



CWL in the Holy Land

A Catholic Women's League pilgrimage to the Holy Land, along with Catholic Near East Welfare Association, has revealed the challenges facing Holy Land Christians, but also great hope.

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Trinity Manor

A blessing and dedication was held for Trinity Manor, a faith-based retirement and assisted living residence in southeast Saskatoon.

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Book on Christian unity

Rev. Dr. Gordon T. Smith reviews a new book by Rev. Tom Ryan, CSP, called *Christian Unity: How You Can Make a Difference*. Gordon outlines at least four reasons why this book is invaluable.

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Spotlight

Spotlight is the story of the Pulitzer Prize-winning team of reporters from the Boston Globe that broke the sexual abuse scandal in the Catholic Church. Already a multiple award-winner since its premiere, it is certain to be an Oscar best-picture contender, writes Gerald Schmitz.

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Solidarity with Muslims

"It's time to establish a greater solidarity with Islam, notwithstanding extremist terrorism," writes Ron Rolheiser, OMI. "We are both part of the same family: we have the same God, suffer the same anxieties, are subject to the same mortality, and will share the same heav-

en. Muslims more than ever need our understanding, sympathy, support, and fellowship in faith."

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Virgin Mary, Advent icon, has many fans

By Carol Zimmermann

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Maureen Orth, a special correspondent for *Vanity Fair* magazine who has written about music icons, world leaders and Hollywood celebrities, tackled a completely different subject for *National Geographic* magazine: the Virgin Mary. For the magazine's December cover story, "Mary the most powerful woman in the world," Orth visited several countries and interviewed dozens of people with strong devotional ties to Mary — including from those who claim to have seen her, those who believe her intercession has healed them and those seeking her spiritual guidance and intercession.

In the magazine's Washington office Nov. 24, Orth, widow of Tim Russert, moderator of NBC's *Meet the Press*, who died in 2008, said what made the biggest impression on her while interviewing people for the article was Mary's universal appeal across diverse cultures.

"It was a huge journey all over the world," she said, noting that what particularly stands out after a year of visiting Marian devotional

sites in Bosnia-Herzegovina, France, Mexico, Egypt and Rwanda is that Mary is the "hope and solace of so many people

including Muslims."

The Muslim appreciation of Mary, as a "holy woman of God," she told Catholic News Service, "is

a bridge that ought to be explored," especially in this time of strife

— APPARITIONS, page 19



CNS/Paul Haring

POPE FRANCIS VISITS AFRICA — People cheer before Pope Francis' arrival for a meeting with youth at Kasarani Stadium in Nairobi, Kenya, Nov. 27. The pope visited Kenya, Uganda and the Central African Republic during his six-day African tour. See coverage on page 20.

College of Physicians approves euthanasia policy

By Mary Deutscher

SASKATOON — At their Nov. 20 meeting, the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CPSS) voted to approve a policy on euthanasia and assisted suicide. The council's decision follows a public consultation on a guidance document, which was conducted in October.

The policy's initial draft was based on recommendations prepared by the Advisory Group on Physician-Assisted Dying of the Federation of Medical Regulatory Authorities of Canada (FMRAC). The policy was drafted by a sub-committee of the CPSS, and is meant to guide physicians regarding assessment of the criteria outlined by the Supreme Court of Canada in the landmark Feb. 6, 2015, Carter decision that decriminalized euthanasia and assisted suicide.

The CPSS policy does not provide clinical guidelines for performing these practices, but is rather intended to ensure that euthanasia and assisted suicide are only performed by physicians who have received appropriate training, once this training is made available.

The council's discussion focused on three main areas: conscientious objection, the definition of the word "adult" in the Carter case, and the use of advanced health care directives.

Regarding conscientious objection, the policy states that objecting physicians are "expected to provide sufficient information and resources to enable the patient to make his/her own informed choice and access all options for care."

The policy further states that this means "arranging timely access to another physician or resources, or offering the patient information and advice about all the medical options available." The physician's obligations can also be met "by delegating this communication to another compe-

tent individual for whom the physician is responsible."

In its deliberations, the council drew heavily on its recently passed policy on conscientious objection. Some council members expressed concerns that physicians who are opposed to euthanasia and assisted suicide would not be able to meet the obligation to provide their patients with information, as doing so would make them complicit in their patient's death. This section of the policy passed with nine council members voting for the amended section and five voting against.

The council's discussion also

focused on the word "adult," which is not defined in the Carter decision. It is possible that persons under 18 could qualify as "mature minors," a category of persons under the age of 18 who can consent to medical treatments if their doctor determines that they understand the procedure being proposed and the risks and consequences of that procedure. The final policy recommends that physicians only provide euthanasia and assisted suicide to persons 18 years and older unless the

— CONSCIENCE, page 6

Medical aid in dying 'catastrophic idea'

By Alan Hustak
Catholic Register

MONTREAL — After 30 years in palliative care medicine, Dr. Bernard Lapointe is adamant that regardless of what the law says he will never euthanize a patient. He is among thousands of law-abiding Quebec doctors who are facing some of the most difficult days of their professional careers as the province hurtles toward Dec. 10 and the legalization of euthanasia.

Quebec's controversial right-to-die legislation, Bill 52, makes it

mandatory for physicians to either accommodate a patient's request to die or to refer that patient to an obliging doctor in the same institution. With few exceptions, all Quebec health care institutions, including hospitals, hospices and palliative care facilities, are required to provide assisted-death services for patients who ask to die and qualify under government guidelines for assisted death.

"No institution has the right to conscientiously object," said Lapointe, director of the Palliative Care Division of Montreal's Jewish General Hospital. "Even faith-based hospitals with a religious attachment to them cannot ignore the law."

"The die is cast, the law is the

law. No hospital is going to defy the law."

Yet the medical staff at *Université de Montreal* health centre have voted unanimously to reject doctor-assisted death and at least two of 29 hospices in the province have announced they will not participate: The West Island Palliative Care Residence in suburban Montreal and Maison Michel Sarrazin in Quebec City. Maison Auberge Lumière in Sherbrooke will limit medical aid in dying to patients suffering from terminal cancer.

Most Quebec doctors oppose the legislation, Lapointe says.

"Doctors have the right to be conscientious objectors, and I for

— QUEBEC, page 4

Hustak is a freelance writer in Montreal.

Youth ‘overwhelmed’ at U.S. conference for 23,000

By Sean Gallagher

INDIANAPOLIS (CNS) — As 23,000 youth from across America worshipped together during the closing mass of the National Catholic Youth Conference in Indiana-

polis, Leanna Long felt “amazingly overwhelmed” to be in the midst of so many people who shared her faith.

She attended the conference from her home in North Carolina, where Catholics are a small mi-

nority of the overall population.

“We know the church is large,” said Long, a member of St. Thomas More Parish in Chapel Hill, in the Raleigh diocese. “But to be able to see it and know that I’m not alone (is helpful).

“We’re told that where two or three are gathered, (Jesus) is in your presence. Well, I’m one of one in my school. Is God with me still? The answer is, ‘Yes.’ Even though I’m in North Carolina and someone else is in New Hampshire, we’re still . . . praying together,” she told *The Criterion*, newspaper of the Indianapolis archdiocese. “We’re still gathered together, and he’s there.”

In her words, Long captured the church’s youthful vitality and diverse universality. Both were on display Nov. 21 as conference attendees were led in worship on the feast of Christ the King by Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, who was the principal celebrant.

During his opening remarks at the mass, Rodriguez shared with his young listeners the mission they were being given as they returned to their homes.

“This is not the end,” he said. “This is the beginning of another stage when you will go back to your places in order to spread the kingdom of Jesus Christ.”

In his homily, Rodriguez reflected on the feast of Christ the King that the church was celebrating that weekend.

“Today, we want to celebrate all his triumphs in one single feast, especially established to show Jesus as the only sovereign (in) a society that seems to want to turn its back on God and not acknowledge any of this,” said the cardinal, who is a close adviser of Pope Francis.

Rodriguez later exhorted his “young brothers and sisters” “to spread out his reign of love, with all the values of the kingdom.”

The kingdom of Christ, he said, is “the salt of the earth, the light of the world, the leaven of the dough, a sign of salvation in order to build a more just world, more brotherly, one based on Gospel values, the hope and eternal joy to which we are all called.”

The feast of Christ the King also leads the Catholic Church to consider its ultimate fulfilment at

the end of time, and the relevance of that future event to the world here and now, he said.

“Today’s feast is like experiencing an anticipation of the second coming of Christ in power and majesty, the glorious coming which will fill the hearts and will dry forever the tears of unhappiness,” Rodriguez said. “And, at the same time, it is an encouragement to make real this experience of the second coming by our good works, because the hope of a new earth should not scare us.

“Rather, it should strengthen our commitment to cultivate the earth, where that body of a new human family grows and can give us an advance taste of the new world.”

In addition to the 23,000 youth participating in the mass, approximately 250 priests concelebrated. The liturgy also featured 18 bishops, 50 deacons and 50 seminarians.

The NCYC closing mass capped the conference that began Nov. 19 and took place in the Indiana Convention Centre and Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis.

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has hosted the last three conferences, which are held every two years. It is scheduled to host the next one in 2017. The conference is sponsored by the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry.

While many Catholic youth travelled thousands of miles to attend the National Catholic Youth Conference, Frankie Auriemma’s trip to the event only took about 20 minutes.

A member of St. Susanna Parish in Plainfield, a suburb of Indianapolis, Auriemma was proud that the archdiocese was hosting so many Catholic youth from across the country as she looked upon the attendees in the stadium prior to the start of the closing liturgy.

“It’s here in our hometown. That’s crazy,” she said. “We get to be the hometown. I can say, ‘Yeah, I’m from Indianapolis. It’s cool. This is my home turf.’ It makes me really proud. This is where I grew up. I’ve been here my whole life.”



CNS/Sean Gallagher

NCYC CLOSING MASS — Felician Sisters Mary Beth Bromer, right, and Eliana Remiszewewska, who minister in the Archdiocese of Chicago, play a Catholic trivia game with youth from the Diocese of St. Cloud, Minn., during the National Catholic Youth Conference Nov. 19 at the Indiana Convention Centre in Indianapolis. The biennial conference draws more than 20,000 Catholic teens from across the U.S.

Ukraine wants to live in peace: Shevchuk

By Marianne Zanko Komek

PERTHAMBOY, N.J. (CNS) — The excitement was palpable at Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic School in Perth Amboy on a recent Wednesday when Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk of Kiev-Halych, Ukraine, paid a visit.

The head of the Ukrainian Byzantine Catholic Church spoke to the schoolchildren about loving God and neighbour. He extended greetings from children in Ukraine to them.

A question-and-answer session with the students followed in English, Ukrainian and Spanish — the major archbishop speaks those languages and six others — and covered a range of issues, including the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

In response to one boy’s question, he said, “Right now there is a war in Ukraine. Ukraine is the victim of foreign aggression. But simple people in Ukraine and in Russia don’t want to fight each other.

“Every nation wants to live in peace, but some presidents who want to start war are playing a career game,” said Shevchuk. “We have to stop their irresponsibility. Young boys in Ukraine are now dying to stop the war. So please pray for them.”

His visit to the school, the only one affiliated with the Byzantine Catholic Church in the Diocese of Metuchen, was part of a U.S. trip that included his participation in the unveiling in Washington of the Holodomor-Forced Famine Monument, honouring the memory of millions of Ukrainians who starved to death in 1932-33 during forced collectivization under the Stalin regime.

Shevchuk also was among several religious leaders from Ukraine who held a news conference urging the U.S. to increase humanitarian aid in their country as winter sets in.

