious or conscientious objections, but abortion foes have been campaigning against the MMR vaccine for measles, mumps and rubella because of the association between the vaccine and abortion. The vaccine was originally created in 1964 in the United States using a human cell line prepared with lung tissue from an aborted fetus. A second cell line was derived from a 14-week-old fetus in the United Kingdom in 1970.

A 1982 law, The Immunization of School Pupils Act, requires all school children to be vaccinated

for measles, mumps and rubella, but allows for two categories of exemption. There are medical exemptions granted on the basis of a doctor or nurse practitioner's recommendation that the vaccination may be harmful to a child with a compromised immune system, or on the basis of existing natural immunity.

For an exemption based on a religious or conscientious objection, parents or guardians must submit a notarized statement of conscience or religious belief.

At the Toronto Catholic District School Board, administrators are unaware of large-scale rejection of the vaccinations. Working with the City of Toronto Public Health, the school board policy keeps unvaccinated children out of the classroom.

"We will suspend the student or not allow the student to be in the class until their immunization records are updated and validated," said TCDSB spokesperson John Yan. "That would include the MMR and all those (vaccines) required by Toronto Public Health. Those are infectious diseases that affect the general well-being of students in the class and certainly staff as well."

A petition launched on LifeSiteNews.com six months ago protesting vaccines based on aborted fetal cell lines has attracted just over 4,000 page views. Anti-abortion blogs such as Children of God for Life and anti-vaccination sites such as Vaccine Risk Awareness have been campaigning against the vaccines based on the link to abortion.

Public Health Ontario researchers could only collect the number of religious and conscientious objections and not the precise reasons for objection.

It's possible some of the reli-

gious and conscience objections come from people who believed a discredited, bogus study linking vaccines to attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, said Redemptorist bioethicist Rev. Mark Miller.

"That study has been totally discredited," said Miller.

While the link with abortion for standard measles, mumps and rubella vaccines is real, that doesn't mean Catholics should worry that they are co-operating with the evil of abortion by having their children vaccinated, said Miller. It would be difficult to establish how a child being vaccinated today would be helping to procure an abortion 50 years ago.

"We find, in such a case, a proportional reason, in order to accept the use of these vaccines in the presence of the danger of favouring the spread of the pathological agent, due to the lack of vaccination of children. This is particularly true in the case of vaccination against German measles," said a 2005 investigation by the Pontifical Academy for Life.

German measles are a severe risk to pregnant women and their unborn children and the vaccines' link back to abortion is so tenuous that Catholic parents should

vaccinate their children "to avoid a serious risk not only for one's own children but also, and perhaps more specifically, for the health conditions of the population as a whole — especially for pregnant women," said the Pontifical Academy for Life.

The Vatican's bioethicists encourage parents and Catholics generally to pressure scientists and pharmaceutical companies to research alternatives to fetal-derived vaccines. But until such alternatives are available, children should continue to be vaccinated.

"Measles and rubella, if they are contracted by a woman who is pregnant, they cause severe damage to the fetus — to the point of

death," points out Miller. "Therefore, in weighing the benefits and burdens of these things, the (Vatican) document suggested that Catholic parents should get their children vaccinated against these things."

The moral decision is mostly about the public good, said Miller.

"It's a public health issue, whereas we often get it framed as a freedom issue — it's my child, it's my body and all this stuff," he said. "Basically, what the church has always argued is for the common good. This is the scientific evidence and our moral tradition is that the scientific evidence tells us that this is a good for parents to use with their children."



Art Babyeh

PARLIAMENTARY FACE LIFT — The West Block on Parliament Hill is looking better these days as the complete renovation of the landmark building continues. Construction started in January 2011 and is expected to be completed in 2017. The approved budget for the project was \$863 million.

Every country is enriched by other cultures: Alenchery

Continued from page 3

holds a doctorate in catechesis from the Salesian Pontifical University in Rome.

"Even after coming here, he was a man of communion," said Alenchery. "That is what the synod of the Syro-Malabar Church has trusted in him — a man of communion."

Kalluvilil will find himself on the forefront of the Syro-Malabar's greatest challenge as a bishop within the diaspora. For the first time in a history that stretches back to St. Thomas the Apostle, the Syro-Malabars are living outside their tight-knit communities in Kerala, absorbing the majority culture of the West.

"The question of inculturation is very important," Alenchery said. "I always tell our people, they have to be rooted in the traditions of our church and also, to a certain extent, the cultural heritage of our country, India. But at the same time they must be acculturated in the country where they are now. Now, every country is being enriched by the culture of other peoples."

The tradition of large multigenerational households will be diffi-

cult to maintain in Canada, but Thomas Christians need to find other ways to maintain those close bonds across generations, to care for their parents as they age and to involve grandparents in the lives of children, said Alenchery.

Catechesis is central in Syro-Malabar tradition, in which parishes are divided into groups of families, up to 40 people per group. These groups of families gather at least once a month for catechesis — to discuss their lives in light of tradition and church teaching. It's a tradition that should help them consciously and carefully adapt to their new circumstances, according to the cardinal.

There have been Thomas Christians immigrating into Canada since the early 1960s and Canada hosts one of the highest concentrations of Syro-Malabars within the diaspora. A full eparchy has been established in Chicago for American Syro-Malabars and another in Australia. Alenchery hopes to see eparchies established in the United Kingdom, where there are more than 70,000 Syro-Malabar Catholics, and in Europe where the largest concentration is in Italy with 12,000.

Moral implications under discussion

Continued from page 1

that physicians provide treatment when it "must be provided within a limited time to be effective and it is not reasonably possible to arrange for another physician or health care provider to provide that treatment." This could potentially include, for example, the chemical abortion pill RU-486, which was approved by Health Canada this summer for use in first trimester pregnancies.

Much of the discussion around previous drafts of the policy concerned the moral implications of making a formal referral. Most physicians who exercise a moral objection to procedures such as sex-selective abortion are willing to provide patients with information on how to legally access the procedure, but are not willing to be directly involved by providing a referral. As Cardinal Thomas Collins explained in his March 24 letter concerning a similar policy in Ontario, "by insisting they provide an effective referral on [matters of conscience], in essence, the physician is being asked to serve as an accomplice in the procedure."

Suggested revisions to overcome these concerns were jointly presented by the CMDS, the Canadian

Federation of Catholic Physicians' Societies (CFCPS) and Canadian Physicians for Life (CPL).

Regarding the requirement that physicians "make arrangements," these physicians' groups suggested that the language should be clarified to state that doctors are to provide patients "with information to allow the patient to arrange timely access" to full and balanced health information and/or to medical services. "This rephrasing clarifies the obligations of both physician and patient," wrote the physicians' groups, "ensures the patient has access to the required information, and allows the physician the freedom to find creative solutions in the exercise of her conscience."

The CMDS, CFCPS and CPL also proposed the removal of the requirement that physicians provide treatment that must be provided within a limited time. The physicians groups asserted that a "physician's obligation to provide care to prevent imminent harm is indisputable," and stated that this obligation, which is already present in the policy, should guide physicians through emergency situations.

These concerns were shared by Bishop Donald Bolen of the Diocese of Saskatoon, as well as by a

number of other Catholic groups, including the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan. However, the CPSS Council only had a brief discussion regarding the submissions made by these groups before passing the policy.

"I am profoundly disappointed and concerned that the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan did not take concerns about the conscience rights of physicians to heart in passing this policy," said Bolen. The Diocese of Saskatoon joined with other organizations in working to raise awareness about the policy and its implications. "I commend the Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada for their ongoing efforts to challenge policies that threaten the rights of medical professionals to act with integrity and follow their conscience."

Although the policy specifically states that it does not apply to "physician-assisted dying," concerns were raised at the council meeting that the policy could be applied to euthanasia and assisted suicide in the future. Associate registrar Bryan Salte dismissed these concerns, stating that "physician-assisted dying" is a substantially different issue because it ends a life (see related article, page 3).

Farmland Legacies promotes sustainable practices

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The work of Farmland Legacies — which includes providing sustainably raised, high-quality beef to Saskatchewan food banks — was highlighted at a recent Administration Day in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

At the gathering of parish and ministry leaders Sept. 10 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, Duane Guina, executive director of the non-profit organization based on a farm in the Wynyard area, spoke about the importance of sustainable agriculture and just food systems, as well as relating the history of Farmland Legacies and the impact of the Legacy of One program.

“As soon as we have accepted the right to life, well what sustains life? First of all, it is food. ‘For I was hungry and you gave me food’ — that’s a basic Catholic social teaching,” said Guina.

“In his recent encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, Pope Francis made the connection between current agricultural practices, such as water contamination and deforestation, but also to unjust structures in the food system, which can be unfairly stacked against the interests of rural communities and the common good,” said Guina. “In each instance, farming was examined through a moral lens, with the well-being of the human person as the focal point, and then the well-being of the planet running a close second.”

Started by the Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan back in 1998 as a response to the agricultural crisis that was happening in the province at the time, Farmland Legacies holds farmland in trust, links land with farmers and works with other organizations to promote and communicate sustainable values and practices, which also enhance community life. The non-profit organization envisions

“a healthy mix of farms and food,” in a landscape with balanced soils and healthy ecosystems, that is home to farmers of all ages, with diverse farm interests, and with market influence shared by many.

“How we farm has a considerable impact on everything around us, from human nutrition and opportunities for fulfilling work, to the well-being of our waters and forests and ecosystems,” Guina said. “This vocational approach to agriculture carries with it a certain responsibility and gravity, but it is also incredibly life-giving and fulfilling.”

Guina then pointed to a project related to poverty and those using food banks and the Friendship Inn. As part of this Legacy of One program, donors contribute funds to Farmland Legacies that go toward raising quality beef to provide a much-needed source of protein to Saskatchewan food banks, which are serving some

10,000 people a month.

“Good quality protein, such as something like a basic hamburger that most of us take for granted, seldom arrives in those food hamper baskets that go out to people,” he said.

“For as little as \$1 a serving we can provide top-quality, grass-fed, finished beef off of our farm,” he said. “It skips a lot of middle people in the process, and shortens the distance from farm to table, which is also good for the environment.”

A family business in small-town Saskatchewan processes the meat raised for the program. “It is provincially inspected, it is a safe, high quality product,” Guina described.

The Legacy of One program is based on the principal that everybody can do a little, Guina said. “Everybody has the power to make a difference, no matter how small. And together many small things make big things possible.”

Launched in the fall of 2014, the program has now delivered 20,000 servings of beef to Saskatchewan food banks. “This year we hope to do 30,000, and we are hoping for 50,000 next year, and the year after that 100,000 — and that, believe me, would still not put a serving of protein on everyone’s plate,” he said. “It is staggering when we look at what poverty and hunger is around our province.”

It takes time to produce a serving of good, high-quality beef, he noted. “It’s nearly a three-year process. So it is critical to us to get that support ahead of time.”

Over 50 animals were born this year, but if the program does not acquire sponsorship for them, in time the animals will not be able to be held back for the project. “It will be as fast as the Spirit lets it unfold,” said Guina, describing the effort as “grassroots faith in action.”

Farmland Legacies is one way that the Christian call to care for



Yaworski

Duane Guina

the poor and for creation is being lived out in our diocese, pointed out Myron Rogal, co-ordinator of the diocesan Office of Justice and Peace.

In conjunction with Guina’s presentation, Rogal provided an overview of the recent *Laudato Si’* encyclical by Pope Francis on care for our common home. “The spirit in which this was written is one of dialogue, an entry point for Catholics into the discussion and it is a reminder that we do live in a small world after all,” said Rogal. “Caring for the environment is no longer optional for people of faith.”

A movement from independence to interconnectedness and interdependence with all of creation is one theme of the new encyclical, he noted.

“Pope Francis references Pope Benedict XVI in saying that every economic choice has a moral consequence,” said Rogal. “When we are looking at our lives, we can no longer compartmentalize.”

It is a call to be set free from materialistic tendencies and consumerism. “This is calling us to our true nature of authentic human freedom.” One of the unique fea-

— POVERTY, page 7

St. Philip Neri holds refugee fundraiser

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — The large crowd at a St. Philip Neri Refugee Committee fundraising dinner Sept. 24 roared with delight when the winner of the evening’s 50-50 draw was announced.

Hearing that recently arrived Syrian refugee Kevork Kasarjian had won some \$300 in the prize

Parish and Maral’s cousin Carlo Arslanian of Saskatoon.

The Kasarjian family fled Syria in 2014 after their home was destroyed by a bomb, living in a refugee camp in Lebanon until they were able to come to Canada.

“There are 70 million refugees in the world today,” said refugee committee co-chair Dale Scott. “Everybody has heard of the Syrian refugee crisis that has been in the news lately, and in this country it has become a federal election issue. However, there are many other groups around the world who need our attention as well.”

Scott expressed appreciation to past and present members of St. Philip refugee committees, and all who have supported refugee sponsorship in the parish over the past 40 years.

“The way to help is to sponsor one family at a time,” said Scott. “That’s what St. Philip Neri Parish and

Eritrean family of six that we applied for over four years ago,” Flory told the crowd. “We have a lot of busy work ahead of us, and you can see why we held the fundraiser today, to help with that work.”

Flory added, “I am totally overwhelmed by the tremendous support we’ve received for this event, and I’d like to give my heartfelt thanks to everyone here for participating, and for those who donated.”

Christine Zyla, co-ordinator of the diocesan Migration Office at the Catholic Pastoral Centre, also brought greetings.

“Goodness, goodness, goodness — this has been the word that has been running through my mind all day today. The goodness of humanity, the goodness of people like you,” Zyla told the crowd.

Tashlich ceremony held Sept. 20

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Gulls and Canada geese appeared virtually out of nowhere as a group from Beth Jacob Synagogue gathered on the shore of Wascana Lake to ritually cast away their sins and celebrate Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year.

“It is a physical manifestation of the spiritual intent to cast one’s sins into the waters starting a new year, fresh, renewed with the hope that we do much better than we have done in the past,” said Rabbi Jeremy Parnes, speaking with the PM following the Tashlich ceremony which took place Sunday afternoon, Sept. 20.

The ceremony takes place between Rosh Hashanah, New Year, and 10 days later, Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, often referred to as the High Holy Days for Jews. This year it took place Sunday Sept. 20 on the dock north of the Legislative Building formal gardens.

The brief ceremony included biblical readings and chanting of specific prayers before everyone

was invited to cast a piece of lettuce onto the water for each sin mentioned: deception, vain ambition, stubbornness, envy, selfishness, indifference, pride and arrogance.

It was a little different this year, as lettuce was used instead of bread. The Wascana Centre Authority discourages feeding bread to the gulls and geese because it usually creates a mess.

It was a perfect day for it, warm, bright sun at 4:30 pm and little wind. Walkers and joggers passed by on the path that surrounds the lake and others were slowly walking through and admiring the fall colours in the formal garden. A few noticed the gathering but no one inquired and the ceremony was completed without interruption.



