



New staff

The Archdiocese of Regina has recently taken on five new staff persons, four to fill positions that had become vacant and one new position to support a growing workload in youth ministry.
— page 6

Sisters in Spirit

As a police chief, Clive Weighill tries to remain apolitical, but at a recent Sisters in Spirit vigil held to remember missing and murdered Aboriginal women, he said that “when you see the socio-economic factors, the poverty, the racism, it’s also systemic. We need to get to the root cause of this.”
— page 7

New school

Construction of a new Sacred Heart Community School began Oct. 2 with an official sod turning attended by Finance Minister Kevin Doherty, Deputy Mayor Wade Murray, Regina Elphinstone-Centre MLA Warren McCall, Elder Mike Pinay, school board members, senior school board administrators and children of Sacred Heart Community School.
— page 7

Afghan stories

Despite Canada’s history with Afghanistan, it did not come up in foreign policy discussions during the recent election campaign, writes Gerald Schmitz. Five movies screened at the Toronto film festival feature stories from an Afghanistan we hardly knew.
— page 9



Climate challenge

Only six weeks after the federal election, our newly elected prime minister, Justin Trudeau, will face his first foreign-policy challenge there, writes Joe Gunn. How will he handle it?
— page 11

Growth and discovery

While stereotypes of aging abound in our youth-obsessed society, it is clear that aging is not a problem to be solved, but a rich developmental stage in its own right.
— page 12

Pope lauds synod’s ‘rich and lively’ dialogue

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The first task of the Catholic Church “is not to hand down condemnations or anathemas, but to proclaim the mercy of God,” Pope Francis told members of the synod of bishops on the family.



CNS/Paul Haring

SYNOD ON FAMILY — Pope Francis walks past an image of the Holy Family as he leaves after celebrating the closing mass of the synod of bishops on the family in St. Peter’s Basilica at the Vatican Oct. 25.

First Nation ministry a sign of hope

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — It’s the first time Anglican and Roman Catholic groups have come together to talk about Aboriginal ministry.

About 30 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people attended what was called Signs of Hope: Conversations on First Nations Ministry, Oct. 17, at St. Paul Cathedral’s Community Centre here. It was organized under the auspices of the Anglican Roman Catholic Covenant Implementation Committee and is one of the goals and activities that are part of the Covenant signed between the Archdiocese of Regina and the Diocese of Qu’Appelle in 2011.

“It is important to educate each other about First Nations and what is going on in their lives. It’s important to hear the stories of the people,” said Susan Klein, co-chair of the Implementation Committee in conversation with the PM. Anglican co-chair Deacon Michael Jackson said it is

— GOD’S WILL, page 4

At the end of the synod’s final working session Oct. 24, Pope Francis was honest about the differences of opinion present among synod participants and about the tone of their discussions sometimes exceeding the bounds of charity. But he framed all those differences as an opportunity for learning.

“In the course of this synod, the different opinions that were expressed freely — and, unfortunately, sometimes with methods that were not completely charitable — certainly led to a rich and lively dialogue,” the pope said.

The synod, he said, was a time of trying “to broaden horizons in order to overcome every hermeneutic of conspiracy or closed-mindedness so as to defend and spread the freedom of the children of God (and) to transmit the beauty of Christian newness, which sometimes is covered by the rust of a

language that is archaic or simply incomprehensible.”

“For the church,” he said, “concluding the synod means to go back to really ‘walking together’ to bring to every part of the world — every diocese, every community and every situation — the light of the Gospel, the embrace of the church and the support of the mercy of God.”

See story on page 16

The synod sessions, the pope said, were designed to have people speak openly about the needs of families and to face them “without fear and without hiding our heads in the sand.”

The gathering, he said, was a time “to witness to all that the Gospel remains for the church the living source of eternal newness against those who want to ‘indoc-

trinate’ it into dead stones to hurl at each other.”

Without mentioning specific differences, such as deeply varied cultural approaches to homosexuality, Pope Francis said synod members learned that “what seems normal for a bishop on one continent can seem strange — almost a scandal — to a bishop from another.”

The synod tried to find better ways to convince the world of the importance of the family based on the lifelong marriage of one man and one woman, he said, knowing that it should not be afraid to shake “anesthetized consciences or to dirty its hands animatedly and frankly discussing the family.”

“The experience of the synod,” the pope said, “has made us understand better that the true

— GOD’S MERCY, page 2

Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* marked

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — In or out? Us or them? Where do we draw the line? Should we draw the line? Once a line is drawn, how do we look beyond our borders?

Every religion, every nation, every community struggles with these questions. In every age the questions get asked again. Our answers shift as the tides of change roll in and out of our lives.

Fifty years ago the Second Vatican Council decided not so much to move the borders as to look beyond them. In just 1,600 words, *Nostra Aetate* (In Our Time) unfolded the church out of its centuries-long defensive crouch and opened up channels of dialogue with every other faith of significance and reach around the globe.

Nostra Aetate wasn’t a decree or a constitution. It claimed neither dogmatic nor pastoral authority. It was satisfied to be merely a declaration. It was the shortest document issued at Vatican II. But of the 16 documents of the Second Vatican Council, none are more studied, more argued over, more written about or more relevant to how the church lives its mission now.

“For me, it’s a

radical change. It’s a threshold,” said Edmundston, N.B., Bishop Claude Champagne, chair of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Commission for Christian Unity, Religious Relations with Jews and Interfaith Dialogue. “It was the first time in the history of the church we were able to see there could be some good, some truth, some beauty in the other believers. For me it was a very deep change.”

Champagne’s commission issued not one but two documents to mark the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*. Over the last four years of academic conferences, books and celebrations to mark a

half century since the Second Vatican Council, *Nostra Aetate* is the only Vatican II document to inspire the CCCB to issue an entire catechetical program for Canadian Catholics.

The two booklets (available as a PDF from CCCB.ca) are both titled *A Church in Dialogue*. The first explains the history and philosophy of Catholic interfaith dialogue. The second document outlines in particular progress in dialogue between Catholics and Muslims.

Council fathers voted 2,221 to 88 in favour of *Nostra Aetate* and Pope Paul VI promulgated the

— NOSTRA, page 4



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

NOSTRA AETATE 50th ANNIVERSARY — Toronto’s Cardinal Thomas Collins speaks at a synagogue in Toronto. A mere 50 years ago, it would have been unheard of for a Catholic priest to do such a thing. But with the Vatican II declaration *Nostra Aetate*, the Catholic Church opened itself to the other faiths of the world. Oct. 28 marks the 50th anniversary of *Nostra Aetate*.

Synod faces new vision of church

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Members of the synod of bishops on the family agree that Catholic families are the beating heart and busy hands of the church, but the tensions in the synod hall demonstrate that what they don't agree on is a vision of the church and its primary attitude to the world.

As the Catholic Church marked the 50th anniversary of the close of the Second Vatican Council — the last session was held Sept. 14 - Dec. 8, 1965 — debates within the synod indicated that reflections on the council have shifted from differences over the meaning of individual council documents and moved on to its general vision of the structure of the church and the relationship of the church to the world.

"The discussion is about the future of the church," German Cardinal Reinhard Marx told a group of reporters Oct. 20. Some synod members seem to view the church as "a castle to be defended, surrounded by enemies. That I can't understand," he said. "The church is a sacrament in the midst of people," reaching out, challenging, bringing healing.

The synod highlighted the fact that the family is at the very heart of the church: The family is where the faith is lived and passed on and where the

Christian community most strongly impacts and is impacted by the surrounding society.

As pastors, members of the synod were wrestling, for example, with the questions of communion for the divorced and civilly remarried and with how best to respect the dignity of homosexual persons while defending marriage as a union of one man and one woman for life.

But none of the bishops thought the questions ended there.

A church living in the midst of the people obviously is challenged by the variety of cultures those people represent. Maintaining unity while responding to diversity and even learning from it has been a task the Christian community has struggled with from the beginning, and not always successfully. The dangers are real.

From the beginning of the synod, members discussed the possibility that in a truly universal church, some pastoral approaches to particularly important questions could be tailored to local situations.

Members of the synod's German-speaking small group said outreach to the divorced and civilly remarried was one of those situations. But English Group A, which had Australian Cardinal George Pell as its moderator and U.S. Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz

as its recording secretary, said leaving a matter that touches on the indissolubility of marriage up to individual bishops' conferences "would risk harm to the unity of the Catholic Church, the understanding of her sacramental order and the visible witness of the life of the faithful."

English Group D, led by Cardinal Thomas C. Collins of Toronto with Archbishop Charles J. Chaput of Philadelphia as secretary, reported that in their group, "One bishop said that the issue of admitting divorced and remarried persons without an annulment to communion was such a vital matter of doctrinal substance that it could only be handled at an ecumenical council and not at a synod."

Australian Archbishop Mark Coleridge of Brisbane, who has become a must-read blogger during the synod, wrote Oct. 22, "For me personally, one real fruit of the synod has been a deeper and richer understanding of synodality in the life of the church," particularly the way Pope Francis explained it in a speech Oct. 17 as a style of "journeying together" with everyone — the pope, bishops, priests and laity — listening to, teaching and learning from each other.

"The pope spoke of synodality as a permanent feature of the life of the whole church rather than



CNS/Tony Gentile, Reuters

POPE TUMOUR RUMOUR — A man reads an Italian newspaper in Rome, Oct. 21, claiming Pope Francis has a benign brain tumour. The Vatican spokesperson said claims that the pope has a tumour are "entirely unfounded." Some commentators claim the pope's foes within the Vatican and the Catholic Church wanted to weaken his authority as the pivotal synod of bishops on the family came to an end on Oct 25.

an occasional feature of episcopal life — and went on to set episcopal collegiality and the Petrine ministry within this context," Coleridge said. "This struck me as a deep and simple articulation of the vision of the church found in the teaching of Vatican II, and it made sense to me for the pope to say that this is where God is leading the church as we launch into the third millennium."

Cardinal Daniel Sturla Berhouet of Montevideo, Uruguay, posted a comment on Facebook Oct. 13 saying, "The difficulties that are encountered in the synod process because of the diversity of opinions and of sensibilities are those of any living organism, and they can be shared precisely in the certainty" that the pope will give the final word and keep them united.

Synod groups apologize for inadequate marriage ministry

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Two of the 13 final small-group reports of the synod of bishops for the family contained apologies: one for ways in which a lack of pastoral care may have contributed to the breakdown of marriages and one for "harsh and merciless" attitudes toward unwed mothers and their children, the divorced and homosexuals.

"We must stop continually scolding those who have failed in their first marriage without recognizing that we have some blame in that failure because we did not welcome them," said the report of Spanish Group A, read by Cardinal Jose Lacunza Maestrojuan of David, Panama. "In the same way, there must be an end to the elitist and narrow-minded attitudes many members of the Christian community have toward them."

Presenting its report late Oct. 20, the German-language group said its members felt called to admit that "in an ill-conceived attempt to respect the doctrine of the church, repeatedly we have had harsh and merciless pastoral attitudes that created suffering, especially for unwed mothers and child born out of wedlock," cohabiting couples, homosexual persons and those who are divorced and civilly remarried.

"As bishops in our church, we ask forgiveness," said the report unanimously approved by the group's members, including Cardinal Gerhard Müller, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and Cardinal Walter Kasper, a theologian and former president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The synod moved into its final drafting phase after the reading of

the small group reports late Oct. 20; the reports were released by the Vatican the next day. A 10-member committee took the reports each group made on the three chapters of the working document and drafted a final text, which was submitted to a paragraph-by-paragraph vote.

God's mercy is boundless

Continued from page 1

defenders of doctrine are not those who defend its letter, but its spirit; not ideas, but people; not formulas, but the free gift of God's love and forgiveness. This is in no way to detract from the importance of formulas, laws and divine commandments, but rather to exalt the greatness of the true God, who does not treat us according to our merits or even according to our works, but solely according to the boundless generosity of his mercy."

Clearly, he said, the three-week synod did not resolve every problem facing families or even every question of how the church can best minister to them. But it did try "to enlighten them with the light of the Gospel and the 2,000-year tradition and history of the church" formulated in ways people today can understand.

Without acting as if every form of modern family life was equally valid, but also without "demonizing others," he said, the synod wanted "to embrace fully and courageously the goodness and mercy of God who surpasses our human calculations and wants nothing other than that 'all would be saved.'"

Pope sets up new office for laity, family

By Junno Arocho Esteves

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis announced he is establishing a new office for laity, family and life, which combines the responsibilities of two pontifical councils.

The pope made the announcement Oct. 22 during the afternoon session of the synod of bishops on the family.

"I have decided to establish a new dicastery with competency for laity, family and life, that will replace the Pontifical Council for the Laity and the Pontifical Council for the Family. The Pontifical Academy for Life will be joined to the new dicastery," the pope said.

The responsibilities of the new office will be spelled out in a document being drafted by a commission the pope said he already has appointed.

Members of the pope's international Council of Cardinals have been discussing the move for months. Cardinal Dionigi Tettamanzi, the retired archbishop of Milan, was tasked by the pope to study the feasibility of creating the new dicastery.

Following a presentation by Tettamanzi, the council made a formal proposal to bring together the current pontifical councils for the laity and for the family and place the Pontifical Academy for Life under the new office's jurisdiction.

Established in 1967 by Blessed Paul VI, the Pontifical Council for the Laity is charged with overseeing the apostolate of the laity and "their participation in the life and mission of the church," both as individuals and through organizations and movements. It was reformed 10 years later and included among the permanent dicasteries of the Roman Curia.

The Pontifical Council for the Family was established May 9, 1981, by St. John Paul II and took the place of the Committee for the Family created by Pope Paul in 1973. The council promotes pastoral ministries and apostolates aimed at supporting families and the defence of human life.



CNS/Erik De Castro, Reuters

TYPHOON IN PHILIPPINES — Residents hold on to a plastic hose and an electricity wire Oct. 19 while trying to cross a flooded road amid a strong current after Typhoon Koppu hit the Philippine province of Nueva Ecija. This weekend Hurricane Patricia hit southwestern Mexico as a monster Category 5 storm, the strongest ever in the Western Hemisphere.

Submissions released on euthanasia consultations

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Canada’s Catholic bishops and the Canadian Organization for Life and Family (COLF) have released their submissions to a federal consultation on euthanasia and assisted suicide.



CCN/D. Gyapong

Bishop Douglas Crosby

The interventions of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) and COLF opposing euthanasia and assisted suicide were submitted in October to the External Panel on Options for a Legislative Response to Carter vs. Canada, a consultation set up by the Conservative government last summer.

On Oct. 20, the day after his Liberal party won a majority gov-

ernment, Prime Minister-designate Justin Trudeau told journalists he looked forward to seeing the consultations, promising his government would “abide by the Supreme Court decision and ensure that both vulnerable Canadians are protected and Canadians’ rights and choices are also defended. That’s the balance we’ll be striving for.”

After striking down some of the Criminal Code provisions against assisted suicide in the Feb. 6 Carter decision, the Supreme Court gave Parliament a year to craft new legislation before its decision came into force.

“Obviously this is an issue that is both sensitive and personal for many Canadians,” Trudeau said. “I’ve always supported the Supreme Court in its decisions and we will be moving forward as is responsible to respond to the Supreme Court decision.”

COLF and the CCCC urge the federal government not to adopt either euthanasia or assisted suicide.