They urged help for “the humanitarian catastrophe gripping our country. The needs are enormous, ranging from medical supplies to everyday items such as food, water and clothing.”

The delegation also had a meeting at the White House with Obama administration officials. The major archbishop’s itinerary included celebrating the Divine Liturgy at the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception for a congregation of more than 1,200.

In Perth Amboy, when he arrived at the school Nov. 11, the students stood and said, “Glory to Jesus Christ” in Ukrainian to him. He replied, “Glory forever.”

Young children dressed in traditional Ukrainian garb greeted him with bread and salt and bouquets. A children’s choir sang hymns and songs in English and Ukrainian, and recited a rhyming history of the school. Birthday gifts were presented to him, including an icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Shevchuk was accompanied by Ukrainian Archbishop Stefan Soroka of Philadelphia, who is metropolitan of Ukrainian Catholics in the United States; Rev. Ivan Turyk, pastor of the Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and Assumption Catholic School’s principal, Michael Szpyhulsky.

“We are very proud that we have two great spiritual leaders of our church who really love Catholic education and are concerned

about our youth,” said Turyk.

He said the Ukrainian Catholic Church is not only for Ukrainians, but for all, which he noted is reflected “in the beautiful mosaic of our children of different races and backgrounds.”

Ukraine, which was ruled mostly by Russia and other neighbouring countries for centuries, regained full independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union but relations between the Russian Federation and Ukraine deteriorated with the annexation of Crimea by Russia and incursions in other nearby Ukrainian territory in 2014.

Seoul launches prayers for North Korea

SEOUL, South Korea (CNS) — To mark the 70th anniversary of the division of Korea and the Year of Mercy, the Archdiocese of Seoul launched a prayer movement, North Korean Church in My Heart.

Seoul Cardinal Andrew Yeom Soo-jung, who serves as apostolic administrator of Pyongyang, North Korea, said the people there “have always been in my prayers.”

Before a mass at Myongdong Cathedral Nov. 24, the cardinal said: “Pope Francis has announced the Jubilee of Mercy; I believe the Korean Peninsula is one of the regions that need most the mercy of God. I invite everyone to join me in this prayer movement, to bear in mind the Catholic Church of North Korea, and to show our love and concern with continuous prayers,” he said ahead of the opening mass for the movement.

After the liberation of Korea, there were 57 parishes and about 5,200 Catholics in North Korea. After the Korean War, however, the Catholic Church of North



CNS/Archdiocese of Seoul

KOREAN CHURCH PRAYS FOR NORTH — Some of the pictures of North Korean parishes are seen Nov. 24 inside the Myongdong Cathedral in Seoul. As Catholic churches around the world are preparing to celebrate the Jubilee of Mercy, the Archdiocese of Seoul launched a prayer movement to remember the Catholic Church in North Korea.

Korea underwent persecutions by the government. Only a few hidden Catholics are believed to be in North Korea now.

The archdiocese said North Korean Church in My Heart is open to anyone who wants to pray for the North Korean Church.

CWL Holy Land pilgrimage reveals challenges

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — A Catholic Women's League (CWL) pilgrimage to the Holy Land has revealed the challenges facing Holy Land Christians, but also great hope, says CWL president Barb Dowding.

The pilgrimage Nov. 13 - 23 took 17 CWL members, along with Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA) Canada's national director Carl Hétu and St. John's Archbishop Martin Currie, to visit the projects CWL supports, to show support for Christians living in the region and to visit the holy sites.

In a Skype interview from Bethlehem Nov. 20, Dowding said she had decided to go as a "personal, private pilgrimage to gather my wits and regroup."

The trip has been an "amazing experience," she said. "I've seen a lot of wonderful things."

"What we did see was a lot of walls, walls everywhere," Dowding said. "Walls are such a great divider; we talked about it in almost every meeting: how to break down the walls. Instead of breaking down, they seem to be getting higher and higher."

Dowding said they knew about the security wall, the checkpoints, and difficulties crossing back and forth between Israel to Palestine. "We could actually feel it and see it," she said. "That is part of their life and I'm sure it deeply affects them."

"I never felt the people we met were wringing their hands in despair or lacking hope," she said.

"They went about their business day by day, despite the challenges."

"What we've all agreed is praying for peace is huge," she said. People they meet are "all saying peace seems very far away but they always cling to the hope that other great divisions have fallen away: Northern Ireland, South Africa, all those things that seemed totally impossible have changed."

Hope remains and "people asked us to pray, pray, pray!" she said.

Currie, who had previously served as a CWL's spiritual adviser and now sits on CNEWA Canada's board, said the Christian population is "very small, roughly two per cent of the population, down from 14 - 15 per cent in 1948."

"A lot have emigrated to other countries," the archbishop said. "Sometimes they feel they have no future here."

Currie said Canadian Catholics need to "support the Christian communities that are here," by not only seeing the "holy sites, the old stones" but to see the "living stones" the Christian communities that are there, and have been there "since Apostolic days."

"How do we support these Christians here, so they don't have to go elsewhere to seek a better way of life?" he asked.

The other CWL members each had their own reasons for coming, Dowding said. "They, like me, met so many people living, working serving here in the Holy Land under very difficult, almost extreme conditions."



Photo courtesy CNEWA

CWL HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE — The CWL group is shown after praying for peace at Israel's separation wall where Pope Francis had prayed on his way to Bethlehem in May 2014. Barbara Dowding is last on the right, in front of Archbishop Martin Currie.

The group visited the two projects CWL supports to "show solidarity and confirm they are good endeavours," she said. One is the Infant Welfare Centre in the Old City of Jerusalem that supports at-risk teenagers to help them stay in school, even if they face an unplanned pregnancy. "The success rate is really high," said Dowding. "The centre has a day-

care for little children so mothers can work."

The other is the Shepherd's Field Hospital in Beit Sahour that provides health care for mothers and small children from pregnancy through early childhood.

"The babies, and children up to age four and five were so well-cared for and loved, you know you're putting your energies into

the right thing," Dowding said, noting these projects have been called Velma's Dream, after a previous CWL president, Velma Harrison, who, after a similar pilgrimage in 2010, was inspired to find ways CWL could help Holy Land Christians.

The pilgrims visited a number

— SISTERS, page 4

Media event held in Saskatoon in advance of climate change talks

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A coalition of environmental, justice and faith groups in Saskatoon were among those advocating for climate justice in the days leading up to the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change being held in Paris Nov. 30 - Dec. 11.

At a media event Nov. 25 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, Tracy Mitchell of the Council of Canadians said that Saskatchewan people and the Saskatchewan government can and must play a role in achieving climate justice and averting catastrophe.

A march planned for Saskatoon Nov. 29 will coincide with other such demonstrations of grassroots support around the world, said Mitchell. "Saskatoon that day will join with the rest of the world in marching for climate justice, in the lead-up to the climate negotiations in Paris."

Bishop Donald Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, who also serves as chair of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, expressed support for the local march and for efforts around the world to encourage political leaders and all those participating in COP21.

"I hope this march in Saskatoon is a way of standing in solidarity with a broad and bold request across the world for significant and courageous steps at

the Paris conference," Bolen said.

The bishop added that he would encourage provincial and national representatives at COP21 to look beyond their own economic concerns to the larger, long-term global picture.

In his recent encyclical on the environment Pope Francis discussed the ways in which wealthier nations like Canada often draw on the resources of poorer nations to better our own lives, Bolen noted. "We have a responsibility in this country to be concerned about the whole world, and we have the resources and the wealth to be a real leader in this area," he said.

Erica Lee, a University of Sas-

katchewan student and indigenous rights advocate, was preparing to head to Paris as a member of the Canadian Youth Delegation to COP21. "First of all I am a representative of my community in Saskatoon: inner-city folks, indigenous folks, and people often left out of climate negotiations," she said.

"Climate justice and social justice are related, especially for indigenous people," Lee said. "The way we are disappeared from the land, the missing and murdered indigenous women — these issues are completely related to climate injustice and the ways that our land is exploited."

Lee said she hopes to encourage resistance to the idea that what is most important is development and exploitation of the land. "We cannot sacrifice the planet for money."

Mark Bigland-Pritchard of Climate Action Saskatoon called for political leaders to act now to avoid the worst effects of climate change. "Facing the challenge of addressing the climate crisis demands a quality of political leadership which we have not yet seen. There is no place for hesitation, delay or fear of change."

He also noted this is not just an environmental issue, but one of justice and compassion, and "an

issue of human survival, and survival of everybody together, not just the survival of the people who have the resources to get through."

Bigland-Pritchard stressed the reality of massive droughts and floods, heat waves, forest fires, and rising sea levels, as the global temperature rises as a result of human activity. "We have to find a way to live within the limits set by the laws of physics," he said. "That includes phasing out carbon-based fuel or fossil fuel."

He pointed to the case of Bangladesh, with 160 million people, who have emissions lower than Saskatchewan, with its population of only 1.1 million. Saskatchewan has the highest per-capita rate of greenhouse gases emissions among Canadian provinces.

"Bangladesh is not contributing in any serious way to this crisis, and yet they are a low-lying country, many of their communities are set to suffer as a result of increasing global temperatures, and resulting increasing sea levels and increasing floods," he said. "We have a particular responsibility in Saskatchewan because we have a particularly high per-capita emissions rate."

Bigland-Pritchard also noted that the damage caused by environmental devastation and drought has far-reaching implications — for instance, the current Syrian refugee crisis has partly come about because of long-term drought that led to political instability.



Yaworski

CLIMATE JUSTICE — Mark Bigland-Pritchard of Climate Action Saskatoon, Bishop Donald Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, indigenous-rights advocate Erica Lee (a member of the Canadian Youth Delegation to COP21), and Tracy Mitchell of the Council of Canadians (from left) recently spoke about local advocacy related to the climate change negotiations in Paris Nov. 30 - Dec. 11.

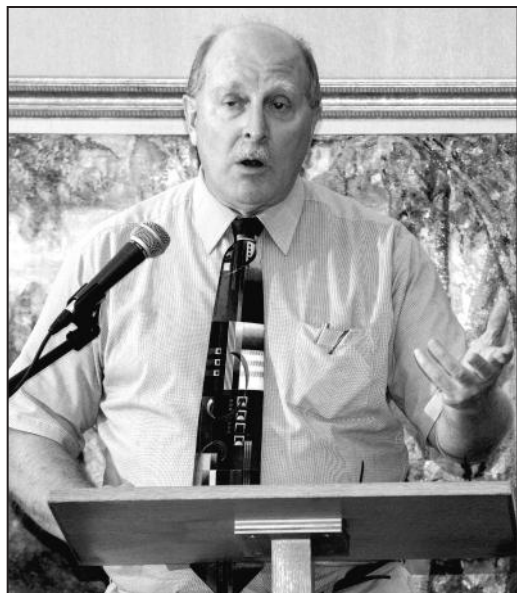
Catholics need to shape suicide law from within

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — A new ethics guide on physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia recommends that family doctors who cannot find ethical common ground with patients who wish to die help those patients find another doctor.

“If reflection and discussion do not reconcile the conflicts between the physician’s and patient’s values, the physician should discuss transferring the patient’s care to another physician in a way that neither compromises the physician’s moral integrity nor affects the patient’s quality of care,” reads *A Guide for Reflection on Ethical Issues Concerning Assisted Suicide and Voluntary Euthanasia*, quietly released by the College of Family Physicians of Canada in September.