Flegel

TASHLICH — A group from Beth Jacob Synagogue in Regina gathers on the shore of Wascana Lake to ritually cast away their sins and celebrate Rosh Hashanah.



Yaworski

REFUGEES — Syrian refugees Maral and Kevork Kasarjian, who arrived in Saskatoon Sept. 17 with their five children, were special guests at a St. Philip Neri Parish Refugee Committee fundraiser held Sept. 24 in Saskatoon. They are among three families arriving this fall, sponsored by the parish.

draw was an appropriate highlight for an evening filled with support for refugee sponsorship.

“I think Kevork loves Canada!” said refugee committee co-chair Sheila Flory with a smile.

Kevork and his wife Maral were among the hundreds attending the dinner and silent auction, which raised some \$10,000 for the parish refugee committee’s ongoing sponsorship efforts.

The couple and their five children were welcomed to Saskatoon only one week before, on Sept. 17, co-sponsored by St. Philip Neri

the diocese has been doing since the Vietnamese refugee crisis of the late 1970s through the Kosovar crisis of the 1990s. The last three parish full sponsorships have been Muslim families from Sierra Leone, Iran and Iraq.”

Flory introduced Neeku and Sassan Hosseinzadeh of Iran, who were previously sponsored by the parish. She also introduced Shazia Hidayat, the friend of a Christian family of six from Pakistan being sponsored by the parish, who are expected to arrive next month.

“We are also expecting an

Regina launches archdiocesan annual appeal

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — The longest running Lay Ministry program in the country was just one of the questions participants in a unique form of the game show Jeopardy had to answer as part of the 15th annual kickoff for the Regina Archdiocesan Appeal. It took place Sept. 23 at Our Lady of Peace Church, which sits across the parking lot from the chancery office.

Instead of just the usual speeches, distribution of materials and

sometimes a skit or two, organizers of the annual kickoff decided on something different and came up with their own version of Jeopardy. The youth ministry was charged with putting together the program and came up with five categories: 100 Years of Faith; Service to All; Changing Times; The Size of Germany; and Follow the Leader.

Three volunteers from the audience competed: Marianne Gordon from St. Lawrence Parish, Maple Creek; Jeannine Nelson of

Our Lady of Grace Parish, Sedley; and Paul Ponak of Holy Child, Regina. Holy Family Youth Minister Kaylene McQuaid played the role of quiz master. The audience was divided into three groups and was allowed to participate by shouting answers, all of which added to the entertainment. The winning group won the right to be first in line for supper.

The main business was to announce the goal for the appeal — \$1.4 million, the same as the previous year’s goal — and to distribute appeal packages to all the parishes. The 2014 Appeal raised \$1.3-million with just 21 per cent participation.

“Imagine what could be raised

if more participated,” said vicar-general Rev. Lorne Crozon. He listed some of the ministries supported by the appeal and noted particularly the \$35,000 cost for the eight seminarians. “This is the largest number we’ve had since the 1950s,” said Crozon.

The slogan for this year’s appeal, Serving as One, sets the tone, encouraging participation to support the 33 ministries including several third-party groups that the archdiocese supports. The largest amount, \$145,000, supports hospital chaplaincies followed by priest and moderator placement and travel at \$121,000.

The new appeal video was also unveiled and will be available to

all parishes, who are encouraged to play it for their congregation. Regina Archbishop Daniel Bohan in the video reminded everyone that, with appeal funds, “we will be able to carry out the role Jesus has given us.”

The appeal actually runs for the calendar year and Crozon noted that \$240,000, or about 14 per cent, has already been raised. But the real push comes in the fall of each year with the official kickoff when parishes receive all the materials.

This year the appeal featured Saskatchewan Roughrider defensive end John Chick, who talked about how his faith has guided his career and his life.

Poverty, environment intrinsically connected

Continued from page 6

tures of the encyclical is how it questions the concept of economic growth, Rogal noted. “Is growth always a good thing?”

Rogal quoted a statement from Robert F. Kennedy that came up in a recent Jesuit review of the papal encyclical: “the Gross National Product does not allow for the health of our children, the quality of their education or the joy of their play. It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages, the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials. It measures neither our wit nor our courage, neither our wisdom nor our learning, neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country. It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.”

The new papal encyclical has a sense of urgency, and quotes others broadly, including international accords, research papers, and individuals from other faith traditions, Rogal pointed out. Over and over again, *Laudato Si’* stresses that poverty and the environment are intrinsically connected, he said. “Without focusing our attention on both of those issues, we won’t find a solution to either.”

Development must not happen “at the cost of destroying human dignity or the planet” and the developed world must bear responsibility for the damage that has been done, according to the encyclical, Rogal described. “We have a great social debt toward the poor.”

Another theme of *Laudato Si’* is an emphasis on human ecology, with the document stating, “The natural environment is a collective good, the patrimony of all humanity, and the responsibility of everyone. If we make something our own, it is only to administer it for the good of all.”

The document calls for dialogue and more discussion of environmental issues and care for the poor at every level of society and in our churches as well, said Rogal. “We are always effective when we generate process rather than holding on to positions of power.”

Practical calls for action also come out of the encyclical — calls to act with subsidiarity, examine our purchasing and consuming patterns, and work politically to effect change.

No economic solution alone will solve the degradation that has happened to the planet, according to Pope Francis. “It is naive to think we can rely on economics to solve these problems,” Rogal said.

Our Lady of Lourdes celebrate 50th

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A weekend of celebration with a focus on community and evangelization marked the 50th anniversary of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Saskatoon.

Events included celebration of the eucharist followed by a banquet Sept. 19, as well as a parish barbecue after Sunday mass Sept. 20.

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish began as a chapel of ease initiated by St. Joseph Church in 1962, with the church constructed in conjunction with Bishop Murray School. Our Lady of Lourdes was officially established as a parish in 1965, with Rev. Donald McIntosh, OMI, as the first pastor.

munities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach.”

“God wants community,” Wiesner said. “We see this from the first moment of creation. God creates human beings in his own image and likeness. The image of God is that God is a community,” he described, pointing to the Trinity. “When God is at home, God is community. God is family.”

One of the first things Jesus Christ did was to form a community, Wiesner added. “And Jesus left us with one new commandment: ‘Love one another as I have loved you.’ He also reminds us that we are to wash one another’s feet. God loves community.”

Wiesner recalled St. John Paul II’s call to “make the church a home and a school of communion,” in order to be faithful to God’s plan and to respond to the world’s deepest needs.

called by our parish priest or the bishop to evangelize; by virtue of our baptism and confirmation we have the call and the responsibility to evangelize.”



Yaworski
Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI

The 50th anniversary banquet program began and ended with music — pastor Rev. Phong Pham opened with a song about the love of God, and at the conclusion of the evening all those assembled held lit candles and sang the Lourdes’ hymn, Immaculate Mary.

Master of ceremonies was Adrien Piche, while youth from the parish and from Pure Witness Ministries served those attending the banquet. Parish pastoral council chair Chris Donald read a message of appreciation and congratulations from Bishop Donald Bolen, who was attending the national bishops’ plenary.

Special guests at the anniversary banquet included former pastor Rev. Denis Phaneuf, Rev. Clair Watrin, CSB, and Sister Juliana Heisler, NDS, who served for some 18 years as parish life director, pioneering that pastoral leadership role in the diocese.

Welcomed with a standing ovation, guest speaker Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI, reflected on the role of the parish and the call for each of the baptized to be Christ’s witness in the world.

Wiesner explored Pope Francis’ definition of a parish, from the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, The Joy of the Gospel, which says, “The parish is the presence of the church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in the Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelizers. It is a community of com-

To meet this challenge in an authentic way, it is necessary to work on a spirituality of communion, Wiesner stressed. In order to develop a spirituality of communion, it is necessary to recognize “the Light of the Trinity shining in the face of our sisters and brothers,” he said. “Living a spirituality of communion includes the ability to see our brothers and sisters as part of the mystical body, the real Body of Christ.”

Having a spirituality of communion also means cultivating an ability to see what is positive in others and to prize that as a gift from God, he added. This is a process of coming to see that another person’s gift is “a gift from God to me,” Wiesner said, encouraging his listeners to give affirmation to others.

“Finally, a spirituality of communion means knowing how to make room for our brothers and sisters,” he said. “Part of making room for others includes resisting the selfish temptations that constantly beset us and which promote careerism, distrust, jealousy, and competition.”

Formed and nurtured in the parish, each one of the baptized is called to be a missionary disciple, Wiesner continued. “All the baptized, whatever their position in the church, or their level of instruction in the faith, are able to become agents of evangelization,” he said. “We don’t have to be

This includes sharing and making present the message of Jesus whenever we gather with others in our own faith communities, as well as sharing the message with those in our families and communities who lack a meaningful relationship with the church, and those who don’t know Jesus, Wiesner said.

The first and most important way to evangelize is by example, he said. “Be a witness before the world to the resurrection and life of Jesus. Be a witness, be a sign of the living God. . . . A witness is someone who gives evidence, who gives credible evidence,” Wiesner said, stressing that the world is hungry for “evangelizers who speak of a God they know.”

In conclusion, Wiesner urged Our Lady of Lourdes Parish to continue to “work hard at being a community and our call as individuals and as a community to share Jesus’ message with others.”

Born in Macklin, Sask., the retired bishop of Prince George now lives in Saskatoon. After his ordination in 1963, Wiesner spent many years teaching theology and was part of the team that helped develop the Lay Formation program in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. During his time as bishop of Prince George (1993-2013) he served in a number of positions with the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, including two years as president of the national body.



Flegel

FREEDOM OF THE CITY — Units of the Army, Navy and Air Force marched down Regina’s Victoria Avenue, Saturday, Sept. 12 as part of Canadian Armed Forces Appreciation Day. They marshalled in Victoria Park, lined up on an adjacent street then to the cadence of drums and a band marched to City Hall where they were received and given the freedom of the city. Freedom of the City for military units traces to the about 15th century when, confronted with an enemy, a city had a choice of granting the enemy free entrance and/or passage, with certain conditions like don’t pillage the place, or suffering a siege. The units were greeted individually by Deputy Mayor Wade Murray who granted freedom of the city to each unit.

Ethiopians yearn for religious experience

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA (CCN) — Ethiopia is not like the rest of Africa. Just ask an Ethiopian.

Ethiopians cook the hottest food in Africa, endure the coldest rainy season, speak the most languages and brag they have no significant history of being anyone’s colony. The Italians moved in and called themselves colonial masters for six years, but most Ethiopians were barely aware of their presence in the late 1930s.

This was never a mission country. Christianity was introduced in the first century and its rulers declared the Ethiopian empire officially Christian early in the fourth century. The country is still almost two-thirds Christian.

Christians have lived side by side and at peace with Muslims since Muhammad and a few dozen of his followers fled persecution in Mecca and found refuge under the Christian emperor of the Kingdom of Aksum. Today Muslims are a third of the population and Harar is still one of the four pilgrimage cities of Islam.

Catholics are a tiny part of the mix — 0.8 per cent of the population, just over 800,000 people.

Capuchin Franciscan Father Tilaye Alemeshet, rector of Addis Ababa’s Catholic seminary, is an expert in the Ethiopian Eastern-rite liturgy and is well aware of the huge numbers in the corresponding Orthodox Church — 40 million Orthodox Christians, 700,000 clergy in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church. But numbers are not his measure of success.

“Our goal is not increasing our number or competing with other communities. We want to really serve any human person here. And we do it in different ways,” he said. “As long as we work for the kingdom of God, our wish is that people will see our work and our service and give glory to God.”

As far as Tilaye can see, the great rush in recent years into Pentecostal and Evangelical churches has had little effect on the Catholic population. In just two generations the Protestants have grown from insignificance to 18.5 per cent of the population.

“I’m not sure that they really find a satisfying answer to their questions about the meaning of life. It has become a fashion. They enjoy it, but after a while they question whether they have found an answer,” he said. “Some of them turn back.”

The spiritual search among Ethiopians is much wider than the extraordinary numbers of ordinations, the crowds of sisters running schools, orphanages and parish programs, the crosses around every other neck and the students and office workers in Addis Ababa who stop and cross themselves when walking past a church. The growth in Protestant, revivalist churches promising more direct access to Jesus than the hierarchical Orthodox and Catholic churches is part of the religious yearning of Ethiopians. The construction of new mosques

in every corner of the country and the extraordinary popularity of Muslim preachers on radio and television also fits the pattern.

Among young Catholics the search for meaning and direction in unsettled times is on a more intimate scale. Young, urban, university-educated Catholics are finding community and spirituality in the Christian Life Community — a global lay movement for Ignatian spirituality.

The Christian Life Community is new to Ethiopia with an interesting Canadian connection.

“The person in the middle of this movement is Abba Groum, for sure,” said CLC Addis Ababa co-ordinator Gemechu Bekele Lemu. “He is the one who introduced CLC to Ethiopia 12 years ago.”

Jesuit Father Groum Tesfaye studied theology in Canada in the 1970s — when the Christian Life Community was a growing new movement under the leadership of Canadian Jesuits, including Rev. John English. Groum returned from Canada to lead an incredibly varied and active life as the first Ethiopian-born Jesuit, including years spent as a university chaplain.

On campus, he nurtured a generation of young Ethiopian leaders with The Spiritual Exercises. As these students graduated they formed faith-sharing circles that meet regularly to discuss their prayer, their difficulties, their hope, their consolations and desolations.

Elsabeth Efrem shows me a picture of the group she is part of. There are perhaps 30 young people in the photo gathered for a picnic.

Where in North America university is often the place where young people lose touch with the church and come to doubt their faith, in Ethiopia university is where young Catholics deepen their faith.

“The way that some Catholics are raised is a bit formulaic,” said Elsabeth. “You need something to fill a gap. There isn’t really a movement that caters to people’s spirituality (in parish life). In a way, CLC fills that gap.”

And university is a natural place for that to happen.

“We’re very churchy to begin with. In your country, your experience is that if you go to university you are challenged and then the idea of spirituality and all that stuff comes under question more,” said Elsabeth. “Here, my experience working with university students is the opposite. I feel like we find ourselves more after joining campus (life). When you join the university you actually have more of a chance to learn more about the church . . . you have more of a voice after 18, as opposed to being in a parish and under your parents, where you come to the church and that’s it. Our experience is different. It actually builds us.”

For young Ethiopians this experience of faith and learning has not happened at Catholic colleges or universities. The first Catholic university in Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Catholic University of St. Thomas Aquinas, is just in the process of



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE — Young people in Ethiopia seek to experience deep spiritual knowledge, says Gemechu Bekele Lemu, Christian Life Community co-ordinator.

becoming established with a building under construction and a couple of college programs on offer in social work and medical laboratory technology.

