



Human response

"In the face of the terrible suffering that can be caused by illness or depression, a truly human response should be to care, not to kill," say the Canadian bishops.
— page 3

Meeting of Families

The newly ordained auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, Robert Barron, chose Living as the Image of God as the topic of the first keynote speech at the World Meeting of Families. Held in Philadelphia Sept. 22 - 25, the World Meeting of Families was attended by some 20,000 participants from over 100 countries.
— page 6



Grandparents' Day

Mont St. Joseph Home recently hosted 400 people at their annual Grandparents Day Stroll-A-Thon. Residents were paired with a family member, friend, staff member, volunteer or board member to walk around the landscaped grounds of the Home.
— page 7

Faith traditions

On Sept. 25 Satpal Singh, a Sikh, was honoured to sit with Pope Francis at a 9/11 multifaith service. "Although we do not share the same religious tradition, we both share a view on what it means to be a person of faith."
— page 9

Jesuit pope

To understand Pope Francis, you need to know St. Ignatius of Loyola, writes David Gibson.
— page 15

Faithful citizenship

During this election, and after, faithful citizens can raise important issues, propose significant commitments, hold meaningful debates and hold prospective office-holders to their promises, writes Joe Gunn.
— page 16

Sisters Legacy Monument unveiled

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — The Sisters who contributed to the growth of Saskatchewan in education and health services were honoured Oct. 1 as the Sisters Legacy Monument was unveiled in Wascana Park. "They came here as pioneers well before Saskatchewan was created, started schools, provided health care, opened hospitals enduring hardships we can only imagine," said a variety of speakers at the official unveiling.

The bronze monument features two life size figures, one depicting a teacher ringing a school bell and the other a nurse appearing to offer care. Prince Albert sculptor Jack Jensen said while he was creating the work he was thinking about all that the Sisters had done in those early years. "I'm really capturing a snapshot of something of a continuum here," he said speaking with the PM at the unveiling. The monument is located southeast of the Legislative Building on the east side of the park road.

The project began in 2011 when Catholic Health Association executive director Sandra Kary heard about a similar project underway in Alberta and decided something should be done in Saskatchewan. Paula Scott, chair of the Lloydminster Catholic School Division, became chair of the committee, Kary became project lead, a concept was discussed,



Flegel

SISTERS' LEGACY — Sisters who contributed to the growth of Saskatchewan in education and health care are honoured as the Sisters Legacy Monument is unveiled in Wascana Park in Regina.

Jensen was hired as the artist and fundraising began. The project budget was about \$300,000, which paid for the monument and all other costs associated with

bringing the project together. All funds were donated. No public money was involved.

The 180 Sisters from various congregations plus several hun-

dred others who attended the unveiling, the celebration mass which followed at Holy Rosary Cathedral and the evening banquet were more than pleased with the day, judging by the comments heard among the crowd.

Speakers included Regina Archbishop Daniel Bohan, Papal Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi who blessed and dedicated the monument, Kary who emceed the event and Sisters Anne Lewans, Ursulines of Prelate Superior of Saskatoon and Jacqueline St. Yves of Montreal, Superior of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, better known as the Grey Nuns, spoke on behalf of the 5,500 Sisters in 41 congregations who served in Saskatchewan.

Lewans expressed deepest gratitude to the Catholic Connections, a group of Catholic organizations, who drove the project, the artist and all the volunteers involved. St. Yves said those involved represented all who had walked with them in the beginning "and now more and more accept the challenge of carrying on our legacy in the various areas of catholic education, social services and health care."

Lewans acknowledged all the people over the 155 years who welcomed religious women into their communities and parishes and supported them. "Our pioneering people shared their resources, their time and their talents to help us establish our homes and ministries among you."

The unveiling ceremony ended with a choir of children from St. Gregory School singing a specially composed piece by Deacon Bob Williston and lyrics by Sister Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, Prelate.

Pope outlines program for Youth Day

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis asked the world's young Catholics to perform spiritual and corporal works of mercy every month in the run-up to World Youth Day next July.

He asked that they not be afraid to experience God's "boundless mercy, so that in turn you may become apostles of mercy by your actions, words and prayers in our world, wounded by selfishness, hatred and so much despair."

The pope's request was part of his message for World Youth Day 2016 — an international gathering that will be celebrated in Krakow, Poland, July 26 - 31. The celebration's theme, from the Gospel of St. Matthew, is "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy."

Jesus and his beatitudes show how it is better to give than to receive and how "we will be truly blessed and happy only when we enter into the divine 'logic' of gift and gracious love," he said in the message, released Sept. 28 at the Vatican.

When people discover that "God has loved us infinitely in order to make us capable of loving

like him, without measure," then they themselves can become instruments of God's mercy, bringing

hope and healing to those in need.

— CORPORAL, page 19

Pope expected to 'rattle cages' at synod

By Evan Boudreau
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — Robert Mickens is expecting Pope Francis to "rattle cages" during the synod of bishops on the family by challenging the world's bishops to face and address the problems within the church.

A key focus, Mickens said, will come as no surprise to most observers — the issue of divorced and remarried Catholics, which took up so much time and media focus at last year's extraordinary synod of bishops on the family. Francis has indicated he is open to reforming some of the rules on the matter, recently loosening some of the rules around annulments to make the process more streamlined.

"He wants to support the traditional family, that is without a doubt, but he knows that not everyone is there," said Mickens. "The homily from the final mass

(at) the World Gathering of Families (in Philadelphia Sept. 28) was really quite powerful; if they are not against us they are for us. We can co-operate with people if they are not opposed to us.

"He is not afraid of the fact that we have conflicts in the church," said Mickens, a veteran journalist who's covered the Vatican for more than three decades, including 11 years with Vatican Radio.

"The pope is going to encourage bishops once again, as he did in the last two sessions of the synod, to speak, to pray and to try to discern creative ways to address many of the problems that we have in the church."

Dickens spoke with The Register Sept. 28, a day before he was in Toronto to deliver a public lecture on the future of Francis' pontificate and what his visits to Cuba and the United States might tell us about the synod, which began Oct. 4.

To determine what those prob-



Dominican Institute of Toronto

Robert Mickens

lems are, Francis had priests from around the globe canvass parishioners with a questionnaire prior to the synod, which will run until Oct. 25.

— POPE, page 8

Philippine tribal leaders harassed Family is the answer to world's brokenness

MANILA, Philippines (CNS) — Church leaders in the southern Philippines said the killings of tribal leaders and the harassment suffered by indigenous peoples in Mindanao are related to mining operations in the area.

“The (tribal people) who firmly stand against mining activities were the ones being intimidated by paramilitary forces,” Rev. Bong Galela, social action director of the Diocese of Tandag, told ucanews.com.

In Surigao del Sur province, indigenous peoples, collectively known as Lumads, have been under attack by gunmen of the Magahat-Bagani paramilitary force.

Human rights groups alleged that the Philippine military trained and funded the group to go after communist rebels in the hinterlands of Mindanao.

The allegation was supported by diocesan clergy.

“We call for the disarming and arrest of the members of the Magahat-Bagani group,” Galela told a Philippine Senate panel inquiry Oct. 1.

“We also demand the government to ensure that there will be

no coverup in the investigation of these gruesome murders,” the priest said.

The Philippine Senate’s Committee on Peace, Unification and Reconciliation launched this week an inquiry into the Sept. 1 killing of Emerito Samarca, director of the Alternative Learning Centre for Agriculture and Livelihood Development in Lianga, and tribal leaders Dionel Campos and Aurelio Sinzo.

Witnesses accused members of the Magahat-Bagani force of committing the crime, but no suspect has yet been arrested.

The killings resulted in some 3,000 tribal people fleeing to the provincial capital of Tandag, where they continue to stay in makeshift shelters.

“We have to solve this problem as soon as possible,” said Senator Teofisto Guingona III, chair of the Senate panel.

“(The tribal people) have to go home and live a normal life,” he said.

Another tribal leader was reported killed Sept. 28 by armed men in Agusan del Sur province, according to the Rural Mission-

aries of the Philippines.

The victim was identified as Lito Abion, 44, leader of the tribal organization Tagdumahan.

A pastoral statement released by clergy of the Tandag Diocese Oct. 1 noted that the indigenous peoples of Mindanao “are now victims of those who are hungry and greedy for power and wealth.”

“As priests of the Diocese of Tandag, together with our bishop, we all strongly condemn the terrorization, harassments and the killings of our Lumad brothers and sisters, as well as denounce the root cause of it all,” the statement said.

A top official at the government’s Mines and Geosciences Bureau admitted that some mining companies use military and police personnel to secure mine sites.

“But when (the mining companies) are accused of militarization, they pull (the military and police) out,” said Elmer Billedo, bureau assistant director.

“Then what happens, their base camps are attacked. These reports do not reach you,” Billedo said.

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The family is the answer to the two extremes facing the world — fragmentation and “homogenization,” in which everything is forced to be the same, Pope Francis said.

The family based on marriage between a man and a woman is the answer because “it is the cell of a society that balances the personal and communal,” he said at his general audience Sept. 30 in St. Peter’s Square.

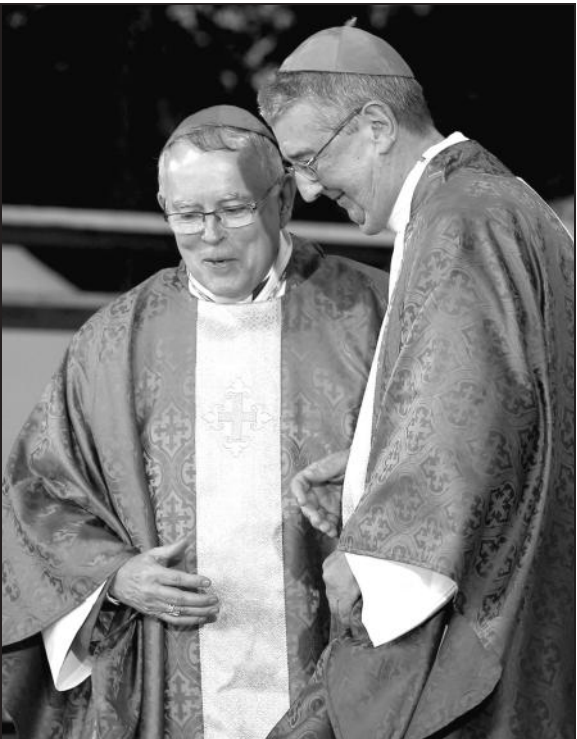
The family also can be “the model of a sustainable management of goods and the resources of creation” against today’s culture of consumerism, he added.

The pope dedicated his audience talk to reviewing his Sept. 19 - 27 trip to Cuba and the United States, where he visited Washington, New York, the United Nations and Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families.

He thanked Cuban President Raul Castro, U.S. President Barack Obama and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for their warm welcomes and extended his thanks to all the bishops and everyone who worked to make the trip possible.

The pope made special mention of Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia “for his commit-

ment, piety, enthusiasm and his great love for the family,” which were seen in his work organizing the main focus of the pope’s trip — the World Meeting of Families.



CNS/Paul Haring

NEXT WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES IN DUBLIN — Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia and Dublin Archbishop Diarmuid Martin are seen after Pope Francis’ announcement about the next World Meeting of Families at the conclusion of the closing mass of the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia Sept. 27. The next World Meeting of Families will be held in Dublin in 2018.

West exploiting our resources: Congo

By Jonathan Luxmoore

OXFORD, England (CNS) — Congo’s Catholic bishops criticized the failure of Western governments to stop the abuse of the continent’s natural resources and urged church groups to follow the pope’s call to mobilize.

“It is our profound conviction that exploiting these resources can contribute to improving our population’s conditions of life,” the bishops’ commission for natural resources said in a statement in late September.

The commission said “awareness by the major polluting countries comes nowhere near to any concrete commitment, or to the efforts required in countries whose forests provide the lungs for conserving the world’s biodiversity.”

The statement, issued Sept. 25 in Kinshasa, said experts on mining, hydrocarbons, forestry and environmental protection had all stressed an urgent need to combat the “illegal, clandestine, irrational and irresponsible exploitation” of Congo region’s resources.

“The fact is that these resources are being exploited without responsibility, and that this now constitutes an increasingly serious menace to our common home, environment and planet,” the commission said.

Western firms have been accused of working with violent groups in the DRC and other countries to obtain minerals used for producing mobile phones, laptops and other consumer objects. They also have been accused of allowing trade in resources to perpetuate human rights violations.

In 2012, the Dodd-Frank act required companies listed on American stock markets to “undertake supply chain due diligence” by checking whether minerals in their products helped fund

armed groups, while a European Union directive in 2013 also stipulated payment transparency in extractive industries.

However, in February, 130 Catholic bishops from 37 countries said many European firms remained “complicit in abuses” through their supply chains, while most of the EU’s 28 member-countries imported significant amounts of resources from conflict-affected regions. The Congolese commission said resources were being illegally extracted from the country’s Virunga and Salonga national parks, as well as from animal reserves and other areas “with contempt for vital needs of local populations.”

It added that indigenous inhabitants had been uprooted from the country’s Equateur, Katanga and

Maniema provinces “without just compensation,” in defiance of laws, regulations and social agreements, while forests and land resources had been exploited by multinational businesses “anarchically without any framework.”

In a March statement, the Brussels-based CIDSE, grouping 17 Western Catholic charities, said the country had suffered “mutilation, massacres, rape, slavery and massive displacement” during 15 years of war, at the hands of armed groups financed by “riches of the subsoil.”

Up to 5.4 million people were killed in Congo in a series of 1995 - 2003 wars involving nine countries and two dozen armed groups, while militia violence has since continued in many parts of the mineral-rich country.



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

POPE FRANCIS BLESSES ST. JOHN’S BIBLE — Pope Francis blesses a volume of the St. John’s Bible during its presentation to the Library of Congress at the U.S. Capitol in Washington Sept. 24. The bible was a gift from Saint John’s Abbey and University. It contains handwritten text and 160 illuminations reflecting modern life. The presentation took place in a reception hall adjacent to the office of U.S. Speaker of the House John Boehner, pictured to the right of the pope.

“When you think about it, it was not by chance, but was providential that the message, rather, the witness of the World Meeting of Families took place at this time in the United States of America, that is, the nation which achieved the highest economic and technological development in the last century without renouncing its religious roots.”

“Now these same roots are asking that we begin again from the family in order to rethink and change the model of development for the good of the whole human family,” he said.

The pope said the family, which is “the fruitful covenant between a man and a woman,” is the answer to the great challenges of our world.

The challenges, he said, are “fragmentation and homogenization, two extremes that coexist and build on each other, and together support the consumerist economic model.”

The family can play a major role in a sustainable, “integral ecology,” he said.

The human couple, “united and fertile, placed by God in the world’s garden in order to cultivate it and safeguard it,” displays the two fundamental principles human civilization is based upon — communion and fruitfulness, he said.

The pope said that during his trip to Cuba, he was able to share the people’s hope in fulfilling St. John Paul II’s dream that “Cuba open up to the world and the world open up to Cuba. No more closed doors, no more exploitation of poverty, but freedom in dignity” and responsibly serving and caring for others and the most vulnerable.

The human response is to care, not to kill

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Bishop Bryan Bayda encouraged those attending the annual Compassionate Healers Mass in Saskatoon to evangelize the world by sharing their stories of encountering Jesus Christ.

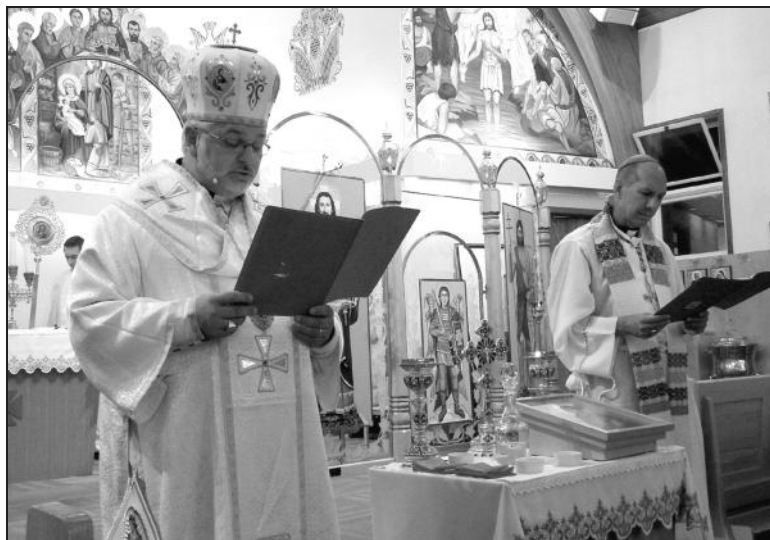
“Some say talk is cheap, yet personal accounts and witnessing to encounters of meeting Christ carry a great deal of power,” said Bayda in his homily at the annual event.

“Reflect on how you have encountered Christ, particularly in those who are suffering,” Bayda challenged those attending the Sept. 29 event at the Ukrainian Catholic Parish of the Dormition of the Blessed Mother of God.

The Compassionate Healers Mass is organized by the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan in three Saskatchewan dioceses each fall, for all those who are involved in the medical or health fields, or who provide care or outreach to the sick, whether as professionals, staff members, administrators, volunteers, parishioners or family members.

“Your real-life stories of encounters with Christ become a powerful witness and act of mercy to others who may feel alone as they face challenges in their lives — who discover, in fact, that they are not alone,” said Bayda. “God is mercifully with us and present to us through each other, facing challenges in the context of evangelization.”

Bayda emphasized the need to bring Jesus to those who are suffering, and to relieve the pain of loneliness.



Yaworski

COMPASSIONATE HEALER — Bishop Bryan Bayda (left) of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, and Bishop Donald Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon lead a blessing at the Compassionate Healers Mass Sept. 29 at the Ukrainian Catholic Parish of Dormition of the Blessed Mother of God, for those who are continuing the healing ministry of Jesus Christ in a variety of settings, as medical professionals, support staff, administration, spiritual care providers, volunteers or caregivers.

Bayda also read a recent message to Canadian citizens from the Catholic Bishops of Canada on the issue of assisted suicide, which was issued Sept. 18 during the recent plenary gathering of the CCCB.

“We give thanks for the thousands of women and men from all across our land who have given their lives to their brothers and sisters through prayer, health care, education, and other works of service and solidarity with the poor and marginalized,” read Bayda.

“Moved by the powerful example of their generosity and how they have promoted and protected

human dignity in many sectors of society, we affirm our nation’s long tradition of caring for the sick and the vulnerable,” stated the Canadian bishops, before going on to address the question of assisted suicide.

“We cannot but express our outrage at the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada to cre-

ate a new ‘constitutional right’ in Canada, the so-called ‘right’ to suicide. Nor can we suppress our profound dismay, disappointment and disagreement with the Court’s decision.”

The ruling legalizes the taking of innocent life, stressed the Canadian bishops’ statement. “It puts at risk the lives of the vulnerable, the depressed, those with physical or mental illness, and those with disabilities.”

The bishops continued: “In the face of the terrible suffering that can be caused by illness or depression, a truly human response should be to care, not to kill. Likewise, the response to the anguish and fear people can experience at the end of their lives is to be present to them, offering palliative care, not intentionally to cause their death.”

The need for palliative care should be one of the most pressing issues in the country, according to the CCCB statement, which points out the silence on this vitally important issue during the present federal election campaign.

“We urge all the citizens of our country to raise this question of life and death at meetings with candidates, to stimulate a true debate worthy of our great country,” stated the bishops.

The bishops also emphasized the need to uphold and protect the con-

science rights of all those who work as caregivers or health care providers. “It is an affront to the conscience and vocation of the health care provider to require him or her to collaborate in the intentional putting to death of a patient, even by referring the person to a colleague.”

The bishops concluded by calling for “a spirit of collaboration in building a society more compassionate, more respectful of the dignity of all human life, more just and more generous.”