In trying to strike a balance between the freedom of conscience of doctors and the Supreme Court



Catholic Register/Michael Swan

NEW GUIDE — Redemptorist Father Mark Miller said a new physician’s guide on assisted suicide tries to make the best of a bad situation. The guide aims to reconcile conflict between the physician’s and the patient’s values.

of Canada’s ruling that struck down criminal law against assisted

suicide, the College of Family Physicians’ new guide does as good a job as possible of protecting doctors who believe killing is beyond their mandate as doctors, said Redemptorist bioethicist Rev. Mark Miller.

“They’re trying to make the best out of a bad situation,” said Miller.

The principle author of the new guide is physician, researcher and ethicist Dr. Bill Sullivan, who was the founding executive director of the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute and a current member of the Pontifical Academy for Life.

Miller supports Catholics working inside the system to try to

shape the law and practice around physician-assisted suicide.

“This is a political reality, not an ethical reality,” said Miller. “From that point of view, you have to get in there and prevent as much damage as you can.”

The new guide for family doctors criticizes the Supreme Court of Canada for confusing the difference between intentionally killing patients and withdrawing or withholding unwanted treatment.

“The (court’s) ruling does not differentiate ethically between physician-assisted dying and currently accepted practices of physicians withholding or withdrawing life-sustaining interventions at a patient’s request and of palliative sedation that is administered for symptom control,” reads the guide. “There is a significant difference in terms of the physician’s intention.”

Overall, the guide leads doctors through a careful and thor-

ough process for determining the underlying reasons behind a request for assisted suicide — “to discern whether depression or suicidal ideation, which compromise patient autonomy, is present and can be addressed therapeutically.”

While the process outlined in the guide is excellent, Miller doubts that the average family doctor, who may see 20 to 40 patients a day, is likely to follow such a rigorous protocol.

“Basically, my experience of family physicians is that they write a prescription and they move on,” Miller said. “If it’s something serious, they send you to a specialist.”

But most family doctors are spending more of their time diagnosing and treating mental health issues, and this will prepare them for more careful assessment of requests for euthanasia, said Miller.

— CHANGE, page 16

Quebec will be first province to allow physician-assisted death

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one will not do it,” he said. “There is not a tribunal in the country that can force me to do it.”

Quebec will become the first province in the country to allow physician-assisted death even though euthanasia and assisted suicide remain illegal under the Canadian Criminal Code. So, technically, doctors who help end a patient’s life can still be charged and face up to 14 years in jail. But Quebec lawmakers are skirting the federal law by insisting they are implementing medical aid in dying, which is a health care matter that falls outside the Criminal Code and is under provincial jurisdiction.

The bill does not specifically mention the word euthanasia or suicide. It uses euphemisms such as “end-of-life care.” The legislation allows terminally ill patients “who are of sound mind” and “in a state of unbearable physical and psychological pain” to request “palliative sedation.” Each request must be approved by an attending physician and approved by a hospital medical team.

Dr. Manuel Boyard, chair of the McGill University Health Centre, says you can read the language of the bill any way you want. What it offers, in his view, is “not assisted suicide, but euthanasia.”

“In Quebec, it is very clear that euthanasia is a medical act. It is not assisted suicide. It is much more likely that doctors will prescribe something for the patient to take home, rather than roll up their sleeves and inject the patient and wait by his bedside for him to die.”

Lawyer Michel Raciot, vice-president of Living with Dignity, disagrees. He argues that the fine print of the bill makes it clear that a physician “must administer medical aid in dying personally and take care of and stay with the patient until death ensues.”

Under the new law, physicians who refuse to provide such assistance must refer their patient to

another physician who will accommodate the request to be killed. The law also allows patients to change their minds at the last minute and to withdraw any signed request for medical assistance in dying.

Quebec’s health minister, Gaetan Barrette, a doctor, insists that even medical institutions which disdain the law must comply with it. “Doctors do not own Quebec hospitals,” he has stated. He has threatened to deny hospital privileges to physicians who refuse to comply.

According to a recent poll, at least two-thirds of Quebec doctors have indicated they want no part of euthanasia.

Boyard believes proper palliative care would alleviate the need for euthanasia and Bill 52 is unnecessary.

“Palliative care in the right setting with the right resources and the right pain control is sufficient,” he said.

Perhaps in an attempt to appease critics, health minister Barrette has announced a five-year, \$4.5-million plan to improve the quality of palliative care by allowing more people to die at home. But the man regarded as the father of Canadian palliative care is unimpressed.

“It is a tremendously important mistake to think you can improve palliative care by throwing money at it,” said Dr. Balfour Mount, a cancer surgeon who started the Royal Victoria Hospital’s Palliative Care Service, the first in North America, in 1975.

“I am fearful about the government’s new support for palliative care. Those of us who work in palliative care are skilled specialists. We have been trained to kill the suffering, not the person who is suffering.”

He calls Bill 52 “a phenomenally bad idea, a catastrophic idea,” but says the battle is lost and “any attempt to fight it is going to be useless.”

Last February, when the Supreme Court ruled that Canadians can’t be denied a blanket right to

assisted suicide, the High Court gave the federal government until Feb. 6, 2016, to amend two sections of the Criminal Code to comply with its ruling. But because Bill 52 is so vague in its terminology, the Quebec government argues its bill qualifies as extended health care, which is not illegal.

Dr. Laurent Marcoux, head of the Quebec Medical Association, which represents 10,000 physicians and surgeons, spoke forcefully against Bill 52 in legislative hearings. But he says government guidelines will somewhat limit access to physician-assisted death.

“No patient will have easy access to death,” said Marcoux. “You just don’t get it into your head one morning and say, ‘I want to end it all, so give me the needle.’ It doesn’t work that way. The patient chooses, yes, but he is surrounded by a medical team and

with the help of his family. The law frames that very well.”

The recently elected Trudeau government is expected to request a six-month delay to rewrite the Criminal Code, but few believe the Liberals, who went from eight to 40 seats in Quebec in the last election, will take the political risk of prosecuting any Quebec physician who helps a patient die.

Section 16 of Quebec’s legislation paves the way for doctors to offer specialized services, much like abortion clinics, but which would permit doctors to administer end-of-life care at a patient’s home and presumably charge for the service. Some doctors suggest suicide clinics might be set up as a compromise.

“Those people with a degenerative disease, those who have gone to court asking for the right to die — their plight is important,

and we have to listen to them,” said Lapointe. “In a pluralistic, secular society, I don’t see any way around it.”

Church leaders in Quebec are opposed to the new law but seem to be resigned to it. Quebec Cardinal Gerald Lacroix has said that whatever terminology you use, the notion that assisted suicide and euthanasia are medical solutions to pain and suffering is repugnant. He too believes there should be greater access to palliative care, and that doctors should be made more attentive to their patients’ psychological suffering.

“Now we will have to be ever more zealous and work with people who are dying so they do not have to request euthanasia,” Lacroix said.

“To cause death to a sick person is not to care for them. Lethal injection is not treatment.”

Sisters run many major institutions

Continued from page 3

of Christian ministries, hospitals and ministries for the disabled, mentally challenged, and the deaf.

At the Hospital of St. Vincent de Paul, they saw children with varying ranges of disability, some needing 24-hour a day care. “What was so amazing to me was to see the love, the care, the cleanliness, the joy found in the whole place from the sisters to the staff,” Dowding said. The staff to patient ratio was one to one. “It proved to me the dignity of life at any stage.”

The pilgrims visited the Cremisan Valley where a proposed new stretch of the security wall could divide Palestinian Christian families from their traditional orchards and farmland, and divide a convent from the people they serve.

“The Palestinians feel they are under occupation, hemmed in by fences and roads,” Dowding said. “The sisters who are in the Cremisan valley are doing a “tremendous job and so far have been able to keep wall from cutting a lot of

Palestinians off from their farms.”

The “wall’s being built under their noses,” she said.

In Palestine, so many of the major institutions are run by Catholic sisters, Dowding said. “Catholic hospitals and Catholic schools are very high quality.” Most of the people who use these facilities are Muslim.

The Christian community cares for “the least of these, those who are physically or mentally challenged, hearing impaired, the ones no one wants to give the time to care for,” said Currie. “Christians are there



Photo courtesy CNEWA

CHILDREN’S CENTRE — Archbishop Martin Currie visits with a Sister of Charity at the St. Vincent de Paul Centre for mentally challenged children in Haifa, Israel.

because it is the Christian thing to do, to see the face of Christ in them, to love them is to be followers of Jesus.”

In multireligious borough, people live peacefully

By Francois Gloutnay

MONTREAL (CNS) — Marcella Villalobos Cid, 36, lives in Saint-Denis, a working-class neighbourhood in the north end of Paris, with her husband, Guillaume, and their two-year-old daughter, Kateri. In her job as co-ordinator for Jesuit Refugee Service’s hospitality network, Villalobos often finds herself concerned for refugees and their families.

After police raided a Saint-Denis apartment for terrorists Nov. 18, Villalobos found herself on the opposite end of the concern spectrum.

“Every time I hear about airstrikes being launched in Syria, I send text messages to refugees and ask them if they’ve been able to reach their families out there. This week, we switched position: It’s the refugees themselves who texted me, when Saint-Denis was being raided by the police. Just to make sure that I was OK. Such solidarity is just priceless,” she said.

“Saint-Denis is rather close to Paris, to my office and to our friends. It’s easy to get around town through transit. But besides those down-to-earth considerations, there’s one reason we chose to live here, in Saint-Denis: It’s a small microcosm of French society and of the world we live in,” Villalobos told the Montreal-based Presence info.

More than 100,000 people live in the borough, whose inhabitants are from 170 different nationalities.

Gloutnay is a staffer at Presence info based in Montreal.

“In Saint-Denis, community life is rich and thriving. There’s lot of young people here. What’s more, it’s a welcome hall for many immigrants,” said Villalobos. It’s also a multireligious borough where “Catholics, Muslims, Jews and Protestants are in good terms and live peacefully.”

When police raided the terrorist hideout just a few blocks from the Villalobos home, friends from all walks of life and many different nationalities sent them dozens of text messages.

“They wanted to know how we felt, if our family was safe and sound and if we needed anything,” she said.

The JRS-France project co-ordinator said terrorist attacks such as the ones that struck Paris Nov. 13 “are commonplace in the daily life of many people around the world. I hope it will open everyone’s eyes to the situation lived by people who live in Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq or Ukraine. Those countries have known such terror for many, many years, and on a daily basis.”

Before moving to France five years ago, Villalobos lived and worked in Montreal, where she volunteered with the Canadian church’s Development and Peace agency. She has worked with Mexican seasonal farmworkers and worked with the poor as a socio-pastoral agent for the Archdiocese of Montreal.

Villalobos still follows events in Quebec and Canada. She was saddened to learn of an online petition asking to stem the imminent settlement of Syrian refugees in Canada. Some fear that terrorists might mingle with the

refugees and become a threat for national security, but the Canadian government announced Nov. 24 it would accept 10,000 Syrian refugees by Dec. 31 and another 15,000 by the end of February.

Villalobos, who works daily with refugees, said people “must refrain from the temptation of putting in the same bag the terrorists who commit those horrible acts of violence and the refugees who are actually fleeing the violence of those radicals.”

“To us, it’s pure nonsense to believe that jihadists might mingle with refugees and submit themselves to that long, awful and horrific journey on sea and land, toward Europe. Many people have died while trying to get across the Mediterranean. Do you sincerely believe that any jihadist would be willing to take such a risk? It’s totally insane. It’s just pure nonsense,” she said.

“The Muslims that are being accompanied by Jesuit Refugee Service are friendly, highly critical of their own country. They even criticize Islam itself,” she added.