For many North Americans the CLC experience of sitting in a circle and talking about faith, prayer and movements of the heart sounds incredibly contrived, artificial or, if genuine, just plain frightening. But it connects with Ethiopians, said Elsabeth.

“We as a culture are very communal. When we come together it’s much more — we come together more often. Even in our neighbourhoods we come together,” she said. “To discern together comes almost naturally to us.”


The Christian Life Community in Ethiopia is not yet recognized by the global movement. The groups in Ethiopia struggle to put on programs, rent space for meetings, put together the application to become part of the global family. They look at the movement in neighbouring Kenya with its much larger Catholic community, and admire its boldness of CLC in Nairobi which has founded a remarkable school for children of Africa’s second largest slum.

Ethiopia is going through enormous social changes. Seventy per cent of the population is under 30. The economy is growing at an average rate of 10 per cent each year. What were once small towns

are suddenly blossoming into cities as the traditionally rural population moves to cities looking for education and jobs. Nobody in Ethiopia’s government actually knows the population of Addis Ababa, but guesses run from six million to nine million.

New ways of life and the emerging generation are raising profound spiritual questions.

“Young people in Ethiopia, like CLC members, they want to experience this deep spiritual knowledge. There’s this deep spiritual experience they want to have,” said Gemechu. “They’re happy if they can know that the way they are following is the surest way for them.”



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Africa takes its place in the universal church

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA (CCN) — The Catholic Church is more African than most Canadians realize. We pay no attention to the early African popes — Gelasius I (492 to 496), Miltiades (311 to 314) and Victor I (189 to 199). We gloss over the African origins of some of the most significant writers and thinkers of early Christianity, including the evangelist Mark, author of the oldest Gospel in the canon, and theologians Tertullian, Origen and St. Augustine of Hippo.

Our reading of the Old Testament never pauses to note that Sheba was queen of Ethiopia when she met Solomon. Our reading of the New Testament attaches no particular significance to the fact the first recorded gentile converted to Christ was an African — a court official under Candace, queen of Ethiopia, whom Philip the Apostle cured of leprosy.

We all know how the Roman Emperor Constantine decided Christianity should be tolerated by his imperial governors in 313. But how many of us know that by 324 the Ethiopian empire became officially Christian?

The Africanness of our church isn't just a collection of trivia from history. The church today is more African than it has ever been.

"Somebody said once, it's like God is moving to Africa. I don't think so," said Rev. Iyogwoya Moses. "I believe God is everywhere."

Since 1980 Africa's Catholic population has grown by 238 per cent and now approaches the 200 million mark. By 2040, 24 per cent of Africans will be Catholic — more than 460 million African Catholics before the middle of this century.

In the last century the Catholic population grew from 1.9 million in 1900 to 130 million in 2000. That's a growth of 6,708 per cent.

The largest Catholic seminary in the world is Bigard Memorial Seminary in Nigeria, with 1,225 students enrolled. Many North

American and European parishes have been blessed with young, enthusiastic, hard-working African priests — which gives the impression of an enormous African bounty of vocations.

Africa now has more than double the number of priests it had in 1980, a 131 per cent growth in the priestly population of the continent according to Georgetown University's Centre for Applied Research in the Apostolate. However, the additions to the priestly population are far outstripped by the growth in the Catholic population. Compare the 238 per cent growth in Catholic population over the past 35 years to a mere 112 per cent increase in the number of parishes.

Ethiopia has been an officially Christian country since the fourth century and today it is more than 63 per cent Christian, although Catholics represent less than one per cent of the population. The tiny Catholic minority is split almost evenly between Ethiopic- and Latin-rite Catholics. The little Catholic Church, however, is the No. 2 provider of education, health care and social services in Ethiopia — right after the government.

"Maybe we are not that much interested in numbers," Capuchin Franciscan Father Tilaye Alemeshet, rector of Addis Ababa's Catholic seminary, told me. "What we are focused on mainly is to help the people, the needy."

"We are not really concerned with how many people are coming to us, how many people we manage to convert. The country is already a Christian nation."

Tilaye is modest about the numbers attending his seminary. There are around 160 students and each year 15 to 20 of them are ordained for various religious orders and the dozen dioceses around the country.

For the 1.2 million Catholics in the Archdiocese of Toronto, 15 to 20 ordinations a year would be cause for celebration, but Tilaye is subdued about the numbers his seminary produces. When he was a student there were 230 enrolled at the seminary and ordination



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

JESUS CHURCH — The majority of Ethiopian Christians are Orthodox, and churches like the Jesus Church in Addis Ababa are always well attended.

classes of 30 were not unusual.

"It shows how vocations have decreased in the current situation," he said.

African Catholics are not nominal or cultural. Mass attendance generally stands at about 70 per cent for the continent.

Of course it is dangerous to talk about Africa in sweeping generalities. When we talk about Europe we don't assume Spaniards, Poles and Norwegians are all cut from one cloth. There are 56 countries in Africa. There are 83 languages spoken just within Ethiopia. Each of these languages carries with it a culture, a history, a nation. Africa is at least as diverse as Europe.

The Africa of booming semi-

naries sending missionaries to re-evangelize Europe and North America is largely Nigerian. The Missionary Society of St. Paul of Nigeria has six priests serving in Canadian parishes and more than 30 spread across the United States.

But most of these African priestly missionaries are not in the comfortable rectories of the West. The majority of 280 Missionaries of St. Paul are serving in poor mission parishes in Cameroon, Liberia, Mali, Chad, Sudan, Malawi and Gambia.

"There was a time when we had to close a mission because the priest could not get enough food to eat," Moses, Missionary of St. Paul project development co-ordinator, told The Catholic Register while visiting Toronto.

The growth of Moses' little missionary congregation is spectacular. The society was formed in 1977 and ordained its first priest

in 1985. Today there are 110 seminarians studying for the missionary priesthood with the society. As vocation director until last year, Moses used to see as many as 3,000 applications per year, from which he would select between 20 and 30, mindful of the expense of putting a young man through six years of university studies before ordination.

Moses pooh-poohs the idea that bishops in North America and Europe are exploiting Africa to paper over the rich world's failure to nurture vocations. In his view African missionaries serving in the West are giving back some of the riches they received from Irish missionaries in the 19th and 20th centuries. The African church is now a full partner in the universal church.

"If you have a father and a mother who care for you, and now they are old with struggles and challenges, would you not help them if they need your assistance?" he asks. "An African proverb says, 'If you want to wash your hands well, you need two of them. One hand cannot wash itself.'"

Whispers about Africans signing up for the priesthood to assure themselves a comfortable, middle-class life are hardly worthy of Moses' contempt. The Nigerian priest has served parishes in the Boko Haram heartland of northern Nigeria and recalls a Sunday morning when the church where he was going to preach was blown up.

"I will tell myself, 'O God, if I don't come back today, God rest my soul.' It can be as bad as that," he said.

But rather than dwell on the dangers he has faced, Moses is anxious to talk about the struggles of his brothers in the Missionary Society of St. Paul of Nigeria who are serving in Sudan, Chad, Malawi.

"We don't think it is economic reasons that are driving them," he said.

Nor does Moses think the vocation story paints the full picture of the church in Africa. If Africa has vocations, it's because families are living their faith.

"They are blowing up churches and there are people in them, but people are still going to church," he said. "It's not that they want to die, but they want to be in church."



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

RELIGIOUS IMAGERY — Taxis, private buses, houses and public buildings all bear religious imagery. Ethiopian Christians of all sorts wear crosses around their necks and paint them on their doors in this openly religious society.

Suicide to be normalized?

Continued from page 3

death simply because of their disability and their unwillingness to live with it. It will lead to the normalization of suicide."

Bishop Donald Bolen reiterated the church's profound worry about the path we are walking as a society, noting that "a truly human response to the suffering or dying should be to care for them, seek to ease their pain, to accompany them in whatever way needed; not to kill them or help them take their own lives." Regarding the CPSS consultative process, he added, "I would

strongly encourage the people of the diocese to reply once again to the request for feedback, stating their opposition to euthanasia and assisted suicide, and their concern to protect the conscience rights of doctors." He indicated that the church will strive to deepen its commitment to journey with the most vulnerable in our midst.

The guidance document acknowledges that future legislation regarding euthanasia and physician assisted suicide will take priority over the CPSS Document. The consultation will close on Oct. 20, one day after the federal election.

New album more about ‘the drama’ than music

By Caitlin Ward

I haven’t bought the new Libertines album. This may come as a shock. Or, perhaps not. More than likely you haven’t thought of it at all. To be completely honest, I didn’t expect you to. Really, I’m not that shocked about it, either. But a younger version of me might be quite distressed by this whole scenario. Once upon a time, you see, the Libertines were my favourite

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

band. To that younger version of me, not buying this album immediately upon its release would quite literally be the act of an insane person. The band broke up more than 10 years ago. The front men, Carl Barât and Pete Doherty, stopped speaking to one another entirely for at least two years. To a Libertines fan, it’s shocking that the band’s gotten back together at all, let alone so many years later. This new album, *Anthems for Doomed Youth*, is the album that was hoped for, but never expected. Of course, the thing about the Libertines is that every piece of music they managed to record after 2003 is something of a miracle. Their second album was never supposed to happen, either, and the band’s reunion to record it was

short-lived. They broke up before the second single came out. As I write this, I’m realizing I still have an encyclopedic knowledge of everything that was ever reported on them. And actually, it’s because of that fact that I won’t get into the particulars of how and why they kept breaking up. Because when you start talking about the escapades and drama of a band, and especially this band, the music gets lost for the mythology. The Libertines were as much legend as band. I was interested in the band before I’d even heard their music.

Heart of the Matter The Libertines



20th Century Fox

THE MARTIAN — During a manned mission to Mars, Astronaut Mark Watney (Matt Damon) is presumed dead after a fierce storm and left behind by his crew. But Watney has survived and finds himself stranded and alone on the hostile planet. Opening Oct. 2, *The Martian* has already earned a critics’ score of 93 per cent on rottentomatoes.com

Books

Book reveals relevance of Aquinas for today

PRACTICAL THEOLOGY: 350+ Ways Your Mind Can Help You Become a Saint by Peter Kreeft. Ignatius Press, 2014. Paper, 366 pages. US\$21.95. Reviewed by Edwin Buettner.

Anyone who has attempted to read the medieval theologian St. Thomas Aquinas knows that his work can be challenging. Without proper guidance and encouragement, it is all too easy to abandon the scholastic philosophy that is synonymous with his work. Peter Kreeft, professor of philosophy at Boston College, is well aware of the difficulties: “Reading (St. Thomas) all by yourself is difficult, unless someone makes it easy.” Practical Theology makes the 4,000 pages of St. Thomas’ *Summa Theologica* not only understandable, but reveals to the reader that his work is as relevant today as it was more than 800 years ago. Kreeft emphasizes that this book was written as a kind of spiritual guide rather than an academic exercise, a collection of “choice gold nuggets . . . (that) . . . can help you become a saint.” The book’s length and the rather severe image of Aquinas (by Piceno, 15th century), which dominates the cover, may serve to discourage the casual browser. However, even a brief perusal of its pages will whet the appetite of readers who appreciate solid theological analysis applied to the issues of day-to-day life, bridging the apparent chasms between faith, reason and practice. Kreeft’s writing style is that of a highly competent teacher with a deep knowledge and love of his area of study. The deliberately provocative introductory questions for each topic are sure to prompt active reading of the text. (Example: “Does passion make us more or less responsible for sin?”) Although the author does not compromise Aquinas’ pursuit of the

well-known ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness, his explications are engaging and challenging. In navigating the shoals of the eternal questions regarding how one should live, the reader has a sense of security that derives from trust in a well-built watercraft and experienced captain. The 350+ topics are arranged in such a way that it is possible to explore an area of interest in some depth. For example, if one is interested in the nature of love, Kreeft has written 11 short (one- to two-page) topical explorations including, “How to love one’s enemies,” “Loving your body,” and “Love of spouse compared with love of self.” If the reader is interested in only one of the topics, each has a self-sustaining quality. Every topic’s discussion is an amalgam of some of Aquinas’ original writing (clearly indicated in bold type) with Kreeft’s commentary. Where appropriate, clarifications are embedded within Aquinas’ original writings. What emerge are seamless and accessible texts of pedagogical utility. One wishes that more study texts would adopt this effective and user-friendly format. True masters of a field of study are able to effectively communicate with non-specialists and Professor Kreeft clearly belongs in that category. Accordingly, Practical Theology is a book for anyone who seeks wise and practical direction for the very human journey, for living well in the lights of both reason and faith. While readers may not always be in agreement with what at times may be perceived as the author’s categorical conclusions, Kreeft’s expertise and honest pursuit of truth is never in doubt.

I read an article by one of my favourite reviewers that referenced them after they’d broken up. That very young and romantic version of myself fell in love with this group of fellows who’d nearly killed themselves a hundred times before they’d hit 25. As luck would have it, I also liked their music. So that was OK, then. But I’m not going to pretend it was all about the songs. It was about this idea of who these people were. It wasn’t just me. All of the music press and a good chunk of music fandom was taken with the breakups and the reunions and the breakups and the reunions and the final breakup that has now turned out not to be final. Barât and Doherty both formed new bands (Dirty Pretty Things and Babyshambles, respectively) quickly after, and put out albums that were received better than they probably should have been. Both DPT and Babyshambles eventually put out some pretty good albums, but by that point the drama of it all had died down, and neither sophomore effort did particularly well. Then they all kind of dropped off the public for five years, and now, there’s a reunion. The trouble is, I’m not interested in the drama, anymore, and now in their late 30s and early 40s, it seems the band’s not as interested, either. The video for

the second single, *Heart of the Matter*, presents a peep show of Barât and Doherty forcing drugs and whiskey on a person tied up in front of them while fans put in coins to watch them. At the end of the song, it’s revealed that they were torturing dummy versions of themselves with their own vices while the viewers slowly lost interest. It’s been hailed as their most honest and brave statement yet, and the video matches the lyrics of the song, which are in turns self-pitying and cynical. But the irony is that the video is so graphic that I didn’t listen to the song at all when I watched it. I’ve watched it a few times, now, and I can’t manage to separate what the song sounds like from the graphic image of Barât beating himself across the face (a nod to the time in 2003 he drunkenly attempted suicide by smashing his face into a sink). And so it’s drama instead of music once again, albeit from an older and more self-aware group of people. It feels as if there’s a lot of spectacle in the world when there’s supposed to be substance, and I might not be romantic enough anymore to be OK with that. So I’m not sure I should buy this album. I genuinely don’t know how much I like this band if it’s supposed to be about the music.