The Compassionate Healers Mass included a blessing, in which participants came forward to have their hands anointed, as they recommitted themselves to the healing ministry of Jesus Christ.

At the conclusion of the celebration, Therese Jelinski, president of the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS), described the reasons for the annual event. “This Compassionate Healers Mass allows us to focus on the healing ministry of Christ, and it strengthens our vision to be a faith community sharing in this healing ministry. It is also a time to enjoy gathering together, celebrating with and commissioning those who work and volunteer in the provision of health care.”

Jelinski closed with an invitation to the CHAS conference in Prince Albert Oct. 19

Anti-poverty advocates launch campaign

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — In the run-up to the Oct. 19 election, anti-poverty groups launched a week-long campaign Oct. 6 to raise awareness of the plight of Canada’s poor.

“Not one of the parties is making poverty a centrepiece of their (election) campaign,” said Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ) executive director Joe Gunn, one of the organizers.

The campaign began with Chew on This! events across the country where participants handed out a brown bag containing an apple and anti-poverty information. It ends on Oct. 17 on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.

All the major political parties’ campaigns are focusing on the “fight for the middle class,” Gunn said. CPJ, as part of Canada Without Poverty, an alliance of 600 - 700 groups that includes foodbanks, churches, organizations providing meals for the poor, and other anti-poverty organizations, hoped to bring the need for a national anti-poverty plan before the public and the candidates in the campaign’s final days.

“We really need to tackle poverty so we don’t need to do this all the time,” Gunn said, noting that while people are happy to help the poor, the poverty problem continues to grow and must be addressed.

The emphasis this year will be on the Dignity for All poverty plan launched in February that provided a “menu of options” for federal candidates, he said. The weeklong push starting with Chew on This came about because “there was no debate or discussion about poverty” and the groups decided they

had to raise the issue.

According to the Chewonthis.ca website, 833,000 Canadians use food banks every month; children make up one third of those benefiting from food banks; and one in every eight people “experience some level of food insecurity.” Foodbanks created in the 1980s to be a temporary measure to address poverty have only seen the need for them grow, the website said.

Gunn and a team from CPJ joined people from St. Joe’s Supper Table, an outreach of St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Ottawa, people from Parkdale United Church’s feeding program, and a social justice group from Saint Paul University to hand out the Chew on This! brown bags in front of Parliament Hill.

This is the third year for the campaign, Gunn said, noting when it started only a few locations had events, but that number jumped to around 40 locations last year and to more than 50 this year. After the Oct. 6 event, participants began posting photos, video and other messages on social media and the chewonthis.ca website, to increase the exposure and involvement in the issue, he said.

“Groups that have worked for four years around what we need to do” in everything from jobs, income support, health care, child care, social housing and other matters, say they “need the parties to pick up this need for a comprehensive (anti-poverty) plan like all of the provinces have except one, British Columbia,” he said.

Every year on Oct. 17 to mark the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, CPJ has been producing a poverty trend scorecard to assess “how we are doing in the country around pov-

erty issues,” Gunn said. “This has become extremely difficult due to the lack of data and Statistics Canada cuts.”



CCN

Joe Gunn

This means CPJ does not have the kind of comparison data it needs, but it does have the National Income Survey, he said. “It looks like poverty has increased very slightly.” The latest figures, however, are only up to 2013, he said.

CPJ has joined others in Canada Without Poverty in hosting workshops across the country, Gunn said. They did a workshop in Sarnia where 50 people attended including some from city hall. When Prime Minister Stephen Harper made a campaign stop later in Sarnia, the city’s mayor raised the poverty issue, Gunn said. Harper noted that income splitting and other measures help the poor. “All the parties say their plans help the poor, but each one of their campaigns all address the fight for the middle class.”

CCCB writes prime minister on Israeli security wall

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) has written the prime minister asking him to use his influence on Israel to prevent an unjust route for its security wall.

Written Sept. 17, two days before Gatineau Archbishop Paul-André Durocher ended a two-year term as CCCB president, the letter concerns the Cremisan Valley between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. The proposed security wall there would cut off 58 Palestinian Christian families from their agricultural lands.

The letter to Prime Minister Stephen Harper asks the Canadian government to “call on the Israeli authorities to find a just resolution” to a decision this past July by the country’s Supreme Court that now will permit the building of the wall.

Durocher described how the wall means the families “will lose their agricultural lands and subsequent livelihood, and the local Catholic Salesian monastery as well as the sisters’ convent will be severely restricted in their educational services to 450 disadvantaged children — girls and boys, Muslims and Christians — from the surrounding towns and villages.”

Palestinian families have been fighting the proposed location of

the wall in the courts for the past eight years. In April, the Israeli Supreme Court rejected the location and “invited the military authorities to find alternatives less destructive to the local populations,” said CCCB outgoing general secretary Msgr. Patrick Powers in a Sept. 25 news release. In July, however, the court reversed the decision.

The CCCB president noted he was writing, “In communion with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem and with the Conferences of Bishops of Europe, the United States and South Africa,” and is “greatly disappointed with this latest development.” Durocher asked the Canadian prime minister, given his “good relations with the Government of Israel,” to “raise this question” with them in order “to find a just resolution to the problem in the Cremisan Valley, a resolution that will show leadership and compassion.”

The archbishop expressed sadness that the Israeli authorities “agreed to begin uprooting the olive trees on this property already on Aug. 17, only days after the Palestinian families had appealed the Supreme Court of Israel’s July decision.”

Durocher visited the Cremisan Valley earlier this year as part of the annual Co-ordination of Episcopal Conferences in Support of the Church in the Holy Land.

Synod fathers can learn from familial bond: cardinal

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

MISSISSAUGA, ONT. (CCN) — The church must rediscover its role in helping and supporting families at this fall’s synod on the family, one of the leading Asian cardinals told The Catholic Register.

More than 360 cardinals, bishops, priests and laypeople are attending the synod of bishops on the family, being held in the Vatican from Oct. 4 - 25.

This ordinary synod will follow up on the work of last year’s smaller extraordinary synod that became contentious as bishops examined the challenges facing today’s families.

Cardinal Mar George Alenchery, major archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, said his Indian, Eastern-rite church’s contribution to the synod will be its example of how families are woven into parishes and parishes are centred on families.

“In my personal appraisal of the situation, the most important thing is to have the accompaniment of the family by the church,” said Alenchery. “Which we forgot to do to some extent in the past. I mean, especially in the countries of the West.”

Syro-Malabar parishes are

divided into family groupings or units of no more than 40 people. Each group of families meets at least once a month for an evening spent studying essential questions of faith and speaking with each other about family challenges. Twice a year all the family groups come together for a larger catechetical event.

“So there is a sharing,” explained Alenchery. “And then there is a sharing of all these family units together at least two times a year. That kind of uniting together of families is a great help in our church.”

Alenchery doesn’t expect that Roman-rite parishes will begin to imitate the organization of Syro-Malabar parishes, but he believes western Catholics could learn from the close bond between parishes and families in his rite.

“I will say that the Syro-Malabar church can play a great role in this task of evangelizing by the universal church. It’s a kind of sharing of one’s own experience,” the cardinal said. “There are many elements that the Syro-Malabar church can also take from the Latin church.”

Rather than a forced or artificial process, families are more likely to be evangelized by closer bonds within and among families

“creating a community of osmosis,” said Alenchery.

While the cardinal expects local churches will be left free to find diverse solutions to the family challenges in their own region and culture, such diversity cannot threaten the unity of the Catholic Church.

“It will be a diversity that can be very much reconciled on the basis of our faith and our witness of charity — faith working through charity and mercy,” said Alenchery.

Mercy will be the basis of church unity at the synod given Pope Francis’ constant call to mercy, the cardinal predicted.

“This introduction of the roles of mercy to the normal functioning of the church will give an

added impetus to the families in the future church,” he said.

Inspiration for the church to hold families close together and close to the church can be found in Jesus’ teaching about care for the lost sheep of the flock, Alenchery said.

“He always looked on the sinner, those who failed, with mercy,” he said. “He was ready to see them also as members of his flock. Even if one is gone astray, he asked the pastors to go and search. That kind of embracing all in the flock of Jesus Christ has to be re-established in the church, that’s all.”

Alenchery doubts there can be a single answer to all the challenges families face in different parts of the world and various cul-

tures.

“This kind of approach has to be different in different cultures and in different churches,” he said. “But it is not a diversity making the church different in different countries.”

The church in different parts of the world will be listening to each other at the synod, said the cardinal.

“There is no question of one church alone giving to the other church, or one church alone evangelizing the other church,” he said. “There are many elements which have traditionally come to us which may be of value for others. And there are many other values also in the Latin church which we can take.”

Pope has been invited to Canada, but nothing set

By Philippe Vaillancourt

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) — Now that Pope Francis’ trip to the United States has ended, many wonder when he will visit Canada, as he has been invited to visit Montreal in 2017.



CCN/D. Gyapong
Archbishop Paul-André Durocher

Asked about this possibility, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesperson, said there is no plan to visit Canada at the moment.

“I understand your desire to see the pope in your city (Montreal), and you have the right to hope,” a smiling Lombardi said in French during a news conference in Philadelphia Sept. 27.

He immediately added that he is not aware of any “concrete plan for a trip to Canada.”

Earlier this year, Pope Francis was invited to visit Montreal in 2017 by Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre, Montreal Archbishop

Christian Lepine and Quebec Prime Minister Philippe Couillard. The biggest French Canadian city will celebrate the 375th anniversary of its foundation in 2017.

Lombardi reminded that, for now, only two papal trips are confirmed: Africa in November, and Poland in July for World Youth Day. He said other papal trips are just “suppositions.”

Invited to comment on the possibility that Pope Francis might visit Canada’s “peripheries,” Lombardi said Pope Francis cares “for everyone.” He added that, just like the pope did in the United States and Latin America, he would surely pay close attention to Canada’s “peripheries” if he ever visits.

In Philadelphia for the World Meeting of Families and papal visit, Archbishop Paul-André Durocher of Gatineau, Quebec, said there was no confirmation from Rome for a Canadian trip.

“What I see from Francis is a desire to meet the peripheries, the marginalized,” said Durocher, immediate past president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. “If he comes to Canada to visit these peripheries, it would be wonderful.”

When asked what those peripheries would be, the archbishop mentioned people from the First Nations, immigrants, the poor, and victims of sex abuse by clergy members.

Lepine noted that Pope Francis “just completed a 10-day trip in Cuba and the United States that no one saw coming,” adding that people need to expect the unexpected with this pope.

St. John Paul II visited Canada three times as pope: 1984, 1987 and 2002.



Art Babyeh

LUNAR ECLIPSE — The “supermoon” rises above the Ottawa horizon Sept. 27 before moving on to a rare super “blood moon” total lunar eclipse. A supermoon is a full moon at its closest point to Earth. It is the last such eclipse until 2033.



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Ottawa Catholics hear how they can help refugees

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Representatives from parishes across the Ottawa archdiocese came to the diocesan centre Sept. 24 to find out how they can help sponsor Syrian refugees.

Ottawa’s Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Services Rev. Geoff Kerslake told the gathering of about 40 people the number of people requiring help is “mind blowing.” Even if the government increases the number of refugees by 10 times or 20 times, it “will only be a drop in the bucket,” he said.

Some parishes have already been involved in sponsoring one

or more families, he said. Some parishes have assisted families who had the ability to support their relatives, but were working through the parishes to get help in the sponsorship process.

Parishes can also sponsor individuals, which is less complex from a logistical point of view, he said. Parishes can also co-operate together to help sponsor refugees.

“The biggest issue isn’t the money,” Kerslake said. “Catholics in Ottawa are very generous. The issue in our parishes is not the raising of \$30,000; the big issue is getting a core committee of six to eight people who will look after the logistics of getting the family settled.”

This includes finding them a place to live, furniture, clothing, getting the children registered in school, help with grocery shopping, teaching them how to get around the city, help with obtaining government documents, employment and other matters.

The Ottawa archdiocese has prepared several permanent deacons who will help with the “significant amount of paperwork” involved in sponsorship, Kerslake said. “This makes it easier to get the ball rolling.”

Karen Mahoney of the Catholic Centre for Immigration said the refugees who come to Canada are already screened for medical and security reasons. “All of this is taken care of by the visa office,” she said.

“What a message of solidarity, compassion and evangelization we would show if every parish sponsored a refugee family,” she said.

The Ottawa archdiocese is the Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) with the government, but the parishes take on the responsibility for sponsoring refugees under this agreement, said Julie Salach Simard, also of the Catholic Immigration Centre. The federal government has promised to take in 10,000 Syrian refugees by September 2016, instead of 2017, while still fulfilling its commitment to Iraqis. Simard said the government expects to issue 4,000 new visas before the end of 2015.

It has taken parishes from 15 to even 60 months in one case, to see

their refugee family on Canadian soil, but Simard estimated the waiting time could be reduced to eight months.

The parish is responsible for providing support equivalent to the government assisted rate for refugees for one year, which varies according to the number of people in the family, she said. The families will get the child tax benefit and quality for OHIP.

Parishes may specify they want to help a Christian refugee family, she said. “Three families came to us through relatives in our Catholic community and through a contact we have with an overseas monastery,” Simard said.

“I saw myself with my eyes what happened when ISIS or jihad captured a city and killed the Christians there,” said a Syrian refugee present in the audience. He pointed out many families of the jihadist terrorists are also in the UN refugee camps. Because Christians face persecution there, Christians are not found in the UN refugee camps. “Christians are suffering there and nobody helps us,” he said.

Simard said she gets a lot of calls from family members with relatives who are displaced in Syria, but unfortunately refugee sponsorship only applies to those who have fled outside the country.

She said she has seven new Syrian refugee families awaiting sponsorship — most are families of four; one is a family of five.

“We will come and do training,” she said, promising parishes



CCN/D. Gyapong

Rev. Geoff Kerslake

and groups of parishes support throughout the process.

“It is not just the refugees who benefit,” she said. “It builds community in your parish.”

Kerslake also urged Catholics not to forget those refugees and displaced peoples who either do not wish to leave or can’t leave the Middle East. Presenters from the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP) and the Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) were on hand to explain other ways to help persecuted Christians in the Middle East. Kerslake pointed out the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, CCODP, CNEWA and Aid to the Church in Need are collaborating in a first-ever joint fundraising campaign.



CCN/D. Gyapong

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP — Genevieve Gallant of Development and Peace and Melodie Gabriel of CNEWA told a gathering interested in refugee sponsorship how they could help those who can’t leave the Middle East.

Expert concerned Putin’s Syria intervention takes eye off Ukraine

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Russian President Vladimir Putin’s intervention in Syria raises concerns that the crisis in Ukraine will be ignored, a Canadian historian told a seminar here Sept. 30.

“All Ukraine is worried at the moment about is what it means,” Toronto-based University of Alberta historian Frank Sysyn told students and faculty at the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at Saint Paul University.

The migrant crisis in Europe and the war in Syria have diverted

attention from Ukraine. “I can’t imagine how Germany can integrate 800,000 refugees in a short period of time,” Sysyn said. But Europe may see Russia as “part of a solution that stops refugees.”

While North America is willing to see that Ukraine remains a sovereign state, Germany is “much less so,” he said.

“Putin’s goal is to scorn the United States by keeping (Syrian president) Assad in power,” he said. While the Russians are proping up the “atrocious Assad regime” and the world’s attention is focused there, Putin continues to

foment the crisis in Ukraine through an exploitation of religious allegiances.”

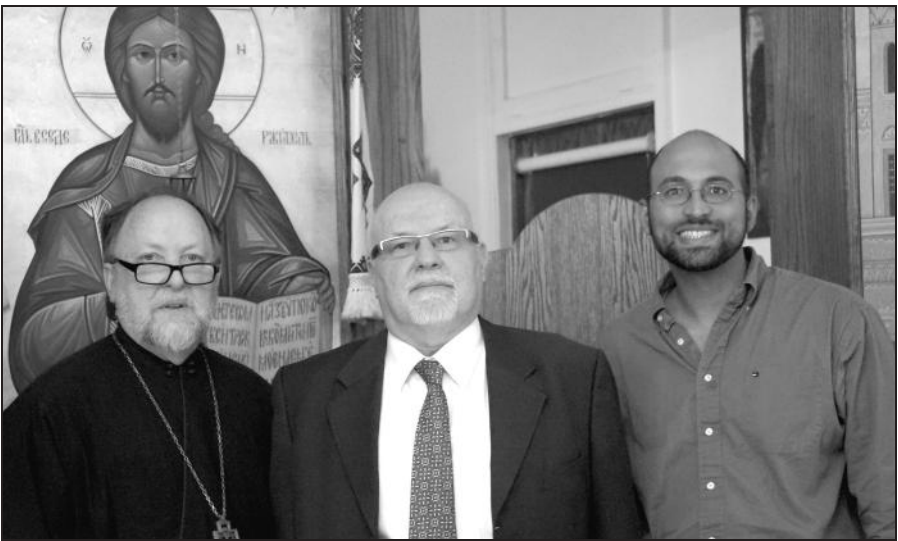
While the vast majority of Ukrainians identify as Orthodox, the Orthodox churches are divided into several bodies, with the most active and alive communities being those of the Kyivan Orthodox Patriarchy (38 per cent of Ukrainians).

Even within the Ukrainian Orthodox of the Russian Orthodox Moscow Patriarchy (20 per cent), the greatest numbers of both lay people and clergy are in Ukraine, he said.

“The Russian Orthodox Church’s entire base is in Ukraine.”

“There has been a massive shift coming from Moscow” from both Putin and the Moscow Patriarch Kirill to “use the concept of a Russian world” to influence Ukraine and destabilize it. The Russian Orthodox Church is a state church, Sysyn said, and neither Russia nor the Russian Orthodox Church wants to lose Ukraine. Putin has said, “Ukrainians and Russians are one people,” he noted.

Some priests, who are more closely allied to Moscow than their parishioners, have refused to bury Ukrainians who have died in the conflict, Sysyn said. “The Moscow Patriarchy has a horrible problem,”



CCN/D. Gyapong

HISTORIAN SPEAKS IN OTTAWA — Toronto-based University of Alberta historian Frank Sysyn, an expert on Ukraine (centre), with faculty of the Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at Saint Paul University, Rev. Peter Galadza (left) and Brian Butcher (right).

he said. “Most of the living community” of this church found in the middle and western parts of Ukraine supported the Maidan in favour of democracy and a turn to Europe instead of Russia, but some of the clergy and pro-Russian factions are “pro-oligarchs,” and trade with Russia and are motivated by the need for financing.

“Moscow is stirring up tensions,” that might lead some Orthodox of the Moscow Patriarchy to start “crying persecution” which would lead to a direct “intervention from Moscow,” Sysyn warned.

Another 39 per cent identify as “generic” Orthodox who may have a cultural relationship with the faith but do not go to

church, he said.

There are also two Catholic churches in Ukraine, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church (eight per cent) which shares a Byzantine liturgy with the Orthodox; and the Roman Catholic Church, which is about one to two per cent of the population, Sysyn said.

Sysyn said many of the NGOs involved in Ukraine have a better handle on the conflict than Catholic Church authorities do. He said many Ukrainians were dismayed when Pope Francis called the conflict there “fratricidal” without mentioning Russia’s involvement. Rome, however, may not want to offend Moscow for political reasons, he said.



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Barron speaks at World Meeting of Families

By Blake Sittler

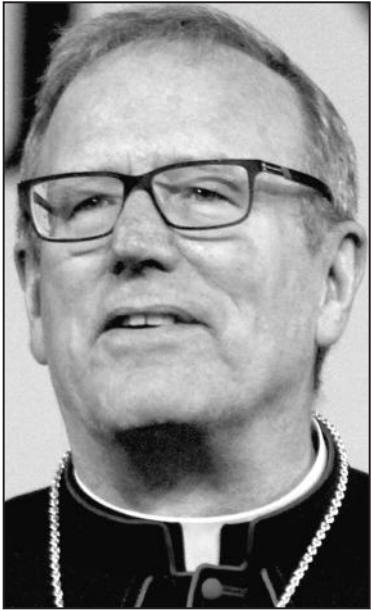
PHILADELPHIA — The newly ordained auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, Robert Barron, chose Living as the Image of God as the topic of the first keynote speech at the World Meeting of Families.