“Our awareness is shaped by humanity’s thousands of years of reflection and by our actions as Christians in following Jesus,” said the CCCC’s consultation signed by CCCC president Hamilton Bishop Douglas Crosby. “He showed most fully what it means to love, to serve, and to be present to others. His response to the suffering of others was to suffer with them, not to kill them.”

“He accepted suffering in his life as the pathway to giving, to

generosity, to mercy. One does not have to be a believer to recognize in Jesus’ life and action a supreme example of humanity,” Crosby said. “The values of Jesus of Nazareth are the basis for our views on assisted suicide. Canada has nothing to fear in committing itself to these profoundly human and life-giving values. Similar values are shared not only by other Christians but also other world religions as well as men and women of goodwill without religious faith.”

Crosby pointed out the CCCC has been reiterating over the years “our continued opposition to efforts to implement any form of euthanasia and assisted suicide.”

The Catholic bishops invited Canadians to “build a culture of life,” promote good palliative care, and better health care for those with chronic conditions.

The intervention explained Catholic teaching, according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, categorizes assisted suicide and euthanasia as “moral and social” evils and forms of murder. The bishops also stressed the importance of conscience rights for any health professionals who might be pressed into an assisted suicide or euthanasia regime.

COLF began its intervention with a warning of the risks of legalizing so-called “medical aid in dying,” as seen from the experiences of Belgium and the Netherlands.

“By legalizing euthanasia or assisted suicide — which allows



CCN/D. Gyapong

Michele Boulva

one person to kill another or help that person commit suicide — we would diminish the respect due to human life and erode the basic trust essential to the functioning of any society: the assurance that human life will always be protected,” said COLF director Michele Boulva. “If we allow assisted suicide or euthanasia for those terminally ill or not — when requested on the basis of unmanaged suffering, autonomy or individual self-determination

over life itself — how can we refuse it to the depressed, the disabled or the frail?”

“In this context, the elderly and the vulnerable risk being pressured to consider the option of an early death; the so-called ‘right to die’ could soon become a ‘duty to die,’ ” she warned. “And such pressure is likely to increase as health care resources decrease. Thus ‘aid in dying’ will become the most deceptive form of violence, the ultimate abuse of seniors already subject to physical and psychological violence.”

Boulva warned Canada’s “civilization is at a turning point.”

“If we really believe in the equality of all Canadians, we will work to ensure their equal protection by maintaining the legal prohibition of killing. Only in this way can we maintain the fundamental trust required for us to live together.

After Trudeau and his cabinet are sworn in next month, there will be little time to craft legislation before the Supreme Court’s Feb. 6 deadline. Many groups, including the CCCC and COLF have called for the use of the notwithstanding clause to suspend the court’s decision for five years.

‘Work smarter, not harder’ clergy assembly told

By Frank Flegel

MOOSE JAW — Priests need to work smarter, not just harder, in the face of declining numbers. That was the message Rev. Ronald Knott of the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky, (home of KFC, Bourbon and Muhammad Ali, he quickly added) brought as guest presenter at the annual Clergy Assembly held Oct. 5 - 8 at the Heritage Inn here. This year’s theme was The Powerful Spiritual Leadership of a Unified Presbyterate.

He spoke to priests several times over the four days, emphasizing teamwork. “It was really about us working together with the bishop as a team for the purpose of delivering high quality, coherent ministry to the people,” said Knott in an interview with the PM. “Think we instead of me and look at the diocese as a whole through the eyes of the bishop, otherwise we tend to look at just our little kingdom, our little world without looking at the big picture.” Instead of being insular, priests should make the effort to get to know each other, especially the international priests; to send letters and emails of appreciation and celebrate the successes of one another.

There was no discussion on how to measure success and he stayed on the theme of leadership and teamwork. “If you turn around and see no one is following, you’ve got two options; you can blame the sheep or you can step back and say, ‘There’s something about my leadership style that I need to look at,’” said Knott. He told the assembly priests have to get a lot better at preaching. Instead of waiting to the last minute, spend the week preparing the homily for the weekend. There is a sense, he



Rev. Ronald Knott

said, that as lay leadership develops the need for priests drop but quoting Pope John Paul II, Knott said, “The more lay ministry develops the more we need quality leadership from our priests.”

Vicar-General Rev. Lorne Crozon said he was pleased at this year’s attendance as one of the larger and best assemblies. “We’re in this together and we’re all working toward a common goal.” Crozon said Knott brought out very clearly that as priests they all share in the ministry of the archbishop. “So we have to get a sense of the archbishop’s mind, we have to know that it’s not just us that’s doing this but together as a unified ministry. It’s taking away from that sense of congregationalism that sometimes in some of our parishes suffer from and toward a wider view of church and working together with the church in a unified body.” Crozon said it’s not operating our parishes just on our own as happens in some denominations “we’re doing it as a whole archdiocese or a whole presbyterate.”

God put desires in your heart

By Blake Sittler

PHILADELPHIA — Where Is This Relationship Going? Dating as Discernment was one of the presentations attended by many of the younger participants at the World Meeting of Families Sept. 22 - 25 in Philadelphia. Some 20,000 Catholics from over 100 countries heard experts speak on a wide range of topics at the international gathering.

Three speakers took turns sharing thoughts about the goal of dating, the meaning of discernment and discussing how the dating years should be considered a time of growing in self-knowledge. The

presenters used humour, PowerPoint, music and a live web application to build several word collages that were created in real-time by the participants.

Brian Barcaro, co-founder and CEO of CatholicMatch.com, spoke about what he called “the growing singleness gap.”

“Ten years ago, Chicago had 16,000 marriages a year in their parishes,” he explained. “This past year, that number is closer to 6,000.”

This trend has been noted as a concern by most dioceses in North America. Couples not connected to their faith are more likely to simply live common law or,

if they do marry, will marry in another Christian denomination or faith, at a “destination wedding,” or will marry civilly.

Barcaro describes the website as a place where single Catholics can meet other Catholics for “faith focused dating.”

The second presenter, Danielle Bean, a mother of eight, is publisher and editor-in-chief of Catholic Digest. She also hosts a Catholic women’s talk show called The Gist, and is seen on CatholicTV.

Bean began by evaluating the messages that exist in the contemporary dating culture.

“Women sometimes think, ‘Men don’t want to get married. They want something like they see in magazines or on the Internet,’ ” she offered.

“We want to meet someone who is Catholic but not too Catholic,” she said, adding: “These filters set us up for failure.”

Bean painted a picture of marriage as a vocation, a calling from God, and of the young people dating as disciples discerning their calling.

“God has made all of us individually for a mission,” she said. “And God is waiting for us to say ‘yes.’ ”

Bean described marriage as an “icon of God’s love for us” and challenged those listening to be as committed to Christ in their dating as Jesus is to them.

“When you look at a crucifix, you don’t see a guy hanging there

— ATTUNE OUR EARS, page 4



Blake Sittler

DATING AND DISCERNMENT — Devon Hardington, Matthew Scott, Annie Atwood, and Grace Wood (from left) were four of the young participants at a World Meeting of the Families session on dating and discernment.

Nostra Aetate changed the culture of the church: Baum

Continued from page 1

document on Oct. 28, 1965. It was a statement from the church which caught the attention of the world and the spirit of the age.

It was sprung upon the world at the same time as Canadians were discovering multiculturalism. What started as the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963 had by 1969 opened up to the successive waves of immigration constantly remaking Canada. In the course of acknowledging the Japanese, the Jews, the Italians and the Portuguese in our midst, the 1969 final report of the royal commission invented the word “multiculturalism.” For Canadian Catholics who were the children of multiculturalism, *Nostra Aetate* struck a chord.

A Canadian was also present at the drafting of the Vatican II declaration. Theologian Gregory Baum

was chosen as an adviser to the first ever president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in 1960, Cardinal Augustin Bea. A survivor of the Holocaust born of a Jewish mother and a Protestant father who arrived in Canada as a war refugee, Baum’s perspective was vital to Bea’s work. Pope John XXIII asked Bea to craft a statement on Catholic relations with Jews in light of the murder of six million. It took almost five years for that assignment to evolve into *Nostra Aetate*.

Half a century on, Baum does not sugar-coat the idea that *Nostra Aetate* changed the self-understanding, the outlook and the culture of the Catholic Church.

“*Nostra Aetate* really is a change teaching,” Baum told The Catholic Register in 2012. “I can’t really blame Catholics for being upset about it. This is really new.”

“The Catholic Church rejects

nothing of what is true and holy in these religions,” wrote the council fathers.

“The church, therefore, urges her sons to enter with prudence and charity into discussion and collaboration with members of other religions.”

For a generation of Catholics who grew up unable to attend the weddings and funerals of even Protestants, let alone Jews, Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists, this changed how they were to be Catholic.

“It’s the first time in the history of Christianity that a church has said something positive about religious pluralism,” said Baum.

This wasn’t just sticking a smiley face on the grim, old church. It required a new mindset.

“If you are in dialogue with Protestants and Jews, you want to be in dialogue with your own church,” Baum points out.

Redemptorist Father Paul Hansen was a young priest in Germany studying serious theology as the age of *Nostra Aetate* dawned, but 50 years on he’s still anxious to talk about the implications of that declaration.

“The network of the Catholic Church throughout the world has the potential to be a unifying force given the struggles we’re facing,” Hansen told The Catholic Register during a break at the Responsibility to Engage conference at Toronto’s University of St. Michael’s College Oct. 8 — a gathering of theologians, politicians, clergy and other scholars in Toronto to think about the revolution in religious dialogue launched 50 years ago.

Though it was certainly the product of its time, the Cold War included, *Nostra Aetate* still speaks to us today in new and interesting ways, said Hansen.

“We’re on the verge,” he said. “Because of instant communication and because of the incredible dismissal you might say of the nation state to a global village, we need a structure that’s going to carry the human family forward.”

Is dialogue such a structure? More than you might suppose, suggests Champagne. After *Nostra Aetate*, Blessed Pope Paul VI issued his first encyclical. In *Ecclesiam Suam* the pope defined the church in terms of its mission. It was an encyclical made possible by *Nostra Aetate*.

“He (Pope Paul) decided that dialogue would be the key word,” recalled Champagne. “Dialogue with other Christians, dialogue with other religious traditions and dialogue with people without a religious faith.”

Every pope since then has spoken of the church in terms of dialogue, none more so than Pope

Francis.

“Inter-religious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world,” Pope Francis said in 2013. “And so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities.”

A quick glance has led some to dismiss the high ideals of *Nostra Aetate* as the misguided optimism of the 1960s. But without ideals, without hope, we drown in the narcissistic triviality of self-interest, Sister Mary Boys told the St. Michael’s conference.

“We live in a maelstrom of distractions — of selfies and Twitter and . . .” said the Union Theological Seminary professor.

Dialogue is the cure. “Dialogue is not a method, it’s a way of life,” Boys said.

There is a future for the 50-year-old document if we can engage its principles against the “awful temptation for superficiality,” Dominican writer and scholar Rev. Timothy Radcliffe told The Catholic Register.

“The biggest threat to our culture is the globalization of superficiality,” Radcliffe said. “I know one of the functions of the church is to go on reminding people that behind the glitzy, bright facade there is the suffering that people are enduring.”

But you cannot know the suffering or the hope present in the world without knowing people, and knowing them deeply — knowing what they believe and how they pray and their sense of themselves.

“We have something to learn (in inter-religious dialogue) but we also have something to offer and something to say,” said Laval University theologian Rev. Gilles Routhier. “Something to share with the other. It is about dialogue in which we both receive and offer.”



Design Pics

A NIGHT FOR CHILDREN — “Halloween shadows played upon the walls of the houses. In the sky the Halloween moon raced in and out of the clouds. The Halloween wind was blowing, not a blasting of wind but a right-sized swelling, falling, and gushing of wind. It was a lovely and exciting night, exactly the kind of night Halloween should be.” — children’s author Eleanor Estes, *The Witch Family*.

We must attune our ears through prayer

Continued from page 3

who is only a little bit committed to this relationship,” she stated. “He is all in.”

Using language influenced heavily by the writings of St. John Paul II, Bean explained the important trait of self-giving or self-gift, not just in dating but in life.

“(John Paul II said) love between man and woman cannot be built without sacrifices and self-denial,” she quoted. “We probably read that in the latest issue of *Cosmo*, right? No, of course not. This is the antithesis of what our culture is telling us.”

Bean explained that a calling from God can only be heard if we listen by attuning our ears through prayer.

“We can’t have a relationship with someone we don’t talk to,” she reasoned. “And we definitely cannot (have a relationship) with someone we won’t listen to.”

Bean noted that many young people complicate their sense of the voice of God in their life. She shared the story of a young friend who had dreamed all her life of

being a mother and then went on a retreat and heard a witness talk about becoming a nun.

“This threw her into a tizzy,” she shared. “She worried that this was a call from God to become a nun.”

“God put desires in your heart because he wants to fulfil them. Those dreams of being a wife and mom were put there by God as a calling, not as a test,” she explained.

Robyn Lee was the final person to speak and approached the topic from the unique perspective of an aspirant of the Postulant of the Franciscan Sister of the Eucharist. She is also the editor of the CatholicMatch blog, Faith, Hope & Love.

Lee described an essay contest she had to judge for Catholic Match.com. The question applicants had to write on was, “Describe how you have discerned your call to marriage and how joyfully lived out your faith until they met ‘the one’?”

Lee shared how this was a question she herself had not answered and that it was the reflection that followed that helped in

her discernment.

Some of the young participants were on a mission year and were eager to share their reactions to the talks.

Devon Hardington, 17, from Jacksonville, said: “I liked how they talked about the basis of all relationships comes back to your relationship with yourself and with God.”

Grace Wood, 19, Nashville, added: “It’s at this age that we’re starting to find out who we are and trying to find that answer.”

Wood said that one of the things young single Catholics need to do to co-operate with the process is to unplug from technology for part of the day to make quiet space for prayer and reflection.

Matthew Scott, 18, Texas, said, “I like how they said that God’s will is right in front of us, it’s not hidden or difficult, it’s in you.”

“A lot of young people would resist or reject the idea of self-sacrifice in a relationship,” Scott concluded. “They’d say they could just go get some alcohol and have their own way. It’s sad but that’s what a lot of them do.”

It is God’s will that this should be happening now

Continued from page 1

a continuation of the process of reconciliation and healing between the First Nations People and the rest of our society. “This workshop we have been considering for some time. I think it is God’s will that it should happen now and at this very time in our history.”

Sister Re-Anne Letourneau, of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, heads up the Roman Catholic Aboriginal non-Aboriginal Relations Community and Rev. Dale Gillman is an Anglican Priest who is Chair of the Anglican First Nations Ministry. The two were the major presenters who were followed by a discussion period that encouraged audience participation.

Letourneau talked mostly about the importance of building relations between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, she said in a conversation with the PM.

“Our vision is relationships and our mission is to facilitate relationships and to journey together inter-culturally, rooted in truth, justice, love and humility.” As part of that process her group even changed their name from Aboriginal

Ministry to Relations Community. “We were seen as always doing something for people.”

Gillman is an Anglican priest and pastor of a church in Nokomis. She described her life and the life of her five siblings with a mother who attended a residential school.

“She always believed that white people were better than we were,” said Gillman in an interview with the PM. “She never knew how to parent and didn’t show love but she became better at it and was a better mother to her grandchildren.”

Gillman said her own grandparents, although they too were at a residential school, retained their culture and traditions and were much better parents to her and her siblings. Gillman is often called to Regina’s North Central which has a high Aboriginal population. “I see the impact of residential schools there when parents need to attend parenting school,” because they did not receive those skills from their own parents.