No one can hold a light to your misery You’re the number one Being hard done Hard done by You’ll get by with your smile Wicked smile and laughing at the misfortune of others You gotta get your kicks Kicking the pricks Laughing as they pick up sticks And old ladies walks on by Trip up as they glide	I am no stranger to the coals I carry them in my soul They scorch my flesh and leave great holes In the meaning of my life But I get by, I get by Just as crooked little smile You’ll get by, you’ll get by
CHORUS With all the battering it’s taken I’m surprised it’s still ticking (x2) Let’s get straight to the heart of the matter So glum, it’s all on a platter So what’s the matter, what’s the matter today?	CHORUS So hold a light to my misery But don’t send it up in flames It’s only I who take the blame But try me anyway And you’ll get by you’ll get by With your wicked little smile You’ll get by, you’ll get by with your wicked little Ohh... CHORUS

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for all affected by cancer —
patients, caregivers, survivors, family, friends
offered by
**McClure United Church
and Holy Spirit Parish**
Thursday, October 15, 2015
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4025 Taylor St. E, Saskatoon
7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Music by *Sacred Sounds*
Scripture Readings
Reflections
Candle Lighting
Hospitality

Everyone Welcome!
For information contact McClure United Church 306-373-1753
Kelly/Charlene at Holy Spirit Parish 306-374-1425

Toronto film festival at 40 hits it out of the park

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



As Blue Jays fever raised September hopes among Toronto baseball fans, the 40th edition of TIFF, its prominent international film festival, screened the strongest selection in the many years I've been attending. At that, I managed to see only two of the eventual prize-winners while cramming in a fraction of the nearly 300 features on offer during the 10 days Sept. 10 - 20. I also skipped major titles that will be in regular theatres anyway within the next weeks. That includes **Room**, which took the People's Choice audience award, **Black Mass**, **The Martian**, **Spotlight**, **Sicario**, and the Canadian Afghan war story **Hyena Road** (one of five Afghanistan-related movies), to be reviewed later.

TIFF's crowning highlight came on the closing Sunday with a free screening in Roy Thompson Hall of Alfred Hitchcock's 1958 masterwork **Vertigo** to the live accompaniment of its famous score by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and in the presence of the movie's leading lady Kim Novak, now 82. She was in fine form as she spoke about her collaboration with Hitchcock and co-star Jimmy Stewart. In a 2012 decennial poll of critics by Sight & Sound magazine, **Vertigo** displaced **Citizen Kane** as the top film of all time. One could see why from this superlative presentation.

As for new work, here are capsule reviews of my top 10 dramas and brief notes on another 10 worthy of mention. I'll look at TIFF documentaries next week.

Son of Saul (Hungary)

The first film I saw, and the best, is an astonishing first feature by director László Nemes that was awarded the grand prix at Cannes. Set in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in the latter part of the Second World War it is an intense intimate rendering of the Holocaust like no other. The camera focuses tightly on the hellish vision of Saul Ausländer (Géza Röhrig), a Hungarian member of a 'Sonderkommando' unit (Jewish prisoners assigned to do the dirty work of the crematoria then executed) as he seeks a proper burial for a boy and joins a group of escapees. There is a smile in the last scene that will break your heart.

Land of Mine (Denmark/Germany)

Selected for the new juried "Platform" program, director Martin Zandvliet brings to horrifying life the aftermath of Germany's defeat in 1945 when German POWs, many mere boys, were forced to defuse and clear from Denmark's coastline over two million landmines (hence the title's play on words). Half were killed or gravely injured. The story, taught with tension, follows a group of frightened young prisoners under the orders of vengeful Danish ser-

geant Rasmussen (Roland Møller) who grows increasingly conflicted about his role.

Dheepan (France)

Director Jacques Audiard earned the *palme d'or*, the Cannes festival's top honour, for this searing drama about Sri Lankan Tamil refugees trying to make a new life in a France afflicted by social and racial unrest. It's anchored by an extraordinary performance from non-professional actor Jesuthasan Antonythasan as Dheepan, an ex-Tamil Tiger who acquires a false identity and family — an unrelated "wife" and "daughter" — in the dangerous chaotic escape and process of claiming asylum. The violence that follows them underscores the desperation and precarious situation of so many migrants today.

The White Knights (Belgium/France)

Also in the Platform section, the story "loosely based on actual events" is about a French NGO "Move for Kids" operating in a francophone African country and deceptively claiming it is there to benefit preschool age orphans. In reality it wants children for would-be adoptive parent clients in France. In the centre of this moral quagmire of private "charity" is the gruff agency chief Jacques Arnault played by Vincent Lindon who heads a terrific cast. (He was named best actor at Cannes for another French film, *The Measure of a Man*.)

Jafar Panahi's Taxi (Iran)

The strictures of house arrest imposed on celebrated dissident Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi in 2010 haven't stopped him producing amazing work. This latest, winner of the golden bear at

Berlin, was shot almost entirely inside a taxi with Panahi at the wheel navigating Tehran's streets while recording revealing conversations and incidents with passengers from the humorous to the violent — a window on the realities of life the authorities would like kept closed, hence Panahi's helpers must remain anonymous.

The Club (Chile)

Director Pablo Larraín earned the Berlin festival's grand jury prize for this disturbing story of a group of wayward aging Catholic priests living in a remote purgatorial refuge. When a suicide follows angry accusations of child molestation, a young priest psychologist, Father Garcia (Marcelo Alonso), arrives to begin an investigation that could close down the house. The confessional consequences are traumatic but not beyond the healing power of forgiveness and mercy.

45 Years (U.K.)

Veterans Charlotte Rampling and Tom Courtenay were named best actress and actor at Berlin for their roles in writer-director Andrew Haigh's intimate drama about long-married couple Geoff and Kate Mercer preparing for their anniversary, the celebration of which is marred by the husband's jarring revelation about the fate of a past love that he has concealed. Geoff's regrets and effusive profession of love aren't enough to repair the bond of trust that has been broken.

The Family Fang (U.S.)

Jason Bateman directs and stars in this rather absurdist black comedy (based on a bestselling novel) about a highly dysfunctional family. Caleb and Camille Fang (Christopher Walken and Maryann Plunkett) are notorious for staging outrageous public pranks that involve son Baxter (Bateman) and daughter Annie (Nicole Kidman) until they grow up and turn their backs on the whole business. An accidental reunion leads to uncomfortable memories, a performance episode gone awry and a dubious disappearance before the siblings



G. Schmitz

SON OF SAUL — The team behind *Son of Saul* at its Sept. 10 North American premiere with director László Nemes at left and actor Géza Röhrig (Saul) at right. The film was awarded the grand prize at Cannes in May.

(Bateman and Kidman have great chemistry together) find a way to escape their parents' shadow.

Sleeping Giant (Canada)

First-time director Andrew Cividino drew plaudits at Cannes and TIFF's best Canadian first feature award for this finely observed drama about a trio of teenage boys — Adam and cousins Nate and Riley — spending a summer on the shores of Lake Superior. Adam is reserved and uncertain, reluctant to be drawn into the others' adolescent misdeeds and dares, troubled by his father's affair, and confused when a girl he knows becomes attracted to the physically dominant Riley. The relationships are increasingly fraught when tragedy puts a fateful chill into their lives.

My Internship in Canada (Canada)

In director Philippe Falardeau's political satire a Haitian immigrant, Souverain Pascal (Irdens Exantus), becomes the unlikely intern to independent rural Quebec MP Steve

Guibord (Patrick Huard) when he suddenly finds himself holding the crucial vote on the Conservative government's planned military deployment and torn between his ambitious wife's and activist daughter's contrary demands. It's a delicious sendup of Canadian political follies with some well-aimed shots, including at a manipulative piano-playing, hockey-loving prime minister.

Worth noting:

The festival's opening film, **Demolition** (U.S.), from Quebec's Jean-Marc Vallée (Dallas Buyers Club), doesn't really hold together but as its protagonist, a Manhattan investment broker whose marriage is falling apart, Jake Gyllenhaal gives another terrific performance to add to his physical transformations in *Nightcrawler*, *Southpaw*, and the current climbing disaster epic *Everest*.

Cary Fukunaga's **Beasts of No Nation** (U.S.) depicts the horrors befalling child soldiers in a fictionalized African civil war. Although overlong and verging on highly negative stereotype, the performances by Idris Elba as a brutal rebel commander and Ghanaian Abraham Attah as the abducted boy Agu are compelling.

Desierto, a first feature by Jonas Cuarón (son of renowned director Alfonso), took home an international critics' prize at TIFF for its unrelenting intensity as homicidal racist vigilante Sam (Jeffrey Dean Morgan) hunts down a group of Mexican migrants illegally crossing into the U.S. until stopped by Moises (Gael García Bernal), a father trying to reunite with his son.

Pablo Trapero's **The Clan** (Argentina/Spain) tells the stranger than fiction true story of the Puccio family whose abductions, extortions and killings paralleled the nefarious disappearances of Argentina's military regime. Especially fascinating is the relationship between patriarch Arquimedes and his rugby-star son Alejandro.

Magallanes by Peruvian director Salvador del Solar is a gripping



G. Schmitz

SLEEPING GIANT — The North American premiere of *Sleeping Giant* was Sept. 15 with actor Jackson Martin (Adam) at left and director Andrew Cividino at right, along with the rest of the cast. The film received TIFF's best Canadian first feature award.

— MORE, page 12

Mercy upon mercy: a good year for our church

Breaking Open the Ordinary

Sandy Prather



On Sept. 3, Pope Francis gave an address to a men's religious congregation on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of their founding. In keeping with one of

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

the major themes of his papacy, Pope Francis invited the priests to dedicate a great portion of their time to the sacrament of reconciliation. "Please, be great forgivers," he exhorted them, and he told them the story of a friar he knew in Buenos Aires, a priest who was, Francis says, a great forgiver. "He is almost my age and sometimes he is gripped by scruples for having forgiven too much. And one day I asked him: 'And what do you do when you are gripped by scruples?' — 'I go to the chapel, I look at the tabernacle, and I say:

Lord, forgive me, today I forgave too much, but let it be clear that you gave me the bad example.' "

Theologian Jack Shea has pointed out that it was the "too muchness" of Jesus that the people couldn't stand: too much mercy, too much compassion, too much love, and all of it too readily available — indeed available simply for the asking, free for the taking. Jesus, Shea says, made God as available as the village well and that was a scandal.

It was a scandal to the good religious people of his time, experts at measuring the mint, anise and cumin, scrupulous in tithing, and painstaking in obedience to the Law. It remains a scandal to all who work hard at earning God's grace, who can, with satisfaction, point to all the good deeds they do, count the masses attended, rosaries prayed and novenas offered. But to the Prodigal and the Magdalene, and to all those like them, those who knew then and those who know now that they are outside that "purity zone," it was and is undeserved mercy falling like rain from heaven on a parched soul.

Who is right: the self-righteous busily collecting grace points and jockeying for position before a calculating God, or the broken, standing on the outside, amazed recipients of an undeserved mercy that invites them in, sets a place for them at the table and welcomes them heartily? Followers of the gospel know the answer. It is the scandalous Jesus who hangs out with the sinners whom we look to as he reveals the heart of boundlessly merciful God — one as accessible as the village well.

When Pope Francis proclaimed the upcoming Extraordinary Year of Mercy for the church (Dec. 8, 2015 — Nov. 20, 2016), it is this scandalous God he is referencing. The entire People of God, those in the pulpits and those in the pews, are invited to be the face of mercy.

For those in the pulpit, Pope Francis has reminded them often of their calling to be "ministers of mercy." Among his more memorable quotes are those which speak about the church being a "hospital for souls" and eucharist not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak. He has stated that a confessional is not a torture chamber and

warned against priests who are arbiters of grace rather than facilitators of it: the church, he says, is not a toll-house. Pope Francis also said recently that if priests aren't merciful, then they should ask their bishop for a desk job and "never walk into a confessional, I beg you."

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, he reminds us that while we might get tired of asking for forgiveness, God never tires of offering it and when we take that step toward Jesus, we will always find that we are greeted with mercy.

To those in the pew, it is an equally concrete invitation to make mercy a guiding principle in our lives. It begins with the inner gaze and the humble acknowledgment that we are sinners, in need of God's mercy ourselves: *The kindergarten teacher was speaking to her class one day about the difference between doing good things and bad things. At the end of the lesson she asked, "So, if red is bad and green is good, what colour would you be? One little girl pondered the question quietly for a moment, then announced triumphantly, "I'd be streaky!" So would we all!*

"The mercy of God," Shea says, "reminds us that we are not irredeemable sinners but temporarily lost sons and daughters." When we are in touch with our brokenness, grateful recipients of God's merciful gaze, then we are

able to turn such a gaze on others. It is a "dynamic of mercy," captured by novelist and spiritual writer Frederick Buechner in an excerpt from one of his novels:

Pushing down hard with his fists on the tabletop, Gildas heaved himself up to standing. For the first time, we saw that he was missing one leg. It was gone from the knee joint down. He was hopping sideways to reach for his stick in the corner when he lost his balance. He would have fallen in a heap if Brendan hadn't leapt forward and caught him. "I'm as crippled as the dark world," Gildas said. "If it comes to that, which one of us isn't, my dear," Brendan replied . . . Gildas with one leg, Brendan sure he had misspent his whole life entirely. Me that had left my wife to follow him and buried our only boy. The truth of what Brendan said stopped all our mouths. We were crippled all of us. For a moment there was no sound but the bees. . . . "To lend each other a hand when we're falling," Brendan said. "Perhaps that's the only work that matters in the end." (Buechner, Listening to your Life, 1992.)

Lending each other a hand when we are falling; witnessing to a scandalous Jesus who gives us all the "bad example" of forgiving too much; mercy upon mercy upon mercy: it could be quite a year for our church!



Design Pics

MERCY IN THE CONFESSIONAL, AND BEYOND — Pope Francis has invited priests to dedicate a great portion of their time to the sacrament of reconciliation, and to be "great forgivers." The entire People of God, those in the pulpits and those in the pews, are invited to be the face of mercy, writes Sandy Prather of the upcoming Extraordinary Year of Mercy for the church.

More feature films to watch for

Continued from page 11

tale of a taxi driver's scheme to blackmail a frail elderly colonel, under whom he had served while fighting the Shining Path insurgency, for the former's sexual abuse of a young indigenous girl held captive by the military. Nothing goes according to plan.

Magnus Van Horn's *The Here After* (Poland/Sweden/France) follows the fate of troubled 17-year-old John (Ulrik Munther) after he is released from a detention facility into the custody of his father in a rural Swedish community that cannot forgive his terrible crime. It's an absorbing study of three generations of male rage and emotional disconnection.

In *Campo Grande* by Brazilian Sandra Kogut, a five-year-old girl, Rayane, is left on the doorstep of middle-aged Regina's home in a wealthy Rio neighbourhood, soon joined by nine-year-old brother Ygor. Regina's dilemma in caring for the abandoned children speaks volumes about the social extremes that disrupt her comfortable life.