Host of the video series Catholicism, Barron has become known for his Word on Fire resources and his many YouTube videos, which have attracted over 14 million viewers.

The World Meeting of Families held in Philadelphia Sept. 22 - 25 was attended by some 20,000 participants from over 100 countries. Dozens of speakers addressed topics ranging from dating and divorce to spousal abuse and discipleship.

“We must think of ourselves as representatives of God, bringing his power, wisdom, heart and mind to the world,” Barron said.

“There is no greater humanism than Christianity. There is no religion, no ancient philosophy,



Bishop Robert Barron

Renaissance humanism, modern social theory that holds humanity up higher than Christianity, because we have been made in the image of God.”

Barron used the incarnation to elucidate how God became man

so that people could become more like God.

Barron articulated how in the creation story the author paints a picture of God creating in order, light, stars, the earth and animals, all things that in the past were once worshipped by other religions.

“They are not to be worshipped,” Barron said. “They themselves are in a beautiful liturgical procession because they are meant to give praise to God.”

Barron then offered some hermeneutics on Adam before the fall. Adam was the first scientist who catalogued the animals with God. Adam was also described as the first priest, leading all in worshipping God.

“What goes wrong with us?” Barron asked. “We begin to worship things other than God: wealth, power, pleasure, our own egos.”

“What goes wrong with us is bad praise,” he argued: “running after false gods and compromising our identity as a priestly people.”

Barron tied this logic to the idea that bad praise also means Christians sacrifice their own prophetic role to proclaim God as God, and we lose our kingly role of sharing the faith.

“We need to teach the world how to worship right,” he challenged. “If we don’t, we are not fulfilling our mission. When we do, peace will break out all over.”

Barron told of when John Paul II in 1979 spoke in Victory Square in Warsaw, a moment some historians mark as the beginning of the fall of communism in Europe.

“The people started chanting, ‘We want God! We want God!’,” shared Barron. “Like a great priest, John Paul helped realign their worship.”

Barron then referred to the Dominican theologian Servais Pinckaers who in his book Sources of Christian Methods made the distinction between the freedom of indifference and the freedom of excellence.

“We could drive as fast as we want if it weren’t for those pesky traffic laws,” Barron joked. “That is when the law is seen as an affront to freedom as self-determination.”

“The freedom of excellence is the shaping of desire so as to make the achievement of the good first possible and then effortless,” he said.

Barron explained that he was free to speak English only through decades of learning the rules and being corrected in shared practices of speech, spelling, punctuation and syntax.

“Through this long process of disciplining my desire to speak the English language, I have become free,” he said.

Barron explained how right laws, like right praise, free people to be who they were created to be and to become the people they want to become.

“The Catholic Church is seen as ‘the church of no’ if seen through that first lens of (freedom of indifference),” Barron explained. “But we have to understand the rules of the church according to the second sense . . . we need to speak the law, the moral laws, the theology of the body . . . and then we see that the ‘no’ is always in service of a much larger ‘yes.’”

— SPEAKING, page 10

Compassionate Healers’ Mass held

By Paula Fournier

PRINCE ALBERT — “It’s those everyday acts of compassion and love that will slowly turn our world around. God wants all of us to be the instruments of his mercy in our world. That’s our challenge and mission as Christians,” said Rev. Maurice Fiolleau, vicar-general for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Prince Albert, as he gave his homily at the annual Compassionate Healer’s Mass here Sept. 12.

The Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS) states their mission on their website: to tend to the sick, suffering and dying “as though we were tending to Jesus himself.” They describe the annual mass as “a time to gather, celebrate with and commission those who work and volunteer in the provision of health care.” They are “strengthened in their vision to be a faith community sharing the healing ministry of Jesus.”

CHAS prays for and celebrates individuals with various roles within the health care field,

including doctors, nurses, volunteers, chaplains, technicians, and support staff in hospitals, among others.

“All of you, and many more who serve in health care, I welcome and thank you for your response to God’s call to serve others in need. You certainly have a noble calling because in your work, you are representatives of Jesus’s signs of his compassion and apostles of his love. You are the healing presence of God. In what you do to bring care, comfort and healing; you are a sign of the kingdom that Jesus came to bring,” said Fiolleau.

Fiolleau cited Pope Francis, who believes that our culture has become a throwaway culture. Fiolleau believes the pope is telling us that the world we live in is increasingly becoming a culture that does not value human life.

He spoke of the current debate on end-of-life issues and how it affects the sick, the disabled and the elderly.

“We need to create a culture of compassion, mercy, care and concern. It’s up to us; we can make

the difference. I pray that as you continue your ministry of care, you will trust in the Lord Jesus to bring new hope so that you can bring that hope to those you serve.”

After his homily, Fiolleau asked those involved in health care to stand as he gave a special blessing.

At the end of mass, Sandy Normand, Mission Education coordinator for CHAS, explained how their work brings education and opportunities for experiences for those involved in health care.

“Bringing the mission alive is our hope for those who are the hands and feet of Christ. The Compassionate Healer’s Mass gives people a chance to think about why they do what they do.”

CHAS’s 72nd annual provincial convention will be held Oct. 19 - 20 in Prince Albert. This year’s theme, Inside Out: Spirituality & Quality in Health Care, illustrates Catholic health care’s mission to bring spirituality into medical facilities. Dr. Kenneth Pargament and Sister Mary Jean Ryan will be this year’s keynote speakers.

Chick’s faith guides his life: ‘it’s awesome’

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Saskatchewan Roughrider defensive end John Chick is best known for his prowess on the football field, but as he told the people attending Regina’s annual Archdiocesan Appeal kickoff, it’s his faith that defines and guides him.

“Everything I have in life is because of him.”

Chick was born and raised in Gillette, a city of about 32,000 in the centre of Wyoming. He excelled at sports in high school and Utah State College, which led him to the pros. He signed with the Riders in 2006 but left in 2010 for teams in the NFL before returning to the Green and White in 2013.

Along the way he was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. It was one of what he said are the three pillars of his life. “Overcoming diabetes has made me stronger in other areas of my life.” The other two, he said, are biblical verses: Matthew 6:25-27, 34 and Jeremiah 29-11. The Matthew verses talk of God feeding the birds while verse 34 says not to be anxious about tomorrow. Jeremiah gives words of peace, end and patience.

“They carried me my whole life,” said Chick.

He and his wife have seven children, with the eighth due in December. “I have four Canadians now,” he joked.

His faith, he says, won him his wife. They met in college. As a Catholic he was surrounded by the Mormon faith, including his wife. He was impressed how well Mormons practised their faith and it made him passionate about living his “the way they are.” He convinced his future wife to attend church with him and four years later, in his senior year, she was baptized and confirmed at Easter

and they were subsequently married.

He described his move to Saskatchewan, of which he knew nothing, “as such a God thing.” When he first crossed the border

he said he wondered what he was getting into.

“There was nothing. It was wide open.”

They grew to enjoy life here and said they were trying to make it their permanent home, “but there are a few things we have to arrange.”

Of course he talked about football, starting with the Kent Austin Riders and the 2007 Grey Cup. “No one expected us to even reach the playoffs, but Austin taught us to believe and we won the Grey Cup.” As of this writing, the team is 1-11, but he says neither he nor his team members have given up. “When you’re not winning you learn what kind of a person you are.

“Everywhere we have gone, our Catholic faith has been awesome.”

The family attends Resurrection Parish.



John Chick



Fournier

FALL SUPPER — On Sept. 27, St. Mark Parish in Prince Albert hosted approximately 540 guests during their annual fall supper. Cabbage rolls, meatballs, turkey, stuffing, coleslaw, turnips, carrots, potatoes, gravy and pies filled serving tables. Supper co-ordinators Lorraine Tremblay and Marlene Park helped the 24 volunteers with preparations on Friday, Saturday and Sunday morning. Newly appointed pastor, Rev. Jim Kaptein, walked around the hall, socializing with visitors and making balloon animals for families. Members of the parish donated almost all food items.

Grandparents Day a special event in Prince Albert

By Paula Fournier

PRINCE ALBERT — On Sept. 13, Mont St. Joseph Home hosted 400 people at their annual Grandparents Day Stroll-A-Thon. Residents were paired with a family member, friend, staff member, volunteer or board member to walk around the landscaped grounds of the home. They enjoyed burgers, listened to live

music and watched children playing. The goal of Brian Martin, secretary-treasurer for the board of directors, was for every resident to have a family member or friend to be with that day. “Because this is about families, the most important thing for our residents is for them to have a special Grandparents Day.” The annual Stroll-A-Thon is

also an opportunity to raise funds to purchase furnishings and equipment needed by residents, staff and medical personnel. Pledges are collected by the day’s participants as they walk the residents around the facility. One staff member raised over \$3,700 this year. There is no additional support or special equipment through government funding, Martin said. The care home would not be able to flourish without the support of the community. “The money that the foundation has given to the home through donations for safety equipment and needs in the home is amazing. I think it’s great for community to have engagement and ownership in our health care programs and serv-

ices. I think that is what is truly special about Mont St. Joseph. We work very hard to be welcoming to the community and get our residents engaged in activities.” For volunteers looking for opportunities, Martin invites them to join Mont St. Joseph as individuals, teams or groups on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The director of recreation will train and orientate them, matching each volunteer to a compatible resident. “They visit when they are able to. Four city parishes are coming to organize the mass on Sunday. That might be the only time they’re here, but some come every day. It’s a vocation. We always think that it’s a win-win for the residents, but inevitably we find that volunteers express that

they’re the ones who are touched through the experience.” When asked how they measure their success, Martin answered that ultimately that day, and what they do every day, will be measured by how welcome people feel. “If our residents, families, staff and visitors feel welcome here, then there are all kinds of things that spin off of that; they’re all good. So critically for me when people are coming through the door for their first Grandparents Day here — how do they feel at the end of the night? Did they feel welcome? Did they have a good time? Did they go to bed knowing that it was a good day? That may be the most critical way to measure how we go about our business.”



Fournier

GRANDPARENTS’ STROLL-A-THON — At the annual Grandparents Day Stroll-A-Thon, residents of Mont St. Joseph Home in Prince Albert are paired with a family member, friend, staff member, volunteer or board member to walk around the landscaped grounds of the home.

Marriage program launched

ST. BONIFACE — The Archdiocese of St. Boniface has launched a new mentorship-based marriage preparation program, For Better and Forever. Tim and Louise Scatliff of Ste-Hyacinthe Parish in La Salle, who have been married for 42 years, are a sponsor couple with the marriage preparation program. They are currently accompanying two couples who are preparing for marriage, and will continue to meet with them over a brief period of time after their wedding as well. “We help engaged couples talk about different subjects that could become issues between them,” explains Louise. “We let them read a chapter of the program, answer the questions individually and share their answers between them, and then we get together and chat. The aim is that they foster good communication skills and learn to understand each other better.” Indeed, For Better and Forever is a marriage preparation program that is based simply on discussions between two couples of the same parish. The engaged couple meets the sponsor couple five times before the wedding, and once or twice afterward. Tim Scatliff explains that they aim to talk 30 per cent of the time and give the engaged couple the space to talk 70 per cent of the time. “Our role is to listen to them

and share our experience if it can be of any help to them. We don’t judge! At any rate, what is said between us stays between us; we won’t even share anything with the priest, unless the couple agrees to it. For Better and Forever puts the two couples on the same level. No one has all the answers, and everyone benefits from the program, including the sponsor couple. “We, as sponsors, also read the chapters and answer the questions. That allows us to discuss, and thus strengthens our bond,” says Louise. “It is a satisfying experience for us and an excellent way to enrich our own marriage,” adds her husband. Krystal and Ben Mitchell followed the program with Tim and Louise. “They had a lot of stories and ideas to share with us,” admits Krystal. “We talked about so many things that no one else would suggest you should discuss when you are about to get married! It was really good for us.” For the time being, the Scatliffs are the only sponsor couple in their parish, but they hope that other couples will soon be trained as mentors. So far, approximately 30 couples have been trained in the diocese. There is a continued need for more married couples who would be interested in taking part in the adventure.

Sexual identities fluid and negotiable

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Eighty-four point two per cent of adults between 18 - 25 believe premarital consensual sex is okay, but they feel guilt and shame about it and they blame that on religion. That was one of the findings from a research project led by Dr. Pamela Dickey Young, Professor of Religion at Queen’s University. She talked about the research as this year’s Luther Lecturer that was held Sept. 28 at Luther College, University of Regina. Her lecture was titled Sex, Religion and Canadian Youth: Identities Under Construction. Young made it clear the sample size was small — 486 people selected from across Canada — but she believes it is still a good reflection of how young adults see themselves in the context of religion and sex. The research has value, she said in an interview with the PM, because religious groups want young people in their group. “Hear what they say about religion and don’t present it as a bunch of rules because they’re not looking for rules.” Sexuality, she continued, is a topic where we have to learn to be conversant politely. “Talk about it and not just shove it under the carpet.” Her research was conducted over three years and used surveys,

personal interviews and some social media. Nine religions were identified by the subjects with the largest group, 61 per cent, claiming Christian roots. Non-religious was the next largest group at 20 per cent with four per cent identified as Muslim and 3.3 per cent Judaism. Gender identities were 71 per cent female, 27.9 per cent male, 69.1 per cent said they were heterosexual, 9.9 per cent said they were bisexual, 10.2 per cent identified themselves as queer, four per cent trans, 4.4 per cent lesbian and 4.7 per cent as gay. “Some claimed multiple identities, religious and sexual,” said Young in her lecture, and many continued in the religion of their parents. Many of the research subjects did not want to be pigeon-holed, said Young, which led to some curious responses like one individual who claimed to be a Catholic Agnostic. “They want to be agents of their own identity.” 60.4 per cent said religious traditions on sexuality should adapt to contemporary cultural and social values. Several responses shown on the huge screen in the auditorium drew laughter. One response in particular: the individual argued you could bend the rules if you didn’t agree with them and noted the Anglican religion as an example because it was founded

on a divorce. Most were influenced in their choices and values by friends 86.6 per cent, compared to parents at 79.1 per cent, their religion came in at 49 per cent and religious leaders at 24.8 per cent.



Flegel

Dr. Pamela Dickey Young

Identities were fluid and negotiable in the group that was studied, said Young. “They were articulate about it, they were thoughtful about it, it didn’t just come off the top of their heads and they really want to be critical thinkers and critical makers of their own identity.”

Nuestra Señora de la Asunción unique

ST. BONIFACE — The only Spanish parish in Manitoba, Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, offers more than 30 opportunities of various types for the faithful of all ages. Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, in Winnipeg, encompasses no less than 33 different groups, including the Knights of Columbus, Catechetics, the Nueva Jerusalem Charismatic Prayer Group, the Liturgical Committee, Equipos de Nuestra Señora (Our Lady teams) for couples, F.A.C.E Youth Ministry, an Arise group, and the Neocatechumenal Way, among others. Pastoral co-ordinator Melvin De Paz, who is one of those responsible for youth evangelization, explains, “This all start-

ed with the charismatic prayer group. We now have five catechetical groups for children three years and older, as well as for adults, a liturgical committee, six different choirs, and many other groups. In addition, we have the one of only five Spanish Knights of Columbus Councils in Canada.” Here, everyone from the age of three to the elderly has the opportunity to participate in parish life, he emphasizes. “Our parish priest, Rev. Jorge Mario Londoño, is extremely open to new ideas; he is not afraid to take risks.” But how do these groups function in harmony? “The key is communication,” states De Paz. The group leaders meet every two months to share their activities

and challenges. That is how they are active and dynamic, having so much to offer!” A relatively new parish, Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, with its 220 families, remains very active, while nonetheless welcoming many recent immigrants. “In 1986, a group of people requested a Sunday mass in Spanish in the Diocese of Winnipeg’s St. Ignatius Parish, but soon realized something more was needed, and in 1992 the charismatic prayer group Nueva Jerusalem was born,” explains Laura Garcia, co-ordinator of the charismatic group. “The need and growth continued and we joined the Diocese of — WELCOMES, page 9

Family gathering opens eyes to the possibilities

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

PHILADELPHIA (CCN) — Most of the 500 or so Toronto pilgrims and more than 1,000 Canadians in Philadelphia showed up for the last two days of the papal visit to see the pope. A smaller, hard core of dedicated family activists and advocates formed part of the 18,000 who attended the weeklong World Meeting of Families.

They attended seminars, listened to speakers, engaged in debates, collected hundreds of pages of pro-family Catholic literature, exchanged email addresses with people they met and formulated new programs, new goals and new insights.

The delegates who made the trip to Philadelphia and stayed all week are people who already lead strong, faith-filled families, conceded Teresa Hartnett, direc-

tor of family ministry for the Diocese of Hamilton. The World Meeting of Families delegates were there to indulge their passion, she said.

“If you love baseball you go to baseball games. If you love music you go to concerts. If you play the piano you like to hear someone who plays it better than you,” she said. “Here you have a crowd where everyone shares a similar belief. They’re here to be uplifted, to be reminded that they’re not alone.”

For Hartnett, the World Meeting of Families, another big festival of Catholic life inaugurated by St. Pope John Paul II, is almost a professional obligation. But she would be there whether it related to her job or not.

Hartnett has gathered ideas and is formulating plans. She’s going to ask Hamilton Bishop Douglas Crosby about forming a diocese-wide committee with representa-

tion from all the deaneries that would review and ensure every parish in the diocese has effective and well-publicized programs and services serving families.

The speakers, workshops and seminars have been an opportunity for Hartnett to step back from the daily grind and see what else might be possible in family ministry.

“It’s that thing where you’re stuck in your own thing in little Hamilton diocese — not stuck, but those are the people you associate with. Now you come and you see a million people here, 20,000 at the World Meeting of Families, and it makes you realize we are strong. The faith is not weak, as the press would like us to believe,” she said.

For Calgary mother Sara Francis, attending the World Meeting of Families with her husband, Ben, was a week worth making sacrifices for. She’s long



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

Teresa Hartnett, director of family ministry for the Diocese of Hamilton.

been an admirer of authors such as Christopher West, Scott Hahn, Bishop-elect Robert Barron and Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle. But nothing tops the pope.

“I was encouraged when Pope Francis said Christianity is not a subculture that should only be observed in the private realm,” said Francis. “I find sometimes it can be difficult to live out my Catholic faith in the public sphere in our secularized culture. His words gave me much strength for when I return home.”

Though he came for the family issues, that didn’t mean Ryan Wilson from Prince George, B.C., wasn’t ready to hear the pope speak about immigration, globalization and religious freedom.

“The reaffirmation of the absolute need for religious freedom as an integral part of human life” was a key moment, Wilson said in a text to The Catholic Register. “Secondly, he stated the importance of accepting immigrants into the fabric of the country with love and in a spirit of peace.”

Finally, Wilson’s ears opened when the pope spoke on behalf of smaller and traditional cultures drowning under a wave of eco-

nomie globalization.

“He stressed that globalization done in a way which minimizes or marginalizes any of the human family is a bad pursuit,” Wilson said. “Rather, globalization has to be done in an inclusive manner.”

Hartnett found encouragement at the conference for women to take their place in the church, to see the Catholic Church as their natural home rather than a structure controlled by men.

“I think for a lot of women here, the message is an empowering one,” she said. “We often talk about what we don’t have in the church. We can’t be priests, we can’t be preachers. But the message here today is that your role is, in some ways, more powerful than that role because we generate life. Our beginning brings them to God. God entrusted us with something fairly powerful. When you focus on that, you see that you have a role, maybe not the role people talk about, but we do have a very important role.”

In 2018 the World Meeting of Families will be in Dublin, Ireland. No doubt, many of the same Canadians will be there.