Klein and Jackson hope this first “conversation” will lead to other opportunities where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal can come together in understanding.

COLF anniversary letter focuses on conscience

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) marked its 20th anniversary with a reflection on the formation of conscience, entitled, “Parents, will your children be happy?”

The organization is mandated “to promote the culture of life and to build a civilization of love,” said COLF’s director Michele Boulva, who joined the organization in early 2004 as French-language co-director, and became the sole director a year later when English-language director Jennifer Leddy departed.

The latest document reflects, among other things, on one of the key themes of COLF’s focus: the universal call to holiness. “Our baptism calls us to be saints,” Boulva said. “It also calls us to be apostles. We are the first Christians of the third millennium. We live in a world very similar to the pagan world in which lived the first Christians. In the context of the new evangelization, we also need to bring people to meet Jesus Christ. This is what the new evangelization is all about. And we need to be very attentive to the Holy Spirit who is going to be sending us to our mission field in the midst of the world.”

Boulva noted the preacher to the papal household, Rev. Raniero Cantalamessa, has spoken of four waves of evangelization since the early church. The

fourth, in this “very secularized world,” will come from the laity, the priest says.

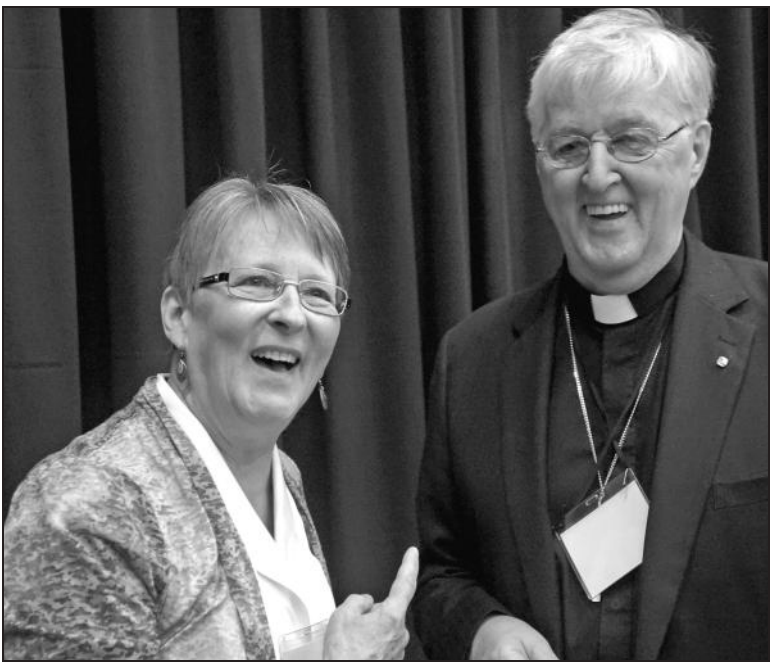
Lay apostles, responding to their baptismal call, will lead the way in enabling people to have an encounter with Christ, she said. “Where does the encounter with Christ happen?” she asked. “It’s an extraordinary encounter, but it happens in ordinary life, in your family, in your workplace, wherever you go for social, cultural activities.”

“You are called to be an apostle, first with your own children, to bring them to Christ, to bring them to accept Christ, and do the same with your colleagues at work,” she said. “We are also called to be active citizens because we have a right to freedom of conscience and religion.”

“We need to transform the world with Christ by bringing our values to the public square, to where we work. We need leaders who have a Christian formation and who will help not necessarily by naming Christ every five minutes, but by making choices and decisions inspired by Christ’s teachings.”

COLF’s latest document aims to equip and support families as they dedicate themselves to the education of their children in the hope that they come to choose what “is good, beautiful, right and true,” she said.

“By creating us free, in his image and likeness, God also imprinted deep in our heart a law — Natural Law — which, if we



CCN/D. Gyapong

COLF ANNIVERSARY — Michele Boulva, director of the Catholic Organization for Life and Family, with Valleyfield Bishop Noel Simard, former president of the COLF board and one of the CCCB delegates to the synod on the family.

respect it, leads us to live and love as God does and, as a result, to be happy,” says the document released Oct. 13, while the synod of the family was underway in Rome.

The document challenges the notion that truth is subjective or relative, where “everything is seen as relative . . . it all depends on my perspective, my experience, my preferences.”

It stresses the importance of forming conscience in children, especially as society threatens freedom of conscience. “When

indifference, religious ignorance, moral relativism, doctrinal errors and confusion prevail, consciences are stifled, misguided, and as a result become lukewarm or die,” it says.

It outlines the important role parents play in teaching moral responsibility and inculcating virtue into their children and in teaching the true value of freedom. “Upon reflection, there is nothing more essential than to lead our children to heaven,” the document said.

It ends with a suggested work-

shop to help families deepen their reflection.

Co-founded and funded by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus, COLF is a non-profit organization working in close collaboration with the CCCB. Its mission is to “promote Catholic teachings on life and family” and to “educate and support families in their mission in the church and in society,” she said.

“We want to reach out to families through parishes, dioceses, movements and associations,” Boulva said, by means of our publications, seminars, workshops and participation in public debate on moral issues such as euthanasia. Over the years, COLF has produced documents on subjects ranging from marriage, abortion, euthanasia, assisted human procreation, end-of-life issues, education, seniors, vocations, youth, work, natural family planning, etc., she said.

Boulva said she finds it encouraging to see the church focusing more and more on marriage and the family, noting the two synods on the family this year and last year, as well as the recent World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia in September.

She pointed out that the canonization Oct. 18 of Zélie and Louis Martin, the parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, during the synod, “sends a very strong message out that marriage is a vocation and a path to holiness.”

Ottawa archbishop invites faithful to participate in Year of Mercy

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Ottawa’s archbishop will invite the faithful to perform corporal and spiritual works of mercy during the Jubilee Year of Mercy commencing Dec. 8.

“What can you do to be an example of merciful love and service, reflecting in some small way God’s love and mercy?” Ottawa Archbishop Terrence Prendergast asked 700 Catholics gathered for the eighth Archbishop’s Benefit Dinner Oct. 21. “Whom should you forgive? Of whom should you ask forgiveness? Who needs your kindness?”

“If we seek them, God will provide us with opportunities to be merciful to others, as the heavenly Father has been and will be



CCN/D. Gyapong

Archbishop Terrence Prendergast

merciful to us,” he said.

Prendergast said he would soon issue a pastoral letter mak-

ing the invitation that each of the faithful perform at least one corporal and one spiritual work of mercy during the year. He said he would also “encourage each Catholic to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation — to go to confession — during the Year of Mercy.”

The diocese is preparing a Holy Door of Mercy for Notre Dame Cathedral to “give expression to our desire to receive God’s mercy toward us and to share it with others,” he said, inviting Catholics to “make a pilgrimage to pass through the Holy Door,” after it opens Dec. 12, perhaps with other parish members, prayers groups, or other associations.

The archbishop listed the corporal and spiritual works of mercy through illustrating the

work done by the charities supporting the fundraising dinner this year.

“Performing the corporal works of mercy is frequently satisfying and gives us a sense of achievement,” he said. “To feed the hungry and to give drink to the thirsty at the Hawkesbury Food Bank or St. Joseph’s Supper Table; to clothe the naked; to welcome the stranger; to shelter the homeless through the Catholic Centre for Immigrants, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, or Chez Mère Bruyère; to visit the sick and imprisoned; or to bury the dead through various outreach programs — all can touch us profoundly for the better.”

“Compassion to others changes something in our hearts, in the core of our beings,” he said. “The spiritual works of mercy are less known and often harder to perform. They are: to instruct the ignorant; to counsel the doubtful; to admonish sinners; to bear wrongs patiently; to forgive offences willingly; to comfort the afflicted; to pray for the living and the dead.”

“Yet these spiritual works of mercy often are very close to what is done through Kateri Native Ministries to support, heal and renew our Aboriginal brothers and sisters or to what we do when we support the struggling parents of our young people, the children themselves, or our fellow workers, relatives, and friends,” he said.

Prendergast spoke of one of

the pope’s titles as Servant of the Servants of God, noting how Pope Francis “humbles himself to go out to the margins” and “embraces” those “on the peripheries.”


“He challenges us to do the same: go out to those who are hurting, lost, abandoned, or alienated, and bring them in,” the archbishop said. “Serve them. Humbly remind them of their glorious identity in Christ. This is being a servant-leader.”

The theme for the 2015-2016 pastoral year is The Family: Home of Love and Mercy, the archbishop said.

“Children, families, parents and grandparents, siblings, uncles, and aunts crave a hearth where they can find love, affirmation, and support,” he said. “But because families are also places where hurts occur, misunderstandings take place, and disappointments are common, family members do not find what they deeply yearn for.”

“We need to help the family to be the locus of mercy, of healing, of renewal, of transformation,” he said. “Humbly aware that God alone is perfect, we must safeguard each person’s dignity. Every child should know that his identity, his value, is in being God’s handiwork and the adopted son or daughter of God.”

He urged parents to correct their children without angering them and when offences occur to seek and offer forgiveness.



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Prendergast spoke of one of

Nuncio visits First Nations in Prince Albert

By Paula Fournier

PRINCE ALBERT — On the first day of his visit to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Prince Albert, Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, spent time at Muskeg Lake Cree Nation. The urban councillor of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, Paul Ledoux, gave the official welcome and asked the nuncio to carry messages from the First Nation to the Holy Father. An elder from the community welcomed the nuncio. She told him she had watched the televised visit of Pope Francis to the

United States and was continuing to pray for him. Rev. Tuyen Vu, pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Muskeg Lake and three other parishes in the area, said he prayed for the nuncio to have the grace needed for his ministry in Canada. Mark Arcand, vice-chief of the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) Treaty Office, also welcomed the nuncio. “We believe it’s important and a sign that you are here that we all need to work together. You are welcome to be part of our families, suppers and songs; you are making a differ-

ence with our young people.” Councillor Harry Lafond of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation explained the significance of the traditional smudging ceremony as it was performed. A representative from St. Michael Parish at Beardy’s and Okemasis First Nation spoke on being Cree and Catholic today. He spoke of the challenges of difficult roads, upkeep on an old building and sharing a parish priest. He was grateful for the aid sent by Catholic Missions in Canada to help bring in a priest. Sturgeon Lake First Nation representative A.J. Felix de-

scribed his earliest memory of church as going to Christmas midnight mass on a sleigh pulled by horses strapped with bells. Children sat covered in blankets between bales, while the teams of horses steamed from the hard work in the snow. Felix remembered glorious music and feeling the presence of something special. Once mass was done, they stopped at every home until they reached their own. He told the congregation that confirmation and baptism are special to those living in Muskeg Lake. To them, God is everywhere. He explained the spirits of the four directions and the tradition of smudging with sweetgrass, a part of their people for thousands of years. He said the First Nations people smudge for healing, hope, blessing, cleansing, prayer, sickness, the birth of a new child and as their elders go out of the world. Bishop Albert Thévenot, M. Afr., told the congregation the path that lies before them is the goodness of God, which we are all called to share in, but we should not live in the past. “To follow our life is a path. We need to tell our stories but not remain in them. The drums call us to celebrate. Today we are creating bonds. Before us lies a new season. Let us open ourselves to the Creator.” The Ave Maria was sung in Cree by Dolores Sand, followed by the prayer of the four directions. The readings were spoken in English and Cree. The elders were invited to surround the nuncio as he bowed his head for a blessing. Many came to raise their hands over him. The nuncio said he was filled by the deep experience. He sensed the road he had travelled to the church was a true Canadian road, showing for him a true Canadian experience. “I listened tonight like never before, especially to the Christmas story. The description— never before have I heard a story

like it. This event helps me make a reference to a passage from St. Paul to the Corinthians. Christmas is a beautiful story, an event at which we become a new Christian. Deep inside us, we aspire to recognize God who lives. He says, ‘I cannot stay alone without my children. I wish to go and stay with them, unite my life and live with them until their death and to embrace them in their death to eternal life.’ This is what Jesus has done — his life with ours. This is our Saviour.” All who attended the celebration went for a potluck supper at the Kihiw Waciston gymnasium across the road from the church. An elder from the community blessed the meal. Men, women and children came forward to perform traditional dances as young men from Big River First Nation drummed together. Ending the evening, Harry Lafond presented the nuncio with tobacco and an eagle feather, each in a homemade wooden box. Necklaces of wooden beads were given to Thévenot and the nuncio. The young drummers presented them with a drumming stick. The nuncio spoke to the pastors on being a priest and about the New Evangelization. “The ordained ministry can only be carried out as a collective work,” he stressed. “It is in communion with my bishop and all my brother priests that I serve my parish.” On his last day in the Prince Albert Diocese, the nuncio celebrated mass with diocesan staff in their chapel area. He encouraged them to continue their work bringing faith to communities in the diocese. He joined the bishop and the diocesan staff for a breakfast prepared by staff members. He presented a special Vatican coin to the diocesan staff as a token of his prayers. Reflecting on the visit, Thévenot said he feels Bonazzi now has a better understanding of reality in the prairies. “I believe he left with joyful feelings.”

Regina adds five new staff members

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Each of five new Regina archdiocesan staff members said their decision to join the archdiocese was influenced in some way by their faith and a call from God to serve. Braden Kuntz is working with Michelle Braden in youth ministry; Jeanine Mann and Diana Demaria provide general staff support with Mann providing support to Brett Salkeld in the diocesan program and ecumenical office as well as Social Justice and Communications. Demaria provides office support for Denise Walsh in the annual appeal office; Jennifer Ochieng is the assistant financial officer and Eric Gurash is the co-ordinator for Lay Ministry and Evangelization. Four fill positions left vacant through retirements while Kuntz is in a new position to support a growing workload in youth ministry. Ochieng obtained her CA designation while working with the provincial auditor’s office. Coming to the archdiocese business office she said was a unique opportunity to combine faith and accounting. “There was a little



NEW STAFF — Braden Kuntz, Jeanine Mann, Jennifer Ochieng, Eric Gurash and Diana Demaria (from the left) recently joined the Regina archdiocese as staff members.

call from God there, too, pulling on my heartstrings.” Kuntz worked as co-ordinator of Youth Ministry at Regina’s Resurrection Parish for two years and through that did some work with archdiocesan youth co-ordinator Michelle Braden on the Young Adult Leadership Team. “It’s a new opportunity and jobs don’t open up very often at the archdiocese, so I thought I would give it a chance.” Mann worked in retail before

becoming pastoral assistant at Holy Cross. “They were having difficulty filling the position and I felt a call to step in.” She stayed for a year and a half but didn’t feel she was meant to stay there. She didn’t renew her contract and took some casual work until the archdiocese opened and appealed to her. Gurash was pastoral assistant at Christ the King Parish for 14 years before arriving at the archdiocese. He said he felt God was calling him to a different form of ministry. “One of the things about this ministry is that it allows me to focus in on a particular area of ministry. Here I can focus on adult faith formation.” He hopes to put more emphasis on the evangelization side of his ministry. Demaria and her husband came to Canada from France for a new life of opportunity. She was an adviser for overseas employment and felt guided by the Holy Spirit to work with people experiencing professional, health and family issues. “Working with the archdiocese gives me the opportunity to live my faith every day to deepen and strengthen my relationship with Christ.” It also helps her focus on Christian values. “I truly feel in symbiosis with this peaceful environment that helps me grow spiritually.”