Every year, Jes-

uit Refugee Service, with the help of volunteer families and religious communities, helps 500 refugees settle in France. Up to a thousand refugees benefit from the services offered by JRS, be it legal counsel or French lessons.

Shortly after the terrorist attacks, Catholic leaders in Paris and Saint-Denis offered soothing words to the faithful.

“The Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal André Vingt-Trois, and the Bishop of Saint-Denis, Pascal

Delannoy, asked that ‘through our prayers, our words and our deeds, we may be peacemakers,’ ” Villalobos said.

“Being a peacemaker . . . it’s just not possible to cross your arms and stay at home. Whether we live in Paris, in Saint-Denis or elsewhere in the world, we must ask ourselves what it means to be a peacemaker and what must be done to build a world that’s fairer and more peaceful,” she said.



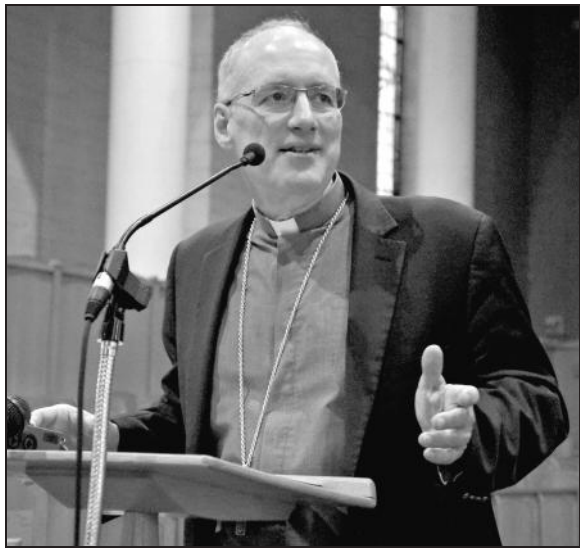
Art Babyeh

OTTAWA CLIMATE MARCH — The 100% Possible climate march in Ottawa was one of about 1,700 marches held worldwide on Nov. 29 on the eve of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, which began its 12-day summit in Paris Nov. 30. The marches call on governments to move toward 100 per cent renewable energy by 2050. CBC reported that the Ottawa rally was one of the largest the city had ever seen.

After synods, it’s time for Pope Francis to speak: Durocher

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The kind of broad consultation that preceded the two synods on the family is “part of the reality of the church now,” Gatineau Archbishop Paul-André Durocher told a conference here Nov. 21



CCN/D. Gyapong

Gatineau Archbishop Paul-André Durocher

The most recent synod in October has provided the pope with a text for the process, which is a “work in progress,” the archbishop told The Synod My Family conference at Dominican College Nov. 19 - 21. “We need to give space for Pope Francis to speak,” the archbishop said.

The process involves three stages, he said. The first involved consultation with the People of God; the second involved the bishops building on that consultation and speaking with each other with honesty and listening with humility; and the third will involve “listening to the pope,”

D u r o c h e r said.

Durocher took part in last year’s extraordinary synod as president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) and this year’s ordinary synod as a delegate for the CCCB’s French sector.

Initially the bishops did not know how the first synod would connect with the second, he said. Only on the last day of last year’s did they find out the document they produced would become the working document of *lineamenta* for this year’s, he said. “If I had known that I would have approached it differently.”

“I had the feeling they were

feeling their way in this,” he said.

He also wished there had been more time in-between the two synods for study groups to gather and deepen their reflection in-between sessions, as theologians and bishops did in-between Vatican II’s sessions. But the archbishop was pleased with the shorter length of the bishops’ interventions and the greater amount of time devoted to small group discussion. Bishops spent 36 hours in their small groups, time Durocher described as fruitful. Instead of listening to five- or six-minute talks one after another, there were talks on each section, followed by small group discussion.

The working document and the structure of the synod was divided into three parts based on Catholic Action’s principles of See; Judge; Act he said, noting it was used in Argentina as part of a “theology of liberation” that “shaped the pope’s way of approaching pastoral action in the synod.”

The pope spoke during the synod about the “principle of synodality” of “walking together” that involves bishops and priests listening to lay men and women “to discern the Spirit” and encouraged this approach at all levels of the church, from the diocese, to the region, to the universal church, and how the hierarchy must be exercised in service not power, he said.

Durocher spoke during the first session about violence against women, pointing out one third of all women worldwide “experience violence at the hands of their husbands.” One line in his three-minute talk mentioned ordaining women to the diaconate. “It was not the heart of my intervention,” he said. “The media blew it up out of proportion.”

Salt and Light TV CEO and Vatican press office English language assistant Rev. Thomas Rosica and Salt and Light TV Producer Sebastian Gomes shared their experiences of being inside the synod.

Rosica stressed the synod fathers approved all 94 paragraphs of their final text by a two-thirds majority, including the texts on communion for the divorced and civilly remarried and on the treatment of homosexual persons.

“To be clear, the report makes no explicit mention of absolution and the return to communion, it seems to leave some possibility for such a solution by quoting the Catechism of the Catholic Church’s affirmation that ‘imputability and responsibility for an action can be diminished or even nullified’ because of different conditions,” Rosica said. “Just as the degree of guilt will differ, the report said, ‘also the consequences of the acts are not necessarily the same in all cases.’ ”

Rosica said the synods’ affirmed

pastoral approach must include: “Accompaniment, a readiness to listen, a gift of time and attention to one another.”

Gomes spoke of the difficulty of changing the practice of giving communion to the divorced and civilly remarried because it touches so closely on doctrine, but he said the document seemed to open the door to a change.

Rev. Peter Galadza, a Ukrainian Catholic priest, and his wife



CCN/D. Gyapong

Rev. Thomas Rosica

Presbytera Olenka Galadza, also addressed the conference on living out the vocation of married life. Both spoke of how married couples need Christ to help them with their personal brokenness.

Farmers need help developing climate resilience

By Carol Thiessen

WINNIPEG — As world leaders, including Canada's new prime minister, meet in Paris Nov. 30 - Dec. 11 to conclude a major new climate change agreement, their main focus is on cutting greenhouse gas emissions — a good thing. But the plight of many of the world's 1.5 billion small-scale farmers should also be addressed.

"Our partners across Africa and Asia are telling us that they

are facing increased droughts, more severe flooding and unpredictable growing seasons," says Jim Cornelius, executive director of Canadian Foodgrains Bank. "They need support in adapting to climate change, as well as other environmental challenges."

A new report from the Canadian Foodgrains Bank argues that promoting strong public investments in sustainable agricultural practices will help farmers build climate resilience.

Sustainable Harvests: How

investing in agriculture can help farmers address environmental challenges, documents the many environmental obstacles farmers face, including water shortages, degraded soils and a decline in diversity of plants and animals. Climate change poses an enormous additional risk, with the potential to increase the number of hungry people by 10-20 per cent by 2050.

Small-scale farmers, particularly women, are especially vulnerable to environmental degrada-

tion. "They are often relegated to the poorest lands and they directly depend on natural resources, such as rain, to provide for their families," said Cornelius.

What makes things more challenging is "they have limited capacity to adapt to these challenges, due to lack of access to credit, agricultural information and other supports," he adds.

Many of the solutions are already known, Cornelius notes. Sustainable practices such as conservation agriculture, agro-

forestry, the use of more diversified crop rotations and drip-irrigation.

"These practices can help conserve water resources, build soil health, and enable adaptation to climate change," he says. "But small-scale farmers need support to put these solutions into practice."

Unfortunately, Canadian government aid for agriculture is in decline. From 2008 - 2011 Canada's support for agriculture averaged \$450 million per year. Since 2011, this has fallen by 30 per cent.

The Foodgrains Bank is urging Canada to restore its aid for agriculture to at least \$450 million per year, and also to ensure that aid supports sustainable agricultural practices. "This would be a win for reducing hunger in the world. And it would be a win for the environment," says Cornelius.

At the climate change talks in Paris, the world's developed countries can show their support for helping small-scale farmers adapt to climate change by making commitments of financial support to help developing countries adapt to and slow climate change, he adds.

"This is a great opportunity for the new Canadian government to make a positive contribution to fighting climate change. Let's make sure the world's most vulnerable farmers get the support they need," he says.

Sustainable Harvests is the third in a series of reports from the Foodgrains Bank documenting the benefits of agricultural development. The first, Money in the Pocket, Food on the Table, made the case that investing in agriculture in developing countries is one of the most effective ways to reduce poverty in the world. The second, Growing Nutrition, showed how agricultural development can lead to improved nutrition for families.

CHAS annual conference held in Prince Albert

By Paula Fournier

PRINCE ALBERT — Representatives from Roman Catholic dioceses, school divisions and health services in Saskatchewan gathered in Prince Albert for the annual Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS) conference with the theme, Inside Out: Spirituality and Quality in Health Care. Participants were invited to reflect on how their personal calling contributes to Catholic health care's mission to provide high-quality health care.

Speaker Kenneth Pargament spoke on Bridging Research and Practice. He provided an overview of the current status of research on spirituality and health for better patient outcomes and clinical practices. Using evidence gathered over 25 years, he presented a strong rationale for spiritually integrated health care.

The theme of Pargament's second presentation was Cultivating Sacred Moments in Health Care. He spoke about sacred moments as part of the healing process for patients, families and providers themselves.

As an example, Pargament spoke of a patient who suffered from heart failure. She was not a good recipient for a transplant. After being resuscitated three times, she told him she chose to "go gently into that good night."

"That was a sacred moment with her," Pargament said.

He explained sacred moments and what they meant, those which included transcendence, ultimacy, connectedness, boundlessness, generation of spiritual emotion and transformation.

On the second day, participants had a choice of breakout sessions. One session featured Danica Liske, who at the age of 17 became a full-time caregiver for her father, who had Alzheimer's. In another session, Jon Gilchrist, an ethicist from Covenant Health in Alberta, explained his understanding of what makes Catholic health care unique. The third choice saw Dr. Joy Mendel explain the impact on the ruling of physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia on the Canadian health care system.

Three awards were handed out at the banquet. Shirley McNeil of Saskatoon, whose role in health care brought an invaluable perspective to the CHAS board, received an honorary membership to CHAS. Scott Parker of Battleford, a palliative care provider and educator in his community, received the Moola Freer Award.



Fournier

CHAS CONFERENCE — During the annual Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan conference, Bishop Albert Thévenot, M. Afr., stands with keynote speaker Sister Mary Jean Ryan, FSM (Franciscan Sister of Mary), and Sandra Kary, executive director of CHAS.

Finally, the CHAS Mission Award was presented to Larry Stang of Macklin, who brings with him a compassion that is borne out of his commitment to his faith and desire to develop a nurturing community for all.

Sister Mary Jean Ryan, FSM, was the keynote speaker for the

second day. Ryan founded Sisters of Saint Mary (SSM) Health, whose name pays tribute to those early sisters who provided loving care for people who were sick. SSM Health is a Catholic, not-for-profit organization serving the health needs of communities across the Midwestern United States

through one of the largest integrated delivery systems in the nation.

Ryan shared her experiences navigating the many challenges SSM Health has faced while becoming an exceptional institution in an ever-changing world. Delivering high-value health care that is affordable, sustainable and convenient to every patient is integral to their care.

"Providence had a big hand in our success from the very beginning," she said. "My formation as a nurse was the foundation to making the SSM spectacular."

The conference ended in a celebration of the eucharist. Board and staff members were called forward in a commitment ceremony, where they accepted the responsibility and challenge of providing leadership to the association and to witness to the healing ministry and abiding presence of Jesus.

In his homily, Bishop Albert Thévenot, M. Afr., stressed that the knowledge received at the conference gave all participants a mission and a responsibility.