Immigrant Canadians give ‘yes’ to pope

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

PHILADELPHIA (CCN) — When Pope Francis pleaded with immigrants to hold on to their traditions and culture, a big “yes” rose in Alicia Ledda’s heart. That’s what she came to Philadelphia to hear.

As one of more than 1,000 Canadians in Philadelphia to see the pope, Ledda knew Pope Francis was speaking to her as well.

Ledda, like Francis, comes from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Though she’s been in Canada 35 years and has raised children and made a life in Toronto, Ledda still speaks accented English and still gets treated like an outsider.

“Other people make you feel that way,” she told me as she marched with 56 entirely Hispanic members of the Charismatic Renewal movement from the Greater Toronto Area.

They were parading through downtown Philadelphia Sept. 27, going to mass with the pope. They

would endure a long wait to get through security and a longer wait for Francis to arrive and mass to begin. They flew Canadian flags, but Ledda had an Argentine flag and a few others carried images of Our Lady of Guadalupe. They were happy, singing, they are proud of a pope they consider one of their own.

For these Canadians, the pope’s encouragement to immigrants to belong, to play their part in their adopted country — and his corresponding admonishment to the host countries to open up and fully accept them for who they are — was a thrilling moment.

“I think in particular of the vibrant faith which so many of you possess, the deep sense of family life and all those other values which you have inherited,” the pope told them the previous evening. “By contributing your gifts, you will not only find your place here, you will help to renew society from within.”

That wasn’t a message aimed exclusively at the United States, said Ledda.

“Argentina and Canada are my countries. I try to preserve the culture of both countries,” said Ledda.

Her adult children couldn’t attend the papal mass with her, unable to get time off of work, but Ledda is sure her children share her love for the pope and her faith.

“It is sad they couldn’t come,” she said.

Alex Sanchez, a Peruvian immigrant to Toronto, said all of Canada’s Latin American immigrants appreciate and understand the pope when he speaks about globalization, cultural diversity and migration.

“They (immigrants) want to work hard always. They put God first and then the rest,” Sanchez said.

Being there for the pope is a moment of great pride, an affirmation of who they are as Latin Americans and as Catholics, said Sanchez.

“We need to demonstrate we believe in the values, not only the values but the virtues, of the church,” he said.



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

CANADIANS AT PAPAL MASS — Members of the Charismatic Renewal movement from the Greater Toronto Area fly the Canadian flag in downtown Philadelphia on their way to mass with Pope Francis on Sept. 27.

Pope Francis wants whole church involved in synod

Continued from page 1

More than 300 cardinals and bishops are expected to attend this year’s synod.

The point of engaging parishioners was to find out what issues were important to families, what are the needs of the modern family and what is working well within the church, said Mickens.

“The pope wants the whole church involved in this,” said Mickens, the editor of Global Post Magazine. “This is a whole new method of discernment in the church which makes people who are used to controlling the debate and following the rules very uncomfortable. There was never debate at the synods before.”

In the past Mickens said bishops spent the three weeks of the synod reading documents, writing responses and listening to hierarchy speak.

Francis made it clear during his papal visit to the United States that “we cannot just dream of the

good old days when everyone followed church teachings,” said Mickens.

“He wants people to discuss because it is the only healthy way forward for the church,” he said. “The one thing that the pope is not afraid of is debate.”

Along with opening up debate among the bishops, Mickens also expects Francis to change the frequency at which they speak.

“The pope has already said that there is going to be no final document,” he said. “It is unrealistic to think that these issues which are serious issues can be resolved at a three-week meeting of bishops. It is only going to open up the conversation wider, deeper, and it is going to have to be ongoing.”

“How frequently, that will be left up to the pope, but my instinct is that the pope will take this opportunity to make the synod of bishops one of the primary elements of the governance of the Catholic Church.”

In U.S., pope integrated personal, political vision

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

PHILADELPHIA (CCN) — In the 1970s feminist writers had a slogan they wanted to share with the world: “The personal is political.”

For a week in September the world watched 78-year-old Pope Francis present a perfectly integrated personal and political vision.

The political pope stood before Congress and reminded them how public service is supposed to work.

“You are called to defend and preserve the dignity of your fellow citizens in the tireless and demanding pursuit of the common good, for this is the chief aim of all politics,” he told senators and representatives in Washington.

The personal pope was on view three days later at the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility. He stood before convicted murderers, rapists, gangsters and drug dealers and said, “I am here as a pastor but, above all, as a brother, to share your situation and to make it my own . . . all of us need to be cleansed. I am first among them.”

When the pope tells prisoners that they are in prison to become whole, to reclaim their dignity and then rejoin society, he confronts the politics of recrimination, fear and revenge. He brushes aside arguments for the death penalty and the mantra “life means life.”

Before he even got to the United States, the pope told reporters on the plane from Cuba,



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

PAPAL SOUVENIRS — The commercial side of the U.S. papal visit is evident in this store window display in Philadelphia. Pope Francis visited Cuba and the U.S. from Sept. 19 - 27.

“Life imprisonment is almost a hidden death penalty. You are there and you are dying every day without any hope of freedom.”

The personal pope was also evident during a private meeting with five survivors of sex abuse, where Francis expressed sorrow and shame.

“Words cannot express my sorrow for the abuse you suffered . . . I beg your forgiveness,” he told the survivors. “For the sins of omission on the part of church leaders who did not respond adequately to reports of abuse made by family members, as well as by

abuse victims themselves.”

But Francis also knows that victims require an institutional response to the harm they suffered.

“God weeps,” he told bishops and seminarians in Philadelphia as he broached again the subject of sex abuse. “I commit to the careful oversight to ensure that youth are protected.”

The pope’s biggest political project, one that has dominated his entire year, has been to move world leaders to act on climate

change. At the United Nations he reminded the world’s diplomats of the purposes of both the UN as an institution and of international law.

“It must be stated that a true ‘right of the environment’ does exist,” said Francis. “We human beings are part of the environment. We live in communion with it, since the environment itself entails ethical limits which human activity must acknowledge and respect.”

This is politics on behalf of in-

dividuals who suffer in a “relentless process of exclusion,” said Francis.

“In effect, a selfish and boundless thirst for power and material prosperity leads both to the misuse of available natural resources and to the exclusion of the weak and disadvantaged. . . . The poorest are those who suffer most,” he told UN delegates.

Francis knows that what happens politically shapes the personal lives of people who have no power, no influence and perhaps no knowledge of the forces at play.

“Our world demands of all government leaders a will which is effective, practical and constant,” he told the UN. It also demands “concrete steps and immediate measures for preserving and improving the natural environment and thus putting an end as quickly as possible to the phenomenon of social and economic exclusion, with its baneful consequences: human trafficking, the marketing of human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of boys and girls, slave labour, including prostitution, the drug and weapons trade, terrorism and international organized crime.”

The pope was not pulling punches.

“The ecological crisis, and the large-scale destruction of biodiversity, can threaten the very existence of the human species,” he said.

Now is that political, or should we take it personally?

Church welcomes faithful from 21 different countries

Continued from page 7

St. Boniface in October 2006, where a Spanish mission was being opened, and then in October 2010, we became an actual parish,” she continued. “As a parish, we could then have a full-time Spanish-speaking pastor,” states Garcia, who is originally from El Salvador.

The Charismatic Prayer Group meets every Friday at 7 p.m. in the church, and every year organizes a New Life in the Spirit seminar. Over time more than 800 people have participated in the seminar and many of them now are leaders or active members in other groups of the church. This seminar is the basic Christian Initiation and a game changer for anyone seeking a “new start,” a “new life,” or simply to have a personal experience and relationship with God.

One of the reasons for this success is that it is an immigrant’s personal parish (not geographical). As the only Spanish-language parish in Winnipeg, it welcomes the faithful of 21 countries from all over the city, who find here a sense of community and family.

“Our parish is a family for many immigrants,” states Londoño, the pastor, who is originally from Colombia. Nowadays, however, along with the important sense of

community and the use of the Spanish language, first and foremost, the parish in answer to Archbishop LeGatt’s calling to be witness in a secularized society, wishes to open itself up to the Manitoban milieu dominated by the English language.

“This year, a group of young people have asked to work in English and have an English mass, so we bought English Bibles and have started reading them. It was like falling in love with Jesus all over again!” confided De Paz, who is originally from Guatemala.

Since May 2015, the parish has offered two bilingual English-Spanish masses twice a month.

“It was important to take this approach because, even though the immigrant parents speak primarily Spanish, their children who grew up in Canada communicate more easily in English, and the parish was losing touch with their young people,” confides De Paz. “Because of the use of English, they will be able to invite their English-speaking friends and we will be able to keep them,” he concludes.

“What’s more, many people who were unreachable because they didn’t understand Spanish, will now come to appreciate all our activities. It’s a change which inspires hope for our parish!”

By Satpal Singh
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On Sept. 25, I sat onstage with Pope Francis at a multifaith service at the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York City. I was invited to offer a prayer from the Sikh scripture, with my daughter, Dr. Gunisha Kaur, who provided an English translation.

The occasion led me to reflect on my near-death experience more than 30 years ago.

In 1984 I was returning from Hyderabad, India, in the south to my home in Amritsar, Punjab, in the north. When we neared Delhi, a mob of vigilantes stormed onto our train and called for the blood of each and every Sikh.

The mob beat me nearly to death. The vigilantes must have thought they had killed me, because when I lost consciousness they threw me off the train and onto the tracks. I was left for dead.

After I came back to consciousness, I realized that another attack was imminent. I believed in that moment that I would never see my family again. I closed my eyes and said goodbye to my wife and children. I prayed for the souls of everyone I knew, including my attackers.

Satpal Singh is associate professor of pharmacology and toxicology at the University at Buffalo.

Sikh honoured to share stage with pope

The mob was part of a larger pattern of violence that targeted thousands of Sikhs all over India. Two Sikhs had assassinated Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, and the mob sought revenge by attacking innocent Sikh civilians — as if it were justified to hold an entire community responsible for the actions of a few.

When I finally reached my family in Amritsar, we made the painfully hard choice to move to the United States where I am now working as a professor of pharmacology.

The culture of the U.S. cohered better with my own ideals of justice and religious freedom, and I came to appreciate the value of community-building.

Reflecting on how I barely survived the intense violence produced by religious animosity, I decided to devote myself to making our world a better place. I drew from my Sikh outlook and started to build relationships across religious boundaries.

It is from this lens that I have come to deeply appreciate the leadership of Pope Francis. He embodies the Sikh concept of servant-leadership, which suggests that the best leaders are those who are constantly looking to serve those around them.

Francis’ decision to drive around in a humble Fiat reflects his humility. His act of dining with the impoverished rather than with political leaders illustrates

his humanity. And his willingness to speak openly about pivotal social issues shows his commitment to righteousness.

I admire these features in Francis, because each of them represents what my Sikh faith teaches me about living a good life. Many of the values he espouses are the same values to which I aspire as a Sikh.

My Sikh faith teaches me to identify with and serve the most needy among us. In our tradition, service is a way of praying through action and of expressing our gratitude to the Creator for all we have been given. This is an outlook that I see reflected consistently in Francis’ actions.

As a Sikh, I also believe I have a responsibility to stand for justice, even when it is difficult to do so. Francis has shown leadership in this regard as well. In his brief trip to the U.S., he has weighed in on key issues of our times, including immigration and poverty. I am thankful to Francis for taking such stands and support his sentiments on these issues.

As I sat next to Francis during the ceremony at the 9/11 memorial, I kept thinking to myself: “Never in my life could I have imagined I would be in this position.” I am honoured to have been selected to share the stage with this great man. Although we do not share the same religious tradition, we both share a view on what it means to be a person of faith.

Hope is keeping the faith in times of difficulty

By Caitlin Ward

The thing about Otis Redding is you can listen to him for only so long. Then you need to pull the car over and feel bad about things for a while.

Well, perhaps not quite. I mean, you might not have been in a car at the time. You might have had to stop walking and lie down in the road. Or, perhaps, you had to get up from your desk to weep while staring out the window.

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

While it rains.

This might be a slight exaggeration. But not much of one. I really love Otis Redding, but I can only take so much. I don't know if

Pain in My Heart
Otis Redding

I've ever made it through more than half a dozen of his songs in one go. After the first few, I just start feeling vaguely uneasy and a little depressed. And I have to pull over, or at least change the song to something less gloomy.

I don't think I was completely conscious of that fact until this evening, though. That is, I knew I only listened to a few Redding songs at a time, but I hadn't really

thought about why that would be. I thought I just had a few favourites. It never occurred to me that my favourites happened to be the first few songs on one record, and I had never heard the other half of it.

Tonight I was listening to his Stax/Volt recordings — part of a substantial singles collection a friend gave me in a fit of madness or generosity or both — and I started laughing a few songs in. It wasn't anything particularly funny about that particular song. Rather, it was the fact that these songs were coming at me in waves of gut-wrenching misery; it had reached that critical point where it stopped being sad and started being morbidly funny. The sad arpeggios, the melancholy voice, the heartsick lyrics — it

was too much. I laughed hysterically, alone in my apartment, on my couch. I felt a bit bad, but by God, it was hilarious.

In fairness, I'm pretty tired these days, so lots of things seem more funny than they probably are. So I went back to the beginning of the playlist to see if it was in my head.

It wasn't. Without any rearranging, retooling, or fudging, these are the first lines of the first five Redding songs on my computer:

"These arms of mine / they are lonely." (These Arms of Mine)

"You left me for another." (That's What My Heart Needs)

"Pain in my heart / You're treating me cold." (Pain in My Heart)

"Come to me / I'm lonely." (Come to Me)

"Don't leave me this way / I got no other place to stay." (Don't Leave Me This Way)

If you were wondering, I started laughing at the line, "pain in my heart." Yes, I'm apparently heartless, myself.

We must conclude, if we are to believe his music, that Otis Redding was not the happiest of men.

I don't know if I can criticize him too much for it, though. It might make me a hypocrite. I'm a bit notorious for always talking about when things go wrong, be it on a small scale or large. Today in class, for example, I wanted to talk about examples of repeating patterns in history, and how one of the great benefits of the liberal arts as a whole is that they give us the opportunity to learn from past and imagined versions of ourselves.

I don't know why I decided that the best way to illustrate this was by talking about the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, Evil May Day, the Second World War, and civil war in Syria. But I

did make that decision, and it kind of affected the mood of the class. We talked about xenophobia and genocide for the rest of the day. We're fun like that.

One of my colleagues said to me after class, "with you, Caitlin, all roads lead to ethnic cleansing."

Strangely, though, I don't think I'm a particularly unhappy person. I'm quite hopeful much of the time. I believe in a common good and a better world. In fact, I tend to get very frustrated with the friend who gave me these Otis Redding singles in the first place, because he has so little faith in a humanity I so often love to the point of tears.

Perhaps that's what hope really means, though: not that you talk about sunshine and light, but that you talk about gravely difficult things and not lose faith. Otis Redding wrote many, many sad songs about women who'd left him. He must have been pretty hopeful, himself, to have kept trying with this love business.

Otis and I might need to ease up on people, though. Not everyone is as optimistic as we are.

Pain in my heart
she's treating me cold
where can my baby be
Lord no one knows.

Pain in my heart just won't let me sleep
where can my baby be
Lord where can she be

Another day, as again it is though
I want you to come back, come back,
come back, baby, till I get enough
A little pain in my heart just won't let me be
wake up at restless nights
Lord and I can't even sleep

Stop this little pain in my heart

Another day as again it's rough
I want you to love me, love me, love me,
baby, till I get enough
Pain in my heart, a little pain in my heart
stop this little pain in my heart
stop this little pain in my heart
someone stop this pain
someone stop this pain



Lionsgate

SICARIO — Emily Blunt stars in *Sicario*, a film set on both sides of the U.S./Mexican border that tells a story about the drug war and its costs. It is directed by French Canadian Denis Villeneuve. "... if the film is a little too macho and far too Anglo to tell the full, ugly story of all the villains and victims, it is, like all of Villeneuve's films, a bravura piece of filmmaking," writes Stephen Whitty of the *Newark Star-Ledger*. The film opened Oct. 2 and has a [rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com) critics' score of 92 per cent.

Books

Publication of new book is 'simply good news'

SIMPLY GOOD NEWS — Why the Gospel is News and What Makes it Good by N.T. Wright. Harper Collins, ©2015. Hardcover, 189 pages, \$31. Reviewed by Edwin Buettner.

As a clearly written and highly accessible work in the tradition of Christian apologists such as C.S. Lewis, the publication of *Simply Good News* will indeed be good news. Not only for professed followers of Jesus of Nazareth but also for those beyond the traditional boundaries of Christendom. Drawing on his background as a former Anglican bishop and university professor, Wright presents solidly logical and historically grounded explications of the Gospel message, within the contexts of both personal faith and pastoral care. Though the title may suggest otherwise, Wright's vision is broad and inclusive, serving well as a foil to religious fundamentalism.

Throughout the book, the author drills deeply into various aspects of what many would consider core Christian beliefs. In doing so, Wright leads the reader toward a consideration of the "cosmic" (universal) dimensions of the mission of Jesus, "(that) something has happened as a result of which the world is a different place." In today's parlance, it is as if the author is suggesting a "super-sizing" of the Gospel, a corrective for a common tendency to reduce the Gospel to a more domesticated version. By his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus proclaimed the greatest of truths: "God made this world of space, time, and matter, he loves it and he is going to renew it." As for the "renewal," Wright invites his readers to hope not only in personal redemption but also to imagine a transformed world that is "more solid, more permanent, more altogether

glorious . . . than the present one."

Wright's reflections on the frequently preached tenet that "Jesus died for our sins" are illustrative. When understood too narrowly, the scope of Christ's redemptive work — to say nothing of the nature of God — is severely limited. Wright does affirm a belief in Christ's work of conversion within peoples' lives. Nonetheless, he invites readers to question what may be its underlying assumption: that the "problem" solved by Jesus was "an angry God who didn't seem to want you to get (to heaven)." For Wright, the fullness of redemption is about "heaven and earth coming together" and God's "passing the sentence of death on evil itself."

The final chapter is titled *Praying the Good News*, an in-depth reflection on the Lord's prayer. Here Wright refocuses the discussion, shifting perspectives from "the big picture" of salvation history to the personal. He believes that often when people pray, it is to ask for God's assistance with the trials of life, in effect beginning where the Our Father ends. Wright calls it the Help! stage. However, it does remain important that the pray-er make his/her way back to the beginning invocation, "Our Father who art in heaven." In doing so, the believer acknowledges Jesus' revelation of God as the universal Father of the human family. These are no longer just pious words or a faint hope, because as Wright puts it with elegant simplicity, "Jesus made it real. That is the good news."

'If we stop speaking we won't be heard'

Continued from page 6

Barron described the practice of sharing these laws as prophetic discipleship.

"If we stop speaking, we won't be heard," he said.

He described the challenge of Christians encountering a society that believes every individual has the right to choose and create their own reality, their own versions of right and wrong.

"Would you accept that logic for anything you take seriously?" he asked. "The answer is clearly no."

"When it comes to things we take seriously, we reference the law and we love those who are able to speak it clearly," Barron noted.

He challenged participants to remember that clear, prophetic speech is coupled with an extrava-

gant mercy.

Barron described the role of the king to go on campaigns and to conquer new territory. He compared this to the line in Matthew 16:18: "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell will not overpower it."

"We are the ones on the march," Barron highlighted. "Hell has something to fear from us."

Barron said this message could not be proclaimed through judgment, anger or violence; we can only take this message to the world through peace and love in confidence.

"The family is where the Imago Dei is furnished, where it is brought to life, where we are taught to be priest, prophet and king," he pointed out. "The family can go out into the world to teach right praise."

Documentary excellence shines at Toronto festival

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Toronto hosts one of the world's largest documentary film festivals, HotDocs, which takes place in spring, and it boasts a cinema on Bloor St. dedicated to this expanding genre. TIFF too has been strengthening its documentary offerings which can be counted on to deliver some of the best festival experiences, a number of which received standing ovations.