Life chain an act of gratitude

By Jennifer Hettrick

PRINCE ALBERT — On Sunday, Oct. 4, over 80 members of the pro-life community united at Kinsmen Park in Prince Albert to participate in an international event. For an hour, they stood along 2nd Avenue in silent prayer for the end of abortion, and for its victims. They held signs that stated various pro-life messages. All across North America, thousands of people come together annually in over 1,900 different locations to participate in the Life Chain and to build a culture of life. Despite the cold and the impending rain, many pro-lifers spent their Sunday afternoon bearing witness to the beauty of life, and showing support for both pregnant and post-abortive mothers and fathers. The annual event has been held in Prince Albert for over 25 years. Generally, members find that those who do not support the pro-life movement do not respond to the silent prayer vigil, other than the occasional rude gesture or shout. However, this year a group of four stood on the oppo-

site side of the street with homemade signs promoting abortion. Keeping to the spirit of the Life Chain, none of those gathered stepped forward in confrontation. However, one organizer invited them to join the group after the event for coffee and donuts, which they accepted. Through a generous donation from St. James Parish in Albertville, the Life Chain group was able to purchase two new signs displaying the crisis pregnancy number in Canada. “I have attended the Life Chain on several different occasions,” one young woman said. “This year, however, was the first time I experienced it as a sincere moment of giving thanks for my own life and for the opportunity to stand and give witness to the beauty of life and the true pain which comes from abortion. Although I may not have used words to express my gratitude, I was able to express it through silent witness and prayer. I only hope that the individuals who saw my sign will perhaps give thanks for their own lives, and take a step forward to promote the culture of life.”



HANDS ACROSS THE BRIDGE — Some 150 people gathered for Hands Across the Bridge Oct. 17 in Saskatoon, marking the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. Although participants did not manage to span the entire Broadway Bridge, they offered passing cars a visible sign of solidarity with the poor on both sides of the river, said Vanessa Charles of the Saskatoon Ant-Poverty Coalition. “Our brothers and sisters are living in poverty on both sides of the bridge,” she said. “Rents on the east side are the same as rents on the west side: unreachable.”

Sisters in Spirit vigil held in Saskatoon

By Andr  a Ledding

SASKATOON — For the 10th year, *Iskwewuk E-Wichiwitochik* (Women Walking Together) organized an Oct. 4 Sisters in Spirit march to bring support and awareness to the issue of murdered and missing Aboriginal women, and missing and murdered people in general.

“How does a 78-year-old woman in a safe community suddenly go missing?” asked co-chair and emcee Myrna Laplante, referencing the 2007 disappearance of her aunt Emily Osmond from Kawacatoose First Nation. “How is it that a woman that goes out with her partner is all of a sudden found deceased?”

Laplante was one of many who spoke about missing or murdered loved ones at the well-

attended gathering. The march was led by a female drum group from Station 20 West through the core neighbourhood, followed by greetings from Saskatoon Tribal Chief Felix Thomas, M  tis-Nation Saskatchewan President Robert Doucette, and Saskatoon Police Chief Clive Weighill.

Thomas said that he wants more done to prevent these crimes from happening. Doucette spoke of his own female family members, before noting that history records this happening even in the 1800s.

“Conservative Prime Minister John A. Macdonald was receiving letters complaining about Aboriginal women being (taken and abused, or disappeared or coerced into the sex trade) and he did nothing,” noted Doucette.

Weighill also weighed in, say-

ing that as a police chief he tries to stay apolitical, but it is hard not to make observations over time.

He agrees in that it is a criminal matter when people are killed or disappeared. “But when you see the socio-economic factors, the poverty, the racism, it’s also systemic. We need to get to the root cause of this.”

Saskatoon City Police are collaborating on a monument to provide a memorial and a place to gather or reflect.

After soup and bannock and official greetings, family members and friends were invited to light candles and mention whom they were for. Several family members spoke about their experiences, beginning with Monica Bosse, Daleen Kay Bosse Muskego’s sister-in-law.

“Our story began in 2004 . . . and we didn’t find Daleen until four years later,” Monica said. “She’d been lit on fire . . . Douglas Hales is currently in jail for 15 years so our family received justice if you can call it that. My niece

doesn’t remember her mom.”

Carol Wolfe spoke about her daughter Karina Beth Ann Wolfe, who has been missing five years now, via an interpreter. “She’s my only daughter. The last thing she signed was ‘I love you Mom’ — now five years later I’m still waiting for her to come home. I will never stop searching for her. I will not give up on Karina. . . . When will the governments listen about murdered and missing in Canada? It is time.”

She also requested people to remember the missing and murdered, and their families, in their prayers. Darlene Okemaysim-Sicotte, co-chair with Myrna LaPlante of the organizing group *Iskwewuk E-Wichiwitochik* which began in 2005, shared her own experience with cousin Shelly Napope, a victim of John Crawford, a serial killer.

“The family had reported her missing about 30 times and that was something I learned over the years. Also back then before all of this awareness is the way the media

portrayed Shelly and over the years her lifestyle — I don’t think people realize these are loved ones, people missed them, they impacted their families and they were missed. When she was located, even the media were at the reserve taking footage of her casket being brought in, there was just no privacy for the family to mourn. All I could do was pray for my aunt.”

She wanted to show what families of the past had to endure quite typically, and spoke about improvements that have come forth via advocacy and education. She also urged people to keep families in their prayers and continue to share photographs on social media when women go missing, even just to support the families.

Marilyn Wapass spoke about her sister for the third time in a week.

“It’s been a rough week. Fourteen years ago my little sister went missing here in the city. I looked for her and couldn’t find her

— BODY, page 12



JUBILEES — Ursulines of Prelate gathered with family and friends last August to celebrate the Golden Jubilees of Sister Bernadette Feist (left) and Sister Mary Zerr. The Jubilee day was marked with a festive eucharistic liturgy, a banquet and a short program.

St. Theresa Feast Day celebrated in Wakaw

By Mary Nagy

WAKAW, Sask. — The Oct. 1 morning celebration at St. Theresa Parish in Wakaw began with the arrival of St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission students from Bruno, Sask. Thirty-eight students, along with their director of formation and three instructors, joined with parishioners to celebrate the Feast Day of St. Theresa.

Founded in 2007, St. Therese Institute is a Christian community of faith formation for youth aged 18 to 35 in Bruno. Retreats for adults are held in their Healing and Growth Centre. The vision of the institute is to live in the charisms of the Little Way of St. Th  r  se of Lisieux. The group started coming to the Wakaw parish about seven years ago for an annual day of devotion in honour of St. Therese of the Child Jesus.

After an initial welcome by a local parishioner, director of St. Therese School Jim Anderson outlined the agenda. The morning began with eucharistic celebration presided by Pastor Rev. Phong Tran, concelebrated by visiting priest Rev. Dennis Phaneuf from Saskatoon. The choral group, with guitars and other instrumentals, led the music liturgy.

Guest speaker Chris O’Hara

gave a talk on St. Th  r  se and her faith in restoring relationships by practising the Mercies of the Lord. He emphasized how important this was to St. Th  r  se for her formation, to know the mercy of God through His love and forgiveness.

Wakaw parishioners prepared and served a lunch to all in attendance. Lunch was followed by a talk from Lisa Anderson, a core instructor at the school. She spoke about the parents of St. Th  r  se, Louis and Z  lie Martin, canonized on Oct. 18, the first couple ever to be canonized at the same ceremony. Lisa said it is very important for us to know and understand the extremely difficult lives of the Martins. Despite their trials and tribulations, they were still able to maintain their sanctity. Lisa feels their canonization will be “a spark to us in today’s married world to give us hope for our own family life and sanctity.”

Reciting the rosary and meditations on St. Th  r  se followed. Each student received a lighted candle from Anderson and placed it on the altar as a sign of devotion to St. Th  r  se of Lisieux and their commitment to their year of formation.

The program concluded with adoration.

Sod turned for new school in Regina

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — Construction of a new Sacred Heart Community School began Oct. 2 with an official sod turning attended by Finance Minister Kevin Doherty, Deputy Mayor Wade Murray, Regina Elphinstone-Centre MLA Warren McCall, Elder Mike Pinay, school board members, senior school board administrators and children of Sacred Heart Community School. The sod turning took place on the northwest corner of school property. It is scheduled to be completed by September 2017. The government is contributing \$27 million to the project.

The school was built in 1928. It is an iconic structure in North Central Regina and acts not only as a community school but has become something of a community centre as well. It hosts several after-school programs and is noted for its emphasis on reading in all grade levels.

It had been on the Regina Catholic School Division’s wish list for a new school but the gov-

ernment moved it up the list when the gymnasium began falling apart: the score board and several ceiling lights detached from the wall and ceiling; the gym became dangerous and was closed in 2014. Students now use the former Sacred Heart Church, which the school board purchased and revamped into a temporary gym.

Doherty, speaking on behalf of Education Minister Don Morgan, said the government was pleased to support construction of a new state-of-the-art school. “Our government recognized the need to provide students and staff at Sacred Heart with an innovative and modern Catholic school that will respect the rich history of the current building,” said Doherty in a prepared release.

The new school will accommodate up to 700 students from pre-kindergarten to Grade 8 and will include a dedicated community space as well room for a 51-space childcare centre. Some of the unique brick work, tyndall stone and columns of the old school will be incorporated into

the new one and the iconic Sacred Heart statue that now stands at the entrance will be featured in the new school.

School Board chair Rob Bresciani said the board was pleased that construction is underway and recognized its need for a growing student enrolment. “We are experiencing unprecedented growth and we need this school to accommodate our students.”

Deputy Mayor Wade Murray brought greetings on behalf of the city of Regina and said he was pleased to see construction begin on this much-needed school.

Rev. John Weckend who regularly visits the school, said a prayer and blessed the area with holy water. Elder Mike Pinay noted the school is on Treaty Four Land and explained when Mother Earth is going to be disturbed it is appropriate to bless that land, which he did silently while holding a handful of earth.

The official party then proceeded with the formal sod turning using the traditional gold-coloured shovels.



COMMUNITY SCHOOL — Students and community and school leaders take part in a traditional sod-turning ceremony for the new Sacred Heart Community School in Regina.

Stories of our youth can resonate for a lifetime

Around the Kitchen Table

Lloyd Ratzlaff



Good morrow, good fellow, and a right lusty blade thou art. For whom shineth this autumn sun if not for thee? Whence hath the world tended if not hither, and whither goeth it but hence? Now by the good Saint Dunstan (whosoe'er he may be), this day seemeth the very morn of creation, and the day of salvation withal. Now will I hie me to the shower, for methinks I am wondrously smelly. In forest glades dwell I not, but haply nigh unto the South Saskatchewan River, whereat befall many merry adventures yesteryear and anon.

Methinks this turneth into crap.

The stories of Robin Hood first captivated me when my fifth grade teacher read them to us from a book by Howard Pyle. I went home and begged for my own copy, but it was Grandpa Gliedge who put it under the Christmas tree for me that year, and later I inscribed it myself as a way of showing my gratitude.

I was enchanted by these stories' marvellous diction, and to this day they hold more charm for me than any late-born movie like Men in Tights can do. Here, as a seasonal example, is Pyle's description of the arrival of autumn: "Now the hips burned red in the tangled thickets and the haws waxed black in the

hedgerows, the stubble lay all crisp and naked to the sky, and the green leaves were fast turning russet and brown. Also, at this merry season, good things of the year are gathered in great store. Brown ale lies ripening in the cellar, hams and bacon hang in the smoke-shed, and crabs are stowed away in the straw for roasting in the winter time, when the north wind piles the snow in drifts around the gables and the fire crackles warm upon the hearth."

To my ears, the Robin Hood stories sounded almost like the King James Bible which I read privately at home and heard expounded in church. But these lusty tales, so far from reinforcing my customary guilt, released me from it, at least for the time being. For if Robin and his merry men (the stories often call them "gay") could plunder the rich and distribute money to the poor, quaff pottles of good October brewing while feasting on the king's poached venison, make a perpetual fool of that vile Sheriff of Nottingham, take tremendous risks and endure the consequences, and do all of this in the King's own English — well, it helped tilt my sombre religion a bit more toward the centre. Robin's adventures made injustice and mindless laws vulnerable, and turned them to the higher advantage of a free life with plenty of humour thrown in to boot.

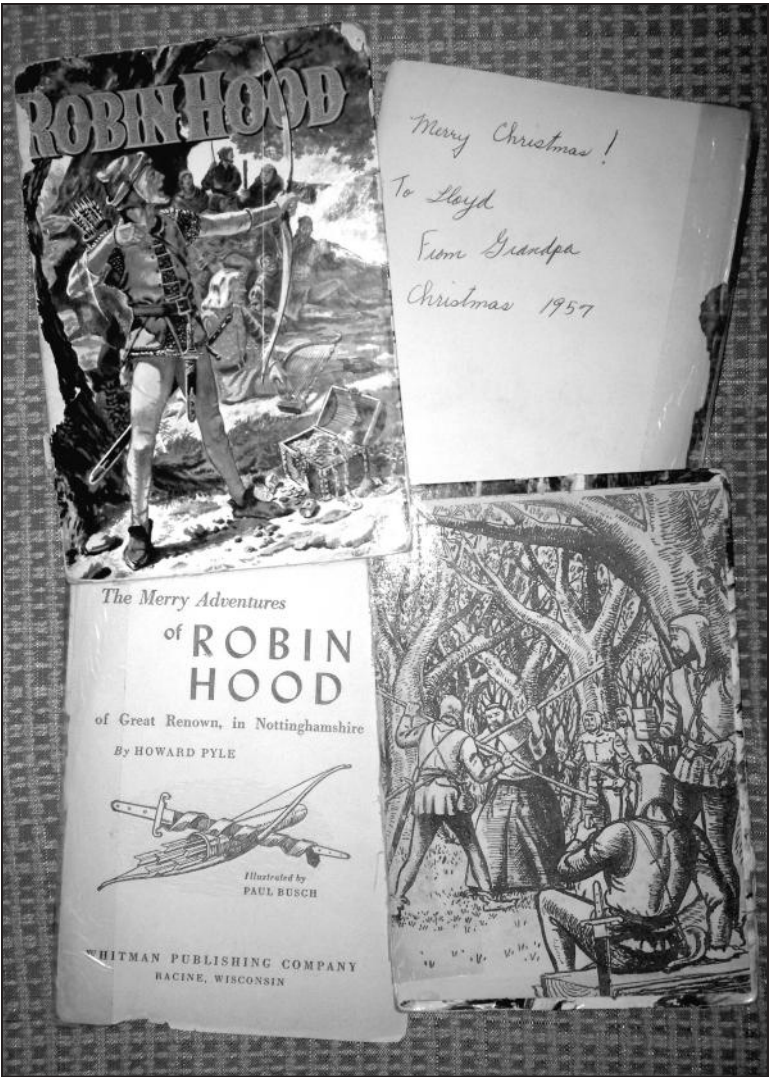
Look at the overblown curses! When Robin first encounters the seven-foot John Little on a log bridge — the foe who would shortly become his right-hand man, Littlejohn — he at once challenges him to a duel: "By the bright brow of Saint Aelfrida, I will show thee right good Nottingham play with a clothyard shaft betwixt thy ribs." The opponent replies, "I will tan thy hide

till it be as many colours as a beggar's cloak." And Robin retorts, "Thou pratest like an ass, for I could send this shaft clean through thy proud heart before a curtal friar say grace over a roast goose at Michaelmastide" — a threat longer in the utterance than the friar's own prayer.