"We have to find a way to respond to patients' needs," he said. "We have to go beyond what is asked, give all we can, to show we are called to excellence."

Conscience rights must be respected

Continued from page 1

courts or legislatures further define "adult" in the future.

Patients will not be able to consent to euthanasia and assisted suicide through advanced care directives, but rather must remain "competent at all stages of the process, until the time of physician-assisted dying." This requirement could also be changed by a court or legislature in the future.

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

The policy acknowledges that it is not possible to provide doctors with detailed instructions to confirm that patients meet the Carter criteria. The policy states that, "physicians are expected to use appropriate medical judgment and follow a reasonable plan of assessment to ascertain whether the Carter criteria have been met for a specific patient."

If a doctor determines that a patient meets the Carter criteria, the policy requires that the patient's request for euthanasia or assisted suicide is consistent "over a reasonable period of time." This time period "will be dependent on the patient's medical condition and other circumstances" and is not specified in the policy. This approach was adopted to ensure patients receive timely access to "physician-assisted dying."

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

The CPSS's Policy on Physician-Assisted Dying will guide physicians when the current Criminal Code prohibitions on euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide cease to be in effect. This is expected to occur Feb. 7, 2016, assuming the federal government does not ask for an extension to the Carter case ruling. The CPSS policy will be subject to provincial or federal laws and regulations in the event either level of government chooses to act.

Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada executive director Larry Worthen responded to the CPSS policy, saying, "We are comfortable with the provisions on conscientious objection. Our members are generally willing to provide information to patients so they can make an informed choice on their options."

Worthen further stated, "Once our patient makes a choice for assisted suicide or euthanasia, then we must step aside and not participate in the process. We will still care for the patient, but we cannot assist in their death. Many patients will be comforted knowing that their doctor has these moral convictions. People who want to support doctors conscience rights should go to the website MoralConvictions.ca and pass their concerns on to the decision-makers."

Myron Rogal of the diocesan Office for Justice and Peace noted that information materials about the Moral Convictions campaign and website are presently being distributed to parishes throughout the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, with financial assis-

tance from the Saskatchewan Pro-Life Association.

"It is vital that we continue to let leaders know of our grave concern about how the Supreme Court ruling will be implemented. No one should be forced to participate in causing the death of another human being. The conscience rights of doctors and all health care professionals must be protected," Rogal said.

"The public has a significant role to play in putting pressure on the provincial government to ensure the patient-physician relationship remains one of trust and integrity," he added.

Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen is encouraging ongoing public participation.

"Euthanasia remains a grave threat to many vulnerable persons as well as to our whole society, which once stood firm on a fundamental respect for all human life," Bolen said. "I encourage all Canadians to contact their MLAs and MPs to influence the drafting of legislation that ensures the protection of conscience rights and keeps the needs of vulnerable persons at the centre of this discussion."

Blessing and dedication held for Trinity Manor

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — A blessing and dedication was held Nov. 20 for Trinity Manor at Stonebridge, a faith-based retirement and assisted living residence in south-east Saskatoon.

Built by Emmanuel Care — formerly known as Catholic Health Ministry of Saskatchewan — Trinity Manor offers an “aging in place” model of care, permitting residents to transition from independent living to assisted care as their needs change. It is adjacent to Samaritan Place, a long-term health care facility that is also among the Catholic facilities administered by Emmanuel Care on behalf of Saskatchewan’s bishops.

“As a ministry of the church, the mission of Emmanuel Care is simple: we go out, we look for unmet needs and we try to fulfil them,” said president Scott Irwin.

“We thank God for all the people who were involved in the visioning, the planning and the building of Trinity Manor, and of Samaritan Place across the street,” he said at the start of the celebration. “In a special way we want to thank those we have passed the torch on to: Doug Vaughn, the chair of Trinity Manor board, and (CEO) Suzanne Turmel and her staff who make Trinity Manor what it is — a vibrant, faith-filled community.”

Turmel also spoke at the start of the celebration, presenting the building and the chapel to the bishop and asking for his blessing.

“At Trinity Manor we put the emphasis on creating a warm, welcoming community for all,” she said. “Our hope is to create a life-giving community, where residents become neighbours and neighbours become lifelong friends. At Trinity Manor we are happy to offer a holistic approach to carefree living that nourishes the body and the mind and the spirit.” Spiritual care is one of the amenities at the faith-based facility, which includes a chapel.

The blessing of the chapel and the altar took place during the celebration of the eucharist, with Bishop Donald Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon presiding.

In his homily, Bolen reflected



Yaworski

TRINITY MANOR BLESSING — Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI, Bishop Donald Bolen and Bishop Albert Thévenot (from left) spread Sacred Chrism on the altar at Trinity Manor’s chapel during a dedication celebration for the facility Nov. 20.

on the concept of home and Scriptures that speak about how God comes to dwell among us. “We all need a home, love the sense of belonging to a home, being at home,” he said.

“A chapel is a place of silence, and a place to encounter God. The tent of meeting was where the people of Israel encountered God in a direct and particular way,” Bolen said, citing the first reading, with its “beautiful rich imagery of encountering God face to face, coming to us as friend and as Lord.”

The Word that speaks to all of creation and through whom all things were made comes to dwell among us “in the flesh,” as described in the prologue of the Gospel of John, he continued. “Literally, the Word ‘pitched his tent’ among us,” Bolen said. “God has been revealed as one who comes to where we are, to dwell among us.”

God encounters us in every place and every time of our lives, in all the moments of everyday life, including the pains and frustrations, he said. “Christ dwells with us and calls us to share our lives with him and with each other. May this place be a true home, a place of joy and a place of love. May all that you experience here be held in the merciful hands of

God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in this Trinity Manor.”

Bolen was joined by Bishop Albert Thévenot, M. Afr., of Prince Albert, and Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI, in anointing the altar with the Oil of Sacred Chrism. Bolen, Thévenot and Rev. Paul Fachet, OMI, also anointed the walls of the chapel during the dedication.

A relic of St. Marguerite D’Youville, founder of the Sisters of Charity (the Grey Nuns) was deposited in the altar as part of the celebration. At the conclusion of mass, Sister Carol Borreson, SGM, presented an image of the

Canadian saint to Turmel for the chapel.

Following the mass, Bolen blessed the Trinity Manor building, and two pieces of stained glass artwork dedicated to the memory of Urban Donlevy and Rod Donlevy, and recognizing their contributions to Catholic health care in the province, including the construction of Trinity Manor and nearby Samaritan Place.

Open to those of all faith backgrounds, Trinity Manor is also home to many retired sisters from several congregations of women religious, members of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and other

retired clergy. That came about partly as a result of the vision and determination of members of the Donlevy family, Bolen noted.

“Urban Donlevy, in conversation with the sisters, came up with the idea that Catholic health could build a facility that would at once respond to the needs of women religious and the needs of the people of this region, and the needs of Catholic health,” said Bolen, admitting that when the idea was first presented “it seemed like a long shot.”

Bolen continued: “It is very fitting that we honour Urban and Rod Donlevy for their tremendous contribution to Catholic health, and their contribution in a very particular way to Trinity Manor and Samaritan Place, which would not have come about without them. They didn’t do it alone, but they were the driving force.”

Members of the Donlevy family were on hand for the celebration, and for the blessing of the two pieces of art.

A panel of stained glass art by Canadian artist Sarah Hall, showing Saskatchewan trees as depicted in the Incarnation stained glass window at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, was placed near the Trinity Manor chapel in memory of Urban Donlevy.

Another panel of art glass by Hall, showing a portion of the diocesan cathedral’s Resurrection window, with words from Scripture in Aramaic, the language of Jesus, was placed near the Samaritan Place chapel in memory of Rod Donlevy.

Catholic Family Services looks ahead

By Paula Fournier

PRINCE ALBERT — “Tonight is about celebrating 30 years of hard work and dedication with the hope of 30 more years,” said Catholic Family Services (CFS) executive director Louise Zurowski at the anniversary supper and dance at Plaza 88 in Prince Albert.

On behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Prince Albert, Rev. Maurice Fiolleau, vicar-general, welcomed all who came to support the non-profit counselling agency and its mission.

Prince Albert city councillor Martin Ring welcomed everyone on behalf of mayor Greg Dionne. He acknowledged the importance of CFS in the lives of those who have supported and benefitted from the services of the agency.

Rev. Travis Myrheim, pastor of St. Michael Parish and chaplain of St. Mary High School, said the prayer for the meal.

Zurowski shared quotations from a diocesan historical book, which explained how CFS began their work.

“Father Jean Papen was the one with the dream and helped bring Catholic Family Services to fruition,” she said. “With hope and perseverance he encouraged us, rallied our flagging spirits and pointed out that anything worth having was worth working hard for, and he showed through example.

“From corners unknown, he unearthed office chairs, desks and

lamps. He loaned us his typewriter and wrote letters to us accompanied by cheques from his parish flock. Today we are grateful that Father Jean Papen had that dream, and we think that he would be very proud to see what Catholic Family Services has become.”

Had it not been for his help and that of diocesan priest Rev. Luc Gaudet (deceased), the agency would not have its current office space, Zurowski said. During the past year, major renovations to the building’s heating and cooling system were required. The costs were overwhelming. The agency wondered how it would happen — where would the funding come from?

When the Sisters of Our Lady of the Cross came forward with the full funds for renovations, CFS renamed their office Adele’s Place in honour of the founder of the religious order.

“As a result of the generosity the Sisters of Our Lady of the Cross have shown, and many other contributions, we have the opportunity to focus on what we need to do best; that is, tend to our clients.”

Zurowski acknowledged chair member Jeanette Eddolls for the work and organizing she does. She noted that Eddolls received the Prince Albert Citizen of the Year award in 2014.

In recognition of their hard work throughout the years, two board members recognized

Lorraine Bowman, office manager since 1997, and Louise Zurowski, executive director since 2002, for the many storms they helped the agency through.

Inaugural board members Waltera Van Gennip and Jan Olesko were given the honour of cutting the 30th anniversary cake.



KARTANOWICZ DIES — Rev. Bruno Kartanowicz, MSF, died Nov. 20 at the retirement home of the Missionaries of the Holy Family in Wielki Klincz, Poland. He was pastor at Our Lady of Czeszochowa Parish in Saskatoon before his retirement to Poland, having served the Polish and Latin mass communities in Saskatoon for some 15 years. Coinciding with his funeral in Poland, two masses were held Nov. 25 in Saskatoon, one in Latin and one in Polish.



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Haitian earthquake life-changer for Whitehorse girl

By Jean Ko Din
The Catholic Register

TORONTO (CCN) — In 2010, Morgan Wienberg's future was set: she was headed to McGill University to study nursing to specialize in pediatric surgery because she knew she wanted to work with children. But her plans were derailed when a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti.

The young Whitehorse native said she will never forget how she felt watching the devastation on the news, with thousands dead and left homeless, and knew she wanted to help. So five months later, upon graduating high school, the then 18-year-old Wienberg packed her bags and headed for Port-au-Prince, the poverty-ravaged Caribbean nation's capital city. She hasn't stopped helping.

"I don't regret for a second that I didn't (go back to school)," said Wienberg. "I think I've learned so much and had so much personal growth through the experiences that I've had."

For two-and-a-half months, she worked with non-profit Mission of Hope Haiti, taking care of injured earthquake victims in Source Matelas, a rural village about 30 minutes north of Port-au-Prince.

It was through her volunteering she was introduced to the local orphanage Orphelinat Bon Samari-

tain, and she couldn't believe what she saw.