Terence Davies brings an exquisite widescreen cinematography to *Sunset Song*, an adaptation of a classic 1932 novel centred on the resilient character of Chris Guthrie (Agness Deyn) as she grows up in a Scottish farming family, ruled over by a tyrannical father, and copes with a series of tragedies including her husband's execution for desertion during the First World War.

French Blood by filmmaker Diastème (the pseudonym of Patrick Asté) strikes a chord with its story of young racist skinhead Marco (Alban Lenoir) who over several decades renounces the path of violent extremism. It's a timely portrait given the current popularity of France's anti-immigrant far right Front National.

Finally, the most wickedly entertaining feature I saw was Dutch writer-director-actor Alex van Warmerdam's Belgium/Netherlands coproduction *Schneider vs. Bax* in which two contract killers — family man Schneider (Tom Dewispelaere) and dissolute novelist Bax (van Warmerdam) — are pitted against each other. This movie's twists kill, literally.

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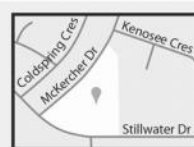
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Revolution of the heart starts with each one of us



Liturgy and Life

Michael Dougherty

In Manhattan’s East Village, just off the Bowery, crushed-together tenements took the light from the street. Surrounding asphalt and concrete covered and choked out most signs of nature. Only the occasional weed grabbed a narrow purchase on the scant bits of earth amongst the rubbish tins. Even there the Word of God was living and active.

A friend I accompanied had a message to deliver one early spring afternoon in the East Village. We climbed up a few flights of stairs of Maryhouse, a brick building on East 3rd. After an inquiry we were directed to a room. There the diffused rays of the afternoon sun had managed to make it down the narrow internal shaft and through the window. Resting on a metal-framed bed, eyes closed in the half-light, features relaxed, the woman we were meant to see looked much younger than her then 73 years. As she rose to greet us the years slowly returned.

In spite of the interrupted nap, Dorothy Day greeted us warmly and listened to my friend’s message. I would meet Dorothy several more times in the early 1970s when I found

For many years, writer, educator and outdoor enthusiast Michael Dougherty has been an active community leader. He has been involved with numerous organizations, including the Social Justice Committee at the Sacred Heart Cathedral of Whitehorse; the Yukon Anti-Poverty Coalition; the Yukon Human Rights Board; and the Downtown Urban Gardeners Society. In 2014 he received the Governor General’s Caring Canadian award. An adjunct professor at Yukon College, Dougherty lives in Whitehorse.

time for a break from my studies at McGill University in Montreal. Whether over a bowl of soup at St. Joseph House on East First Street before I returned to finishing up the evening soup kitchen dishes, or at the Catholic Worker farm a couple of hours north of the city at Tivoli, New York, her calm, determined presence would always permeate the space we shared. Through her I had the sharp, piercing and unsettling realization that the path she had chosen of non-violent witness, voluntary poverty and prayer was open to all of us if only we chose to walk it.

During the harsh years of the Great Depression Dorothy Day co-founded the Catholic Worker Movement (<http://www.catholicworker.org/>) with Peter Maurin, a social activist from France. The Catholic Worker newspaper, the first two “houses of hospitality,” and Mary Farm soon followed. The Second World War and the strident period of Cold War military buildups tested their commitment to non-violence. Through the following difficult years of civil rights and labour struggles the Catholic Worker grew under Dorothy’s guidance. It always offered hospital-

Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time October 11, 2015	Wisdom 7:7-11 Psalm 90 Hebrews 4:12-13 Mark 10:17-30
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ity to the homeless, hungry, exiled and forsaken as a practical witness to their commitment.

“A firm belief in the God-given dignity of every human person” marked her pursuit of the wisdom described in the first reading. This wisdom laid bare the false promise of “sceptres and thrones” and other worldly enticements.

The Bowery and East Village have changed since Dorothy died in 1980. Now luxury condominiums and gentrification have driven out many of the poor and those maimed by drugs and alcohol that had been the neighbourhood’s habitués. However, the Catholic Worker Movement continues to serve the marginalized. It still prophetically calls to account a system that creates inequality and injustice. This is true in New York City as well as in the more than 236 Catholic Worker communities worldwide.

The Catholic Worker women and men serving their sisters and brothers in need remain committed to the ideals of Dorothy Day. Her words still resonate. “The biggest challenge of the day is: how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution that has to start with each one of us.”

Named “Servant of God” in 2000, the first step toward canonization (the same year as Catherine Doherty of Madonna House in Combermere, Ont., received the same designation), Dorothy Day continues to challenge and inspire. Wherever we are, we know that we have choices to make.

You don’t have to be called a saint to live a life of service and simplicity. We are all told, like the man in the reading from the Gospel of Mark, “Sell what you own, give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” We see the man who grieves at the challenge Jesus lays before him. Do we turn from it as well? How has our wealth hardened our hearts and made it impossible to see the needs around us? What “eye of the needle” must we pass through?

In these last weeks before the federal election, issues have been raised that demand a clear response from us. Will Canada provide a safe, welcoming haven for refugees fleeing persecution and violence? Can we effectively deal with the poverty and despair we see on our First Nations reserves, in our inner cities and amongst our elderly and single-parent families?

The facts lie starkly before us: 200,000 Canadians wander our streets homeless; 900,000 people rely on our community food banks each month, a third of them are children; one in seven of our fellow citizens struggle to meet their basic needs; globally one in nine people are chronically malnourished; worldwide 22,000 children, according to UNICEF, die each day from poverty-related causes.

Organizations such as Vote To End Poverty (www.votetoendpoverty.ca) and Dignity For All (www.dignityforall.ca) point us toward solutions. Maybe our journey starts by asking the questions Peter Maurin did: “. . . why the things are what they are, how the things would be if they were as they should be, and how a path can be made from the things as they are to the things as they should be.” Across the ages Jesus shows us the way.

Key to healing is found in watering our virtues, making them grow

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



All of us live with some wounds, bad habits, addictions and temperamental flaws that are so deeply engrained and longstanding that it seems like they are part of our genetic makeup. And so we tend to give in to a certain quiet despair in terms of ever being healed of them.

Experience teaches us this. There’s the realization at some point in our lives that the wounds and flaws which pull us down cannot simply be turned off like a water tap. Willpower and good resolutions alone are not up to the task. What good is it to make a resolution never to be angry again? Our anger will invariably return. What good is it to make a resolution to give up some addictive habit, however small or big? We

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will soon enough again be overcome by its lure. And what good does it do to try to change some temperamental flaw we’ve inherited in our genes or inhaled in the air of our childhood? All the good resolutions and positive thinking in the world normally don’t change our makeup.

So what do we do? Just live with our wounds and flaws and the unhappiness and pettiness that this brings into our lives? Or, can we heal? How do we weed out our weaknesses?

There are many approaches to healing: psychology tells us that good counselling and therapy can help cure us of our wounds, flaws and addictions. Therapy and counselling can bring us to a better self-understanding and that can help us change our behaviour. But psychology also admits that this has its limitations. Knowing why we do something doesn’t always empower us to change our behaviour. Sociology too has insights to contribute. There is, as Parker Palmer puts it, *the therapy of a public life*. Healthy interaction with family, friends, community and church can be a wonderfully steadying thing in our lives and help take us beyond our lonely wounds and our congenital mis-

Various recovery (12 Step) programs also contribute something valuable. These programs are predicated on the premise that self-understanding and willpower by themselves are often powerless to actually change our behaviour. A higher power is needed, and

that higher power is found in ritual, communal support, radical honesty, admittance of our helplessness and a turning over of ourselves to a Someone or Something beyond us that can do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Recovery programs are invaluable, but they too aren’t the answer to all of our problems.

Finally, not least, there are various theories and practices of healing that ground themselves in spirituality. These range from emphasizing churchgoing itself as a healing, to emphasizing the sacrament of reconciliation, to recommending prayer and meditation, to counselling various ascetical practices, to sending people off to holy sites, to letting oneself be prayed over by some group or faith-healer, to undergoing long periods of spiritual guidance under a trained director.

There’s value in all of these and perhaps the full healing of a temperamental flaw, a bad habit, an addiction or a deep wound depends upon drawing water from each of these wells. However, beyond this simple listing, I would like to offer an insight from the great mystic, John of the Cross, vis-à-vis coming to psychological, moral and spiritual healing.

In his last book, *The Living Flame of Love*, John proposes a theory of, and a process for, healing. In essence, it runs this way: for John, we heal of our wounds, moral flaws, addictions and bad habits by growing our virtues to the point where we become

mature enough in our humanity so that there’s no more room left in our lives for the old behaviours that used to drag us down. In short, we get rid of the coldness, bitterness and pettiness in our hearts by lighting inside our hearts enough warm fires to burn out the coldness and bitterness. The algebra works this way: the more we grow in maturity, generativity and generosity, the more our old wounds, bad habits, temperamental flaws and addictions will disappear because our deeper maturity will no longer leave room for them in our lives.

Positive growth of our hearts, like a vigorous plant, eventually chokes out the weeds. If you went to John of the Cross and asked him to help you deal with a certain bad habit in your life, his focus wouldn’t be on how to weed out that habit. Instead the focus would be on growing your virtues: What are you doing well? What are your best qualities? What goodness in you needs to be fanned into fuller flame?

By growing what’s positive in us, we eventually become big-hearted enough so that there’s no room left for our former bad habits. The path to healing is to water our virtues so that these virtues themselves will be the fire that burns out the festering wounds, addictions, bad habits and temperamental flaws that have, for far too long, plagued our lives and kept us wallowing in weakness and pettiness rather than walking in maturity, generosity and generativity.

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Synod an opportunity to listen to the People of God



catholic dialogue

Isabella R. Moyer

Despite questionnaires and invited auditors, the upcoming synod on the family is still a synod of bishops. Is there any hope that the voices of families will be heard? Is there any hope that the voices of women will be heard when only a handful of handpicked women will be present (Pope Francis has appointed 30 women to attend the synod as auditors making contributions to the discussions, but only the 279 male members of the meetings can vote)? Is there any hope that there will be any changes in church teachings and discipline surrounding family life?

If the final recommendations of the synod are to have any real effect at the grassroots level, what happens behind closed doors must respond to what is going on outside, in the world. Pope Francis has reopened the windows of the church, encouraging a freer atmosphere for dialogue. And, the People of God are talking. If the bishops attending the synod disregard the voice of the people, it will be to their detriment.

Abuse scandals, financial scan-

dals, and hypocrisy within the leadership of the church have eroded the moral authority of many bishops in recent decades. And, yes, this too is a family issue. How many families have left the church from disillusionment and disgust? The synod is an opportunity, on the world stage, for bishops to show true servant leadership — humble leadership that acknowledges its

own human weaknesses, understands the needs of those they serve, and responds in mercy to their struggles.

During the 2014 synod we were exposed to the clear lines of polarity within episcopal ranks. Some synod members come with the “smell of the sheep” on them. Like Pope Francis, these pastor bishops are immersed in the reality of the people they serve and have an understanding of the practical issues faced within their local cultures.

Sadly, some bishops live a cocooned existence in diocesan and curial halls. Others spend their energy gathering armies of culture warriors to defend each jot and tittle of church law regarding human sexuality and family life.

Some expend more effort in fighting the legalization of same-sex marriage, for example, than in actively fighting the racism and sexism that feed the cycle of poverty and social inequality.

Today we have a pope who insists that we focus less on ideology and more on gospel action. His pastoral experiences in the slums of Buenos Aires lend him moral authority when speaking about the challenges faced by families. He promotes an open-door policy for the church, baptizing the children of single mothers when other priests refused. He recently said, “Churches, parishes, and institutions whose doors are closed should not call themselves churches. They should call themselves museums.”

How far to open the doors, and how to treat those who enter will be at the centre of many discussions at the synod. Opening the door of our churches is the first, and perhaps easiest step. We are happy to have our pews filled. The second step is welcoming all to the table of the Lord, and this is where disagreements will occur. What kind of hospitality says that you are welcome to sit with us, but are not invited to eat? How can we preach of covenant love, and then reject or attack the love of couples that do not fit into our vision of the perfect marriage and family?

How can we be pro-life without addressing the economic and political issues that leave so many women, men and children starving, homeless or fleeing the ravages of war? How can we speak of motherhood in glowing, poetic terms while ignoring continued gender inequality and violence against women?

We cannot expect the synod of bishops to heal the world of all her ills. Neither can we expect, nor should we expect, the bishops to throw aside core beliefs of our Catholic faith. At the heart of our faith is the great commandment of loving God and loving each other. Over the years we have developed numerous doctrines on how that love should be expressed and lived. History shows that some of these doctrines can and have evolved over the years as we gain newer and deeper understandings of human nature and our relationship with each other and with our God.

It is possible that this synod will merely reiterate all the existing doctrines and disciplines of the church, while blaming a catechetically ignorant laity on the current crises in family life. I hope this doesn't happen. It will constitute a missed opportunity for much-needed reconciliation and mercy for our church and her people.

It is also possible that Pope Francis will nudge his fellow bishops to listen well to the voice of the people, and seek prophetic and courageous solutions to the challenges faced by families around the world. If this happens, then the XIV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will become a providential moment in church history.



CNS/Octavio Duran

FRANCIS' LEGACY — A nun walks the courtyard at the church and convent of San Damiano in Assisi, Italy, where St. Francis first received his miraculous calling in 1205. Seven centuries later others in Assisi during the Second World War led their city to continue Francis' legacy with their concern for others, writes Annie Laura Smith.

Legacy of St. Francis continued in Assisi during war years

By Annie Laura Smith

The town of Assisi in central Italy is remembered primarily as the City of St. Francis. The city's spiritual legacy is revered since he profoundly changed the world with his message of peace, his concern for the poor, and his love for all creation. St. Francis found much joy in living the Gospel, and showing others how to do so.

The year 2009 marked the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Franciscan brotherhood. Today Franciscans continue to share the message of God's love and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ as St. Francis did in the 13th century. In the introduction to his biography of St. Francis, Omer Englebert wrote, “Francis is one of those men of whom humanity will always be proud.”

Seven centuries later three other men in Assisi during the Second World War led their city to

continue his legacy with their concern for others. The clergy and citizens of Assisi saved more than 200 Jews during the German occupation of their city. The manner in which they saved these lives borders on the miraculous. It makes some wonder if St. Francis interceded on their behalf.

German troops occupied Assisi on Sept. 8, 1943, as Allied troops fought their way up the Italian peninsula. In spite of the German occupation, several hundred Jewish refugees sought refuge in the city. They were apparently drawn to the city by the legacy of St. Francis, and later attributed their safety to him. The Assisians bravely sheltered and hid these refugees at great personal risk. By the end of the occupation, not one of the refugees had been betrayed to the Germans.

Three men, Msgr. Giuseppe Nicolini (the bishop of Assisi), Col. Valentin Müller (German commander, physician, and a devout Catholic) and Don Aldo Brunacci (the bishop's secretary) are known as the heroes of Assisi because they were instrumental in the success of this endeavour.