There was Wat the Tinker, Midge the Miller, and a Tanner named Arthur a Bland — how they fought with Robin and hurled maledictions back and forth before being inveigled into joining his band. "By the lusty yew bow of good Saint Withold; by the pewter platter of Saint Dunstan; by the white hand of the holy Lady of the fountain, I have a right round piece of mind to crack thy knave's pate." All those bruising, beatings, and bemauling of pates, the bombastic oaths to prick some rogue's skin until it was as full of holes as a slashed doublet.

The foul Sheriff of Nottingham reasons within himself concerning the famous Sherwood outlaw, news of whom has reached even to the spires and towers of great London Town, "I must either take him captive or have wrath visited on my head from his most gracious Majesty" (sitting in my fifth-grade desk while the teacher read this, I tried not to think about the God who was far more majestic and wrathful even than old King Henry).

Most of all, I think I relished the account of Robin's first meeting with the Friar of Fountain Abbey. The burly Tuck with his shaven crown sits under a tree beside the river consuming a great loaf of bread, ever and anon pulling at an equally great flask of Malmsey, and talking so loudly to himself that Robin nearly dies




L. Ratzlaff

WELL READ — Lloyd Ratzlaff's copy of Robin Hood is so dilapidated from years of rereading that it's finally fallen apart altogether, but even so he says he'll never throw it away.

laughing as he finally bursts from the covert where he has hidden to spy. Tuck bellows at him, "Come forth, thou limb of evil and I will carve thee into as fine pudding-meat as e'er a wife in Yorkshire cooked of a Sunday," and from beneath his friar's garb draws "a great broadsword full as stout as Robin's."

If you want to know how Friar Tuck out-tricked the renowned Trickster of Nottingham, you can read the book for yourself. As for me, I already knew back in the fifth grade that I had no chance of ever being yeoman, sheriff, knight, baron, or abbot. But a squat mendicant enjoying his picnic beside a river, well, who could tell . . . ?

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



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Stories from an Afghanistan we hardly knew

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



On Sept. 29 Canada’s three main political party leaders engaged in a two-hour debate on foreign policy issues without once mentioning Afghanistan — our intervention which lasted a decade and was the costliest, in lives and money, since the Korean war. One might be lulled into thinking there was nothing to discuss. Yet that same day Taliban insurgents took control of a major Afghan city, Kunduz, for the first time since the 2001 western invasion that toppled their regime. Afghanistan’s situation is dire enough that the country is the second biggest source, after Syria, of desperate refugees flooding into Europe. Moreover, the question of Canada’s treatment of Afghan detainees has not been settled as argued by a recent report, *Torture of Afghan Detainees: Canada’s Alleged Complicity and the Need for a Public Inquiry*, released by the Rideau Institute and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

The Afghanistan Canadian politicians no longer want to talk about what was featured in five movies at the Toronto film festival, some more illuminating than others, and is also the subject of the award-winning documentary *Frame By Frame* that premiered at Austin’s South by Southwest festival in March.

Hyena Road (Canada)

With a big budget by Canadian standards and heavy promotion, writer-director-producer and star Paul Gross (Passchendaele) brings to the screen a war story set during Canada’s combat mission in violent Kandahar province. The opening sequence has the leader of a sniper team, Ryan Sanders (Rossif Sutherland), take out a Taliban laying an improvised explosive device, followed by intense scenes of Canadian troops

under fire. Fortunately though, the movie exudes none of the flag-waving rah-rah superiority of 2014’s *American Sniper*. Indeed, “there’s no winning,” concedes the senior intelligence officer Pete Mitchell, played by a white-haired Gross who introduces bits of context in voiceover and dialogue. Moreover, several strong Afghan characters have important roles, chiefly a veteran *mujahid* (Neamat Arghandabi), known as “The Ghost” and “Lion of the desert” for fighting the Soviets, whom Mitchell seeks out as an ally, using his fixer nicknamed “The Cleaner” (Nabil Elouahabi) as a go-between to arrange meetings. The Canadians’ road-building project also involves dealing with a local official “BDK” (Fazal Hakimi) — reputed to be in the pay of the CIA — whose corruption and treachery in playing both sides lead to a bloody conclusion. It’s one “hell of a road” all right.

A subplot of secretive romance between father-to-be Ryan and his communications controller Jennifer Bowman (Christine Horne) at Kandahar Airfield HQ seems primarily designed to add painful poignancy to a final heroic sacrifice. Still that’s a minor distraction from the realistic portrayal of military operations and complicated relationships with the local population, a verisimilitude impressive for a film shot in Jordan and on Canadian Forces Base Shilo in Manitoba. Moreover, the tone of sobering ambivalence about what can be achieved befits a mission that faced long odds whatever its intentions.

Kilo Two Bravo (U.K.)

This war-is-hell docudrama account focuses only on what happens to western soldiers, specifically British paratroopers charged with guarding the Kajaki Dam in Helmand province. No Afghan faces are shown apart from the opening few minutes and no geopolitical context is explained. Director Paul Katis opts for a highly realistic recreation of the events of Sept. 6, 2006, when soldiers on patrol stumbled into a minefield entering a wadi (an intermittently dry riverbed). During the Russian occupation huge numbers of mines were dropped from the air, many of which washed down into these wadis. Ultimately four

mines were set off causing grave injuries to a number of soldiers as shown in extremely explicit scenes of gory dismemberment, trauma and raw expletives. The situation was made critically worse by operational complications resulting in a four-hour wait before helicopter rescue. The actions of medic Paul “Tug” Hartley (played by Mark Stanley) during that time were certainly heroic. All but one of the wounded survived the ordeal.

Such movies may be a useful reminder of the horrors experienced by some Afghan veterans. Yet despite 14 years of western intervention, they could never be shot in their actual settings because the country is far too dangerous. At the TIFF screening, where the real Paul Hartley was present, director Katis cracked that the Jordanian location they found was conveniently close to a five-star hotel. While reliving our wartime sacrifices in comfort we need to spare a thought for the Afghans who are still being blown up at a terrible rate.

Thank You for Bombing (Austria)

Originally planned as a documentary, Austrian director Barbara Eder delivers in three chapters a severely critical look at what happens to journalists covering war stories. The context is explosive allegations of American soldiers burning a Quran leading to popular outrage among Afghans. In the first chapter veteran Austrian reporter Ewald is ordered to Kabul to investigate when in the airport he spies a fugitive Serbian war criminal who killed his cameraman in Bosnia years earlier. His editor, however, has no interest in old war stories. The second chapter takes us to Afghanistan where ambitious American female television journalist Lana takes crazy risks and sacrifices her dignity to get the lowdown on the two American GIs, Fitz and Bergman, implicated in the Quran-burning scandal. The third chapter follows strung-out war correspondent Cal who clashes with superiors and his wife. After going on a reckless journey to Kunduz that kills his driver, back in his Kabul hotel room he watches a suicide bombing attack with excitement. The story only leads when it bleeds.

Eder paints a rather ugly, cynical picture of the news business, of pack journalism in war zones, and of those who can become addicted to covering the trauma of war. No doubt there is some truth in these portrayals and to Eder’s credit some scenes were shot in Afghanistan. But the film lacks balance. It ignores, for example, the kind of the inspiring dedication demonstrated by veteran Canadian-born Associated Press correspondent Kathy Gannon, almost killed in a 2014 attack, and others who should be thanked for their rigorous reporting on Afghan reality.

Guantanamo’s Child: Omar Khadr (Canada)

I’ve already praised this documentary drawing on co-director Michelle Shephard’s book *Guantanamo’s Child: The Untold*

Story of Omar Khadr. The Toronto Star reporter has doggedly covered the case of Canada’s most famous child soldier for over 12 years. On July 27, in Khost, Afghanistan, Khadr almost died in a firefight with the Taliban, subsequently accused of throwing a grenade that killed an American soldier. He and his family have been portrayed as al-Qaeda sympathizers. Khadr is unsure of what actually happened and as he says, “you can’t really regret things that you didn’t have control of.” What is certain is that he was subjected to torture from his initial detention at Bagram through many years in the notorious Guantanamo prison that President Obama has promised to close. It took four years for Edmonton lawyer Dennis Edney to be granted access to him. Eventually Khadr pleaded guilty to a war crime in a flawed American military trial as the only way to be returned to Canada over the repeated obstructions of the Harper government, which opposed his May 2015 release on bail into the custody of the Edney family. With Khadr finally able to imagine a future, their determination and support on his behalf is a remarkable aspect of this continuing story.

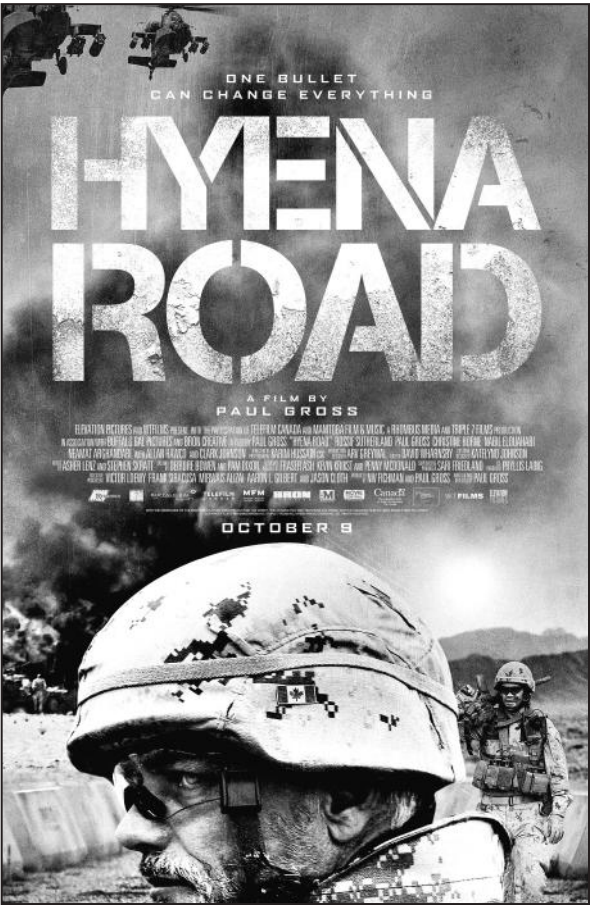
A Flickering Truth (Afghanistan/New Zealand)

I’ve also praised New Zealand writer-director Pietra Brettkelly’s documentary in a previous column. She spent years overcoming obstacles in order to bring the story of the Afghan Films archive to the screen. A key figure in its restoration is the expatriate in charge, Ibrahim Arify, who was imprisoned during the Soviet era, and who returns to his home in Germany when he considers conditions have become too dangerous. Another compelling figure is the elderly Isaaq Yousif, the faithful caretaker who has survived multiple regime changes. What Brettkelly discovers is a vibrant cinematic history. As she told Scott Macauley of Filmmaker Magazine: “It was such a wonderful relief and revelation when we started to see the films, that there was diversity of stories, social issues like abuse, drug use, rape were dealt with in film, and the representation of women was much more interesting than what

I’d assumed.” A team of local archivists remains who have created a mobile cinema van to bring classic film clips to rural villages. Though there are many “no-go” areas, it’s heartening to see children’s eyes opened to such flickering truths from their country’s rich cultural heritage.

Frame By Frame (Afghanistan)

As an amateur photographer, I really loved this amazing documentary (<http://www.framebyframethefilm.com/>) by Ameri-



CANADIAN FILM — With a big budget by Canadian standards and heavy promotion, writer-director-producer and star Paul Gross brings to the screen a war story set during Canada’s combat mission in violent Kandahar province, writes Gerald Schmitz.

can filmmakers Alexandria Bombach and Mo Scarpelli who in 2012 followed the work of four courageous Afghan photojournalists: Massoud Hossaini, a former refugee and Pulitzer Prize-winner, now with the Associated Press; his wife Farzana Wahidy who focuses on the situation of women; Najibullah Musesafer who risked his life during the Taliban era when photography was banned and now teaches at several universities; Wakil Kohsar who records the plague of heroin addiction and returns to his native Panjshir Valley in the lead-up to elections. They represent a photographic revolution that captures the diversity of their country up close and sheds light on its dark corners. With westerners leaving, they also realize that, as the filmmakers say, it’s up to Afghans to “take ownership of Afghanistan’s story and reveal a humanness that is rarely captured by foreign media.”

Seeing through Afghan eyes illuminates more than war dramas filmed elsewhere. Getting those images is a dangerous vocation — 2014 was the worst year in Afghanistan’s history for violence against journalists. Massoud has reason to worry that the world will forget Afghanistan again. We can’t say we weren’t warned.

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Liturgy and Life

Michael Dougherty

Long before dawn the glow of the first cooking fires flickered through the rude stick walls of the small traditional *casitas* loosely clustered around the church at the core of the village. These simple structures, usually with just one room with a hard-packed dirt floor and a thatch roof of palm fronds, would house a whole family and their simple possessions. The women rose first to fan the embers of previous night's fire back to life. Perfectly round, hand patted tortillas would then be placed on a rudimentary grill of beaten sheet metal. Once browned, they joined a growing stack ready for her family when they rose.

By dawn the men would be heading to their small *mil-pas* hacked out of the surrounding bush on the edge of the Lacondona rainforest of southern Chiapas straddling the Mexico's border with Guatemala. The corn, beans and squash they grew sustained their families and provided the surplus needed to buy needed essentials. Soon after the women and children would also be about their daily tasks.

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

Even in normal times spring meant hunger. The planting finished in May would not yield a harvest until August. Second plantings would have to hold the families through winter and all the way again until the next summer harvest.

In the fading light of the day a small Tzeltal Maya girl approached me with a simple question in Spanish, "How many tortillas do you want for tomorrow?" I knew my answer meant extra work and would tax her family's resources. The villagers of La Garrucha had asked Bishop Samuel Ruiz and the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Human Rights Centre several hours bus drive away in the town of San Cristobal de las Casas to provide international peace monitors for them. They hoped that our presence would provide a modicum of protection for them in this conflict zone. The villagers in return would provide us with a place to sleep and a kitchen where we could cook our meals, firewood and three dozen tortillas a day.

Rejected, marginalized and exploited, the people of La Garrucha after years of protests with no officials deigning to listen to their pleas, supported the Zapatista uprising in 1994. This brought the force of the state down on them. A military

Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time November 8, 2015	1 Kings 17:10-16 Psalm 146 Hebrews 9:24-28 Mark 12: 38-44
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action had forced them to flee their homes and fields the year before my stay in their village in 1997. Paramilitary actions continue to plague them even to this day.

Their crime was to speak truth to power. They sought and continue to seek to reclaim a fair share of the wealth denied to them in the resource rich state of Chiapas, their ancestral land. Fully a third of the indigenous people were reported to be severely malnourished in a state that provided staples like sugar and beef to the rest of the country. Sixty per cent of school-age children like those in this village had no access to schooling. A small portable generator provided the only electricity they had for their clinic and occasional community events.

Elijah in our first reading spoke truth to power. In Israel of the ninth century B.C. a drought ravaged the northern kingdom of King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Elijah had prophesied this as he preached against the alienating policies and practices of a ruler who had broken faith with the Lord God.

Elijah sought refuge from a vengeful king and the natural calamity with a poor woman and her son. "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand," he instructed her. We know how the story goes from here, her complete trust in the words of a stranger and her hospitality were rewarded.