"I had visited other orphanages. I visited tent villages where all of the people living in tents were amputees, but the children in the orphanage were just in the worst conditions of any human being I had ever seen," said Wienberg.

The orphanage housed about 75 children ranging in age from under one year old to 14. There was no staff. The old Haitian woman that ran the orphanage neglected and abused the children.

"They almost had no identity," said Wienberg. "They were just called 'little boy' or 'little girl.' What really frightened me was if one of these kids disappeared, no one would even notice and there were days where I would go and visit the orphanage and kids were missing and there was no explanation and there was nothing being done about it."

When September rolled around, Wienberg returned to Canada. But she couldn't shake the memory of the children at the orphanage. After witnessing the suffering and the poverty, she knew she couldn't just go back to her old life.

Wienberg decided to defer her studies and worked to raise money to support the orphanage. She recruited friends and family to spread the word. She got in con-



Photo courtesy of Morgan Wienberg

LIFE-CHANGING WORK — Morgan Wienberg lives in Haiti full time, working to give Haitian children the support for a good education and a good home.

tact with a fellow volunteer, Sarah Wilson, who was following her fundraising efforts. Together they founded Little Footprints Big Steps (LFBS) in 2011. Initial donations came from Wienberg's tuition money and savings — about \$17,000.

"I really felt that all the plans I had for myself could wait but

these kids really couldn't wait," she said.

After six months of working and fundraising, she went back to Source Matelas on her 19th birthday. This time, she was on her own. She contacted the Haitian woman that ran the orphanage and offered to volunteer for free for five-and-a-half months. The woman agreed.

Meanwhile, Wilson stayed in Canada to work on turning LFBS into a formal non-profit organization and support Wienberg's trip with more fundraising. Together, they were going to get those children out of that orphanage.

Wienberg played with the children and took care of them. It took a while for her to gain their trust.

"They were starving. They would be fed one meal of rice per day," said Wienberg. "I would walk in and there would be a three-year-old lying in his own vomit and people would just walk by."

Wienberg soon discovered that most of the children were not orphans at all.

"Their families were so poor that these parents couldn't afford to send these children to school, they couldn't feed them and people like the woman running the orphanage . . . would prey on these parents," she said.

"The orphanage was also corrupt. It was being supported by five or six different international organizations that were bringing food and clothing to the children. . . . The owner had been selling these donations to make a profit."

As she learned more about the children's families, she began to get in contact with them. She would call each of the children's parents and explain to them what had been happening. One by one, the parents came to pick their children up.

Four years later, LFBS has expanded to 12 full-time staff in Les Cayes, Haiti, with several local outreach programs and two transitional safe homes. The organization has saved more than 120 children on the street and from corrupt orphanages.

Wienberg is now 23. She has since been invited to share her story across Canada and the United States. She has spoken at TEDx Talks and at the United Nations Youth Assembly in August 2013.

She is the recipient of a Governor General's Award and a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Award. She is also working on a documentary about her work at LFBS called Morgan's Kids.

O'Brien shaped many minds in world of film

By Michael Swan
The Catholic Register

There was one happy Jesuit in the background of a lot of your favourite movies, TV shows and broadcast journalism through the last 40 years. Smiling Rev. Jack O'Brien didn't produce *The Fifth Estate*, *The Late Show With Stephen Colbert*, *Bon Cop Bad Cop* or *Law and Order*. He did, however, produce the minds that made those shows great.

At 91 years old and after more than 70 years as a Jesuit, O'Brien died Nov. 7 at the Jesuit infirmary, Rene Goupil House, in Pickering Ont.

As a young Jesuit, O'Brien was sent to study film and communication at the University of Southern California. He didn't just get his 1964 PhD in close proximity to Hollywood. He also became president of Alpha Epsilon Rho, an American honour society better known today as the National Broadcasting Society.

When he got back to Loyola College in Montreal, where he had earned his BA in 1945, O'Brien started up Canada's first university Department of Communication Arts in 1965. When Loyola merged with the Anglican St. George's College to form Concordia University 12 years later, communications arts became one of the new university's signature programs.

The more than 4,700 graduates from Concordia's program include CNN news anchor Brian Nelson, *La Press* columnist Natalie Patrowski, producer of the movie *Chicago Don Carmody*, writer on *The Late Show with Stephen*



Courtesy Concordia University

ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS PIONEER — Jesuit Father Jack O'Brien started Canada's first university Department of Communication Arts in 1965. It became one of Concordia University's signature programs. O'Brien died Nov. 7 at age 91.

Colbert Barry Julien, *Law and Order* producer and writer René Balcer, and CBC *Fifth Estate* host and reporter Hana Gartner.

Gartner remembers the priest as a born teacher who paid careful attention to his students as people.

"I remember, I was rushing through this degree," Gartner told *The Catholic Register*. "I was compressing it into three years, taking a ridiculous number of courses."

More than 40 years later, Gartner can't remember why she was so determined to finish her degree early. She only remembers, "It was ridiculously fast."

She was one of the first women to take the course at Loyola, which had traditionally been all male.

Gartner's punishing pace didn't escape the head of the department's notice.

"So he called me into his office one day. I was a little nervous. I said, 'What did I do?' " Gartner recalled. "He said, 'I think you're doing too much, Hana. What's your hurry?'"

Whatever her hurry was, Gartner stuck to it and graduated in 1972. But through the long years of her career in journalism with CBC (she retired earlier this year), O'Brien's question stuck with her. It took a while, but that conversation with the Jesuit priest and professor helped Gartner throughout her life and career to slow down and think carefully about what she was doing and why she was doing it.

"In many ways, I think, he was a real pedagogue. He really was a teacher," Gartner said.

O'Brien's teaching career led him to other adventures. In 1967 he organized the ecumenical Christian Pavilion at Montreal's Expo '67. In 1983, Jesuit Father General Pedro Arrupe brought him to Rome to serve as the first international secretary for social communications for Jesuits worldwide. While stationed in Rome he also taught at the Gregorian University and became a consultant to the Pontifical Council for Social Communication. For the Jesuits and for the Vatican, O'Brien travelled the world helping Jesuits and church institutions modernize their approach to media.

O'Brien returned to Canada in 1990 and took on a renewal of the Manresa Jesuit Spiritual Renewal Centre in Pickering, Ont. He moved on from Manresa to some part-time teaching at Toronto's St. Augustine's Seminary and established the communications desk serving the Jesuits of English Canada. Then in 2005, at the age of 80, he was back at Manresa, raising money to put it on a firmer ground and leading retreats.

Concordia recognized his contribution to the university in 2011 by giving him the school's highest honour — the Loyola Medal.

Throughout his many careers, O'Brien was always sought out as a spiritual director.

Along with his Jesuit brothers through the years, O'Brien was buried on the Guelph farm where he entered religious life in 1945.

Ryan offers valuable guide to Christian unity

CHRISTIAN UNITY: How You Can Make a Difference, by Thomas Ryan, CSP. New York: Paulist Press, 2015. US\$22.95. Reviewed by Rev. Dr. Gordon T. Smith.

Few things are more crucial to the church in our day as this: that we find a way, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to live in unity. We need to find a way, both locally and globally, to know the grace of genuine Christian fellowship across the divide of diverse Christian traditions. When I say crucial I mean that our capacity, as Christian communities, to witness in word and deed to the reign of Christ requires that we live in demonstrable unity, evident, of course, to the communities and cities in which we live. In other words, ecumenicity has always mattered. Always: as something basic to what it means to be

the church. But what I am suggesting is that this is particularly important in a post-Christian world, in societies in which secularism is increasingly the norm. The church in the West will only have credibility in its mission and witness if and as it learns what it means to live in unity.

Thus the newest publication from ecumenist Paulist Father Tom Ryan is so very timely. Ryan is the director of the Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, having previously served with Unitas in Montreal for many years — a vibrant centre that fostered ecumenical connections in that city. Christian communities need resources by which to live out the call to Christian unity, and, in that regard, Ryan is uniquely positioned to offer a valuable contribution to

what it means to seek unity and live in Christian unity. This guide to Christian unity, from his pen, is particularly valuable for many reasons. I will highlight but four.

First, Ryan articulates, in a timely way, the very meaning of the unity we seek. He speaks of the dynamic of unity and diversity. We are past longing for or actively seeking any kind of monolithic structural or organizational unity. Rather, what we seek, interestingly enough, is a unity that transcends anything institutional; we are not after an administrative structure that will somehow hold us together. Rather, the unity to which we are called, in our generation, is one that values diversity and difference and yet, through all that diversity, finds an uncanny unity that is a source of strength and vibrant missional witness. Indeed, for Rev. Tom Ryan, our diversity is not a problem, but something in which we should actually rejoice.

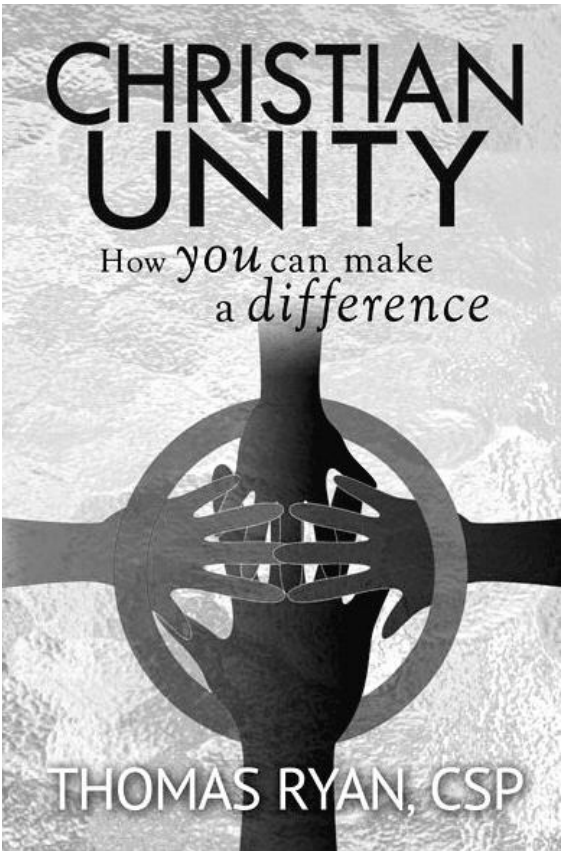
Second, this publication is particularly valuable in that it offers practical insight into not just why but also the how — the specifics, with suggestions and good advice, for both individuals and Christian communities: what we can actually do to foster genuine Christian unity

in the midst of all of our diversity. While he provides a compendium of suggestions for local congregations and parishes, he also has a whole chapter on interfaith families, providing guidelines for what is increasingly common: couples

does our seminary anticipate the challenges and opportunities for ecumenical connections and do our graduating students have the requisite vision for ecumenism and the capacity for fostering Christian unity? When they accept a new pastoral or ministerial appointment, will they on arrival at their new assignment, early on, consider the ways in which they could be a positive agent for fellowship and learning across denominational lines? Individual or local faith communities will not likely actively pursue Christian unity if their clergy are not on-board.

And fourthly, I have appreciated in other contexts the emphasis that Ryan makes on the potential for shared learning — for how we need to learn from one another and be attentive, as he puts it so well, to the gifts the other tradition or traditions might bring to the table of Christian unity. And it is no surprise to see this theme emerge here as well. What he does is suggest what Catholics can learn from Protestant Christians, and vice versa, and what both can learn from Eastern Orthodox communities and Pentecostal Christians, all to the end of stressing, in a powerful manner, that we might actually need one another.