This year's highlight was a free

home life and the exceptional exemplar whose courageous choices have made her a global champion of the rights of girls and the youngest-ever recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014.

The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble (U.S.)

Director Morgan Neville is no stranger to films about musicians. His 20 Feet From Stardom won the Oscar in 2014 and he was also at TIFF with a profile of Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards: Under the Influence. Four years in the making, this movie follows the global journey of the multi-talented Silk Road Ensemble created by Chinese-American cello prodigy Yo-Yo Ma which since 2000 has recorded six albums and played to more than two million people in 33 countries. In addition to Ma, Neville focuses on several of the ensemble's master musicians from varied traditions, including those in exile from countries like Iran and Syria. In bridging cultures through music the project has a humanistic inspiration that reaches from the concert hall to refugee camps.

This Changes Everything (Canada/U.S.)

The screen version of Naomi Klein's eponymous manifesto directed by her husband Avi Lewis is actually superior to the book (which I reviewed in the April 29 issue). It is both less ideologically categorical than the book's "capitalism vs. the climate" dictums and more positively engaging about the struggles of individuals and local communities, notably indigenous peoples, for ecological justice. The film puts faces and compelling personal stories to these struggles and its appeal for radical systemic economic change as outlined in the recent "Leap Manifesto" signed by

many prominent Canadians (<https://leapmanifesto.org/en/the-leap-manifesto/>; see also <http://this-changeseverything.org/>) links to a political process of people taking control of their future. Ultimately that is a hopeful message.

The Pearl Button (Chile/France/Spain)

Master filmmaker Patricio Guzmán (Nostalgia for the Light) recounts the history of the nomadic Kaweskar "water people" who arrived in the fiords of western Patagonia some 10,000 years ago. In their complex cosmology they become stars after death. That world collapsed in the 19th century when they were hunted like animals by white settlers, sold or traded for pearl buttons. Only a handful of survivors remain who speak the native language. During the Pinochet dictatorship political prisoners were brought here. Thousands were dropped into the sea whose waters are a graveyard memorial. This stunning expanse of land and sea bears witness to a story of disappearance and extermination.

A Flickering Truth (Afghanistan/New Zealand)

Afghanistan's cultural heritage suffered greatly during the Taliban era. That included the state Afghan Film organization established in 1965. But there were those who took risks to protect what they could, notably the now elderly Isaaq Yousif who has lived on the premises for over three decades. In recent years a team of dedicated archivists led by a take-charge expatriate Ibrehim Arif has worked to retrieve and restore as much as possible of many thousands of hours of film footage dating back to the 1920s. Intrepid director Pietra Brettkelly follows their efforts and the dangers involved in bringing those surviving moving images to the countryside.

Miss Sharon Jones! (U.S.)

Master documentarian Barbara

Kopple provides an intimate and poignant portrait of dynamic singer Sharon Jones, who has been called a "female James Brown," and who has had to overcome many challenges in her career — the biggest being a diagnosis of stage two pancreatic cancer in 2013. Kopple goes behind the scenes with Jones and her backup band the Dap Kings as the emotional rollercoaster of illness and financial worries test her spirit and theirs. Jones proves to be an inspiring "soul survivor" who returns to the performance stage with brio, earning a first Grammy nomination for Give the People What They Want. No wonder she and the Dap Kings received an enthusiastic welcome after the Toronto premiere.

lence to the world's most powerful and richest nation to do better.

Nasser (France/South Africa)

With Egypt once again firmly in the grip of the military "deep state," writer-director and narrator Jihan El-Tahri provides a fascinating insight into its origins in 1952 when 33-year-old army colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser incited a revolution against the monarchy and British rule. Nasser out-manoeuvred the first military figurehead president, the Muslim Brotherhood and other social forces to become an unchallenged dictator and respected Third World leader who turned toward the Soviet Union when rebuffed by the U.S. There were great achievements — control of Suez, the Aswan dam —



Guantanamo's Child: Omar Khadr (Canada)

Most Canadians have formed an impression of Khadr, the 15-year-old accused of killing a U.S. soldier in an Afghanistan firefight in 2002. Imprisoned for 12 years, including being subjected to torture in the notorious Guantanamo facility, he was released on bail several months ago into the custody of his Edmonton lawyer Dennis Edney and wife Patricia. For the Harper crowd Khadr isn't an abused child soldier but a convicted "terrorist" who should stay in jail. Directors Patrick Reed and journalist Michelle Shephard reveal a more complex story in which Khadr speaks for himself and emerges as an introspective young man who, despite those terrible years, hopes to be allowed the possibility of a normal life.

Where to Invade Next (U.S.)

The first-ever screening of provocateur Michael Moore's first film since 2009's Capitalism: A Love Story got the royal treatment and delighted fans but its title is a misdirection for anyone expecting a hard-hitting critique of American military interventions. Instead, after a comic opening sketch in which Uncle Sam's befuddled top soldiers summon Moore for advice, "Mike's happy movie" consists of the portly shaggy filmmaker touring various European countries, and an Arab one Tunisia, to find out how much better they are doing on a range of quality of life issues — vacation time (Italy), educational performance (France, Finland), free university tuition (Slovenia), the teaching of history (Germany), prisoner rehabilitation (Norway), worker representation in company boardrooms (Germany), drug policy (Portugal), women in leadership positions (Iceland), women's health (Tunisia). Everywhere he lands Moore plants an American flag and claims the ideas (sometimes inspired by American thinkers) to take back to the good old USA. It's highly selective and maybe naive. But it does present an optimistic chal-

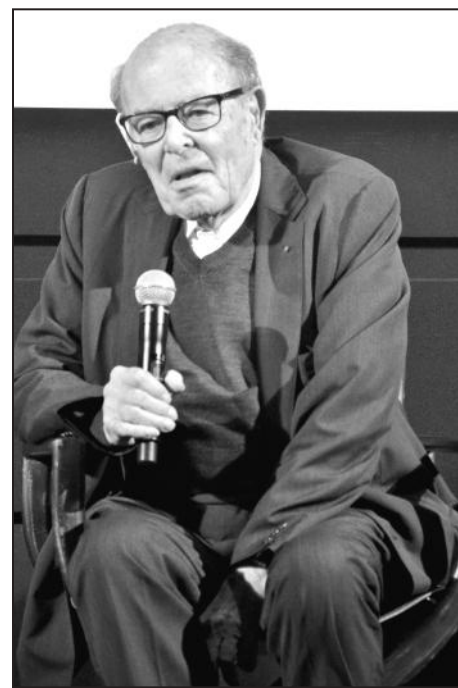
but also defeats, especially the disastrous Six-Day War with Israel when the Sinai was lost. What remained was a modern "pharaonic" system of top-down military-state control that the "Arab spring" disrupted but did not replace.

Women He's Undressed (Australia)

Veteran director Gillian Armstrong tells the fascinating story of how small-town Australian Orry George Kelly came to America, became involved in the theatre scene, and involved with the future Cary Grant, going on to become, as Orry-Kelly, the designer of choice for a parade of Hollywood's biggest female stars. Alongside that rise to fame was the secret life of a closeted gay man whose memoir would never be published.

Several other films with documentary elements deserve mention. In **Francophonie** (France/Germany/Netherlands) Russian director Alexander Sokurov, who amazed with his single-take "Russian Ark" set amid the glories of St. Petersburg's Winter Palace and Hermitage, dramatizes the story of another great museum, the Louvre, at the centre of France's centuries of cultural heritage. A focal point is how the Louvre managed to survive during the occupation of Paris by Nazi Germany.

The People vs. Fritz Bauer (Germany), directed by Lars Kraume, includes some archival footage in its true story of the risks taken by Fritz Bauer, attorney general of a German state, in the late 1950s in order to apprehend and bring to justice the notorious Nazi war criminal Adolph Eichmann. It's a complex account that recalls the 2014 TIFF selection Labyrinth of Lies now receiving limited theatrical distribution. **Kilo Two Bravo** (U.K.) by Paul Katis is a graphic retelling of an actual incident from 2006 in which a group of British soldiers stumbled into a minefield while guarding a dam in Afghanistan's Helmand province. More about it in a future column on new Afghanistan-themed movies.



G. Schmitz

DOCUMENTARY SCREENING — Marcel Ophüls discusses The Memory of Justice after a special screening at TIFF of the 1976 epic work.

screening of the restored Marcel Ophüls 1976 epic work **The Memory of Justice**, which has rarely been seen since. Never less than absorbing over nearly five hours, it is a penetrating exploration of the scales of justice in regard to war crimes and crimes against humanity focusing on the Nuremberg trials of top Nazis, America's actions in Vietnam and France's in Algeria. The themes of who bears responsibility for atrocities still have a powerful resonance and Ophüls, best known for The Sorrow and the Pity (1969) which probed Vichy France's collaboration with Nazi Germany, was present to reflect on the making of the film and its meaning for today.

In terms of new work the following made an impression:

He Named Me Malala (U.S.)

Director Davis Guggenheim presents an intimate, deeply affecting profile of Malala Yousafzai who at age 15 was shot in the head by the Taliban for speaking up for girls' education in the Swat valley of her native Pakistan. Named after a 19th-century Pashtun folk heroine by her father Ziauddin who had established a school, we see her with the loving support of family now living in Birmingham, England, including a shy traditional mother and two impish younger brothers. Malala is both the typical teenager in the context of that



G. Schmitz

PREMIERE — Director Avi Lewis and his wife, Naomi Klein, attend the Sept. 13 TIFF premiere of This Changes Everything, a documentary based on Klein's eponymous book.

Welcome extended for newly professed brother

Both Lungs

Brent Kostyniuk



An event that was both inspiring and joyous recently took place at St. Basil Church in Edmonton. On Sept. 13 Brother Agapey Lutsyk, OSBM, made his profession of vows in the Order of St. Basil the Great of St. Josaphat.

Solemn Profession is the rite at which a brother makes a lifelong commitment to the order. It takes place in the context of a divine liturgy and is generally presided over by the provincial superior, in this case Rev. Gabriel Haber, OSBM.

Arriving at the altar, Brother Agapey made three great prostrations to the floor, then lay face down in the form of a cross. As a troparion was sung, he was completely covered with a black cloth, symbolizing death to the world. After being uncovered, the profession began with a dialogue between Father Gabriel and Brother Agapey in which formal questions were posed concerning the candidate's willingness to make the vow and enter monastic life permanently. With this concluded, the Solemn Vow was made.

I Brother Agapey Lutsyk of the Order of Saint Basil the Great, solemnly vow to the Lord God, one in the Holy Trinity, and to you most Reverend Father Provincial Superior, who are the representative of our Lord and God: poverty, chastity, an obedience in this order, and I promise to remain in it firmly until death. I also promise to the Universal Pontiff and Vicar of Christ, my unceasing faithfulness and subordination, and that I will not seek high office in the order nor in the church. May God help me and this Holy Gospel.

After the Gospel reading,

Kostyniuk, who lives in Edmonton, has a bachelor of theology from Newman and is a freelance writer. He and his wife Bev have been married for 37 years and have eight grandchildren.

Father Gabriel gave a homily directed not only at Brother Agapey, but the main congregation as well. In tone, it was not unlike a father of the bride's speech welcoming his new son-in-law into the family. "Today you make a life commitment to the Order of St. Basil the Great. Undoubtedly you may be experiencing some fear and apprehension. Anyone who would come to a ceremony like this without some fear and great soul-searching has not realized what a life commitment is about."

"You have been with our order for seven years. We know you with your strengths and failings. You know us with our strengths and failings. But put aside your fears. You are responding to God's call, which is his gift to you. We, the Basilians, thank God for your vocation and for enriching the order with the life commitment you make to us today. God has chosen you and called you to life in the Basilian Order. Never doubt the sincerity of heart and soul you bring to the commitment you are about to make."

Father Gabriel continued by speaking of the charism the order, which is a gift from God to the church for the world. As with all Basilians, Brother Agapey is now a steward of the charism with a duty to pass it on to future generations. "The core value of the Basilian charism is contemplation and apostolic work. Contemplation understood as an intimate relationship with God in Jesus Christ. A relationship which overflows into a prayerful and fraternal life in which we seek to serve our neighbour and that is expressed through our apostolic work and service. Contemplation calls us to be intimate friends with God and to allow that friendship with God to influence and shape how we live our lives."

"The call to community is central to our way of life. While our



Brother Stephen

WELCOME — Brother Agapey Lutsyk, OSBM (left), made his profession of vows in the Order of St. Basil the Great of St. Josaphat in Edmonton recently. With him is Rev. Gabriel Haber, OSBM, provincial superior.

Rule puts great emphasis on private space and each member having his own cell, it also calls us to leave our personal space and to come to community. Fraternity involves companionship. Fraternity demands we must be attentive and caring toward those with whom we live. We must strive to achieve open and honest dialogue with each other. We must be genuinely concerned for the physical, psychological and spiritual well-being of one another. We must be present to one another, sharing meals as well as prayers, recreation as well as work."

"Today, brother, you say 'Yes' to God as he calls you to a vowed and consecrated life. The Lord's reas-

suring words addressed to the Apostle Paul are addressed to you today: 'My grace is enough for you, my power is at its best in weakness.' God is calling you to love and serve him in a religious community, that is, together with others whose way of life, ideals and aspirations you will make your own."

"Make the gift of yourself to God and to your Basilian brothers and consequently to the Basilian community freely and wholeheartedly. Throw in your lot with us. May your lifelong journey as a Basilian be adventurous, fulfilling and enriching. May you hear God's call afresh each day and respond with courage and generosity."

After divine liturgy, and the inevitable photo session, Brother Agapey, along with the many Basilian priests and brothers who came to welcome him into the community, joined St. Basil parishioners for breakfast in the Cultural Centre. In a short but sincere speech Brother Agapey thanked both clergy and parishioners for their prayers and support. Although none of his family were able to travel from Ukraine to participate, Brother Agapey could hardly have felt alone. On that wonderful day he was blessed with two new families — the Basilian Order and the many parishioners who he might one day serve.

Answering the Call Mary Truong – Candidate, SP



The earliest time I remember hearing the call to serve was in grade four while I was an altar server for mass. As I grew up, the thoughts would come back once in a while.

I like to help others. Growing up, I volunteered in my school, parish and community. It was something my sisters and I had in common, serving others.

When I finished my Bachelor of Education, the call came back, but I was just not ready yet to really answer it. I focused on teaching and have had seven blessed years with the Calgary Catholic School District. It is a privilege to watch these junior high students grow and mature as teenagers each year.

In 2012, when I thought everything was settled in my life, the call came back. I have a great career, love to travel, and bought my own house. But now I am called to leave it all behind? For a year, I did nothing about this "call". I figured it would go away as it did before. However, this time ignoring the call did not make it disappear. So I began to quietly and slowly discern. I made a silent retreat which helped me find the courage to start searching. I got into contact with several religious communities to get to know them. But nothing really significant happened until June 1, 2014 when I met the Sisters of Providence for the first time. St. Luke's Parish hosted a Vocation Retreat which consisted of many different religious communities in Calgary. In a room filled with many sisters, I felt a strong connection to the Sisters of Providence instantly, which also scared me.

During the summer I volunteered and continued to be in contact with different religious communities. However, it was clear where I felt truly at home. This became more evident during the Summer Live-In Experience held in Edmonton with the Sisters of Providence for two weeks. The other discerners and I got to learn about their charism, community life, and to do some hands-on work in their various ministries. After summer break ended, I continued to spend time with them to have a better understanding of community life. I taught during the week and then spent every second weekend and sometimes weekdays at Providence Convent in Calgary. I participated in their prayer life and faith sharing along with the cooking and cleaning.

On this journey, I have been led by the Providence of God and this is where I have been led thus far. I am open to what God is calling me to do. I am still discerning and have a long way to go, but I took a leap of faith and said "yes" to God's call. There is a deep peace within me and that is the peace that I follow. It is not the end result that is important, but it is the experiences along the journey that matters. On this journey I will come to develop a closer relationship with God and have a deeper understanding of His plan for me. I will cherish the people I meet and the experiences that I have along the way.

To any young women who have the slightest thoughts or inclination toward religious life, I strongly encourage you to do something about it. Do not live your life with "what ifs" or regrets later in life when you look back. Come and see for yourself. You may find out that religious life is not for you and that is OK. At least you will know for sure and there will be no more doubts for you. And if you find out that you are indeed called to religious life, then "Do not be afraid." God does not call you and then not give you the graces that you need to follow His plan for you.

On June 20, 2015, I entered as a candidate of the Sisters of Providence. Will there be challenges ahead? Yes, but every life has challenges and I will face them one at a time as they come. Your prayers for my journey ahead are greatly appreciated.

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Successful leaders serve others with humility



There's a good story told about Jesus when he ascended into heaven and was greeted by two angels. When asked how his mission went on earth, he told them it went very well. He had left his mission to be continued by his disciples. "I have left it in their hands to continue my work of healing, forgiveness and love," said Jesus with great confidence.

"But what if they fail in this mission to continue your work? What would be your Plan B?" asked the angel.

"I have no Plan B" he said. "These fishermen, tax collectors and followers are my only plan!"

Leadership is a more recent preoccupation. With new leadership in our pope, we have witnessed a significant change in style, priorities and charisma. A federal election has prompted discernment about what values we would choose in a leader of the country. The United States, too, is gearing up for a change in presidential leadership.

This provides us with an opportunity to think about the kind of leadership Jesus modelled and how his example can affect the way we lead and the way we choose to trust a leader. We can take a look at today's Gospel reading in the light of this theme. James and John are basking in the successful ministry of Jesus. They are eager to have a place of honour at his right and left, and Jesus asks them a huge question: "Are you able to drink of the cup that I must drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I must be baptized?"

Williston is a retired Parish Life Director for the Diocese of Saskatoon and a former missionary with the Redemptorists. He is also a song writer and recording artist.

Leadership for Jesus has to do with the willingness to give one's life for another. The most trusted are leaders who put service ahead of title, others' needs ahead of their own advancement, and willing sacrifice ahead of power and prestige. Jesus' prediction that James and John too will suffer a similar fate to his only underlines the quality of a commitment they must grow into as his disciples.

I recall a story from a lecture some years ago, that a shepherd, confronted by a hungry wolf intent on his sheep, would take his staff, stand between the predator and his sheep and intentionally bare his neck for the wolf's attack. As the wolf lunged for him, he would quickly drive his staff down the wolf's gaping mouth. The point of the lecture was well taken. Servant leadership requires a certain vulnerability and willingness to give one's life for the sake of another.

It strikes me too that this kind of leadership is a powerful antidote to the ego-driven leadership that insists others serve us. Jesus challenges his disciples with the example of the leaders of his day: "They lord it over others and make their authority felt." With great sternness, Jesus says: "This is not how it is to be among you. Those who lead must be servant of all."

Twenty-ninth Sunday
in Ordinary Time
October 18, 2015

Isaiah 53:10-11
Psalm 33
Hebrews 4:14-16
Mark 10:35-45

The bottom line is, if your master was a servant and gave his life for others, you too must be intentional, selfless and generous in your service to others.

The Suffering Servant song of Isaiah in the first reading is a worthwhile reminder to us of Jesus. That is why we hear it every Good Friday. It gives a glimpse into the vulnerability of a God who would take on human flesh and suffer for the sake of others.

In the second reading we are invited to approach the throne of grace with boldness. This kind of boldness is not to be mistaken for an ego-driven striving for title, recognition and power. We are reminded by the writer of Hebrews

that we approach the throne in order to "receive mercy and find grace to help in times of need."

Pope Francis has this message at the centre of his ministry by promoting a deeper humility among the leaders of the church. Addressing the members of the College of Cardinals at the ordination of 20 new clergy for the Diocese of Rome, Pope Francis preached a message of leadership through charity. He said: "The self-centred person inevitably seeks his own interests; he thinks this is normal, even necessary. Those "interests" can even be cloaked in noble appearances, but underlying them all is "self-interest." Charity, however, makes us draw back from the centre in order to set ourselves in the real centre, which is Christ alone."