Jesus in the gospel also spoke truth to power as he taught in the temple. In the very heart of the Jewish nation he seated himself in front of the treasury. Who were the scribes he watched? Jesus denounced of these powerful and privileged interpreters and administrators of the law in their day as "They devour widow's houses" while placing their large donations in temple coffers. He lauds for his disciples and those among us listening the honest faith and far greater generosity of the poor widow with her gift of "two small copper coins." Had she been a victim of a corrupt system and scribal hypocrisy?

"Create a climate for change" is the slogan for the Development and Peace 2015 education and action campaign this fall. (www.devp.org/en/articles/create-climate-change) It urges us to reflect on "Our overconsumption combined with political inaction on global warming" which "are fuelling extreme weather events, and are leading to long-term damage to the living environments and livelihoods of poor communities in the Global South. Reducing our consumption and demanding political action addresses the structural causes at the root of climate-related disasters, but also creates the conditions for the sustainable development of communities."

In La Garrucha soon after dawn the little Tzeltal Maya girl I spoke of earlier returned with my day's 10 tortillas wrapped in a cloth. I told her to thank her family. Today likely she is a wife and mother with her own family still struggling, though, along with her community to right the wrongs of an unjust society.

The sacrifice of Jesus "at the end of the age" points the way for us toward the need for healing and reconciliation for La Garrucha, for ourselves and for all of our planet.

We are forever torn between the pagan and the divine, and it's all good

In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



"Because, my God, though I lack the soul-zeal and the sublime integrity of your saints, I yet have received from you an overwhelming sympathy for all that stirs within the dark mass of matter; because I know myself to be irremediably less a child of heaven and a son of earth."

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin wrote those words and they, like St. Augustine's famous opening in his Confessions, not only describe a lifelong tension inside its author, they name as well the foundational pieces for an entire spirituality. For everyone who is emotionally healthy and honest, there will be a lifelong tension between the seductive attractions of this world and the lure of God. The earth, with its beauties, its pleasures, and its physicality can take our breath away and have us believe that this world is all there is, and that this world is all that needs to be. Who needs

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

anything further? Isn't life here on earth enough? Besides, what proof is there for any reality and meaning beyond our lives here?

But even as we are so powerfully, and rightly, drawn to the world and what it offers, another part of us finds itself also caught in the embrace and the grip of another reality, the divine, which, though more inchoate, is not less unrelenting. It too tells us that it is real, that its reality ultimately offers life, that it also should be honoured, and that it also may not be ignored. And, just like the reality of the world, it too presents itself as both promise and threat. Sometimes it's felt as a warm cocoon in which we sense ultimate shelter and sometimes we feel its power as a threatening judgment on our superficiality, mediocrity, and sin. Sometimes it blesses our fixation on earthly life and its pleasures, and sometimes it frightens us and relativizes both our world and our lives. We can push it away by distraction or denial, but it stays, creating always a powerful tension inside us: we are irremediably children of both heaven and earth; both God and the world have a right to our attention.

That's how it's meant to be. God made us irremediably physical, fleshy, earth-oriented, with vir-

tually every instinct inside us reaching for the things of this earth. We shouldn't then expect that God wants us to shun this earth, deny its genuine beauty, and attempt step out of our bodies, our natural instincts and our physicality to fix our eyes only on the things of heaven. God did not build this world as testing place, a place where our obedience and piety is to be tested against the lure of earthly pleasure, to see if we're worthy of heaven. This world is its own mystery and has its own meaning, a God-given one. It's not simply a stage upon which we, as humans, play out our individual dramas of salvation and then close the curtain. It's a place for all of us, humans, animals, insects, plants, water, rocks, and soil to enjoy a home together.

But that's the root of a great tension inside us: unless we deny either our most powerful human instincts or our most powerful religious sensibilities we will find ourselves forever torn between two worlds, with seemingly conflicting loyalties, caught between the lure of this world and the lure of God.

I know how true this is in my own life. I was born into this world with two incurable loves and have spent my life and ministry caught and torn between the two: I have always loved the pagan world for its honouring of this life and for its celebration of the wonders of the human body and the beauty and pleasure that our five senses bring us. With my pagan brothers and sisters, I too honour the lure of sexuality, the comfort of human community, the delight of humour and irony, and

the remarkable gifts given us by the arts and the sciences. But, at the same time, I have always found myself in the grip of another reality, the divine, faith, religion. Its reality too has always commanded my attention — and, more importantly, dictated the important choices in my life.

My major choices in life incarnate and radiate a great tension because they've tried to be true to a double primordial branding inside me, the pagan and the divine. I can't deny the reality, lure, and goodness of either of them. It's for

this reason that I can live as a consecrated lifelong celibate, doing religious ministry even as I deeply love the pagan world, bless its pleasures, and bless the goodness of sex even as, because of other loyalties, I renounce it. That's also the reason why I'm chronically apologizing to God for the world's pagan resistance, even as I'm trying to make an apologia for God to the world. I've lived with torn loyalties.

That's as it should be. The world is meant to take our breath away, even as we genuflect to the author of that breath.

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Prayers (and actions) for Paris climate conference

Journey to Justice

Joe Gunn



I'm told a trip to Paris should be a treat in anyone's life.

But only six weeks after the federal election, our newly elected prime minister, Justin Trudeau, will face his first foreign-policy challenge there. Will he make Canadians proud?

COP 21, the United Nations conference on climate change, starts in the French capital on the last day of November.

The nations of the world will attempt to agree to targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions that will prevent global temperatures from rising over two degrees Celsius. So far, there are prospects for an agreement to be signed, but little hope that these negotiations will be ambitious enough to successfully slow climate change. As a prime example, Canada has proposed an emissions reduction target, but it is the least ambitious of all G7 countries. Many Canadians — as well as people around the world — are quite certain Canada can do better.

Gunn serves as 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.

Around the globe, there will be impressive activities in favour of climate action, featuring marches as the negotiations begin (including a major march and demonstration on Ottawa's Parliament Hill) and "mass mobilization and action events" on Dec. 12, when COP 21 wraps up.

Some groups are planning four days of non-violent protests in front of the prime ministerial residence in Ottawa. Environmental groups are calling for 80 per cent of fossil fuel reserves to be left in the ground, and that the planet transitions to 100 per cent renewable energy by 2050. (In case this seems unreasonable, remember that Stephen Harper has already agreed with his G7 peers to phase out fossil fuels use by 2100.)

Canadian churches are also organizing to try to positively influence the outcome of the Paris climate negotiations.

In late September, the 25-member denominations of the Canadian Council of Churches, representing 85 per cent of Canada's Christians, released a statement that called on the federal government to "positively influence" negotiations in Paris, "establish more stringent and ambitious emission targets in

Canada" and "provide \$500 million in material assistance to assist the poorest and most affected countries to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change." Because this was the first time the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops joined ecumenical opinion on the topic of climate change, this statement deserves wide circulation and study in parishes.

In early October, a delegation of Canadian church leaders, including Churchill-Hudson Bay Bishop Wieslaw Krotki, travelled to northern Sweden for a conference entitled, The Future of Life in the Arctic: The Impact of Climate Change.

Stating that, "climate justice for the Arctic is a spiritual issue," they asked faith communities and people everywhere "to rededicate themselves to stand in solidarity and support the peoples in the North, who are now already survivors and leaders in responding to climate change."

Delegates from the United Church of Canada, the Christian Reformed Church and Mennonite Church Canada will all travel to Paris in an attempt to meet with and encourage the official Canadian delegation to achieve more substantial results there.

To assist congregations to prayerfully support cli-

mate justice, Citizens for Public Justice has prepared Prayers for Paris — worship resources for the First Sunday in Advent (Nov. 29) — one day before the conference begins. Parishes can access hymn suggestions from the Catholic Book of Worship, bulletin inserts, videos, Prayers of the Faithful with environmental themes, and even homilies for that Sunday prepared by Saskatoon's Bishop Don Bolen, among others. See: <http://cpj.ca/unclimate-summit-2015>

Pope Francis, in his June encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si'*, wrote: "It is remarkable how weak international political responses have been. The failure of global summits on the environment make it plain that our politics are subject to technology and finance. There


are too many special interests, and economic interests easily end up trumping the common good . . ." (54). The pontiff believes that, "Enforceable international agreements are urgently needed" (173), and that, "Even as this encyclical was being prepared, the debate was intensifying. We believers cannot fail to ask God for a positive outcome to the present discussions, so that future generations will not have to suffer the effects of our ill-advised delays" (169).

While asking God for a positive outcome, we believers also must act for climate justice, by changing our own lifestyles and demanding positive leadership from our newly elected Liberal government.



CNS/Mark Blinch/Reuters

FOREIGN-POLICY CHALLENGES — Only six weeks after the federal election, our newly elected prime minister, Justin Trudeau, will face his first foreign-policy challenge in Paris. Will he make Canadians proud? asks Joe Gunn.



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Signs are as old as humanity itself



Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

"See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand" (Gal 6:11).

The feedback I received in response to a column about church bulletins prompted me to consider that other powerful medium that parishes everywhere use to communicate with their communities: church signs! We are all familiar with the unintentional messages that a hastily worded sign can send: "Don't let worry kill you off — let the church help." Or the possibly intentional misspelling in this one: "God's will is perfect; people make mistakes." Keeping with the meat theme, one church sign announced: "Best sausage supper in town. Come and eat the new pastor."

Turcotte is president of St. Mary's University in Calgary.

At their best, church signs reflect the cleverness of their authors and all the crafty ways churches use to communicate with fast-moving traffic. Here, too, I have a few favourites. One sign announced: "God wants spiritual fruit, not religious nuts." Another read: "Need a lifeguard? Ours walks on water." And as someone who spent 25 years in sunny Australia, I found that this sign resonated with me in particular: "If you are the one who keeps praying for snow . . . please stop."

Signs, of course, are as old as humanity itself. We have evidence that the ancient Romans and Egyptians erected stone or terracotta signs to identify places and their function. King Richard II of England actually passed a law in 1389 forcing all publicans to put up signs identifying their

premises . . . or they had to forfeit their ale! Perhaps my favourite example of these is what we call ghost signs, those fading ads painted directly on older buildings or barns, that continue to resonate long after the product or establishment has disappeared. These are now so popular there are even companies that organize walking tours in search of them.

Signs matter. This, a sign says, is who we are. I was reminded of this recently after St. Mary's University dropped the word "college" from our name. One of the first acts that I authorized in response to this was to have our name changed on all the university entrance gates! I was surprised to receive a flurry of enthusiastic notes when the signs were unveiled.

Needless to say there can be no greater sign than Christ. Announced by angels and stars, choirs and believers, the ultimate Sign of the Times has been the most successful invitation to worship that the world has ever known. No typos, no hard sell, no gimmicks. Just an amazing promise fulfilled by someone who is timeless and always relevant. Or as one church sign put it: "Hipster Jesus loved you before you were cool." Amen to that!

Key lesson we've forgotten in rush to beat old age

By Carol Orsborn and Robert L. Weber
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Four years ago, two fellow presenters at the annual meeting of the American Society on Aging bumped into each other in a stairwell and began a conversation that is sending ripples through both gerontology and spirituality circles. One was a psychologist affiliated with Harvard and a former Jesuit. The other was a Jewish scholar with a doctorate from Vanderbilt in the history and critical theory of religion.

What animated our dialogue was the degree of loneliness each of us, at 64 and 65 years old, had experienced as we bucked the pressure to “stay active” as the hallmark of what the academy defined as “successful aging.” Both as professionals in the field and as members of the boomer generation, it was our shared experience that contemplative qualities such as stillness and acceptance were often being mistaken for apathy.

We began speaking with our colleagues and peers in the

Carol Orsborn and Robert L. Weber are the authors of The Spirituality of Age: A Seeker's Guide to Growing Older (Inner Traditions, October 2015).

Body found in shallow grave

Continued from page 7

and didn't have the best relationship with the police and went back home — it was just too much stress for me to stay in the city,” Wapass explained. “But my sister's body was found in a shallow grave outside the city by a farmer. We had to have two funerals because they found more body parts.” Someone was arrested for the murder and the family attended court to witness prosecution, but the judge threw out the killer's confession. “My sister's killer walked free. For a long time I was very upset,” she shared, but speaking with other families helped her to find her voice and raise it. “Today I speak out and attend vigils like this. To honour my sister's life and to raise awareness on this issue, what I refer to as a crime against humanity.

She thanked Weighill for his

boomer generation, equally dissatisfied with the prevailing notions regarding what it means to grow old in our youth-obsessed society.

Stereotypes of aging fall into four buckets. The first, the persistent image that is considered by many to be the norm, is that aging is something to be reviled and dreaded. At best, growing old is something best done out of sight and mind, ideally in a gated community and ultimately in some kind of institutional setting.

A more palatable position, the second bucket, acknowledges aging as a time of inevitable decline and detachment, but thinks this is not a bad thing. Known as “disengagement” theory by gerontologists, proponents of this bucket think of aging as a problem to be solved in order to keep elders as serene as possible as they transit the wasteland of old age.

The third bucket, activity theory, swings the pendulum to the extreme. As a result, a new generation of elders has been put on the run. To age “successfully,” one must be kept busy pursuing second or third careers, finding renewed purpose, reinventing ourselves and otherwise proving that one can be productive and engaged to the end. An unfortunate side effect of activity theory is the adulation of youth and the legitimization of denial. Don't like

ongoing attempts to make change in a broken system.

“We live in a very dark world. We live in a world where little girls can be found dead . . . like that little girl in Alberta last month. She wasn't Aboriginal but she was a human life. And we've got to remember that a life is a life, and all life is sacred, regardless of what skin colour you are. We need to be able to stand for that life, with love, with forgiveness. We need to be proud of who we are as Aboriginal people, we need to heal because we have a very important purpose: we are the protectors of Mother Earth. And Mother Earth needs us. We need to heal, we need to stand with love and stand with forgiveness. We need to stand for all those women who have been murdered, and honour their lives.

“We need love because love is more powerful than anything.”

the idea of aging? Just don't do it.

But there's a fourth bucket, the one we have been exploring together since that memorable conversation on the stairwell. That is, aging as a spiritual path. In this vision of aging, growing older takes on added meaning as a life stage with value and purpose of its own. The key is embracing rather than rejecting or denying the shadow side of aging.

Those very qualities that others revile, such as the loss of ego, diminishment of identity, erosion of materiality, turn out to be the building blocks of spiritual practice, as or even more efficient than meditation and chanting. The core value of this approach to aging, taking precedence over either the imperative to stay active or to practice solitude, is the freedom to choose for yourself what spirit is asking of you.

That the re-visioning of growing older as spiritual fulfilment should come out of a pair of boomers should come as no surprise. The baby boomer generation has been and continues to be, as sociologist Wade Clark Roof nicknamed us, “a generation of seekers.”

Over the past four years, as we've taken our message public, we have been excited to discover that we are not as alone as we'd thought. Bubbling just under the surface of the boomer ethos is a groundswell of sentiment echoing our own, large and promising enough to be considered the first signs of a movement.

Gravitating toward one another under the general umbrella of “the conscious aging movement,” there's the Conscious Aging Alliance, consisting of 12 organizations offering retreats, classes



J. Weber

SPIRITUAL GROWTH — A growing cadre of experts in the adult development, aging and religious fields relate to the notion of aging as a rich developmental stage in its own right, say Carol Orsborn and Robert L. Weber.

and summits across the country; an International Conference on Spirituality and Aging taking place in Los Angeles in October; a boom in books about spirituality, consciousness and aging; and a daily digest plucking content to share from the contributions to the growing bank of communal knowledge making their way onto the web with thousands of readers.