Bishop Nicolini and Col. Müller had Assisi declared a “hospital city” by various political manoeuvrings. This designation made Assisi a demilitarized city

exempt from fighting. The city subsequently did not suffer the tragic fate of the Benedictine Monastery Monte Cassino. In addition, Nicolini at the Vatican's request, set about to establish an underground network to help save the Jews who had fled to the city.

The bishop formed a Committee of Assistance with the local citizens. He tasked his secretary, Don Aldo Brunacci, who was the third hero of Assisi, with creating this network. They provided counterfeit identity cards, allowing the refugees to live as though they were local citizens. At one time, the immigrant population of Jews and other refugees was as large as this town of 5,000.

The bishop's humanitarian efforts never wavered during these clandestine activities. Some felt he should show more “moderation,” but he never gave in to these dangers and risks. He hid in his basement all of the materials that identified the refugees as Jews. These materials included money, liturgical vestments and sacred texts. To do this, he used his own stone masonry skills. With the help of his secretary, he walked in the area thus hiding everything from view.

These belongings were returned to the refugees after the liberation. The clergy and citizens made no attempts to convert the

Jews to Catholicism during their stay in Assisi. This intent was to save the people who were desperately seeking safety from Nazi persecution.

The appointment of Col. Valentin Müller as military commander of Assisi served the citizens well because he repeatedly intervened against the SS and Gestapo who tried ruthless tactics against the Assisians. When the German troops began retreating from the advancing Allies, Müller feared these retreating forces would occupy the city. Although German Marshal Kesselring assured the doctor this would not happen, Müller stationed himself and other guards to ensure they would not enter Assisi.

When all of the other German forces had fled Italy, Müller and his division left Italy, too. Word went out from the citizens of Assisi that he should have safe passage for what he had done to help them during the German occupation. The colonel and his family were welcomed as visitors in Assisi after the war ended.

On Dec. 11, 1977, Dino Tomassini, the Bishop of Assisi, received the Medal of the Righteous Gentile on behalf of Nicolini from the State of Israel for saving the Jews. The award to Nicolini was given posthumously.

Rev. Brunacci also received the award for his dedicated efforts.

St. Bonaventure University in upstate New York awarded Don Aldo Brunacci the National Gaudete Medal on March 23, 2004, in recognition for his exemplifying the spirit of St. Francis and inspiring others. The words on the medal read: For service to God and humanity in the Franciscan spirit of compassion and sacrifice, faith and humility, hope and joy. He was also an honoured guest at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

Brunacci contributed many of his recollections to the book *Three Heroes of Assisi in World War II: Bishop Giuseppe Nicolini, Colonel Valentin Müller, Don Aldo Brunacci* because of his desire to “publish all the documents in my possession regarding the events in question . . . because only the truth deserves to be known.”

Don Aldo Brunacci died on Feb. 1, 2007. He was not a Franciscan, but a diocesan priest who was “a Franciscan at heart.” When asked why he risked his life for a couple of hundred Jews, he replied, “It is what the Gospel asks a Christian to do.” These actions affirmed the message of St. Francis as they did what the Gospel asked them to do.

Smith has 500 publications in the areas of fiction and non-fiction for children, curriculum materials for children and adults, general interest, inspirational and technical articles, book reviews, test materials, and poetry. She is an instructor for the Institute of Children's Literature in Huntsville, AL.

Pope Francis: a real change in church teaching?

By David Gibson
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Of all the many questions Pope Francis has raised in his brief papacy, perhaps none is as insistent, or as crucial to his legacy, as the debate over whether he represents a real change in the church.

Critics who look at the gushing reception for the pontiff — much in evidence during this visit to the U.S., the pope's first — say that while he has changed the tone of the papacy, he hasn't done anything to change church teachings. And that, they say, is where the rubber hits the road.

Yet on two issues, Francis may have provided some answers during this visit, though the import of his comments received little attention amid the blanket coverage of everything from his embrace of a young immigrant girl to his decision to ride in a modest Fiat instead of an armoured limo.

The first concerns the death penalty.

In his address to Congress on Sept. 24, Francis covered a range of issues that sparked much discussion. Almost overlooked amid the clamour of the historic moment was his call “for the global abolition of the death penalty.”

To be sure, that a pope is against the state executing someone may not seem like news; previous popes have often decried the injustice of the death penalty, in the U.S. and elsewhere, and have made personal pleas for the commutation of the death sentences for some convicts.

After a sweeping revision of the church's official catechism in the 1990s, St. John Paul II had the section on the death penalty amended to narrow, though not entirely close, the possibility of capital punishment, saying the cases in which a prisoner must be executed “are very rare, if not practically non-existent.”

But since he was elected in 2013, Francis has gone a step further.

In March he declared that capital punishment today “is inadmissible, no matter how serious the crime committed.” It “contradicts God's plan for man and society,” and he said, “there is no humane way of killing another person.” (For good measure, he added that even life sentences are “a hidden death penalty” that should also be abolished.)

A number of critics have argued that “the Catholic Church's Magisterium has never advocated unqualified abolition of the death penalty,” as Rev. C. John McCloskey, a prominent conservative commentator, put it.

McCloskey is right. But the line that Francis is taking on the

death penalty may simply mean that church doctrine in that regard is changing, or “developing,” as the theologians prefer to frame it.

Despite the popular image of the Catholic Church as “*semper idem*,” always the same, the church is also constantly evolving, and over the centuries several teachings have flat-out changed.

The most recent example was Rome's endorsement, during the Second Vatican Council, of the principle of religious freedom, which a century earlier had been officially declared anathema.

A second example of developing doctrine may have emerged in Francis' address to the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 25.

As expected, the pope made protecting the environment a central theme, picking up on his groundbreaking and controversial encyclical from June, *Laudato Si'*.

That encyclical was the first by a pope devoted to the environment and in particular climate change. But Francis had in fact picked up on themes and statements elaborated by St. John Paul II and to a greater extent those of his immediate predecessor, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, who was known as the “green pope” for his eco-friendly stances.

Francis, however, seemed to take Benedict's teachings even further.

The anticipation of that encyclical prompted Notre Dame theologian Robin Darling Young to wonder whether Francis would declare that “created nature — the environment — has rights of its own.”

“Such a view on the part of the pope,” she wrote in *Commonweal* magazine, “would be a significant development in Catholic thinking about the inherent worth of creation apart from the humans who dominate it.”

The encyclical itself did indeed seem to be, as the former archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, put it, “a major contribution to the ongoing unfolding of a body of coherent social teaching.” And writing at Religion News Service, Jay Michaelson called the encyclical “theological-ly revolutionary.”

But in his speech to the UN, Francis may have provided an even clearer answer about what he is thinking as he declared that “a true ‘right of the environment’ does exist.”

Francis elaborated somewhat on what he meant by that unusual statement, and it made for fascinating, if often dense, reading. (His recasting of the term “pro-life” as one that encompasses care for creation as well as a host of issues beyond abortion is also intriguing and important, but not as significant doctrinally.)

Late on Sept. 25, his spokesperson, Rev. Federico Lombardi, was asked point-blank by the *Tablet's* Christopher Lamb whether Francis was indeed developing Catholic social teaching on the environment.

Lombardi confirmed that the pope's language was in fact a “new expression,” adding, “there is something new there, yes.”

He also confirmed that the

pope's teaching on capital punishment was also a development of doctrine, and he added, referring to Francis' call for a ban on life imprisonment, that “maybe he will also deepen this expression in the future.”

Just what Francis' statements will ultimately mean for Catholic teaching is something the theologians will argue over, because that's what theologians do, and that's how doctrine changes — or is reaffirmed.

Just as many will fiercely resist any suggestion that the church can or should change the teaching on the death penalty. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, for one, says that would be wrong. Many will also resist any suggestion that nature has “rights.”

The bottom line is that if one aspect of church teaching changes it doesn't mean everything and anything can change. The creed is pretty solid, for example, as are declared dogmas and matters of revealed faith.

But how other doctrines develop is a complex matter; it's not just about a pope waking up one morning and deciding to switch things up. There must be solid arguments developed over many years, a certain accord with the sense of all the faithful, and the assent of much of the hierarchy as well. Change in the church is about realizing more clearly a truth that already existed.

It's a process, and it may well be happening again right before our eyes, though it's hard to detect when everyone is instead looking for a doctrinal change to arrive in the form of some clear and impe-

rious edict from Rome — and on other teachings. (Good luck with the ordination of women anytime soon.)

Not that Rome likes to admit that the church changes at all, in any form. The Vatican fears the slippery slope, and worries that if the flock realizes that one teach-

ing can be modified then the flock may think anything can change, at any moment.

As church historians like to joke, when an announcement from Rome begins with the preface, “As the church has always taught . . .,” then you know something is about to change.



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL —The Vatican flag waves outside St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City. The cathedral is where Pope Francis held vespers with priests and men and women religious during his Sept. 22 - 27 visit to the United States.

Pope breaks out of the box on families

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

PHILADELPHIA (CCN) — People were surprised, at least the professional talkers on CNN were surprised, that Pope Francis tossed his script at the Festival of the Families Saturday night.

But on the subject of family, Pope Francis knows his heart and speaks from it. Remember the outdoor vigil last year, just before the extraordinary synod on the family? The pope spoke quietly, tenderly out of a deep well of wisdom and not from a prepared and approved text.

The pope told people then why the church needs to talk, debate, think and discern over the family in our time.

“In each person born of a woman, there remains alive an essential need for stability, for an open door, for someone with whom to weave and to share the story of life, a history to which to belong,” he said in 2014.

In that candlelit garden behind the Vatican offices and apartments, the pope spoke of families and loneliness.

“It is also the most weighty hour for he who finds himself face to face with his own loneliness, in the bitter twilight of broken dreams and plans,” he said. “How many people trudge through the day in the blind alley of resignation, abandonment, even resent-

ment: in how many homes was the wine of joy less plenty, therefore, the zest ‘and the wisdom’ of life.”

The pope needs no guiding hand when the subject is families, and he showed it again when he addressed families “immigrant and non-immigrant, wholesome and broken” in Philadelphia. He knows that family is where love must happen and fears that it is where we are manufacturing loneliness.

“To look after grandparents, to look after children, is the expression of love,” he said as he emphasized the link between the two extremes of age and youth.

When the raw material of family life is love, then families become a “factory of hope.”

“Love is celebration. Love is joy. Love is moving forward,” he said.

Many have been looking to the pope's appearance here at the World Meeting of the Families to set an agenda for the larger ordinary synod on the family coming up in a couple of weeks. The speakers invited to address 18,000 delegates here over the last week have been mostly conservative and mostly American, but not all. The pope won't be put in a box and he has no desire to see the church in a box.

Francis structured his impromptu remarks (he is a Jesuit and therefore even impromptu remarks quite naturally have structure) around beauty, goodness and truth. He said he wouldn't speak of

mother-in-laws, but that was only to raise a laugh “to get his audience to recognize themselves.” He spoke of flying plates and the difficulties of married life and the heartbreak and exhaustion of raising children. He does not have an idealized view of family life, but he does have ideals.

He knows that modern life so often reduces us to less than a family and thus enforces loneliness. This is why the church has to talk about family “to help people find their way out of modern loneliness.”

“To search for that which today the Lord asks of his church, we must lend our ears to the beat of this time and perceive the “scent” of the people today, so as to remain permeated with their joys and hopes, by their sadness and distress, at which time we will know how to propose the good news of the family with credibility,” he said in 2014. “We know, in fact, as in the Gospel, there is a strength and tenderness capable of defeating that which is created by unhappiness and violence. In fact, every time we return to the source of Christian experience, new paths and un-thought-of possibilities open up.”

On Saturday night, after Sister Sledge triumphantly belted out “We are Family” and Jim Gaffigan so artfully poked fun at his audience, the pope demonstrated that he has not changed his opinion.

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To view the pasture, leaders should leave the pen



Everyday Theology

Louise McEwan

Politicians would love to have Pope Francis' approval ratings. His popularity crosses party lines and spills over the borders of the tiny state he heads. The spiritual leader of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis may be the most influential and galvanizing leader on the world stage. Leadership traits alone cannot fully explain

the "Francis effect." Francis is a case study in leadership. He has every attribute that shows up on checklists for good leaders. He is willing to take risks and to effect change. He delegates and allows people to do their jobs. He seeks advice from different voices, including dissenting ones. He will act unilaterally if neces-

sary. He puts the good of the organization first. And, while good leaders are accessible, Pope Francis finds novel ways to be present to people. He leads by example. Politicians share many of these traits. Yet, as we are seeing during this election campaign here at home, as well as south of the border, few politicians enjoy the same level of popularity as the pope. In my view, this is because leadership cannot be boiled down to a checklist of behaviours. Leadership requires more than the mastery of a set of skills. An outstanding leader also communicates, through words and actions, the person he or she is and the values that inform his or her life. We

might refer to this as the leader's spirituality. Apart from all of his leadership qualities, I believe people are attracted to Pope Francis' spirituality. His humility and respect for others reflect his understanding of service, and his commitment to placing people, not dogma, at the centre of his papacy. It would be unfair to make a direct comparison between the leadership style of Pope Francis and those individuals presently seeking the top job in the nation. After all, Francis does not have to worry about getting elected or coming up with a platform that appeals to a majority of voters. But there is one page from his playbook that national party leaders might consider imitating.

Pope Francis inherited a church rife with problems. He identified one of these problems as clericalism, the focus on privilege, status and power that separates priests from the people they are supposed to serve. One way to combat the tendency toward clericalism is to take on the smell of sheep. "Priests should be shepherds living with the smell of sheep," said Pope Francis. Our national party leaders say they walk and talk with ordinary Canadians. They speak eloquently about what the average Canadian thinks. Each of them would have us believe that he alone has the pulse of the nation. But, it is obvi-

ous from watching the televised coverage of the leaders' tour that no one is taking on the multitude of smells that permeate the pasture. The majority of people who attend the campaign events are party faithful. In fact, some events are by invitation only. Campaign organizers carefully select the individuals who stand adoringly behind the leader, nodding in agreement as he presents his platform and denigrates that of the others. The political backdrop of faces sends a visual message of diversity and support for the leader. The group is there to make the leader seem like one of us, to humanize him and the party's policies, and to persuade us to enter their sheepfold. Our national party leaders are accustomed to the smell of their own sheep pen. That is not necessarily bad, but it limits perspective. Leaders may miss the bleating of dissonant voices with good ideas, voices that could help the country become more prosperous and equitable. This hanging around at the centre of one's pen does not end with the campaign; it makes its way into government in the form of partisanship. The centre of the sheep pen does not afford a complete view of the pasture. As Francis observed while visiting a parish at the edge of Rome shortly after he became pope, "We understand reality better not from the centre, but from the outskirts." In an election campaign, party leaders try to convince voters that their party has the best ideas. After the election, the top dog would do well to seek perspectives and incorporate worthy ideas that come from outside the party fold.