For these four reasons and no doubt for more, Rev. Tom Ryan’s book is invaluable. It is an accessible guide for pastors and lay leaders to how they can, within their communities and cities, actively pursue Christian unity with Christians from other faith traditions. Ryan has extensive experience working with local Christian communities and that experience and the wisdom gleaned from so many local workshops and conversations — the wisdom of years — is distilled for the reader in this new publication.



who share a common faith, but need to manage the reality that they have chosen to marry across denominational lines.

Then also — thirdly — I appreciated the helpful reminder from Ryan that thinking and acting ecumenically needs to be a vital dimension of theological formation for clergy. I am the president of a university that includes a graduate level program in theological formation. And reading this chapter forced me to ask the question:

Books

Resources for catechists deliver on their promises

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CATECHIST: Feeding Your Soul, Growing in Faith, Sharing With Others by Janet Schaeffler, OP.
HERE’S HOW: A Catechist’s Guide by Lee Danesco. Novalis, 2014. Paperback, 90 pages, \$10.95. Reviewed by Edwin Buettner.

These two short books in The Essential Catechist’s Bookshelf series truly deliver on the promises of their titles. Taken together, they provide the catechist (or aspiring catechist) with a complementary package of spiritual formation and instructional methodology. They are clearly written and accessible to both the novice and the experienced catechist. Their overarching tone is one of support, encouragement, and empowerment. Most importantly, perhaps, these books are testaments of the authors’ faith in the power and light of God’s guidance in the formation of a catechist: “God doesn’t call the qualified; God qualifies the called” (Schaeffler).

The essence of The Spirituality of the Catechist is well captured in the author’s introduction: “We cannot give what we do not have.” Because serving as a catechist involves more than instilling ideas and information, he/she must draw from the well of the personal spiritual journey to authenticate and enliven a program. One might say that a program’s impact depends on the extent to which the teaching has been personalized. “As important as good techniques are, great teaching comes from *who the teacher is* . . .” (emphasis added).

What exactly is the spirituality of the catechist? As with all ventures into the transcendent dimension of life, it is all about openness, awareness, and experience. The spiritually alive catechist is one who is becoming progressively more attuned to the Divine presence and action within the uniqueness of her/his life. “Our path to holiness is in the everydayness of our human lives.” It is a sensing of God’s love in the

warp and woof of life, inclusive of the full range of experience: “. . . gentle care, imaginative creativity, acceptance, disquieting challenge.”

Here’s How is an eminently practical book, one all teachers (including non-catechists) are likely to find useful. Drawing on her 20 years’ experience in the field of religious education, Danesco deals with such teaching essentials as motivation, small-group dynamics, discipline, and evaluation. Her sound suggestions are well-grounded in practice and theory; however, in contrast to many who write in the field of education, she avoids the tendency to become caught up in extended academic discussions.

Danesco emphasizes the importance of developing lessons based on the goals and teaching suggestions provided by the manual that accompanies catechetical programs. Nonetheless, she sees the catechist’s job fundamentally as that of applying the information in the guide to “local” realities; i.e., the needs and capacities of the catechist and her/his students. “What is necessary . . . is to take advantage of those instances . . . that allow the lesson not just to be *for* the children but also *about* the children.” To that end, the author stresses the importance of taking time to tailor-make a plan based on “a single sentence that summarizes the lesson’s message.”

Though the books easily lend themselves to self-study, the questions and activities at the conclusion of each chapter make them ideal resources for small-group reflection. They deserve serious consideration by anyone engaged in directing or delivering catechetical programs.



Design Pics

An Advent Night

These cornfields lie fallow now
with their charcoaled earth folded under.
A firmness has settled deep
where the cold rains prepared for winter.

The farmer walks a slow amble
to the hay barn where three cows
stand huddling in their silent vigil,
feeding under the quickening of dusk.

The long cold night nestles in
full and deep.
Stars and indigo
above the field of wounds
where tonight

my needs are c
r
a
d l e d in a

offered throat-high,
between
my heart and my tongue.

Flesh and spirit mingle
under the grace of this night and
the barren trees sing for
the Bringer of the Dance
to come to this garden of longing.

In hope I wander the fields,
waiting head-bowed for
the birth of the One
who will bring a dawn
to end this deep, holy night.

By Michael Dallaire

Ottawa class learns from literary award winner

By Jean Ko Din
The Catholic Register

Caroline Pignat was teaching her Grade 12 writer's craft class, doing the daily morning prompt and getting ready to start a new unit on script writing. It was like any other morning.

Then word trickled in that the Canada Council for the Arts announced she had won her second Governor General's Literary Award. Pignat had to switch gears after class and get ready for a full day of press interviews, including an on-air interview with CBC.

Pignat was awarded a GG Literary Award for her latest novel, *The Gospel Truth*, a young adult historical fiction which was originally meant to be the fourth installment of her Greener Grass book series, which won Pignat her first GG Literary Award. But as she began to do research for the book, one of the supporting characters, Phoebe, took on a life of her own.

The Gospel Truth takes place on a Virginia tobacco plantation in 1858. The story is told through the points of view of six characters, from the slaves, their masters and a visiting birdwatcher. The novel is written entirely in free verse to imitate the character's thoughts and feelings.

"First-person (writing) you're in their head, but free verse, you're in their heart," said Pignat. "When I switched and I realized that's how the novel was going to go, it was intimidating because normal-

ly, historical fiction, you do your research and certain things have to happen. . . . Free verse was much more organic. I had to think of symbols and deeper meanings to what was going on."

Pignat said she has always been a writer. As a young child she was an avid journal-keeper and she wrote every day. Her favourite writings were the letters she wrote to her grandmother in Dublin, Ireland. Every month, she would flip through pages of her journal entries and pick the best stories to retell for grandmother. She made

sure her letters were always funny and entertaining to read.

Pignat said writing those letters was great practice, but it wasn't until she was at university that she really thought about becoming an author.

"I always thought getting published and being an author, when I was a kid, was like how the boys wanted to be NHL hockey stars," she said. "It's a wish but . . . I'm going to grow up and be a teacher instead because that's a real job."

Pignat said she now realizes she doesn't have to choose between

her two passions in life. She said that God has called her to be both teacher and author. Though it may be difficult at times, the two have always complemented each other.

"My passion for writing definitely inspires my teaching," she said. "Teaching writer's craft is like meeting with a writing group each morning . . . I learn from the kids just as much."

Pignat currently teaches part-time at All Saints Catholic High School, a Grade 7-12 school in Kanata, Ont. She has been teaching at the high school for eight

years, starting as a full-time Grade 7 religion teacher in 2008.

Pignat said it was her students in Grade 7 that inspired the voices of her first novel, *Egghead*. Being with her students helped her understand the audience she is writing for. Now that she is teaching Grade 12 students, they inspire an entirely new voice in her writing.

"My passion for teaching also inspires my writing," said Pignat. "Because I mainly write for young adults, being with my target audience every day keeps me in touch with what matters most in their lives. It helps me write authentically and I feel more connected to my readers."

Morrigan Coady, 19, was one of Pignat's first students in Grade 7 religion in 2008-09. At that time, Pignat had just published *Egghead*.

Coady remembers when the novel was first published and how Pignat used the book as a way for them to discuss anti-bullying issues. To this day, *Egghead* is used as a novel study for Grade 7 students in many schools in Ottawa.

Coady said that more than her former teacher's fame as an award-winning author, what she remembers most about Pignat is that she was inspiring.

"I've wanted to be a teacher my whole life, but I wasn't really sure what I wanted to teach until I got to high school," said Coady. "She is just a really good model for someone I want to be like



Photo courtesy of Caroline Pignat

LITERARY AWARD-WINNER — Caroline Pignat, seated at third from left, with her writer's craft class at All Saints Catholic High School in Kanata, Ont. Pignat has just won her second Governor General's Literary Award, which she will receive at a Dec. 2 ceremony at Rideau Hall.

— PIGNAT, page 11

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**GUADALUPE
THE MIRACLE AND THE MESSAGE**

Shining a 'spotlight' on an unholy sex abuse scandal

Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



Already a multiple award winner since premiering at the Venice film festival in August, and now nominated for Independent Spirit awards for best feature, best director, and best screenplay, director and co-writer Tom McCarthy's **Spotlight** is a certain Oscar best picture contender, and deservedly so.

The movie begins on a wintry night in a Boston police station in 1976. In a room a priest, later identified as Father John Geoghan, is confronted with allegations of molesting young boys. The atmosphere is hushed and the case will be hushed. There will be no arraignment, no trial. Another priest representing the archdiocese is there to make sure of that. After a brief detention he quietly takes Father Geoghan away. To avoid public scandal the church would repeatedly promise to deal with its problems of "a few bad apples." Lawyers were brought in to arrange private settlements in such cases; victims sworn to confidentiality agreements. Nothing must be allowed to upset the faithful or interfere with the church's many good works.

Fast forward to July 2001, we're immersed in the daily dynamic of The Boston Globe's four-person "Spotlight" team of investigative reporters, in existence since 1970 and currently led by tough veteran editor Walter "Robby" Robinson (Michael Keaton in his first role since his sensational performance in last year's Oscar winner *Birdman*). The other members of this close-knit group are Sacha Pfeiffer (Rachel McAdams), Michael Rezendes (Mark Ruffalo), and Matt Carroll (Brian D'Arcy James). All were raised Catholic and, though lapsed, certainly understand the church's heavy influence in their city, headed by avuncular Bernard Cardinal Law

(played by Canadian Len Cariou) who is determined to see no evil, or at least to conceal it. The team answers to deputy managing editor Ben Bradlee Jr. (John Slattery), whose father famously oversaw the Watergate investigation at the Washington Post.

It's a time of transition, with falling ad revenues an early harbinger of the digital revolution about to engulf the traditional broadsheet newspaper business. A new no-nonsense editor-in-chief has been brought in, Marty Baron (Liev Schreiber), a Florida native and unmarried Jew who isn't afraid to ruffle feathers. Allegations had recently resurfaced that Geoghan, now defrocked, had abused more than 80 boys during his priesthood. The Globe ran several brief stories. Years earlier, the Globe had been sent substantial incriminating evidence by Phil Saviano (Neal Huff), the troubled head of a local group of abuse survivors, but had never pursued the matter seriously.

Baron sensed there was a much bigger story to probe, that many more priests were involved, and that a systematic coverup led all the way to Cardinal Law's desk. He ordered *Spotlight* to make this the main focus of their work. Naturally as they started digging, originally looking into allegations against 13 priests, the church got wind of it and hoped to at least contain the potential fallout. Baron agreed to a meeting with Cardinal Law who slyly made him a present as "an indication of how this city is run." It was a Catechism of the Catholic Church. Baron wasn't to be deterred and was backed by the Globe's publisher. While recognizing that a majority of the paper's subscribers were Catholic, surely getting to the bottom of this would interest them.



Open Road Films

SPOTLIGHT — Michael Keaton, Liev Schreiber, Mark Ruffalo, Rachel McAdams, John Slattery and Brian D'Arcy James star in the film *Spotlight* as the Boston Globe team that uncovered the massive scandal of child molestation and coverup within the Archdiocese of Boston, shaking the church to its core.

Investigative work can be a long hard slog, checking out every lead, pounding the pavement, searching through dusty archives. It's more dogged day-in-day-out persistence than dramatic action. Without ever sensationalizing the pursuit, the movie does a tremendous job of giving *Spotlight*'s dedication to the task a propulsive energy. Everything inside and outside the newsroom feels convincingly authentic. Bradlee and Pfeiffer go after a slick lawyer, Eric MacLeish (Billy Crudup), they suspect has been involved in a number of hushed-up settlements but cannot get any confirmation.