Equally gratifying is the growing cadre of experts in the adult development, aging and religious fields who relate to the notion of

aging as a rich developmental stage in its own right.



As cultural anthropologist Mary Catherine Bateson puts it: “In our era, old age can be a time of growth and spiritual discovery, a time of fulfilment of life, rather than its dreary aftermath.”

This is, indeed, an exciting time to be growing old: a new stage of life that holds the potential of aging not as a problem to be solved, but as the fulfilment of our true spiritual and therefore human potential.

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Pope Francis shares vision of being a synodal church



Pope Francis shared his vision of a “synodal” church during a commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the synod of bishops. He defined a synodal church as, “a listening church, aware that listening is more than hearing. It is a reciprocal listening in which each one has something to learn.” Synodality, he said, is “walking together — laity, pastors, the bishop of Rome.” It is “an easy concept to express in words, but is not so easy to put into practice.”

The difficulty of being a synodal church was made glaringly apparent during the recent synod on the family. Stories of battling bishops and murmurings of synod rigging made daily headlines. The unprecedented media coverage gave the synod the feeling of a political campaign with heated debates and predictions of who would win.

If you are familiar with church history, or watched *The Borgias*, you know that episcopal wranglings are nothing new. What is new is the transparency and openness that Francis has brought to the synod process. Whether

Moyer blogs at <http://catholic-dialogue.com> and also writes for the National Catholic Reporter blog, NCR Today. She lives in Gimli, Man., with her husband, David. They have five adult children and four grandchildren.

knowingly or not, he helped expose not only the polarity but also the nastiness of some synod members. And this nastiness did not go unnoticed by the pope.

In his closing remarks to the synod, Francis spoke of “laying bare the closed hearts which frequently hide behind the church’s teachings or good intentions, in order to sit in the chair of Moses and judge, sometimes with superiority and superficiality, difficult cases and wounded families.” He praised the “rich and lively dialogue” while observing that opinions were not always expressed in “entirely well-meaning ways.” One wonders how many bishops were squirming in their seats at these words.

The final document was, in some ways, anti-climatic. There was no earth-shattering change in doctrine or pastoral practice. Opening up the possibility for divorced and remarried Catholics through the internal forum merely stated what was already happening in many parish communities. Sadly, there was no movement toward changing the language used in church teaching on homosexuality. In some ways, the synod could be seen as a lot of “sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

Maybe the promise of much-needed reform is not to be found in the document but in the syn-

odal process itself, a process that Francis clarified as ongoing and inclusive of all the People of God; a synodal church, not just a synod of bishops. If this is the case, then it is a brilliant move by Francis.

The world has already been introduced to Pope Francis, the man of simplicity, mercy and compassion. The world is now being introduced to Pope Francis, the astute and skilled leader. He has been preparing us for change with a consistent message decrying clericalism and careerism in the church. In homily after homily, speech after speech, he has promoted decentralization and the need to go to the fringes of the

church and society to take on the “smell of the sheep.” He ceaselessly speaks of the need for deep, respectful listening and dialogue among all God’s people.

Words have power to move hearts, and Francis moves hearts each time he speaks. It takes courage to transform words into action.

It takes courage to promote dialogue, especially within a tightly knit group of cardinals and bishops used to a culture of unquestioning orthodoxy and obedience. It takes courage to allow this dialogue to seep outside of synod halls, where it can be continued in the media, online discussion boards, and in parishes

and homes around the world. It takes courage to challenge those in the upper echelons of ecclesial leadership whose doctrinal zeal sometimes mirrors that of the Pharisees of Jesus’ day. Again, in his closing address, Francis reminded the bishops that, “The church’s first duty is not to hand down condemnations or anathemas, but to proclaim God’s mercy, to call to conversion, and to lead all men and women to salvation in the Lord.”

The actual meeting in Rome may be over, but the workings of this synod will continue. The next step in the process belongs to our pope, and he has proved over and over that he is a pope of surprises.



CNS/Paul Haring

LISTENING CHURCH — A mother holds her child as she observes a session of the synod of bishops on the family at the Vatican Oct. 24. Pope Francis defined a synodal church as “a listening church, aware that listening is more than hearing. It is a reciprocal listening in which each one has something to learn.”

Pondering the weight of glory with C.S. Lewis and Malcolm Guite

By Karl Persson

Addictions and cynicism: they aren’t what I expected to learn about when I signed up for a weekend at St. Benedict’s Retreat and Conference Centre in Winnipeg, led by Oxford scholar, poet, musician and Anglican priest Malcolm Guite. But as we discussed C. S. Lewis’s theology of desire — our aching desire for God, and God’s aching desire for us — the weekend naturally shaped itself as a response to these pressing problems so many of us know first-hand.

Early in the weekend, Guite suggested that addiction and cynicism result from an inability to cope with a deep, piercing, unnamable, inconsolable longing. This longing, identified powerful-

Persson is a poet, writer, and scholar of medieval literature and theology; he is a professor in the Language Department at Sigum University (online) and a teaching assistant for the Ecclesial University project (www.ecclesialuniversity.ca). He lives in Winnipeg with his wife, Meg, and his son, Andrew, and is a parishioner at Holy Cross in the Archdiocese of St. Boniface.

ly by Lewis in his famous sermon *The Weight of Glory*, is found in romance, beauty, poetry and creativity, but all this is a prefatory echo of the joy of heaven. To want is to want heaven, to want God, but our experience of that wanting — our desires for beauty, love, friendship, and sex — doesn’t always appear immediately or obviously as being connected to God, and bad things happen if we don’t know how to deal with these longings.

Some of us set up idols, mistaking our experiences of this joy for the source of the joy itself. These are addictions. Others fear the sheer power of these desires and seek to bury or diminish them. This is cynicism. Lewis speaks of the ways we take revenge on these proper yet never fully fulfilled longings by dismissing them under terms such as romanticism, nostalgia or adolescence.

This latter remark hit close to home for me. I often find myself waking from such dreams of beauty and desire, and still seeing around me broken worlds, broken loves, broken faiths and broken selves. The disjunction tempts me toward despair, to look all these desires full in the face and shout at them for callously preaching a

hope that seems to ignore the suffering around us. In my worse moments I bury them and walk away, each time a little colder, a little stonier than before.

Fortunately, Guite anticipated this very possibility and was ready with Lewis’ response. Our afternoon session was about God’s heartbreaking desire for us, a story of a God who is a diver, disappearing with a splash in the murkiness of the water to retrieve what he loves there at the bottom. It is a story of a God who enters our hearts thus before we can ever have been aware of it, looking in us for something he lost once in a garden. It is a story in which God moves before we could even have imagined it. And it is a story to comfort the hopeless.

Much as I appreciated the morning session, the part of me that knows sadness and darkness and apathy wondered if it was not a kind of mockery: normal people with normal experiences have normal longings that correlate to heaven. But me? What have I to do with this longing? What can I do but be ashamed beside its glowing splendour? Perhaps for others, but this burden of beauty too heavy to bear? I know myself, and I cannot bear it.

But this was the point. Christ is the one who bears this beauty through us, for us, and in us. He lifts where we cannot lift, supports where we cannot support — and indeed is with us in the dirt when we fall.

In the afternoon we visited the stations of the cross, with Guite reading a poem he had written particularly for each, with a 15th for the resurrection. I was caught particularly by the poem at station nine, where Christ falls a third time — the station where we recall that the stumbling and suffering we all experience is not a mere distraction from the gospel, but rather the heart of it. We need not first achieve improvement, energy and ease; rather, he is Immanuel — God with us, and we with him; we sharing in his suffering, and he joining us and bearing us in ours. And Guite gets this:

*Twice you survived; this third will surely kill,
And you could almost wish for that defeat
Except that in the cold hell where you freeze
You find your God beside you on his knees.*

(From the poetic sequence “Stations” in *Sounding the Seasons*, Canterbury Press, 2012;

used by permission of the author.)

The poem conveys the other side of desire, a disappointment resulting in near-suicidal cynicism. Yet here, where things are bleakest, is where Christ joins us. Are you broken? His body and blood are on the table. Are you suffering? Let your suffering be taken up into his body, the church. Are you sinful? Let his sacrament of reconciliation cleanse you. Taste, touch, and see — for he is beside you on your knees.

We concluded with a sonnet on Mary Magdalene’s beautiful, broken longing turned suddenly into joy upon seeing her resurrected Lord — and we fittingly read it among the sisters’ grave-stones circled by the stations. It reminded me of why we have relics in our altars, of stories of early Christians in the catacombs celebrating mass on the coffins of dead saints.

Together we were gathered, the quick and the dead, to heed with Mary that heartbreaking longing that is the fullness of the communion of the saints; together we were, as the creed puts it, looking for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Together we were with God — and it was good.

An enriching synod

In Canada, talk on coffee row this past month was likely dominated by the recent federal election, with the defeat of Stephen Harper and the election of Justin Trudeau.

However, among church groups talk on coffee row was likely to centre on the synod of bishops on the family, which concluded in Rome on Oct. 24.

Likely both types of conversation centred on hopeful signs for the future, new possibilities, new attitudes, new policies.

In Rome, the final report was passed with full consensus. Only one of the 94 paragraphs came close to not passing — the one dealing with divorced and remarried Catholics. It received only one vote more than the two-thirds required.

Some media view the synod as a battleground for winners and losers. The Wall Street Journal, for instance, called the report “an embarrassing defeat” because it did not specifically authorize the pope to approve communion for the remarried and for his “liberalizing agenda.”

Pope Francis has repeatedly said this was not the focus of the synod. It was a synod on the family. True, many members of the Catholic family are involved in broken marriages. The pope is well aware of the pain many families live with every day. He is asking for a change in how the church responds.

In his closing remarks at the synod, Pope Francis called on the church to practise mercy toward struggling and broken families. In strong language, he told the bishops to avoid using church doctrine as “stones to be hurled at others.”

In a related development, two of the 13 language groups contained apologies: one for ways in which a lack of pastoral care may have contributed to the breakdown of marriages and one for “harsh and merciless” attitudes toward unwed mothers and their children, the divorced and homosexuals.

In his speech, Pope Francis outlined his approach: “The church’s first duty is not to hand down condemnations or anathemas, but to proclaim God’s mercy, to call to conversion, and to lead all men and women to salvation in the Lord.”

The synod, he said, was not about finding exhaustive solutions for all the problems and uncertainties facing families today, but studying them carefully and fearlessly “without burying our heads in the sand.” He again reaffirmed the church’s teaching of marriage as a permanent union between a man and a woman, calling the family the “fundamental basis of society and human life.”

Referring to the lively discussion and disagreements among synod members, the pope said it showed “the vitality of the Catholic Church, which is not afraid to stir dulled consciences or to soil her hands with lively and frank discussions about the family.”

In a reference to those who fear he is changing doctrine, the pope said the true defenders of doctrine “are not those who uphold its letter, but its spirit; not ideas but people; not formulae but the gratuitousness of God’s love and forgiveness.”

The report has been accepted. We look forward to the details the pope will spell out in a followup document. No doubt, it will feature signs of hope. — PWN

Religious tourism is booming and includes 300 million travellers

By Peter Johansen, Ottawa
Troy Media

In 2013, more than 215,000 pilgrims reached the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in north-western Spain after walking the Way of St. James.

That impressive number, however, is dwarfed by the million pilgrims who visit the Basilica at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré near Quebec City each year. Or the three million who participate annually in the hajj, the visit to Mecca that devout Muslims must perform at least once. Or the six million who annually visit Jerusalem’s Wailing Wall. Or the 80 million who bathe away their sins every dozen years at the Hindu *Kumbh Mela* in Allahabad, India.

Even newer and relatively unknown destinations attract crowds, such as the town of Medjugorje, in Herzegovina. It became a religious site only in 1981, after six children said the Virgin Mary appeared to them. Now it tallies a million visitors annually.

Yes, religious tourism is big.

And it’s getting bigger. Researchers suggest the market is more resilient to recessions and is more open to repeat business than secular leisure travel.

According to Kevin J. Wright, director of growth markets at the Kentucky-based National Tour Association, the global faith-based travel sector is worth \$18 billion and includes 300 million travellers a year, the majority well educated and with comfortable incomes. “Studies show that 35 per cent of travellers want to take a faith-inspired vacation, so the market potential remains enormous,” he says.

Little wonder tourism operators are keen to hop on the religious tourism bandwagon. For example, Rwanda’s tourism office launched a religious route just last year, centring on the village of Kihebo, where apparitions of the Virgin Mary were first reported in 1981. The Abraham Path has so far developed over 400 kilometres of walking trails across the Middle East, passing places sacred to Christians, Jews

and Muslims alike.

And several tour operators — such as Swiss-owned Globus Tours and two Toronto-based

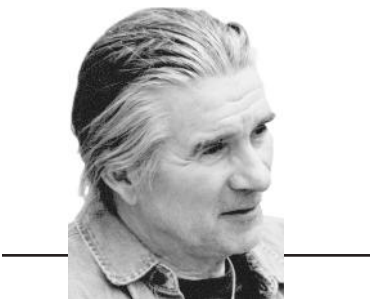
firms, Craig Travel and Connaisance Travel — do extensive business in the field.

Globus, for example, says its

religious tours represent five per cent of revenue. One such tour, a

— PILGRIMS, page 15

Vancouver park built over burial ground



Seeking Sustainability

Jim Harding

I have just returned from Vancouver where I attended our oldest son’s 50th birthday. I had to pinch myself when I realized how quickly the years have gone by since he attended my 50th.

There was lots of remembering at this gathering of extended-blended family. I had some poignant memories, made new discoveries about our son’s life and restored old connections. It was

exhilarating and a bit exhausting.

We stayed with our middle son who also lives on the West Coast with his wife and newborn. I ventured out daily, walking their new dog Jack, to discover the green spaces in the neighbourhood. Their home is part of a dense new housing complex along the Fraser River in New Westminster. It was built on the 64-acre site of Woodlands, B.C.’s oldest and largest “insane asylum” for the mentally and developmentally disabled.

I knew the area well for I regularly drove by it when I lived in a student co-op in New Westminster while attending university in the 1960s. What I didn’t know was that a small park that Jack and I visited was built right on top of the graveyard for the patient-inmates who died in the institution from 1920 - 1958.

Woodlands Park

Woodlands finally closed in 1996. When the land was rezoned in 2001, the municipality had to face the fact that 3,300 former residents were buried there. Most of the headstones had either been disposed of or recycled; some had even gone to make a barbecue patio for staff. The B.C. Association for Community Living didn’t want to leave it this way and in 1999 it had called for a memorial park to celebrate the lives of those buried there. The government got outside and the park opened in 2007.

The names of all those buried and some of the salvaged and broken headstones are now mounted as small monuments constructed along the park’s side-

walks. The broken headstones can be seen as a symbol for the dignity of people with such broken lives.

I had never been to the park before but going there seemed to fit my mood. Perhaps all the memories at the family reunion had opened me up; I certainly felt more pensive and a little nostalgic. But it took three visits for the past reality to finally sink in.

The big awakening came when I happened to follow Jack under an exotic tree with branches curved to the ground; I was startled to find gravesites with headstones still intact. The next day, sitting on a bench trying to settle my soul, it hit me that I was walking over the graves of the thousands of people who had died there. Some of the patients likely carried stories of mental, physical or sexual abuse to their graves.