Paproski

IN TRANSITION — The changing leaves in the late summer and early autumn remind us that life is always in transition. As one season ends, another begins. One season flows into another, a sign that death is not the end, but the beginning of something new.

Trail, B.C., resident Louise McEwan is a freelance writer, religion columnist and catechist. She has degrees in English and theology and is a former teacher. She blogs at www.faiithcolouredglass-es.blogspot.ca. Reach her at louisemcewan@telus.net

The seasons have something to teach us about life transitions

By Paul Paproski, OSB

There are many things I like about autumn. On top of the list is the beautiful display of colours. Leaves look brilliant in yellow, orange and red. Forests look amazing as they become a kaleidoscope of colours. The colours even take on nuances of their own as clouds cast shadows and the sun changes its position in the sky. The beginning of autumn feels mystical. The shadows are longer and forming ever-darker patterns. Darkness continues its course of pushing out the daylight hours. The air is crispy. Temperatures are cooling and the winds are howling, forewarning of colder days ahead. In September of last year I drove my sister Gwen from Regina to her home in Hudson Bay. We travelled from the Queen City to Yorkton and then turned north onto Highway 9. This route was familiar. I travelled it many times previous to 1997 when I entered St. Peter's Abbey to become a Benedictine monk. The

scenery brought back memories of yesteryear, though I do not remember enjoying the view as much as on this day. It was late September and the season of autumn was just beginning. The sun shone through a blue sky and a small congregation of heavy, fluffy clouds welcomed the new time of year. Bright rays drew attention to the beauty of the landscape. The parklands and mixed forests were dressed in the glittering colours of yellow, orange and red. Fields of straw, left from combined wheat and barley crops, looked golden. Swaths formed striking patterns of lines as they awaited their final harvest. Hawks looked majestic as they sat upon bales and power lines. Rural Orthodox and Ukrainian Catholic churches spoke of mystery and the eternal as they displayed their holy cupolas and crosses in the Land of the Living Skies. When I pointed out the fall colours, Gwen agreed that they were beautiful. She loved the outdoors, but she could not appreciate the moment as much as I did. Gwen was battling cancer. She was in pain from weeks of chemotherapy followed by an

operation. Gwen, once full of energy and a zeal for life, was now gaunt and weak. But her disposition belied all this. She was optimistic and managed an occasional smile as we carried on a conversation. Gwen always tried to keep a positive outlook on things, even in this difficult episode of life. It hadn't occurred to me this would be our final trip together. Gwen died eight months later at the age of 50, after losing her five-year battle to cancer. That September car ride with my sister made me realize that the beauty of the season I admire so much came about because of death. The splendour of the autumn leaves was the result of the foliage entering its final cycle of plant life. The life of ordinary green was transitioning into the death of extraordinary yellow, orange and red. The leaves, in their final and, ironically, most spectacular-looking stage, were being cut off from branches and would soon be falling to the earth. How could death bring so much beauty? Since when is there anything beautiful about death? There is a purpose for the seasons. The different times of the year are a witness to the eternal.

Seasons are the design of God. The personality of God flows through all creation and the seasons are an inherent part of all of this. The seasons remind us that we are always in transition. Summer nods off into autumn, which enters a deep sleep to become winter. Winter awakens into spring and then blossoms into summer. Death is not the end, but the beginning of something new. The author of Ecclesiastes speaks of the wisdom of the seasons. "For everything there is a season. There is a time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance" (Eccl 3:1-5).

Celtic wisdom recognizes the eternal world as being so closely connected to the natural world that death is not something to be feared or seen as a threat. The world of nature and the seasons, Celtic wisdom teaches, flows into the final season of eternal life. There is no darkness, shadows or pain in this final transition, only an eternity with God. "I am going home with thee, to thy home, to thy home. I am going home with thee, to thy home of winter. I am going home with thee, to thy home of autumn of spring and of summer. I am going home with thee, my child of my love to thy eternal bed to thy perpetual sleep" (Celtic Prayer).

Paproski is a Benedictine monk and priest of St. Peter's Abbey.

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A ‘mountaineer’ friendship: treasures unearthed

Around the Kitchen Table

Lloyd Ratzlaff



It’s just over two years since my good friend Ken Latos died. For a decade he had pitted his redoubtable spirit against an encroaching cancer, and at the same time was struggling with his pre-Vatican II Catholic upbringing, and toward the end of his life also with certain aspects of evangelical Christianity to which he had been drawn. He was my only friend who shared such deep passion for Carl Jung’s psychology and its insights into the profundities of the human soul. And he was a writer — a prolific writer — collecting over his adult lifetime some 500 notebooks which he kept variously in the trunk of his car, in the rafters of a cousin’s garage, or in a small storage room with concrete walls because it was “the safest place in the apartment.”

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

I first met Ken in 1986 in the Saskatoon airport, where we discovered that we were both headed for Pecos, New Mexico, to a conference on psychology and spiritual life. It was the beginning of a long and comfortable friendship which eventually became for me (and I believe for Ken, too) a relationship of soul brothers. We seemed to point each other to what we knew would help, and often after a discussion felt that some imbalance in life had been corrected. More than once he said, “Now that we’ve talked, things are back to normal,” and I felt that way myself.

In academic philosophy Ken had out-read me by far, and perhaps also in Jungian psychology. During one of our final visits he said he had always imagined our relationship to be like two mountaineers who were climbing for the sheer adventure of it. This metaphor astonished me, since to my mind our common adventure had always been the other way — down into deep places, and much more by necessity than by choice. The images of course are complementary, but it was just like Ken to come up with such an eagle-eyed view; and when he added that our mountain-climbing phase was now over, I halfway joked that this didn’t necessarily mean he had to die.

One of the last writings he shared with his family and friends was a letter meant as a testimony to his spiritual quest. It begins with a series of negations: he is not a metaphysician and not a psychologist, neither is he a theologian or a teacher. But interspersed among the denials are his poetic lines:

I have no profession as a writer but I am a writer by birth and by toil.

He is neither novelist nor playwright nor essayist, he goes on; he is a poet — but not a Shakespeare or a Dante!

I weave from my sorrows wings that become butterflies.

I carry my pail of infinity. I write snake-spears of fire.

As the testament unfolds, he writes that his 500 notebooks were like a field from which he hoped one day to dig out buried treasure; or again, they were like a field ready to be harvested, but just when the harvest was ripe, his doctors told him he was dying.

He had often said that he didn’t want to sleep through his own death, and just as often was adamant that he would never die of cancer — of something, no doubt, but not of this cancer. And though all common sense would deny it, he may well have spoken more truly than anyone knew. For he understood how unwelcoming this world can be, and in one of his he poems describes

my grade one teacher’s judgment

that made me a charter member of the slow group

and our reward was all that extra time in the sandbox . . .

and in April on my birthday I let the dark have me.

For a soul as tender as Ken’s, maybe 68 years of being pigeon-holed and typecast was enough, especially in the final 10 years of contending with so much medical



Design Pics

METAPHOR FOR A FRIENDSHIP — Two mountaineers climbing for the sheer adventure of it was a metaphor for the friendship Lloyd Ratzlaff writes about.

skepticism about his viability. Yet however much he suffered from cancer, I never met him but that his mind was as sharp as always, and I want to say with Paul Scherer, another poet, that I can’t think of Ken as *declining* into death, but rather as *mounting* to it.

A few days after he died I discovered the following quotation from Loren Eiseley: “The true poet . . . is born wary and is frequently in retreat because he is a protector of the human spirit.” Annie Dillard somewhere com-

ments that even an unknown manuscript discovered on a closet shelf after an author’s death was worth having been written. The words had to come out, and did.

I trust that Ken’s treasures will be unearthed in due season. Meanwhile, may he rest awhile in that place of which it’s said, “The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night” — no sunstroke, no lunacy there, only Ken’s capacious soul as ever carrying its pail of infinity.



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Pope Francis a big hit

Pope Francis visited the United States this past week. Media coverage was extensive. Politicians and citizens of all stripes welcomed him and waited to hear his message. He made several important stops, including the White House and a joint session of Congress in Washington, Ground Zero and the United Nations in New York and finally the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. In-between his official visits he made some unscheduled stops, much to the delight of the people, whether a 102-year-old Little Sister of the Poor, some prisoners or victims of sexual abuse. The Prairie Messenger is carrying reports of his most important talks this week. We cannot report on all of them, but his messages were simple, to the point and challenging. Above all, they were positive. His tone is not condemnatory, but exhortative and appealing to what is best in the human heart. His constant appeal is to

show mercy, as generously as God does. God lets the sun shine and the rain fall on all indiscriminately — the righteous and the unrighteous. Two groups wanted to hear more from Pope Francis. Five hundred women’s ordination advocates and leaders from 19 countries and five continents gathered in Philadelphia to call for ordination and equality for women in the Roman Catholic Church. They urgently call on the institutional church to model equality and end the unjust treatment of women. While Pope Francis met with a group of survivors of sexual abuse Sept. 27 and later told bishops that he was overwhelmed by a sense of embarrassment and was committed to holding accountable those who harmed children, the Survivor Network of those Abused by Priests, known as SNAP, said the pope and bishops are not doing enough to address this issue. The 30-minute meeting was with three women and two men abused by members of the clergy, their families or their teachers. Pope Francis must be exhausted after his packed

schedule. But he faces another busy three weeks once the synod of bishops on the family opens in Rome on Oct. 4. — PWN

Doctors beware

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan has passed a policy on conscientious objection that is disturbing. As reported in this issue, the college passed its policy on “physician-assisted dying” after only 15 minutes of discussion, and despite objections. The Canadian bishops strongly opposed such a policy at their meeting earlier this month. Doctors may now face disciplinary action for honouring the Hippocratic Oath. More importantly, the policy, if left unchanged, will deter conscientious students from entering the medical profession. Perhaps candidates willing to kill people could be found more easily at the federal penitentiary than in a doctors office. — PWN

It’s hard to have a national discussion of issues, instead of labelling

Building a Culture of Life

Mary Deutscher



I took a class last year in which we looked at the way people vote. One theory explored the way people react to the seemingly infinite amount of information that is thrown at them during an election.

Instead of sifting through all the information, most voters latch onto ideologies and vote for a package of ideas rather than just one issue at a time. This can be quite useful in general because no one wants to spend all their time looking at election platforms. Unfortunately, however, it has also led many people to make knee-jerk decisions regarding some incredibly important social issues. For example, over the past couple

years I have been dismayed to watch as the issues of prostitution and human trafficking moved from being something that most people would discuss openly, to becoming a polarized conversation stopper. Participation in prostitution became a right, and only people who had a problem with sex would try to criminalize its purchase. Canada’s adoption of the Nordic model, which would criminalize the purchase of sex but decriminalize its sale, was seen as a backward move. The victims of human trafficking disappeared from the discussion. This same pattern is present in the euthanasia and assisted suicide debate, as many have embraced these issues as a progressive ideal. Meanwhile those of us who approach this issue out of concern for our elders and those with a disability or mental illness have suddenly found ourselves labelled as out of touch. It’s not the fact that these issues have entered the political realm

that bothers me. They absolutely need to be discussed at all levels of politics. What bothers me is that we have skipped over having a national discussion, and have instead jumped to labelling. When national polls are taken I sometimes feel participants might as well be asked: “Are you a progressive who supports prostitution/euthanasia/freedom, or an old fuddy-duddy?” Popular culture’s tendency to dismiss anyone who does not support “progressive” ideology is becoming even more problematic as we try to address the policy challenges presented by the legalization of euthanasia. The Carter decision took the reckless step of opening the door to euthanasia, and there are many issues that remain to be resolved: Will people who struggle with depression be able to access euthanasia? Will doctors be compelled to participate in it? Will publicly funded faith-based hospitals and long-term care homes be able to decline providing it? In an attempt to address these questions, two public consultations have been opened, one by the government of Canada and the other by the government of Ontario.

Pope challenges economic assumptions

The CCCB Commission for Justice and Peace resource *A Church Seeking Justice: The Challenge of Pope Francis to the Church in Canada examines three aspects of Catholic social teaching to which Pope Francis is giving significant attention: the dignity of the human person and work; teachings on war and peace; and ethical reflections on economics and political responsibility. This final excerpt is on Economics of exclusion and isolation/poverty. The full document is available in English and French at: <http://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/media-room/4268-a-church-seeking-justice-the-challenge-of-pope-francis-to-the-church-in-canada>. Included in the text are a series of text boxes which focus on the Canadian context.*

22. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis reminds us that “economy, as the very word indicates, should be the art of achieving a fitting management of our common home, which is the world as a whole” (EG 206). . . . 23. In continuity with Catholic social teaching, Pope Francis has challenged dominant economic assumptions, especially in the West, introducing Gospel values into economic discourse. While competition and free markets are celebrated in our economic system, “the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest” result in many being “excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape” (EG 53). It is assumed that economic growth “will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world,” but this unquestioned assumption reflects a “crude and naive trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system” (EG 54). The worship of money, a “dictatorship of an economy lacking a truly human purpose,” reduces people to their role as consumers, perpetrates exclusion and denies the primacy of the human person (EG 55). Whatever “stands in the way of increased profits, whatever is fragile, like the environment, is defenceless before the interests of a deified market” (EG 56). 24. The economics of exclusion, isolation and poverty create a “throw-away culture” that “does so much harm to our world. Children are discarded, young people are discarded because they do not have work, and the elderly are discarded with the pretext to maintain a ‘balanced’ economic system, at the centre of which is money, not the human person. We are all called to oppose this poisonous throw-away culture!” Christians, together with all people of goodwill, “are called to build with patience a different society, more hospitable, more human, more inclusive, which has no need to discard one who is weak in body and in mind, but a society that measures its ‘pace’ precisely on these persons.” 25. Pope Francis’s observations on human dignity and justice reflects the church’s traditional emphasis on a “preferential option for the poor” and its recognition of the dignity of human work in God’s plan for creation. . . . Justice, fairness and respect for every human being demand that we “find ways by which all may benefit from the fruits of the earth.” A fundamental principle of the church’s social teaching is the “universal destination of all goods.” . . .

26. Financial reform based on ethical considerations invites a “generous solidarity,” where money serves, not rules, and where those with abundant resources intentionally “help, protect and serve the poor” (EG 58). Pope Francis speaks of “a non-ideological ethics” that could bring about “a more humane social order” (EG 57), where the dignity of each person and the promotion of the common good would shape all economic decision-making (EG 203). Education, access to health care and employment for all would be priorities in such an ethical economy (EG 192). . . .

— POPE, page 19

Deutscher holds an MA in Public Ethics from St. Paul University in Ottawa. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Public Policy at the University of Saskatchewan.