How does this apply to me? Good question. Let us begin with all those who are in leadership positions: parents, teachers, clergy, health care workers, government officials, anyone who has been charged with the care and concern for others. We can ask ourselves some pretty tough questions around our own willingness to serve with a servant's heart, rather than make our "authority" felt!

For example, a child who asks the question "why" a million times could eventually get the answer from a frustrated parent: "Because I said so." Quite understandable in certain circumstances. But if we want our children to grow up inquisitive, investigative, and reflective, this answer will shut those virtues down very quickly. I'm always reminded that becoming a strict authoritarian for your kids can lead to great trouble later on in life, when your authority is substituted by the authority of a peer group or an unscrupulous culture!

We have enshrined in our liturgical year a prayer that is said for all who hold public office. This prayer is one of 10 that are used in the Good Friday Liturgy. We pray: "that our God and Lord may direct their minds and hearts according to his will for the true peace and freedom of all." This prayer could be used more universally and personally for all who are in positions of leadership. We are commissioned to lead in a way that "brings true peace and freedom to all."

Jesus has left us with his task and mission. "For the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many." Let us strive to approach our leadership with humility, mercy and grace!

Caring for our soul requires energy and glue to hold it together



What does it profit you if you gain the whole world but suffer the loss of your own soul?

Jesus taught that and, I suspect, we generally don't grasp the full range of it meaning. We tend to take Jesus' words to mean this: What good is it if someone gains riches, fame, pleasure, and glory and then dies and goes to hell? What good is earthly glory or pleasure if we miss out on eternal life?

Well, Jesus' teaching does mean that, no question, but there are other lessons in this teaching that have important things to teach us about health and happiness already here in this life. How do we lose our souls? What does it mean "to lose your soul" already in this world? What is

a soul and how can it be lost?

Since a soul is immaterial and spiritual it cannot be pictured. We have to use abstract terms to try to understand it. Philosophers, going right back to Aristotle, have tended to define the soul as a double principle inside every living being: for them, the soul is both the *principle of life and energy* inside us as well as the *principle of integration*. In essence, the soul is two things: it's the fire inside us giving us life and energy and it's the glue that holds us together. While that sounds abstract, it's anything but that because we have first-hand experience of what this means.

If you have ever been at the bedside of a dying person, you know exactly when the soul leaves the body. You know the precise moment, not because you see something float away from the body, but rather because one

minute you see a person, whatever her struggle and agony, with energy, fire, tension in her body, and a minute later that body is completely inert, devoid of all energy and life. Nothing animates it anymore. It becomes a corpse. As well, however aged or diseased that body might be, until the second of death it is still one integrated organism. But at the very second of death that body ceases to be one organism and becomes instead a series of chemicals that now begin to separate and go their own ways. Once the soul is gone, so too are gone all life and integration. The body no longer contains any energy and it's no longer glued together.

And since the soul is a double principle doing two things for us, there are two corresponding ways of losing our souls. We can have our vitality and energy go dead or we can become unglued and fall apart, petrification or dissipation: in either case we lose our souls.

If that is true, then this very much nuances the question of how we should care for our souls. What is healthy food for our souls? For instance, if I am watching television on a given night, what's good for my soul? A religious channel? A sports channel? A mindless sitcom? The nature channel? Some iconoclastic talk show? What's healthy for my soul?

This is a legitimate question, but also a trick one. We lose our soul in opposite ways and thus care of the soul is a refined alchemy that has to know when to heat things up and when to cool things down. What's healthy for my soul on a given night depends a lot upon

what I'm struggling with more on that night: Am I losing my soul because I'm losing vitality, energy, hope, and graciousness in my life? Am I growing bitter, rigid, sterile, becoming a person who's painful to be around? Or, conversely, am I full of life and energy but so full of it that I am falling apart, dissipating, losing my sense of self? Am I petrifying or dissipating? Both are a loss of soul. In the former situation, the soul needs more fire, something to rekindle its energy. In the latter case, the soul already has too much fire; it needs some cooling down and some glue.

This tension between the principle of energy and the principle of integration within the human soul is also one of the great archetypal tensions between liberals and conservatives. In terms of an oversimplification, but a useful one, it's true to say that liberals tend to protect and promote the energy-principle, the fire, while conservatives tend to protect and promote the integration-principle, the glue. Both are right, both are needed, and both need to respect the other's instinct because the soul is a double principle and both these principles need protection.

After we die we can go to heaven or hell. That's one way of speaking about losing or saving our souls. But Christian theology also teaches that heaven and hell start already now. Already here in this life, we can weaken or destroy the God-given life inside us by either petrification or dissipation. We can lose our souls by not having enough fire or we can lose them by not having enough glue.

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What dialogue looks like: Jewish-Christian relations

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

Dr. Deborah Weissman

For many people, “Orthodox Jewish,” “feminist” and “interfaith pioneer” are not words they would necessarily think to put together in a sentence. And yet, in the life of Dr. Debbie Weissman, each of these is a vitally important aspect of a dynamic and fruitful life — as an educator, a community leader, and a highly respected spokesperson for inter-religious friendship and dialogue, both in Israel and worldwide.



Dr. Deborah Weissman

A native of the United States, Weissman made *aliyah* in 1972, and today lives in Jerusalem. After her BA and MA studies in New York City, she pursued doctoral studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with a thesis focusing on the social history of Jewish women’s education. Most of her adult life has centred around education in some capacity, working with local community organizations, and a range of international and national organizations (including the Israel Defence Forces), leading courses in Jewish sources, Jewish feminism, biblical interpretation, and issues in the Palestinian-Israeli relationship. For nine years (1994-2003) she directed a program that trained Israeli high school teachers. She has taught on the faculty of numerous Christian educational centres in and around Jerusalem, including the Bat Kol Institute, St. George’s College, the Tantur Ecumenical Institute, the Ratisbonne Institute, the Swedish Theological Institute, Ecce Homo’s Centre for Biblical Formation, and the Pontifical Biblical Institute.

A prominent proponent of a modern understanding of Orthodox Judaism that cherishes both tradition and openness to others, Debbie is one of the founding members (and a leading congregant) of *Kehillat Yedidya*, a modern Orthodox synagogue in the Bak’a neighbourhood of Jerusalem. *Yedidya* seeks to be “a halakhically based community,

equally concerned about traditional Jewish values, social justice, and democracy in Israeli society. (It) attempts to cross the conventional boundaries which currently define Jewish religious life in Israel.” Yedidya has become well-known, both for its friendly relationships with other “streams” of Judaism, and for its hospitality, regularly hosting multi-faith groups from around the world. For many years she has been an active leader in the Inter-religious Co-ordinating Council in Israel (ICCI; today part of Rabbis for Human Rights), and she speaks passionately about the need for justice and peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Between 2008 and 2014, Weissman broke exciting new ground, serving two terms as the first Jewish woman president of the International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCIJ). In that capacity she travelled around the world, speaking to major interfaith gatherings and sharing a message of unity, healing and hope. Reflecting on her many years of service as an interfaith leader, Weissman said: “I’ve met some outstanding human beings in many different parts of the world, and I’ve been impressed with how vibrant the dialogue is in many different places . . . I love teaching Christians about Judaism, which I often get invitations to do . . . I find that most people are very eager to learn, and their questions are always stimulating. Often I have hosted Christians in my home for Shabbat and Jewish festivals, and overall, I’ve found that these experiences have enhanced my own spirituality.”

When asked about the biggest challenges facing interfaith dialogue today, she says: “I also think we’re realizing that we can’t take

more fundamentalist approach to all of our religions, that wants to return to an idealized past. In some parts of the world we are seeing a resurgence of traditional anti-Semitism, and other forms of bigotry, hate crimes and xenophobia. But today, the church isn’t part of the problem; it’s part of the solution. The churches are our allies in fighting it.”

Weissman’s many contributions have been recognized by a number of major awards. She continues to speak regularly on interfaith topics, and to write essays and articles, including a chapter in the recently published volume *A Jubilee for All Time: The Coperican Revolution in Jewish-Christian Relations*. A woman of passion, wisdom and generosity, Dr. Debbie Weissman is playing a vital role in translating *Nostra Aetate*’s principles into a guiding vision for today — and for tomorrow.

Bruno Hussar, OP (1911-1996)

An “oasis of peace” — for many religious Jews, Christians and Muslims, that is what they believe the Holy Land is meant to be, and what they hope and pray it will ultimately become someday. For the late Rev. Bruno Hussar, however, that was more than simply a dream: it was something he dedicated much of his life to building, and it is an important part of his legacy.

Born in Cairo (Egypt) on May 5, 1911, André Hussar (his birth name) grew up in a non-practising Jewish household, with a French mother and a Hungarian father. After high school he went to Paris to pursue university studies in engineering. It was during his university years that he began to feel strongly attracted to Christianity, and eventually converted to the Christian faith, being baptized in 1935. Of his earlier engineering studies, he would later remark that, “All I remember from those years was learning how to build bridges” — *physical* bridges, certainly, but also, *bridges of understanding and dialogue* between cultures and religions.

As a convert from Judaism he experienced very deeply and personally the anti-Semitism of Europe in the 1930s and 40s, and especially the events of the Holocaust. He also became friends with the French philosopher Jacques Maritain and his wife Raïssa, who were early leaders in the movement to change Christian attitudes toward Judaism. After the war he pursued studies in philosophy, and, when he was ordained a priest of the Dominican order on July 16, 1950, he chose Bruno as his religious name.

His religious superior, Rev. Albert-Marie Avril — conscious of Bruno’s desire to help heal

some of the negative history of Christian behaviour toward Jews, and of his sense of solidarity with the young State of Israel — sent him to Jerusalem to help set up a Christian centre for Jewish studies there that would be comparable to the Dominicans’ Islamic study centre in Cairo.

Following his arrival in Haifa in 1953, he undertook studies in an Israeli *ulpan* (an intensive immersion program in the Hebrew language), and became part of a small group of French Catholics (generally members of religious orders) who came to Israel between the late 1940s and the mid-1960s, who were exploring an appropriate way for Christians to be present in — and in dialogue with — Israel’s predominantly Jewish population . . . a Christian community that would have Hebrew as its day-to-day language, and could appropriately incorporate aspects of Christianity’s Jewish heritage. In this, they were supported by several high-level Catholic officials, including Cardinal Eugène Tisserant, a prominent figure in the Vatican.

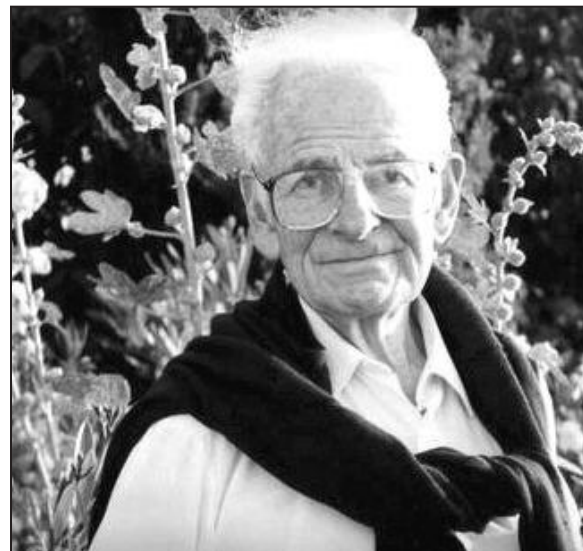
In February 1955 he was one of the co-founders of the St. James Association, a small community of Jews who had converted to Catholicism, whose stated mission was “to fight against anti-Semitism in all its forms” and “to foster mutual understanding, sympathy and friendly relations between the Catholic world and Israel.”

With Cardinal Tisserant’s support, he obtained Vatican permission in 1956 for this small community to begin using Hebrew for certain parts of the mass (until 1967, this community was centred at the convent of the Sisters of Zion in Ein Kerem, and gradually grew to include several hundred members, and four centres, in Jerusalem, Jaffa, Tel Aviv and Beersheva. It continues today, in a much more extensive form, as the St. James Vicariate for Hebrew-speaking Catholics).

Hussar also served as a chaplain to the Arab Catholic community in Jaffa, and these experiences gave him a keen sense of the complexities of contemporary Israeli life, and inspired him to seek out ways for Jews, Christians and Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians, to live together in harmony. He once said: “I feel I have four selves. I really am a Christian and a priest, I really am a Jew, I really am an Israeli and if I don’t feel I really am an Egyptian, I do at least feel very close to the Arabs whom I know and love.”

In 1959, he founded (together with his brother Dominicans Jacques Fontaine and Marcel

Dubois) the St. Isaiah House in Jerusalem, intended to promote Jewish-Christian friendship and prayer. A theological consultant during the Second Vatican Council, Hussar played an important and active role in the writing and development of the Council’s document “On the Jews” (which would eventually become the



Rev. Bruno Hussar, OP

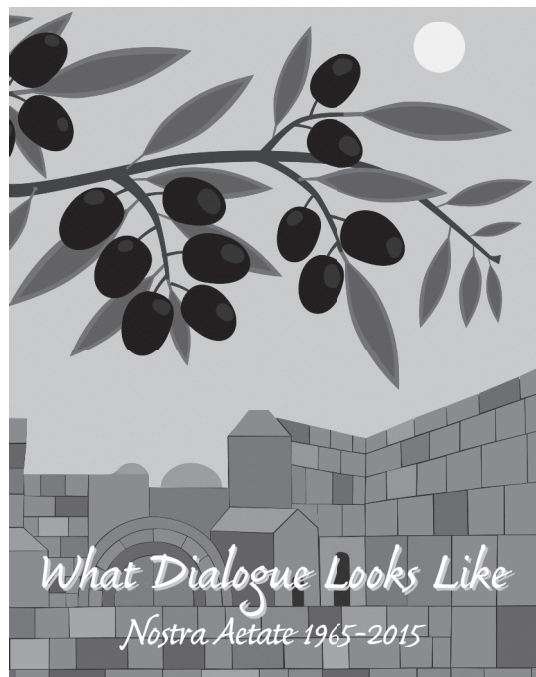
1965 declaration *Nostra Aetate*). In 1966, he became an Israeli citizen.

Hussar’s ultimate dream had been to establish a kibbutz where Jews, Christians and Muslims would model peaceful co-existence and friendship. In November of 1970, he signed a lease for a piece of property, midway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, that would be “an oasis of peace” (a phrase taken from Isaiah 32:18) — in Hebrew, *Neve Shalom*, and in Arabic, *Wahat as-Salaam* (today, often referred to by both these names, or simple as NSWAS).

Here, Israeli Jews and Arabs (both Muslim and Christian) could live together as a concrete sign of hope for the Middle East. It was to be a community of mutual respect and equality, but its beginnings were very difficult (in the beginning, Hussar himself lived on the site in a bus!).

In 1978, five families (one Palestinian family and four Israeli families) set up a tent commune on the site, in very modest surroundings. Today there are approximately 60 families who make up the community, divided evenly between Israelis and Palestinians (both Muslims and Christians), and there is a waiting list of people who wish to move there. NSWAS has been recognized by numerous international awards for its work and, although the kibbutz has experienced many ups and downs, its bicultural, bilingual education system is viewed by many as an important example of a creative, constructive approach to Israeli-Palestinian tensions. For his efforts, Bruno Hussar was twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Rev. Bruno Hussar, a visionary Catholic and extraordinary inter-religious and intercultural bridge-builder, died in Jerusalem on Feb. 8, 1996, and is buried on the grounds of *Doumia* (“place of silence”), a small sanctuary of prayer he established on the property of NSWAS.



the main achievements of the dialogue for granted. In some places we are seeing something of a backlash, and trends toward a

To understand the pope, you need to know Ignatius

By David Gibson
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Figuring out why Pope Francis has upended so many expectations and what he might be contemplating for the future of the Catholic Church has become a parlour game almost as popular as the pontiff himself.

A single key can unlock these questions: Francis' long-standing identity as a Jesuit priest.

It's an all-encompassing personal and professional definition that the former Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio brought with him from Buenos Aires, and one that continues to shape almost everything he does as pope — even though he is the first pontiff to take his name from the 13th-century Italian monk from Assisi who was famous for living with the poor and preaching to the animals.

"He may act like a Franciscan but he thinks like a Jesuit," quipped Rev. Thomas Reese, a fellow Jesuit who is a columnist for National Catholic Reporter.

In fact, it would be easy to mistake this new pope for a new St. Francis of Assisi, given his emphasis on helping society's outcasts and his focus on the Christian moral duty to protect the environment.

Yet he's also the first pope from the Society of Jesus, the religious community whose worldly-wise intellectuals are as famous as its missionaries and martyrs.

Indeed, behind that label lies a centuries-old brand of spiritual formation that includes a passion for social justice, a missionary zeal, a focus on engaging the wider world and a preference for collaboration over top-down action.

And as the first Jesuit pope, Francis brings sharply etched memories of being part of a community that's been viewed with deep suspicion by Rome, most recently by his own predecessor, Pope Benedict XVI.

Jesuit priests are explicitly discouraged from becoming bishops, much less pope, and that outsider's sensibility helps to explain Francis' almost breezy willingness to dispense with centuries of closely guarded and cherished tradition.

"We never imagined that a Jesuit could become pope. It was an impossible thing," said Rev. Antonio Spadaro, an Italian Jesuit who conducted a book-length interview with the pope and knows him well. "We Jesuits are supposed to be at the service of the pope, not to be a pope."

What is a Jesuit?

The Society of Jesus, as it is formally known, was begun in the 1530s by Ignatius of Loyola, a Basque soldier who underwent a profound religious transformation while convalescing from war wounds. Ignatius composed the



RNS/Max Rossi/Reuters

JESUIT POPE — Pope Francis is surrounded by children during a special audience with students of Jesuit schools in Paul VI hall at the Vatican in this 2013 file photo.

Spiritual Exercises, used to guide the Jesuits' well-known retreats, and in 1540, along with six other theology students at the University of Paris, he won recognition from Pope Paul III as an official church order.

In many ways, the Jesuits are like other religious orders, such as the Franciscans or Dominicans. Jesuits take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and live in community. Unlike diocesan priests, they are not ordained to a particular geographic diocese to serve the local bishop.

Jesuits are an all-male order; there are no Jesuit sisters. The society has an almost military-style structure and ethos, with shock troops willing to go wherever and whenever the church needs them. They are "contemplatives in action," in the words of St. Ignatius, and have an especially lengthy period of study and spiritual preparation before taking vows, usually 10 years or more.

Even then, the process is not complete. After another few years, most Jesuits take a special fourth vow of obedience "in regards to mission" to the pope.

If the church needs priests to convert lost souls, the Jesuits are on it. If they are needed to bring Catholicism to new lands, such as Asia or Latin America, they'll buy a one-way ticket. To advance the church's mission, the Jesuits established universities such as Georgetown, Fordham and Boston College.

Despite their simple beginnings, the Jesuits remain the largest order in the Catholic Church.

In 1773, Catholic monarchs jealous of the Jesuits' influence and independence pressured Pope Clement XIV to suppress the order, declaring the society "perpetually broken up and dissolved." Yet in 1814, the order was restored.

In the 1960s, the Jesuits collectively opted to work for social justice and improve the lot of the poor. In the developing world, that put Jesuits on the front lines of popular movements such as liberation theology. In El Salvador, six Jesuits, along with their housekeeper and her daughter, were brutally executed by a Salvadoran military unit in 1989.

At the same time, the Vatican under Pope John Paul II — aided by his doctrinal chief, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger — investigated, sanctioned and sometimes silenced Jesuit theologians who were considered too eager to marry the gospel to suspect social movements.

Jesuits have also fallen victim to what some call a "white martyrdom" at the hands of the pope. As recently as 2005, Thomas Reese was forced out as editor of the Jesuits' America magazine when Ratzinger, his longtime foe, was elected Pope Benedict XVI.