Human rights

It took courage to so vividly mark this sad era in Canada’s treatment of the mentally and physically disabled. It is highly unlikely that this memorial park would even exist if it wasn’t for advocacy organizations like the Association for Community Living. A lot of the changes to humanize social care have occurred since the 1960s, as part of the growth in human rights activism. When I was a psychology graduate student I personally witnessed the chaos and neglect caused by the incarceration practices at Weyburn’s mental hospital. My thesis supervisor was one of the people responsible for overseeing the deinstitutionalization process.

But did we see the vision through? Certainly the community-based continuum of care that was necessitated by deinstitutionalization was never put in place. Especially since the Harper government we see more and more marginalized people suffering from mental illness and addic-

— ELDERLY, page 15



CNS/Paul Jeffrey

REFUGEES PASS THROUGH HUNGARY — Hungarian volunteers share conversation, Sept. 24, as they give coffee to refugees passing through Hegyesalom, Hungary, on the way to Austria. As Europe faces its largest refugee crisis in decades, government agencies and charitable groups simply cannot fill the enormous humanitarian gaps. Tens of thousands of volunteers spread across several countries are helping the multitude of refugees and migrants crossing their lands. The children are freezing and they arrive here after hours on the train with no food or water, a volunteer said, so “we prepare sandwiches and try to give them a warm welcome.”

Homily connects dots in daily life between Gospel and family

The Editor: I would like to connect two articles in the Oct. 14 issue of the *Prairie Messenger*.

Carol Glatz, in her article, “Families need homilies connecting to life,” reported that Maria Gomez, a family and life director in a parish in Dubai, said that “families need to hear homilies that connect the Gospel to the troubles and joys they experience.”

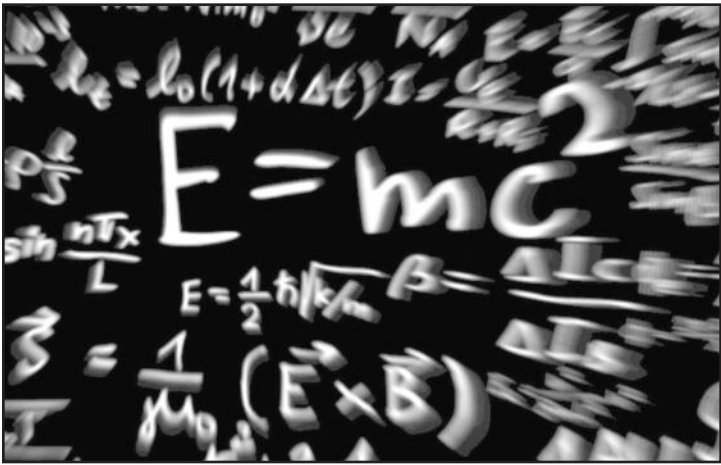
Then, Tom Saretsky, in his column, “The chaos of our lives is essential to growth,” shows just how that can be done. Who would have ever thought that in a matter as mundane as a request for a “new towel” we could find a connection between family life and the Gospel? The Gospel calls us to love in the moment, right where we find ourselves. It may be easy to love someone far removed from us but more challenging to love a parent or a sibling, sometimes for the most ordinary reasons such as a request for a new towel.

Jesus lived in the moment connecting what he and others experienced to the love of God. Jesus knew that people knew the law so repetition was not enough. Jesus connected what people knew to their experiences.

If pastors are to offer homilies which make a difference, they need to connect the dots as Jesus did. Sometimes I wonder if someone, living alone in a rectory, remembers what it was like to argue about

a towel. Perhaps an alternative could be to have reflections offered by people not ordained but who are able to join the dots between the Gospel and family life.

I have heard reflections by non-ordained people and their presentations were well thought out and connected to what we experience in family and daily life. Another benefit of this could be to reinforce that pastors do not have to be all things to all people; there are gifts given by the Spirit for different purposes to different people for the benefit of the faith community. Let us employ these gifts wisely to help the faith community grow in faith. — **Anthony Chezzi Sudbury, Ont.**



God Created

In the beginning
was mass
was energy
was distance
was time
And that
energy travelled
to mass
and unleashed
a seismology report
that God had created

By Alvin Ens

Pilgrims and tourists a mixed crowd

Continued from page 14

10-day package about Ireland’s venerated St. Patrick, includes churches and other religious sites in Dublin, Downpatrick, Armagh and Knock, but it also embraces sights that draw visitors of all types, including the Giant’s Causeway and a sheep farm.

“Some sociologists have said a pilgrim is half-tourist and a tourist is half-pilgrim,” explains Donn Tilson, a University of Miami professor whose *Promotion of Devotion* is a book-length study of spiritual tourism. “If you’re in Rome, say, you obviously want to go to restaurants, shop, see the museums — as well as visit the Vatican.” He notes this mix of motives goes back at least as far as the 14th-century *Canterbury Tales*.

Those mixed motives also mean religious travel isn’t simply about pilgrimage and iconic shrines. “There are culinary faith-based cruises, day-trips to a religious theme park, mission trips to share one’s faith and help meet humani-

tarian needs,” Wright explains.

Among such options are a seven-day trip to the Azores to take in the Holy Christ of Miracles festival each May; faith-themed cruises, such as one in September with well-known gospel musicians led by Bill and Gloria Gaither (inspirationcruises.com); and group or individual trips to a variety of developing lands to assist with education, health care or conservation.

At the moment, about 90 per cent of North American religious tourism is Christian based, Wright says — to some extent reflecting demographic patterns. But, he notes, some 10,000 Americans go on the hajj pilgrimage, and a variety of firms conduct religious heritage tours of New York that are significant with the Jewish market.

Wright also sees increased targeting of the religious market by secular organizations — including the Pittsburgh Pirates’ faith night, where a regular league game is teamed up with fireworks and testimony from players such

as Pedro Alvarez.

Big crowds, particularly at traditional religious sites, can create what Tilson calls “the shadow side of tourism.”

Shrines can deteriorate from greater wear and tear than they were meant to withstand or, as in the case of Cambodia’s Angkor Wat, by tourists who take bits of the crumbling structure as a souvenir. They can drain scarce government funds for upkeep or expansion, thus diverting money from health care or education. And the sheer crowds or inevitable hucksterism, such as souvenir stands, can wash away the spiritual dimension that drew visitors in the first place.

Still, as Wright points out, faith-based travel is popular because it engages so many dimensions of a tourist’s being. “Faith-based travel is so meaningful because it touches us spiritually, socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically,” he says.

“That last is what sets travel apart from experiencing faith any other way, especially as a pilgrim — you stand right in places central to your faith.”

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Tribute to Sask. sisters appreciated

The Editor: On behalf of my community, I wish to thank all those involved in initiating and organizing the Called To Serve celebration in Regina, Oct. 1. This was a truly remarkable occasion in all aspects of its preparation and production to honour women religious in Saskatchewan.

The celebration recalled the first women religious who left cultural, economic and other enviable living situations to come to this pioneer land. Over the past 155 years more than 5,500 women

religious were instrumental in establishing schools, hospitals and other humanitarian programs in Saskatchewan. The celebration also acknowledged our present moment when religious communities have drastically declined.

However, the values, spirit, structures and perhaps even the cemeteries remain indicative of what has been and what endures.

I offer sincere appreciation to every individual involved. — **Miriam Spenrath, OSU, Bruno Ursulines, Muenster, Sask.**

‘Unwanted guest’ policy questioned

The Editor: There is in the city of Regina an initiative referred to as “the unwanted guest.”

I wondered: why does this initiative bother me? I don’t like being scared as I walk downtown when walking to my car after Globe or a meal or walking home

from work. So, I should support such an initiative, shouldn’t I? But I can’t because my internal barometer says something is wrong.

I’ve heard people discuss this initiative. It’s racism. What about the impact on people with mental illnesses and addictions? What about when winter comes? Will poverty factor in? Will it result in more people being incarcerated because they won’t have the money to pay the \$250 fine that could be assessed if they break the ban that a business can impose upon them?

One night I thought how many times I’ve been told to look for Jesus in the margins. I’ve never wanted to encounter Jesus in the “unwanted.” I want to encounter the person. If I enter an encounter grounded in fear and mistrust the relationship will only result in more fear and pain. If there are “unwanted” guests in Regina, perhaps we — perhaps I — need to seek to encounter them with respect, trusting that they, like me, are just trying to live within our community the best way we know how. — **Terry Hochban, Regina**

Elderly people ‘warehoused’

Continued from page 14

tions ending up in jail. Many with mental or physical disabilities continue to struggle daily below the poverty line. Some already face homelessness.


Learning deeply

And aren’t we making many of the same mistakes with long-term care institutions? If we’ve learned from the past, then why is our quickly growing elderly population increasingly being “warehoused”? Shouldn’t our seniors be adequately cared for as social and spiritual, not only medicalized, beings?

Thankfully we are finally hav-

ing some serious collective remembering about what the residential schools have done to indigenous families. But it remains to be seen whether this will lead us to tackle the legacy of colonialism that leaves so many indigenous Canadians facing systemic inequality and poverty.

Remembering and honouring that freezes the past in time can be used as a righteous foundation for creating new injustices. Active remembering that holds the lessons of honest personal and collective reflections in our hearts can, however, be an impetus to find new ways. We are now at the crossroads both socially and environmentally.





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Synod report urges 'accompaniment' for couples

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — While not specifically mentioning the controversial proposal of a path toward full reconciliation and communion for the divorced and civilly remarried, members of the synod of bishops on the family handed Pope Francis a report emphasizing an obligation to recognize that not all Catholics in such a situation bear the same amount of blame.

The 94-paragraph report approved Oct. 24, the last working day of the three-week synod, highlighted the role of pastors in helping couples understand church teaching, grow in faith and take responsibility for sharing the Gospel. It also emphasized how "pastoral accompaniment" involves discerning, on a case-by-case basis, the moral culpability of people not fully living up to the Catholic ideal.

Bishops and other full members of the synod voted separately on each paragraph and the Vatican published those votes. The paragraph dealing specifically with leading divorced and remarried Catholics on a path of discernment passed with only one vote beyond the necessary two-thirds.

Austrian Cardinal Christoph Schonborn of Vienna told reporters Oct. 24 that the key word

in the document's discussion of ministry to divorced and civilly remarried people is " 'discernment.' I invite you all to remember there is no black or white, no simple yes or no." The situation of each couple "must be discerned," which is what was called for by St. John Paul II in his 1981 exhortation on the family, he said.

The cardinal told Vatican Insider, a news site, that although St. John Paul called for discernment in those cases, "he didn't mention all that comes after discernment." The synod's final report, he said, proposes priests help divorced and remarried couples undergoing conversion and repentance so that they recognize whether or not they are worthy to receive the eucharist. Such an examination of conscience, he said, is required of every Catholic each time they prepare to approach the altar.

As Pope Francis said at the beginning of the synod, church doctrine on the meaning of marriage as a lifelong bond between one man and one woman open to having children was not up for debate. The final report strongly affirmed that teaching as God's plan for humanity, as a blessing for the church and a benefit to society.

While insisting on God's love for homosexual persons and the obligation to respect their dignity,

the report also insisted same-sex unions could not be recognized as marriages and denounced as "totally unacceptable" governments or international organizations making recognition of " 'marriage' between persons of the same sex" a condition for financial assistance.

The report also spoke specifically of: the changing role of women in families; the church and society; single people and their contributions to the family and the church; the heroic witness of parents who love and care for children with disabilities; the family as a sanctuary protecting the sacredness of human life from conception to natural death; and the particular strain on family life caused by poverty and by migration.

The Catholic Church recognizes a "natural" value in marriage corresponding to the good of the husband and wife, their unity, fidelity and desire for children. But the sacrament of marriage adds another dimension, the report said. "The irrevocable fidelity of God to his covenant is the foundation of the indissolubility of marriage. The complete and profound love of the spouses is not based only on their human capabilities: God sustains this covenant with the strength of his Spirit."

But human beings are subject to sin and failure, which is why synod members recommend the



CNS/Paul Haring

SYNOD ON FAMILY — Pope Francis kisses a child in a wheelchair during the closing mass of the synod of bishops on the family in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Oct. 25.

need for "accompaniment" by family members, pastors and other

couples. "Being close to the family as a travelling companion means, for the church, assuming wisely differentiated attitudes: sometimes it is necessary to stay by their side and listen in silence; other times it must indicate the path to follow; and at still other times, it is opportune to follow, support and encourage."

A draft of the report was presented to synod members Oct. 22, and 51 bishops spoke the next morning about changes they would like to see in the final draft. Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman, told reporters that several bishops mentioned specifically a need to improve the text's references to "the relationship between conscience and the moral law."

The text refers to conscience in sections dealing with procreation and with marital situations the church considers irregular, particularly the situation of divorced and civilly remarried Catholics.

Those who have remarried without an annulment of their sacramental marriage must be welcomed and included in the parish community in every way possible, the report said. "They are baptized, they are brothers and sisters, the Holy Spirit gives them gifts and charisms for the good of all."

Quoting from St. John Paul's exhortation on the family, the report insists that pastors, "for the sake of truth," are called to careful discernment when assisting and counselling people who divorced and remarried. They must distinguish, for instance, between those who "have been unjustly abandoned, and those who through their own grave fault have destroyed a canonically valid marriage," in the words of St. John Paul.

Priests must "accompany interested people on the path of discernment in accordance with the teaching of the church and the guidance of the bishop," the report said.

Synod report encourages more involvement of women

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — If the Catholic Church did more to recognize and promote women's responsibility within the church, it could help their status in societies as well, said the synod of bishops on the family.

The church should show "greater recognition of their responsibility in the church: their participation in decision-making processes, their participation in the governance of some institutions, their involvement in the formation of ordained ministers," said the final report of the synod, approved Oct. 24.

Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, told reporters the next day that the document, after speaking about "the dignity of women and the way in which women are treated from country to country and within the church . . . talked about the importance of the charisms" that women bring to families, society and the church.

"So while nothing specifically was proposed in terms of where that would be in terms of church structure, there is the call to continue to move forward on this," the archbishop said.

The position of women in the synod itself came up Oct. 24 at a press briefing a few hours before the synod's full voting members



CNS/Paul Haring

MOTHER AND CHILD AT SYNOD — A mother holds her child as she observes the final session of the synod of bishops on the family at the Vatican Oct. 24. Among the topics addressed in the synod report was the changing role of women in families.

— all men — began the process of approving the document. Brother Herve Janson, superior of the Little Brothers of Jesus, was asked how, as a person who is not ordained, he can vote at a synod and why the superior of a women's order could not.

"It's a question I raised as well and I wondered whether or not I should accept," particularly because both religious brothers and religious sisters have consecrated their lives to the Lord, said Brother Janson. He was elected to the synod by the men's Union of Superiors General as one of their

10 voting delegates. Pope Francis appointed 30 women as observers or experts at the synod, but none had the right to vote.

In the section of the synod's final report dedicated to women, a section approved by a 251-9 vote, members wrote of the "determinant role of women in the lives of individuals, the family and society."

The condition of women in the world "is subject to great differences that derive mostly from socio-cultural factors," the report said. "The dignity of women must be defended and promoted."

In too many situations, in both developed and developing nations, the synod said, women are subject to discrimination and, at times, even "the gift of motherhood is penalized rather than valued."

The synod report denounced the "phenomena of growing vio-

An act of love that fails is just as much a part of the divine life as an act of love that succeeds, for love is measured by its own fullness, not by its reception.

— Harold Loukes