— ONTARIO, page 19



CNS/Lisa Johnston

NUNS ON THE BUS CAMPAIGN — Sister Simone Campbell, executive director of Network, appears with the Nuns on the Bus campaign in Washington Sept. 22. Nuns on the Bus, a project of the national Catholic social lobby Network arrived in Washington the same day as Pope Francis. The effort brings Catholic sisters to face-to-face meetings with people across the country to better understand their concerns and needs.

All federal parties are status quo on abortion issue

The Editor: An Ipsos exit poll from the 2011 federal election revealed that Christians were more likely to vote Conservative. It seems that pro-life and “rejection of the culture of death,” as various evangelical papers put it, is the main issue for many devout Christians.

Canada has no legal restrictions against abortion. Pro-choice is the status quo. A portion of the pro-life community has attacked Trudeau for his pro-choice stance and his barring of Liberals from running unless they vote against all anti-abortion bills; but, is it really a fair criticism? Insofar as other parties are concerned, the NDP have the same restriction and the Conservatives allow MPs to vote their conscience. So it would seem the pro-life contingents should vote for Harper.

Well, this is not the case.

Abortion is not an issue this election. Stephen Harper and the Conservatives do not want to open the debate on abortion. In fact, Harper has said: “As long as I’m prime minister we are not reopening the abortion debate.” This means he will go along with the status quo. Abortion is clearly not an issue in this election; not one party is going to do anything to prevent abortion.

For those attacking Trudeau, I ask: Do you really think that Trudeau’s being pro-choice is a reason to vote against him? The easy answer again is no. Abortion, for all intents and purposes, has been removed from debate in

Canada. Harper has even quashed efforts of Conservative MPs who tried to introduce anti-abortion legislation.

Agenda setting is something the party in power has much more power over than the opposition parties. Harper has been successful in making the economy, oil, and pipelines part of the debate; however, he has not even tried to make pro-life or even limited restriction of abortion issues enter the debate. Harper and his Conservatives are more guilty than the Liberals and NDP, who at least are up front about their views.

The Conservative stance is flimsy and siding with the status quo is tantamount to being pro-choice itself. — **Derek Cameron, political science student, Regina**

Families vital to build church of future

Continued from page 1

understand why Jesus’ words about causing ‘scandal’ are so harsh. For Jesus, the truly ‘intolerable’ scandal consists in everything that breaks down and destroys our trust in the working of the Spirit,” he continued.

Pope Francis held up the family as vital to building the church for the future. He said love must be freely shared for faith to grow.

“That is why our families, our homes, are true domestic churches. They are the right place for faith to become life, and life to become faith,” he said.

“Little gestures” of love exist daily in the lives of family and serve to carry on God’s love as well, Pope Francis explained.

“These little gestures are those we learn at home, in the family. They get lost amid all the other things we do, yet they do make each day different. They are the quiet things done by mothers and grandmothers, by fathers and grandfathers, by children. They are little signs of tenderness, affection and compassion,” he said.

“Like the warm supper we look forward to at night, the early lunch awaiting someone who gets up early to go to work. Homely gestures. Like a blessing before we go to bed, or a hug after we return from a hard day’s work. Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home.”

Pope Francis asked the worshippers to consider how they

share God’s love with people in their families and in the world around them.

“What kind of world do we want to leave to our children?” he asked, referencing a line in his encyclical *Laudato Si’*, On Care for Our Common Home.

“Our common house can no longer tolerate sterile divisions,” he continued. “The urgent challenge of protecting our home includes the effort to bring the entire human family together in the pursuit of a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change.”

The pope asked the congregation to consider how they treat each other in their own home. “Do we shout or do we speak to each other with love and tenderness? That’s a good way of measuring our love.”

Ontario favours euthanasia

Continued from page 18


tario. To the untrained eye, this may simply seem redundant. But if you look more closely, you will notice that the national consultation’s panel consists of three people who have previously stated their opposition to euthanasia and assisted suicide, while the Ontario group seems to draw heavily on euthanasia advocates.

The options each consultation will present to our political leaders seem predictable. The real question is: which group will our leaders listen to? In a political climate that does not seem to understand what compromise means, will our leaders be pressured into embracing euthanasia as a progressive treatment that should be widely available to all Canadians? Or will they acknowledge the dangers of euthanasia and adopt policies that favour protecting vulnerable members of our society?

Rather than admitting that the

legalization of euthanasia presents real dangers to some Canadians and working together to mitigate those dangers, in the coming months we may instead find ourselves in a shouting match over whether or not the dangers exist in the first place. This pattern is repeating throughout our political system as ideologies become more entrenched on all sides.

Our focus on progressive/regressive labelling makes it difficult for us to have a balanced discussion on the policies that will shape our social landscape because it focuses our attention on which ideology will win instead of on trying to balance the interests of different groups of Canadians. It is my sincere hope that our leaders, whoever they will be after the election, will look beyond ideology to find a way to protect the interests of vulnerable people. The alternative is to silence a set of voices that are already barely above a whisper.



Leavings

Crumbs and fish bones. Quiet precision
Of ants roaming on rugged stones.
Cautiously we grasp our wicker
Baskets loaded with leftovers.

Earlier he dared our lack of vision,
“Give them something to eat,” and led
Us with a simple invocation
To that sacred time of sharing.

Then he called the children to himself
And showed them how to feed the birds.
His gestures gave a certain colour
And lilies basked in full splendour.

By Conrado B. Beloso

Pope urges new paradigm, laws for development policies

Continued from page 18

A new political economy

27. Referring to Benedict XVI’s encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Francis reminds us that “precisely because it is human, all human activity, including economic activity, must be ethically structured and governed.” . . .

29. . . . In his message for World Food Day in 2014, Pope Francis notes that to defeat hunger, we need a new paradigm for development policies, a rethinking of our international laws regarding production and trade of agricultural products; we need “a change in the way of understanding work, economic objectives and activity, food production and the protection of the environment”; and we need “a new kind of co-operation” involving states, international institutions, organizations of civil society, and communities of believers if we are to build a genuine future of peace. . . .

31. Catholic social teaching rises out of a passionate engagement with the world around us, guided by the teaching and example of Jesus, and the kingdom he came to proclaim. That teaching is not only in the treasury of encyclicals of the past 125 years, but also

in the preaching and life of the church throughout its history.

When in fourth-century Constantinople St. John Chrysostom told his hearers not to “adorn the church and ignore your afflicted brother, for he is the most precious temple of all,” he was laying the foundations of Catholic social teaching; likewise, in 13th-century Assisi when St. Francis kissed the leper and sowed seeds of peace; and in 18th-century Montreal, when Marguerite d’Youville gathered together a group of women to serve the needs of the poor in their midst. Catholic social teaching was being proclaimed and lived by drawing attention to those in need and by allowing the Gospel message to transform the way we live and act as a society. . . .

33. Canada is a great nation, in many respects among the most blessed on the planet. Still, as we listen to the words of Pope Francis, echoing the words of the Gospel and the long tradition of Catholic social teaching, we hear a direct and profound challenge.

In the text boxes which form an important part of this document, we have sought to make connections between the Holy Father’s teaching and some of the justice issues needing to be addressed in our own cities and nation. . . .

Pope Francis shows Americans who he really is

By Cindy Wooden

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — Pope Francis speaks often about memory and motion, the importance of remembering where you came from and setting off without fear to share the Gospel.

That’s what he did in the United States. He circled the Statue of Liberty in a helicopter and flew over Ellis Island not preparing to condemn the world’s great superpower, but to reflect on its history and promise as a land that welcomes people, makes them part of the family and allows them to thrive.



CNS/Paul Haring

BAN KI-MOON WELCOMES POPE FRANCIS — UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon welcomes Pope Francis to the United Nations headquarters in New York Sept. 25.

Over the course of six days in the United States, Pope Francis let the U.S. public see who he really is with touching blessings, strong speeches, prayerful liturgies and an unplugged proclamation of the beauty of family life, even when it includes flying saucers.

With constant television coverage and a saturated social media presence, Pope Francis was no longer just the subject of screaming headlines about the evils of unbridled capitalism and a “who-am-I-to judge” attitude toward behaviours the Catholic Church describes as sinful.

Instead, he repeatedly admitted

his own failures and reminded people they, too, have fallen short. He urged them to trust in God’s mercy and get a move on proclaiming that to the world — first with gestures and maybe with words.

Sin is sin even for Pope Francis. Human life is sacred at every stage of its development, and that includes the lives of convicted murderers, he said during the visit. People are blessed and at their best when they are part of a family composed of a mother, a father, children and grandparents. The well-being of a nation is served by businesses and enterprises that make money, but that do not make money their god.

The pope’s proclamation of the Gospel in Washington, New York and Philadelphia Sept. 22 - 27 focused on reinvigorating people’s faith, hope, trust and commitment to loving God, serving others and living up to the founding ideals of the United States: equality, opportunity for all, religious liberty and the sacred dignity of every creature — human especially, but also the earth.

Pope Francis had never been in the United States before landing in Washington Sept. 22. He was welcomed to the White House and became the first pope to address a joint meeting of Congress. He joined leaders of other religions in honouring the dead and comforting their surviving family mem-

bers at Ground Zero in New York. He addressed the United Nations. And, in Philadelphia, using a lectern once used by Abraham Lincoln, he called for respect for religious freedom and for ethnic and cultural differences.

At home and abroad, Pope Francis scrutinizes people and identifies something good and beautiful in them. He affirms their core concerns, and he challenges them to grow.

For the Catholic Church — in the United States as elsewhere — the key challenge is “not about building walls, but about breaking them down,” as he told the bishops, clergy and religious of Pennsylvania Sept. 26.

From the beginning of his trip — Sept. 19 in Havana — the pope made it clear that with all the important meetings he would have, his primary purpose was to join the celebration of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia Sept. 26 - 27.

And he insisted it be a celebration, not a funeral or simply a session for rallying the obedient, loyal troops before they set out to battle.

talking about. “Families have difficulties. Families — we quarrel, sometimes plates can fly, and children bring headaches. I won’t speak about mothers-in-law,” he quipped.

But mothers-in-law deserve a break and understanding, if one applies the pope’s words to the bishops the next morning and to hundreds of thousands of people gathered on Philadelphia’s Benjamin Franklin Parkway for the event’s closing mass.

Trust the Holy Spirit, he told the crowds. Recognize that God is at work in the world. Treasure the little daily gestures that show love within a family. Affirm all those who do good, whether or not they are “part of our group.”

“Anyone who wants to bring into this world a family which teaches children to be excited by every gesture aimed at overcoming evil — a family which shows that the Spirit is alive and at work — will encounter our gratitude and our appreciation. Whatever the family, people, region, or religion to which they belong!” he said.

Pope tells UN that human life is sacred

By Cindy Wooden

UNITED NATIONS (CNS) — Dealing with war, development, the economy or environmental concerns, bureaucrats and diplomats always must remember that the lives of real children, women and men are at stake, Pope Francis told the United Nations.

Helping to celebrate the organization’s 70th anniversary, Pope Francis visited its headquarters Sept. 25 and pleaded with government leaders and UN officials to keep the dignity and sacredness of every human life and the value of all creatures at the centre of their concern.

“Above and beyond our plans and programs,” he told the UN General Assembly, “we are dealing with real men and women who live, struggle and suffer and are often forced to live in great poverty, deprived of all rights.”

More than 190 heads of state were attending the General Assembly, and many of them made a point of being in the UN’s historic hall for Pope Francis’ speech on the eve of discussion of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, later in the year, the Paris Conference on Climate Change.

The first hour of Pope Francis’ visit was heavy on protocol and posing for official group photographs. He met privately with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and spoke briefly with UN employees, urging them to make their workplace a model of the peace and respect they work to promote around the world. He also paid tribute to the sacrifice of

UN employees killed in the line of duty.

Pope Francis called for real, concrete action to stem climate change; respect for every human life and for “the natural difference between man and woman”; economic decisions that place the needs of people before profits; and greater controls on weapons sales and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

He praised recent international agreements with Iran to ensure it does not develop nuclear weapons and he pleaded for real, concrete, multilateral efforts to bring peace and justice to the Middle East, North Africa and other African countries plagued by the violence of extremists claiming to act in the name of Islam.

“Christians, together with other cultural or ethnic groups and even members of the majority religion who have no desire to be caught up in hatred and folly,” he said, “have been forced to witness the destruction of their places of worship, their cultural and religious heritage, their houses and property, and have faced the alternative either of fleeing or of paying for their adhesion to good and to peace by their own lives or by enslavement.”

Those lives, he said, “take precedence over partisan interests.”

“In wars and conflicts there are individual persons — our brothers and sisters, men and women, young and old, boys and girls — who weep, suffer and die,” the pope said. They are treated as “human beings who are easily discarded when our only response is

to draw up lists of problems, strategies and disagreements.”

Pope Francis warned the UN leaders and the heads of state that too many decisions seemed to be based on the desire by a few for economic or political power, ignoring the values and rights the United Nations was formed to promote and protect.

The United Nations, he said, is called to help humanity “dispel the darkness of disorder caused by unrestrained ambitions and collective forms of selfishness.”

“Economic and social exclusion is a complete denial of human fraternity and a grave offence against human rights and the environment,” the pope said, echoing one of the main themes of his encyclical, *Laudato Si’*. The document emphasized that respect for creation must include respect for all creatures, human beings included, and that efforts to reduce poverty and promote development must respect both the earth and the people who live there.

The best way to measure the success of the new development goals, he said, will be how they give “effective, practical and immediate access, on the part of all, to essential material and spiritual goods: housing; dignified and properly remunerated employment; adequate food and drinking water; religious freedom and, more generally, spiritual freedom and education.”

“These pillars of integral human development,” Pope Francis said, “have a common foundation, which is the right to life and, more generally, what we could call the right to existence of human nature itself.”

The big challenge, he told more than 100 bishops who came to the meeting from around the world, is to recognize just how many beautiful families God has blessed the church with.

“For the church, the family is not first and foremost a cause for concern, but rather the joyous confirmation of God’s blessing upon the masterpiece of creation,” he told the bishops Sept. 27. “Every day, all over the world, the church can rejoice in the Lord’s gift of so many families who, even amid difficult trials, remain faithful to their promises and keep the faith!”

Tossing aside the text he had prepared for the nighttime festival of families Sept. 26, Pope Francis had tens of thousands of people watching him with awe or with laughter or with tears as he described the blessing of real-life families.

“Some of you might say, ‘Of course, Father, you speak like that because you’re not married,’ ” he admitted. But he proved he knew what he was



CNS/Paul Haring

POPE VISITS PRISONERS — Pope Francis blows a kiss to prisoners as he visits the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia Sept. 27.

Wisdom tells me I am nothing. Love tells me I am everything. Between these two banks the river of my life flows.

— Nisargadatta Maharaj