What kind of a Jesuit is Francis?

As a Jesuit in Argentina, ordained in 1969, Jorge Bergoglio found himself in the midst of all this tumult.

The Argentine "Dirty Wars" erupted during the 1970s, and the violence that overtook the country also threatened many priests — especially Jesuits — even as the regime co-opted much of the hierarchy. Bergoglio was made superior of the Argentine Jesuits at the age of 36, thrust into a situation of internal and external chaos that would have tried even the most seasoned leaders.

"I had to deal with difficult situations, and I made my decisions abruptly and by myself," Francis said last year, acknowledging that his "authoritarian and quick manner of making decisions led me to have serious problems and to be accused of being ultraconservative."

Bergoglio fully embraced the Jesuits' radical turn to championing the poor, though he was seen as an enemy of liberation theology. Critics labelled him a collaborator with the Argentine military junta even though biographies show that he worked carefully and clandestinely to save many lives.

None of that ended the intrigue against Bergoglio within the Jesuits, and in the early 1990s he

was effectively exiled from Buenos Aires to an outlying city.

In classic Jesuit tradition, however, Bergoglio complied with the society's demands and sought to find God's will in it all. Paradoxically, his virtual estrangement from the Jesuits encouraged Cardinal Antonio Quarracino of Buenos Aires to appoint Bergoglio as an assistant bishop in 1992.

"Maybe a bad Jesuit can become a good bishop," an Argentine Jesuit said at the time.

In 1998, Bergoglio succeeded Quarracino as archbishop. In 2001, John Paul made Bergoglio a cardinal, one of just two Jesuits in the 120-member College of Cardinals.

His rise in the hierarchy, however, only seemed to cement suspicions about him among his foes among the Jesuits.

So when Bergoglio was chosen as pope in March 2013, one could almost hear the collective gasp in Jesuit communities around the world.

"The fact that he had been somewhat rejected, internally, by the Jesuits, if not for that he probably would not have become a bishop," said Rev. Humberto Miguel Yanez, an Argentine Jesuit like Francis who heads the moral theology department at the Gregorian University in Rome — a Jesuit school sometimes called "the pope's Harvard."

And if Bergoglio had not become a bishop he would not have become a cardinal and, ultimately, pope, since the College of Cardinals by tradition chooses each successor to St. Peter from among its own ranks.

"The stone that the builders rejected," Yanez quipped, citing a well-known gospel verse, "became the cornerstone."

What will a Jesuit pope mean for the church?

Now, of course, Francis is a "brother among brothers," as the current head of the order, Rev. Adolfo Nicolas, put it.

"My impression is that with his daily homilies and catechesis he is conducting a kind of Ignatian

retreat with the whole church," Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn said recently.

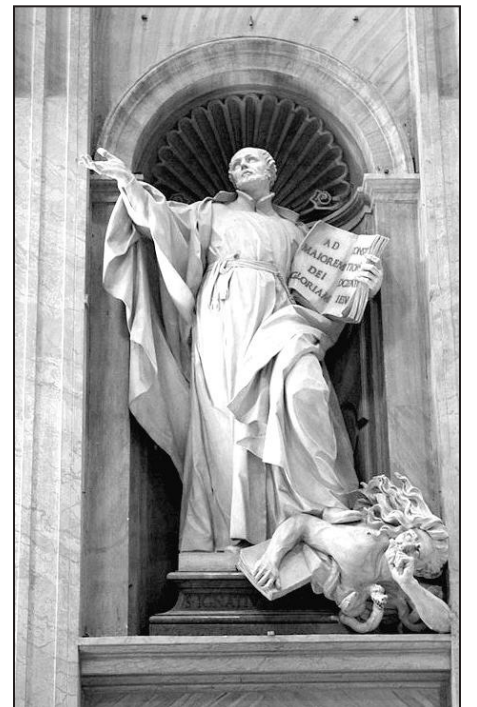
Francis knows how much the Jesuits are still resented by some corners in the church, and especially in the Vatican, but he has not let that alter his style.

He circumvented the usual protocols to canonize one of Ignatius' original companions, Peter Favre, whom Francis has praised for being "in dialogue with all, even the most remote and even with his opponents."

He lives simply, rejecting the traditional papal apartments to live in a small community inside a Vatican guest house. He also preaches forcefully that other clerics, and especially the hierarchy, should eschew the perks and privileges of their office.

Francis' Jesuit influence extends to his mode of governance. One of his first actions as pope was to name a council of eight cardinals from around the world — none of them from the dysfunctional Roman Curia — to serve as a kitchen cabinet, much the way Jesuit superiors operate. He has used a similar model for tackling specific tasks as well, such as overhauling the Vatican's finances.

This sort of discernment — listening and contemplating before acting — is a cardinal virtue of the Ignatian spirituality that is at the core of Francis' commitment to a



RNS

SAINT IGNATIUS — A statue of Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order, is seen in St. Peter's Basilica.

"conversion" of the papacy as well as the entire church.

But that also means that it's hard to say exactly what will come next. Francis has repeatedly praised the Jesuit trait of "holy cunning" — that Christians should be "wise as serpents but innocent as doves," as Jesus put it. The pope's openness, however, also a signature of his Jesuit training and development, means that not even he is sure where the spirit will lead.

"I confess that, because of my disposition, the first answer that comes to me is usually wrong," Francis said in a 2010 interview.

"I don't have all the answers. I don't even have all the questions. I always think of new questions, and there are always new questions coming forward."

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Election 2015: exercising faithful citizenship

Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



When the prime minister called the federal election, he framed the debate as having two key pillars: the economy, and security. The crushing migrant crisis in Europe fed into this frame — until the body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi washed up on a beach, and that unforgettable photo broke our hearts. The defining issue then became humanitarian leadership — and, who would have guessed? — faith communities were thrown directly into the forefront of debate.

Because, you see, faith communities have been receiving and settling refugees for 35 years, since a Progressive Conservative government initiated private sponsorship of refugees at the urging of Canadian Mennonites and their ecumenical colleagues. Ask faith communities, who make up the majority of Sponsorship Agreement Holders, what the problems are with our refugee policies today and they'll be able to tell you right away.

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

Citizens for Public Justice put out the story for all who have ears to hear — <http://www.cpj.ca/private-sponsorship-and-public-policy> — 88 per cent of people working every day with refugees are

“very concerned” with bureaucratic delays in processing; 80 per cent are very concerned with the government cuts to refugee health coverage; 92 per cent are either concerned or very concerned with the lack of consultation from our politicians; and 84 per cent are concerned or very concerned with the lack of immigration officials in Canadian visa posts abroad.

CPJ has prepared a 2015 Election Bulletin, which offers convenient background on the issues, and offers questions you may care to ask candidates when they request your support. Why not ask candi-

dates how many Syrian refugees they pledge to resettle, how they plan to meet that target, how they plan to include our churches and whether they will reinstate the pre-2012 Interim Federal Health Program — cuts which a federal court has described as “cruel and inhumane.”

And CPJ's Election Bulletin covers other issues of concern.

Faith communities have long been on the front lines of addressing poverty in Canada, through support for food banks, feeding centres and In From the Cold programs. At election time we should

all focus on policies that could decrease inequality, make the tax system fairer, and actually prevent and reduce poverty. Candidates for office could be asked if their party is prepared to spend an additional \$2 billion per year in affordable housing, or if they would reverse tax benefits for the wealthy (like income splitting and the doubling of tax-free savings accounts) in order to privilege existing, successful anti-poverty measures like the National Child Benefit Supplement.

In his recent encyclical Pope Francis encouraged people of faith to respond to the climate crisis with renewed vigour and an emphasis on social justice. Wouldn't we view the election period as a success if our newly elected politicians committed to more ambitious greenhouse gas reduction targets — Canada's are now the weakest among G7 countries — as a result of hearing faith communities echo the pope's call?

Candidates could be asked when they will establish a price on carbon emissions, as several provinces have already agreed to do. They might be asked when the long-promised regulations on emissions from the oil and gas sector are forthcoming, if subsidies to fossil fuel producers will end (an action promised since 2009), and to elaborate their plans to revitalize renewable energy projects. And will Canada pay its fair share, estimated at \$500 million, in contributions to UN bodies that assist poorer countries to lower their own emissions?

In August the Catholic bishops encouraged Canadians to vote —

— DEMOCRACY, page 17



J. Weber

GIVING THANKS — “As we celebrate Thanksgiving and fall leaves and pumpkin pie, we are invited once again to give thanks in all things, to practise recognizing that everything is gift,” writes Leah Perrault. Even depression.

On giving thanks: practising gratitude when we are desperate for grace

Barefoot and Preaching

Leah Perrault



Several years ago I found myself face down on my office floor crying, trapped in a darkness of depression only I could see. Somewhere beneath my tears I found the strength to do what I had not been able to imagine before: I picked up the phone and called for help. Huddled under my desk, I told a stranger that I had this amazing life I could not seem to enjoy. Because I was not at risk of hurting myself or someone else, she could not offer me any immediate relief for my pain. I made a second call, to a counsellor's office. Three weeks' wait.

Three weeks to sit in the darkest part of my life and wait. Somehow, I picked up a book by Ann Voskamp called *One Thou-*

sand Gifts, and I read it, clinging to this amazing woman's story and her words and her practice of writing down one thousand things to be grateful for.

I began slowly. *Time off to be sick. Frost on a windshield. Babies laughing. Sunshine through the window. Warm mittens.* I kept a journal on the kitchen counter, another in my purse, and the last beside my bed. Whenever I felt overwhelmed with the dark, I looked around for something to write. *Groceries I did not buy. Clean sheets I did not wash. People who do not need me to have it all together.*

I had a lot of ideas about spirituality before depression, and they were nice ideas. In the desperation of trying to climb out of a pit, spiritual practices became a life preserver. Like a drowning person clings to her rescuer with a choking hold, I held on to gratitude with a death grip in the hope that depression would loose its hold on me.

I am embarrassed by my younger, self-righteous self, who thought for a long time that gratitude was an empty trend of the irritatingly positive putting on a false face. I was wrong. Ann's words challenged the way I had come to be comforted by the darkness I hated: “Living with losses, I may choose to still say yes. Choose to say yes to what He freely gives. Could I live that — the choice to open the hands to freely receive whatever God gives? If I don't, I am still making a choice . . . the choice not to.”

Depression, though formed in the storm of hormones following pregnancy and childbirth, was fed by my habits, attitudes and behaviours. I felt entitled to a life without suffering and, without meaning to, I resented the sadness so deeply that I stopped opening my hands to receive the blessings being poured out in the midst of the dark.

Each person who grapples with depression does so uniquely. For me, the choice to receive even the depression with open hands changed my life. Depression has taught me that spirituality is nothing more than the everyday practices that help me to make peace with what is real. Gratitude was just one part of my recovery, but it remains as one of the practices that prevents me from falling right back down to the bottom of the pit

when a low day strikes now.

In his first letter to the Thessalonians, Paul encourages a group of early church converts to stay faithful to this momentous decision they have made to follow Jesus. He gives them a long list at the end of the letter of all the practices that should mark their faith, and among them, “Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess 5:18).

When I began writing the lists of things to be thankful for, I had no expectation of a miracle. Those lists were the threads of a rope I needed to hold on to without being able to see the other end. Ann went on in her book to write that “thanksgiving precedes the miracle.” Her words offered hope that the practice of giving thanks was going to do something amazing, if I would keep practising.

Giving thanks is easier when circumstances are agreeable to me, but during these times I often forget to be grateful. On some level I must still believe I deserve the good things that happen to me. The problem with this faulty belief is that then the same must be true when difficult things are a part of my world. Gratitude frees me from a false economy of earning favour and punishment and opens me to the grace of life as a gift.

When I give thanks in the

midst of the most difficult experiences, grace shows up. It is far from effortless to let go into a reality I would like to wish away. *The last tear that escapes the eye after death. Holding a hurting child while she cries. Someone who loves me enough to tell me when I have hurt him.* Those first three weeks of waiting, giving thanks in awful circumstances, led to an ongoing practice of gratitude — because when I stop saying thank you, I also stop seeing the miracles.

At the end of those three weeks, at that long-awaited appointment, my counsellor warned me that this depression might end up being one of the greatest gifts of my life. I laughed through my tears of doubt. But now I know that the depression that threatened my life has been a great teacher of humility and of rest. The darkness has given me the gift of asking for help, the grace of sharing the story with others who have walked the same lonely road, and the mercy of being more compassionate with others and myself.

As we celebrate Thanksgiving and fall leaves and pumpkin pie, we are invited once again to give thanks in all things, to practise recognizing that everything is gift. This fall, I am giving thanks for depression, and for the way it makes me desperate enough to practise receiving grace.

Perrault is a wife and mom, a grateful employee of the Diocese of Saskatoon and a speaker, writer and consultant at www.leahperrault.com

When discerning how to vote, ignore the polls

Around the Kitchen Table

Donald Ward



During the May 2015 election campaign in Britain I received an email from the editor of the Daily Telegraph urging me to vote Conservative. I was on his mailing list because I subscribe to one of the Telegraph's services on the Internet. I laughed out loud when I read it.

It is well-known that newspapers are biased and the Telegraph is fairly right-wing, but I was startled by the brashness of the letter. I had never run across anything so blatant in the secular press. The notion of balanced and unbiased reporting formed no part of the Telegraph's philosophy. The editor threatened all kinds of calamity if Labour was elected, and the Labour leader was presented as a buffoon who couldn't even eat a sandwich properly (an unfortunate and widely circulated photograph of the Labour leader eating a sandwich was not flattering).

I didn't take his advice; I am not a British citizen, nor do I live in the U.K. I couldn't have voted Conservative if I'd wanted to. As it happened, the Conservatives won handily, confounding the pollsters, who had predicted a much closer race between the governing Conservatives and the Labour party. The Liberal Democrats, who had complained loudly when what they considered unscrupulously manipulated poll results had shown them in a far distant third, actually won fewer seats than the poll had predicted.

Our own election proceeds apace. I get regular, breathless up-

dates from two political parties, urging me to give them money, and the polls assure us that the Conservatives, the Liberals and the NDP are locked in a virtual tie. As of this writing the Conservatives are slightly ahead, but by tomorrow they may have slipped back into second or third place and one of the others may have hopped into first.

According to a radio journalist I heard the other day, there are two things Canadians love: voting governments out of office, and close races. In this election it would seem the pollsters are almost pandering to us. Daily, sometimes hourly, updates are published on the Internet, and we can't help but wonder if the party leaders fashion their approaches according to what the polls are saying.

Each party has its own method of sampling public opinion, and its own reasons for presenting its platform the way it does. Stephen Harper appears confident, if not arrogant, in his approach, although he has said that he will resign if his party doesn't form the next government. He fancies himself a good economic manager, and he has deftly tapped into an anti-Muslim mood that simmers beneath the surface of the Canadian conscience.

Justin Trudeau appears to be a thoughtful young man, but "young" is the operative word here. The Conservatives have pointed out, ad nauseam, that Trudeau at 43 just isn't ready to lead the country, and their submoronic attack ads seem to be



Design Pics

ELECTION POLL (POLE?) — We can allow election polls to entertain us, writes Donald Ward, “but as John Diefenbaker famously said in 1971, ‘dogs know best what to do with polls.’”

having some effect.

Thomas Mulcair presents himself as a gentle moderate and tries to focus on issues rather than personalities, though he, too, dismisses Trudeau as a callow youth. Trudeau and Mulcair have few kind words to say to one another, although they are united in their opposition to Harper.

Writing in the Toronto Star, Thomas Walkom said, “the Liberals and New Democrats appear to be suffering from what Freud called the narcissism of small differences,” where people with minor differences can be more combative than those with major differences.

“If Trudeau and Mulcair end up splitting the vote in a way that allows Harper to win,” Walkom concluded, “the two opposition leaders will have much to answer for.”

According to the polls, this seems to be the direction we are moving in. But how seriously should we take the polls? They claim to be accurate to within a margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points, but often they obviously aren't — as was

the case with the recent British election.

So, should we allow polls to influence our voting? Clearly not. We can allow them to entertain us, but as John Diefenbaker famously said in 1971, “dogs know best what to do with polls.”

Democracy needs a boost

Continued from page 16

without suggesting why so many of us refrain from doing so. Democracy in Canada needs a boost, by enhancing the role of Elections Canada in encouraging fairer elections and minimizing the role of money in campaigns. Parties could refrain from attack ads and negative messaging. Strengthening democracy should not be limited to election campaigns — CPJ suggests politicians should clarify why so many charities are undergoing audits of their “political activities” and any new government

should commit to a very minimal use of omnibus bills, as good ways to encourage more public engagement.

The CCCB's Sept. 8 letter on refugees invited Catholics to “get involved politically,” referencing CPJ's election material as a resource in this regard. You may download a copy at <http://www.cpj.ca/2015ElectionBulletin>

During this election, and after, faithful citizens can raise important issues, propose significant commitments, hold meaningful debates and hold prospective office-holders to their promises.

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Tribute to Sisters

The legacy of Catholic Sisters in Saskatchewan was celebrated in Regina on Oct. 1. The event followed a similar one in Alberta a few years earlier. One is also being planned for Manitoba.

The Grey Nuns were the first religious community to offer health care services in 1860, in Ile-à-la-Crosse in the then-Northwest Territories — 45 years before Saskatchewan became a province. Soon other religious communities followed, responding to calls to establish hospitals.

In a similar way, religious communities provided the first teachers in schools established in ethnic communities more than a century ago.

Among the dignitaries attending the legacy event were the bishops of Saskatchewan, Most Rev. Luigi Bonazzi, apostolic nuncio to Canada, and Deputy Premier Minister Don McMorris. More than 180 Sisters were present to represent the 5,500 Sisters who have served here in the past 155 years. — PWN

October discussions

There is much to distract us this month of October. The Rider Nation is lamenting the current trajectory of its team, which has only managed two wins to date. Meanwhile, Canadians are celebrating the newfound prowess of the Toronto Blue Jays who made the baseball playoffs and are World Series champion hopefuls. And dominating the religious landscape for three weeks is the world synod of bishops on the family in Rome.

Pope Francis opened the synod with his usual words of encouragement. He reminded synod members that the synod must be a place of prayer where bishops speak with courage and open themselves to “God who always surprises us.” He encouraged the synod’s 270 voting members to have courage, “pastoral and doctrinal zeal, wisdom, frankness and to keep always before our eyes the good of the church and of families and the supreme law — the salvation of souls.”

He urged synod members to be faithful to church teaching, saying the deposit of faith “is not a museum to

be visited or even simply preserved, but is a living spring from which the church drinks to quench the thirst and enlighten” people.

Hungarian Cardinal Peter Erdo of Esztergom-Budapest introduced the discussion by outlining questions the synod will be called to discuss until Oct. 25. An anchor, he noted, is Jesus’ teaching on the indissolubility of marriage. The pastoral question is how to minister to divorced and civilly remarried Catholics, as well as to celebrate those in stable and healthy relationships.

One of the primary challenges families face today is economic. Too many families do not have food, shelter or employment. Young people delay marriage and parenthood because they do not have or think they do not have the means to support a family. Millions of families are torn apart by war and migration. In addition, with an exultation of individualism there is a widespread distrust of institutions — including of the church, the state and the institution of marriage.

The synod is not a negotiation session, the pope said. However, expect the media to treat it as such. — PWN

Conferences of bishops in Latin church reflects synodal organisms



Canon Law For Today

Rev. Frank Morrissey

One of the more important contributions of the Second Vatican Council to the organization of church life and mission was the decision to make conferences of bishops mandatory through the Latin church. A similar synodal organism exists for the Eastern Catholic Churches.

Some conferences had existed before the Second Vatican Coun-

cil. It is generally considered that the first recognized one was established in Belgium. In the U.S., after the First World War, the National Catholic Welfare Council was established as an organism of the American bishops (1919).

In Canada, after the Plenary Council of Quebec, 1909, the bishops of the country began meeting together every five years. Then,

after the Second World War, they established the Canadian Catholic Conference which evolved into the present-day Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. Definitively approved in 1955, it was one of the first conferences formally established in the church.

The Second Vatican Council’s idea of the conference was that it would become a practical expression of episcopal collegiality, on a more local level. Full episcopal collegiality is expressed in the ecumenical council.

During the Second Vatican Council years, the bishops of various countries had indeed begun to work together on statements and proposals, and so the base was laid for a permanent structure to enable them to continue to experience the advantages of working together.

Most conferences of bishops are national, although some of them group a number of smaller countries. On the other hand, there can be more than one conference in some of the larger countries. For instance, in the United Kingdom, there is the Conference of Bishops of England and Wales, the Conference of Bishops of

Scotland, and the Irish Episcopal Conference, this latter covering the dioceses both in the North and in the Republic. In the U.S., there is a separate conference of bishops for Puerto Rico; also, some of the dioceses situated in U.S. territories (Guam, Marshall Islands, etc.) belong to other conferences.

In Canada, bishops belonging to the Eastern Catholic churches are members of the CCCB, but with special provisions for voting on matters that concern the Latin church directly (especially concerning liturgical questions).

Where they were established and functioning, the various conferences played a significant role in the elaboration of the 1983 Code of Canon Law. As the various drafts were prepared by the commission, they were sent to the conferences for their observations. In Canada, a very well organized system was set up, particularly with the assistance of the Canadian Canon Law Society, to provide responses that were well received in Rome. Indeed, a large number of the proposals presented by the Canadian conference were integrated into the current legislation.

As such, the conference is not a legislative body. (This is the function of a plenary or a provincial council, or a diocesan synod). However, there are a number of instances where the popes have given the conferences the authority to pass decrees which are then binding on all the bishops of the

territory. The Canadian bishops have availed themselves of almost all the possibilities foreseen in the Code of Canon Law, thus setting up a body of particular law applicable in the country.

If a conference wants to legislate in matters not foreseen by the code, a special permission is required from the Holy See. Such was the case in the U.S. when the bishops wanted to pass special legislation to deal with clerical sexual abuse of minors. The Canadian bishops opted for another approach, particularly in view of the fact that provincial legislation relative to reporting cases of abuses varied from province to province. Instead, in From Pain to Hope, and in its subsequent revisions, they left it to each diocesan bishop to promulgate the law in his own diocese.

One particular area of concern that arose in the years following the Second Vatican Council was whether the conference could exercise a teaching authority binding on all Catholics in the territory. A number of examples of joint pastoral letters were found in the early years. However, Pope John Paul II, in his *motu proprio* of May 21, 1998, *Apostolos suos*, decided to restrict this teaching role in order to protect the authority of individual bishops.

This decision, unfortunately, led to the fact that, in many instances, conferences have now become somewhat irrelevant. They

— ZEAL, page 19

Sisters initiate health and education services in Sask.

By Most Rev. Daniel J Bohan, Archbishop of Regina

My dear friends, it is a great pleasure for me to be with you today for this very special and important ceremony. I don’t think that I have ever been up in front of so many “nuns.”

In the shadow of the Legislature Building here in Regina, today we carry out a special unveiling of this statue. It is a beautiful work of art which recognizes the life-changing contribution that has been made in education and health care for the benefit of the people of Saskatchewan by the women belonging to Catholic religious communities.

These women began their work in the 1860’s as a service to the families of our early settlers and to what would become the new province in which they lived. Pope Francis has continually called upon us to adopt a culture of encounter, encouraging us to understand that faith calls us to service of one another, in particular those who often find themselves nudged to the outside of a prosperous society.

Long before Pope Francis reminded us of this fundamental characteristic of our faith, the sisters looked into the young faces of children and youth and of those suffering pain and illness and recognized their need.

They set out to provide these children with quality education and

the province with a strong force of educated citizens who would build a future of stability and integrity which we enjoy today.

They taught them not only how to do math and English. They taught them how to be good human beings and citizens, how to live with respect for others. They taught them about honesty and justice and goodwill and self-sacrifice, the virtues which make a community strong and stable and a good place in which to live.

Amid challenging circumstances and the often limited resources of a pioneer community they built firm foundations of learning and healing. As communities of Christian women, they built their lives on religious faith which called them to dispel the darkness of ignorance and to bring healing and health to the people among whom they lived. Their faith sent them out to bring healing to the sick and comfort to the afflicted.

We all benefit today from the efforts of these women and their selfless labours. It is good for us to remember them and to follow their example that we may continue the spirit with which they reached out and touched the lives of the men, women and children around them and brought to them the light of knowledge and the restorative comfort of loving care and healing.

This tribute was given by Archbishop Bohan at the Sisters Legacy program in Regina, Oct. 1.

Morrissey is a professor emeritus of canon law at Saint Paul University, Ottawa, and has been very active over the years in the field of canon law, especially as it applies to dioceses and religious institutes. This is his 35th article in a series.



CNS/L'Osservatore Romano

POPE GREETS NEWLY MARRIED COUPLES — Pope Francis greets newly married couples during his general audience in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Sept. 30. The pope said everyone has a guardian angel who advises and guides them throughout life. The feast of the Holy Guardian Angels was Oct. 2.

Faith of federal candidates should not be overlooked

The Editor: Having read the voting guide prepared by our bishops for the upcoming federal election, I noticed that nowhere is there any mention of the importance of faith and a belief in God by the candidates.

Surely a faith life has had an important influence on decisions made by bishops. Why would that not be relevant when picking leaders for our nation? Is not fear of the Lord the beginning of wisdom? Why would we want to be ruled by godless people who

appoint godless judges to make godless laws for us to live by?

Do bishops think that God should not influence decisions that are made by members of parliament? Do they think that a belief in God is important to bishops but not that important to the decisions made by others in authority?

Secondly, if a candidate states that he does indeed believe in God, just how is that belief manifest in that person's personal life? Is the moral character and integrity of the candidate not relevant?

Do bishops think that the way that a person lives their personal life is irrelevant?

Should the electorate not look at the fruit of the life of a candidate to assess that person's judgment as a precursor to what laws we can expect of the candidate once elected? The personal life of a candidate gives us a glimpse into the honesty and integrity of the candidate, and gives us a picture of the kind of values that the candidate believes is important to our country. — **Tom Schuck, Weyburn, Sask.**

Another solution to the question of failed marriages

The Editor: I have read your article in the PM of Sept. 9 on "forgive divorce." As far as I am concerned, as a priest of 63 years, what is most important and forgotten is the word "covenant."

Why mention "forgive" when the problem for most divorces is there never was a covenant. In home, school and parish people never learn what a covenant is all about. As a psychologist who was responsible for marriage preparation and counselling for years, I would often see people totally ignorant of what this is all about.

When a person explained how their partner could not talk personally nor intimately, it was clear the partner did not "fail." He or she never learnt what it meant.

So, what is the answer?
A cardinal wrote in 1967: "Beyond the pope, as expression of

the binding claim of ecclesiastical authority, there stands one's own conscience which must be obeyed before all else, even if necessary, against the requirement of ecclesiastical authority." (Joseph Ratzinger in Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, Vol. 5, p. 134).

Now, if this is theologically sound, does a person need the confirmation from church authority to confirm that Joseph's marriage never was? Why continue writing about "So, how do you reconcile that teaching, a very clear teaching of Jesus, with the compassion that we all feel for people whose marriages have broken apart and would like to somehow rebuild their lives while continuing in the church?" (Sept. 9 PM).

How can something invalid be broken apart? And who has the power to one day say, "Now I know

it never was"? Only the church leaders? How about one's own conscience?

I am tired of having to deal with this issue with no help from church authorities except through an annulment. Does that word mean "It never was"?

If "one's conscience must be obeyed before all else" how could it help us find the best solution to our problem of divorce? — **Dominique Kerbrat, OMI, Winnipeg**



Design Pics

The Cave

The silent Presence
in the archive of stone
remembers the glacier,
the river, the wind —
the source of this shelter
within the earth —
this refuge of eons,
this cavern of awe.

By Nancy Compton Williams

Rediscover the corporal works of mercy

Continued from page 1

"I ask you, then, to rediscover the corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; clothe the naked; welcome the

stranger; assist the sick; visit the imprisoned and bury the dead," he said.

"Nor should we overlook the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful; teach the ignorant; admonish sinners; comfort the sorrowful; forgive offences; patiently bear with troublesome people and pray to God for the living and the dead."

In order to become more authentic and credible disciples of Christ, the pope suggested "that for the first seven months of 2016, you choose a corporal and a spiritual work of mercy to practise each month."

Pope Francis recalled the example of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, who lived his short life by receiving God in the eucharist every morning and then returning that divine presence and love by visiting and helping the poor each day.

The pope also asked young people to find inspiration in the prayer of St. Faustina Kowalska, which describes specific ways one's eyes, ears, tongue, hands, feet and heart can be merciful in everyday life.

"The Divine Mercy message is a very specific life plan because it involves action. One of the most obvious works of mercy, and perhaps the most difficult to put into practice, is to forgive those who have offended us, who have done us wrong or whom we consider to be enemies," the pope said.

Even though it seems so hard to forgive, pardoning others is a powerful grace placed in "our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence, and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully."

"Only a few months are left

before we meet in Poland. Krakow, the city of St. John Paul II and St. Faustina Kowalska, is waiting for us with open arms and hearts," said the pope, who was scheduled to attend events July 28 - 31.

These two saints were "two great apostles of mercy in our times," as they desired the message of God's mercy reach all people on earth and fill their hearts with hope, he said.

Original zeal no longer evident

Continued from page 18

can issue appeals and make statements, but do not have binding authority (except for those legal matters mentioned above).

One important activity in Canada still is the co-ordination of statements to be made in the various synods of bishops on behalf of the conference. Nevertheless, the original zeal and enthusiasm is no longer as visible. In Canada, for instance, much more emphasis has been placed in recent years on the regional groupings of bishops, where matters of more local or regional concern are addressed by those who are directly concerned.

Perhaps, someday, we can find a happy balance, allowing for a more unified approach among Catholics within the various countries.

The possibilities for communal and joint action exist. It is up to each conference to exploit the various openings found in the church's legislation and continue to provide strong leadership and guidance for the faithful in their territory.



A SACRED SPACE IN A BUSY WORLD

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email: retreats@providencerenewal.ca www.providencerenewal.ca

EL CAMINO DE SANTIAGO
Gifts and Graces from the Journey
Sat., Oct. 24, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Debbie Doornbos

El Camino de Santiago, or the road to Santiago, is a popular pilgrimage across northern Spain. This transformative journey starts long before one sets foot on the path. Recently returned from her second pilgrimage walk on the road to Santiago, Debbie will share her insights into the gifts and graces of her journey and invite us to reflect on how these experiences can apply to our day-to-day life's journey and help us grow spiritually.

\$40 includes buffet lunch

WALK A NEW PATH
Healing and Reconciliation through Forgiveness and Grieving
Fri., Oct. 30 (7 p.m.) to Sun., Nov. 1 (1 p.m.)
Archbishop Emeritus Sylvain Lavoie, OMI

The healing of life's hurts and the hope of reconciliation in relationships seems to be an elusive dream; yet nothing in life is more rewarding than the realization of true healing and reconciliation. This prayerful and thought-provoking retreat, based on Archbishop Lavoie's new book, Walk a New Path, will offer practical suggestions and skills leading to a breakthrough in both areas of our lives. The roles of intimacy, spirituality, and honest communication will be explored.

Suite: \$260 Single: \$220 Commute: \$175

THE FACE OF MERCY — ADVENT RETREAT
Fri., Nov. 27 (7 p.m.) to Sun., Nov. 29 (1 p.m.)
Bishop Emeritus Gerry Wiesner, OMI

Mercy is the principal attribute of God. "Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36) This Advent retreat will be an opportunity to reflect on "the face of mercy" experienced in Jesus, whose birth into this world we wait for, prepare for, expect, and put hope in. Pope Francis has declared a year of mercy and he reminds us that "mercy will always be greater than any sin, and no one can put limits on the love of God, who is ever ready to forgive". This is a ray of sunshine covering us with a spirit of peace as we prepare for the coming of the Lord.

Suite: \$260 Single: \$220 Commute: \$175 Register before Oct. 30 and save \$10

Pope says synod is place to listen to Holy Spirit

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The world Synod of Bishops on the family is not a parliament where participants will negotiate or lobby, Pope Francis said, but it must be a place of prayer where bishops speak with courage and open themselves to “God who always surprises us.”

Opening the first working session of the synod Oct. 5, the pope said the synod’s 270 voting members need courage, “pastoral and doctrinal zeal, wisdom, frankness and to keep always before our eyes the good of the church and of families and the supreme law — the salvation of souls.”

Arriving about 15 minutes before the session began, Pope Francis welcomed to the synod hall the members, delegates from other Christian communities and the men and women who will serve as experts and observers.

The synod is not a convention or a parliament, Pope Francis said,

“but an expression of the church; it is the church that walks together to read reality with the eyes of faith and with the heart of God.”

Synod members must be faithful to church teaching, “the deposit of faith, which is not a museum to be visited or even simply preserved, but is a living spring from which the church drinks to quench the thirst and enlighten” people, he said.

The synod hall and its small working groups, he said, should be “a protected space where the church experiences the action of the Holy Spirit.”

In a spirit of prayer, the pope said, the Spirit will speak through “everyone who allows themselves to be guided by God, who always surprises us, by God who reveals to the little ones that which he has hidden from the wise and intelligent, by God who created the Sabbath for men and women and not vice versa, by God who leaves the 99 sheep to find the one missing sheep, by God who is always greater than our logic

and our calculations.”

Synod members need “an apostolic courage that does not allow itself to be afraid in the face of the seductions of the world” that are attempting “to extinguish in human hearts the light of truth” and replace it with “little and temporary lights,” he said.

However, at the same time, Pope Francis said, apostolic courage does not tremble in fear “before the hardening of certain hearts that despite good intentions drive people further from God.”

Evangelical humility is “emptying oneself of one’s own convictions and prejudices in order to listen to our brother bishops and fill ourselves with God,” he said. It is a humility, “which leads us not to point a finger in judgment of others, but to extend a hand to help them up again without ever feeling superior to them.”

Trust-filled prayer is an attitude of openness to God and silencing one’s own preferences “to listen to

the soft voice of God who speaks in silence,” Pope Francis told the synod members. “Without listening to God, all of our words will be just words that don’t quench or satisfy.” Without prayer, “all our decisions will be just decorations that instead of exalting the Gospel cover and hide it.”

The gathering began with mid-morning prayer, which included the reading of a passage from the Second Letter to the Corinthians: “Brothers and sisters, rejoice. Mend your ways, encourage one another, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.”

Throughout the synod, members will offer a brief meditation during the morning prayer. Honduran Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga of Tegucigalpa began Oct. 5, telling the bishops: “We are not a church in danger of extinction; far from it. Neither is the family, although it is threatened and struggling.”

The synod, he said, is not a place “to mourn or lament” the challenges families face, but to rejoice and seek perfection and to help families do the same.



CNS/Paul Haring

DUROCHER — Archbishop Paul-André Durocher of Gatineau, Que., former president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, is one of the Canadian delegates.

Paris, one of the synod presidents, told reporters, “If you are looking for a spectacular change in church doctrine you will be disappointed.”

At the same time, said Italian Archbishop Bruno Forte of Chieti-Vasto, special secretary of the synod, “the synod is not gathering to say nothing.” The goal is to find new pastoral methods to bring the church “closer to the men and women of its time.”



CNS/Paul Haring

FAMILY GIVES TESTIMONY DURING PRAYER VIGIL — Francesco and Lucia Masi and their family members give a testimony during a prayer vigil for the Synod of Bishops on the family in St. Peter’s Square at the Vatican Oct. 3. The couple from the Diocese of Pisa have been married 35 years and have five children, a son-in-law, a daughter-in-law and four grandchildren.

Ukrainian church leader asks for support

VIENNA (CNS) — The head of the Ukrainian Catholic Church has urged the Vatican to show greater support for his country, as a senior Vatican diplomat warned the country risked becoming “a kind of Somalia.”

“I would have expected a lot more involvement by the Vatican — the time for cautious diplomacy is at an end,” said Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kiev-Halych, major archbishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.

“The fact that 70 per cent of Ukrainian army regulars fighting against separatists and Russian soldiers have Russian as their mother tongue shows the unity of our people and our army. What we are seeing is a foreign invasion of Ukrainian territory by Russian troops,” he said.

In an interview with Austria’s Kathpress agency, Shevchuk said a ceasefire appeared to have held during September in most disput-

ed eastern areas, although a prisoner exchange and other moves still had to be negotiated.

Meanwhile, a former Vatican nuncio to Ukraine warned the country risked becoming “a kind of Somalia in the middle of Europe.”

“Ukraine desperately needs support from abroad, so it doesn’t become a so-called failed state — this risk is unfortunately very great,” U.S. Archbishop Thomas Gullickson, who was nuncio in Kiev from November 2011 until early September, told Vatican Radio Oct. 2.

“I hope the world, and especially the countries of western Europe, will overcome their resistance and do the same as was done after World War II with the Marshall Plan. No one waited till all Nazis were behind bars — they began immediately to rebuild Europe.”

“There’s a real danger Ukraine will become a kind of Somalia in the middle of Europe — Europe can’t turn its back on the Ukrain-

ians and close its eyes to what’s happening,” said the nuncio, who was reassigned to Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

“Events in Ukraine will have consequences for the rest of the world. You can’t just say goodbye, good luck — keep warm and well-fed. We have to engage,” he said.

Leaders from Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France, meeting Oct. 2 in Paris, agreed to back a withdrawal of tanks and heavy weapons from front-line positions in eastern Ukraine, as a first step toward elections in the rebel-held Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

However, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe said it had yet to monitor the withdrawal and warned Oct. 2 it had seen powerful multiple rocket launchers in Luhansk.

Moscow has denied sending troops to Ukraine, but admitted Russian “volunteers” are fighting alongside the separatists.

Ukrainian Catholic leaders have repeatedly accused Russia of military intervention in the war, in which approximately 8,000 people have been killed and at least 17,800 injured since April 2014, according to September data from the UN human rights office.

Vatican official declares his homosexuality at synod start

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — On the eve of the start of the Synod of Bishops on the family, a Polish monsignor who works in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, publicly declared he is homosexual and has a stable partner.



CNS/Alessandro Bianchi, Reuters

Msgr. Krzysztof Charamsa

Msgr. Krzysztof Charamsa, 43, gave interviews to Polish and Italian media Oct. 2 and planned a news conference the following day outside the offices of the congregation. The conference, however, was moved to a restaurant nearby.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesperson, said Oct. 3

that Charamsa and his reflections on his life and sexuality were deserving of respect, but “the decision to make such a pointed statement on the eve of the opening of the synod appears very serious and irresponsible, since it aims to subject the synod assembly to undue media pressure.”

“Msgr. Charamsa will certainly be unable to continue to carry out his previous work in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the pontifical universities,” where he had been teaching: the Pontifical Gregorian University and the Pontifical Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum, Lombardi said.

“The other aspects of his situation shall remain the competence of his diocesan ordinary,” the bishop of Pelplin, Poland, Lombardi said. Charamsa, who has worked at the doctrinal congregation since 2003, was ordained for the Diocese of Pelplin in 1997.

In one of the interviews before his news conference, Charamsa told the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*: “I want the church and my community to know who I am: a gay priest who is happy, and proud of his identity. I’m prepared to pay the consequences, but it’s time the church opened its eyes, and realized that offering gay believers total abstinence from a life of love is inhuman.”

Most priests, like Charamsa, in the Latin rite of the Catholic Church take a vow of celibacy. Exceptions, for example in the case of former Anglican priests, have been made for some clergy who were married before becoming Catholic.

God always wants to build bridges. We are the ones who build walls. And walls always crumble.

— Pope Francis