Rezendes, the most intense and driven of the bunch, works on an equally driven lawyer, Mitchel Garabedian (Stanley Tucci), who is representing 86 of Geoghan's victims. Typically these are kids from poor neighbourhoods or in situations that made them susceptible to the advances of predatory pedophiles whose clerical garb afforded them the status of godly authority figures. Rezendes is seeking details and personal interviews. Meanwhile the steady Carroll takes a lead in painstakingly combing through old church records and parish registers for clues as to possible cases — priests being quickly shuffled through parishes, listed as on "sick leave," "unassigned" or referred to treatment centres.

As the numbers start adding up the team also contacts Richard Sipe, a former priest and Benedictine monk for 18 years, who as a trained psychotherapist has courted controversy by extensively researching issues of sexuality and celibacy in the church. (He is still active; see his website: <http://www.awrsipe.com/>) They are taken aback when he suggests that as many as six per cent of all American priests may have abused minors. That would mean 90 priests in the Boston archdiocese. Eventually they will assemble files on 87, including one who had taught at a Catholic institution which Robinson attended.

When *Spotlight* becomes aware of important sensitive court documents from the Geoghan case that have been sealed, the paper goes to court to get access. The ever-tenacious Rezendes keeps pestering Garabedian until he finds a way to get hold of them even before the Irish Catholic judge rules in the paper's favour. The documents are damning, proving that the hierarchy from Law down knew about and covered up numerous instances of sexual abuse over decades, ignoring warnings as far back as 1962. These revelations also occurred around the time of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, which obviously disrupted events though only temporarily. Robinson then delayed going public until they had a full story put together, including leaning on an old friend, a defence attorney, for further confirmation of cases involved.

The Globe waited till after Christmas, breaking the front-page investigation on Sunday, Jan. 6, 2002, appropriately, as one says, the feast of the Epiphany. It would go on to publish some 600 related stories for which its journalists received a Pulitzer Prize. A total of 249 priests and brothers were implicated. The movie ends by noting that Law resigned in December 2002 and was shunted to a major church in Rome. It then lists hundreds of places where clerical sexual abuse cases have occurred around the globe.

Among the many strengths of *Spotlight* is the depth of character it accords these individuals and how they were affected by discovering an epidemic of abuses that, as Saviano puts it, were as much spiritual as physical since they destroyed faith. Pfeiffer had sometimes attended mass with her devout grandmother but stops going. Rezendes loses the hope that he might reconnect with his faith. Carroll discovers a treatment centre located a block from his home and worries about his young children and whether to warn others. Robinson feels some guilt when reminded that he had

done little with information on abuse cases sent to him by MacLeish back in 1993.

For Slattery who plays Bradlee it's personal: "I grew up Irish Catholic in Boston, and the parish priest would come to your house . . . people relied on the church for not just comfort but real support, day-to-day support for people who needed it so badly. And the fact that they preyed on the most vulnerable makes it that much more painful."

Spotlight builds impact through the standout ensemble work of its actors and the meticulous nature of the filmmakers' research. As McCarthy recalls, "It felt like we were doing what they did 12 years earlier, running around and pulling at threads and talking to people who maybe didn't want to talk to us." At the same time he worries about how hard it is to make a movie like this in a risk-averse culture. The project was "dead three times," he says.

And the newspaper business has suffered even more as online sources proliferate. There are 20,000 fewer newspaper journalists in the U.S. than in 2002. In 2009 the Globe was even threatened with closure by its New York Times parent company unless major cuts were made. (The Globe and Mail's former editor-in-chief John Stackhouse analyzes the trends in a new book, *Mass Disruption: Thirty Years on the Front Lines of a Media Revolution*.)

The spotlight of a major motion picture on what is definitely not a good news story may be uncomfortable for the Catholic Church. But *Spotlight* isn't an unfair attack. It is a serious, sober, fact-based account that, while including several poignant scenes describing instances of abuse, exercises admirable restraint and eschews any graphic images. Catholics also know that the time is past for defensive denials, that the consequences must be confronted openly, honestly and with compassion. That is the best response to this painful chapter.

Pignat encourages students

Continued from page 10

because I think it's important to have teachers that are inspiring and not teachers who bore you."

Coady said she really connected with Pignat and after Grade 7 decided to join the creative writing club that Pignat led after school. She was a member of the club throughout her high school years. She even took Pignat's writer's craft class in Grade 12.

Now, Coady has graduated high school and is studying English and history at Ottawa's Carleton University.

After finishing her undergraduate degree, Coady hopes to pursue teacher's college.

"(Pignat) shows that it is possible to do what you love," said Coady.

"You read books all the time, but getting published seems like

this immense challenge, so when you meet someone who has been published and . . . they're like a real person, it makes you feel like you can do it too."

Coady stays in touch with Pignat through email and Facebook. She is currently working on a novel that she first started as a school assignment for class. Coady said Pignat has been a great encouragement for her writing and for her studies.

"My most influential teachers have been the ones that teach about what they love," said Pignat. "We were excited because they were. We were engaged because they were. I became a teacher because of teachers like that. I aspire to be the kind of teacher they were for me."

Pignat will be attending the Governor General's awards ceremony on Dec. 2 at Rideau Hall to formally accept her award.

Church has medication for darkness of depression



A woman was sitting with her spiritual director. Not quite “sitting”; collapsed like a rag doll, listlessly staring at the floor. He looked at her. He urged her to pray: stop doing, stop trying to get herself out of the dark place she was in. “What good will it do?” she bleated, equally unsurprisingly. She hadn’t read Richard Dawkins’ description of prayer as uselessly “murmuring in our heads,” but it would have resonated. Then, bitterly: “Is God going to send me a rose?”

“Yes,” he answered unhesitatingly. “God has sent you a rose. I’m praying you discover you are the beautiful rose in his garden.”

She was shocked into hearing him, into actually glimpsing herself as beautiful, beloved and chosen. Despite herself, her mind and will cracked open to the possibility that her identity was not “failure,” “despair” or “unlovable,” but “beautiful . . . loved.”

This was not the story depression had been telling her for so long. “You are God’s beautiful one” wasn’t a line in the well-worn refrain buzzing round her head like a cloud of gnats. Those lines were more like: “You messed up again,” “You don’t have what it takes,” “We told you it would never work,” “You don’t belong,” “Just accept you aren’t worth much.” With assistance, she’d come to recognize that refrain, and it didn’t have the stranglehold on her it used to. Today, for the first time, she heard in the depths of her being this other song, strange, compelling, unbelievable. “You are beautiful.” “You are mine.”

Marrocco is a marriage and family therapist, teacher of theology, and writer, and co-ordinates St. Mary of Egypt Refuge. She can be reached at marrocco7@sympatico.ca

Which was true? How could she tell?

If she was suffering from depression, she was one of a huge group. Statistics Canada reports over 11 per cent of adults identify symptoms meeting the medical criteria for depression. Three million plus. So chances are good we, or a co-worker, friend, family member, fellow volunteer or squash partner, bear this burden. Once we understand the depth of affliction depression wreaks, we might sense the depth of courage, hope and faith in the hearts of people who cope with depression — theirs or someone else’s.

We don’t, as a society, cope with it particularly well. We simultaneously dismiss it and rely on it.

On one hand, we expect depressed people to keep functioning and stop talking about it, medicate the symptoms away and hide the pain. Equating healing with functioning, we’re satisfied to stop there. On the other hand, the more time and energy depression sucks out of people, the less time, energy and creativity they have for anything else. One of the things depression does is trick you into feeling isolated.

At a dark time of year, when “depression” is the word, the church gives as medication the experience of communion of saints. November begins with the feast of All Saints, since the seventh century in western tradition. The saints are flesh-and-blood, human as you and I, who have come to full communion with God, overcoming the barriers that separate humans. Therefore they’re also the witnesses who tell us, by their lives and deaths, the story Christ tells: that isolation is an illusion, love is stronger than pain and even stronger than death. They expose the lies depression tells.

The saints, and our communion with them, are strong medicine.



Design Pics

DEPRESSION — “On one hand, we expect depressed people to keep functioning and stop talking about it, medicate the symptoms away and hide the pain. Equating healing with functioning, we’re satisfied to stop there. On the other hand, the more time and energy depression sucks out of people, the less time, energy and creativity they have for anything else,” writes Mary Marrocco. “One of the things depression does is trick you into feeling isolated.”

Psychology, psychiatry and medicine have much to assist people; we need them in the battle against depression. But ultimately they can’t bring true healing. Healing, in Christian terms, isn’t getting fixed so you can function. Healing means being renewed and strengthened in your inner self, the “new self in Christ,” and restored to communion with others.

Depression kills. And it scares us into allowing it to hide. An alarmed parent bringing a suicidal adult offspring to emergency was told to go home and get better: the offspring wasn’t suicidal enough to be admitted. Neither offspring nor parent went away feeling like God’s beloved planted in his garden.

We’re not blaming people for not getting better from depression. Christ came, and still people are sick, in body and in mind; still they die. Depression kills, it afflicts; it doesn’t condemn — though we may condemn people for suffering from it, including ourselves. God is compassion and mercy; why then does God allow our dear one to struggle so long and valiantly with the anguish, despite the heroic efforts of many? To take his own life? We’ve tasted and know the power of God’s love made flesh in Christ. We’ve glimpsed our dear one in joy, in the divine light that shines beyond the grave. Still, the pain. Still, the struggle here on earth.

Immediately after All Saints we celebrate All Souls, knowing some of us are “on the way” but not fully arrived, even after death. It’s still necessary to pray for each other, living and dead.


The Lord of heaven and earth, who drew us from non-being into being, speaks the name of each of us. Suffering and death cannot contain love. It’s the other way around: love contains suffering and death.



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Advent challenges us to be open to those in need



There’s a wonderful old story told of a monastery outside a small village that had fallen on hard times. With a community aging and on the decline, the abbot decided to pay a visit to his friend, the rabbi in the village, to seek out his wisdom. The rabbi listened intently and with great compassion to the abbot’s woes. After a time of silence, the rabbi shared this advice.

“Gather the monks upon your return to the monastery, and tell them you have some words to share with them. When they are all listening, tell them: ‘The Messiah is in your midst.’ This will give them hope and renewed strength,” he said. The abbot agreed to this plan and did as

Third Sunday of Advent December 13, 2015	Zephaniah 3:14-18a Isaiah 12:2-3, 4, 5-6 Philippians 4:4-7 Luke 3:10-18
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the rabbi suggested. He gathered the monks together and said that after his visit with the rabbi he had some words of wisdom for us. Now the abbot was elderly and somewhat hard of hearing, so he heard something a little different than the rabbi had suggested. “The rabbi has told us that *one of us is the Messiah!*” he exclaimed.

The other monks received this message with not a little surprise and some skepticism. However, each monk thought to himself: “Is this possible? What if it really is true? After all, Jesus came in much the same unsuspecting manner.” They began to look at each other differently. Hedging their bets just in case one of them was the

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

Messiah, they began to treat each other with more care and respect. Soon the monastery changed from a community that was dying, to a community full of life, love and mutual care.

The story ends with a glowing description of a flourishing community filled with anticipation at a special revelation and it once again became an attractive place for some to visit and some to stay.

The theme of Advent is well expressed in this little story. The third Sunday of Advent is titled *Gaudete* Sunday, that is, Rejoice Sunday or Sunday of Joyful Anticipation. Zephaniah challenges his community to “rejoice and exult with all your heart.” Why? Because “the Lord, your God, is in your midst.” The Psalm tells us to draw water joyfully from the font of grace. Paul repeats himself to emphasize the posture: “Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say, REJOICE!” Why? Because “the Lord is near.”

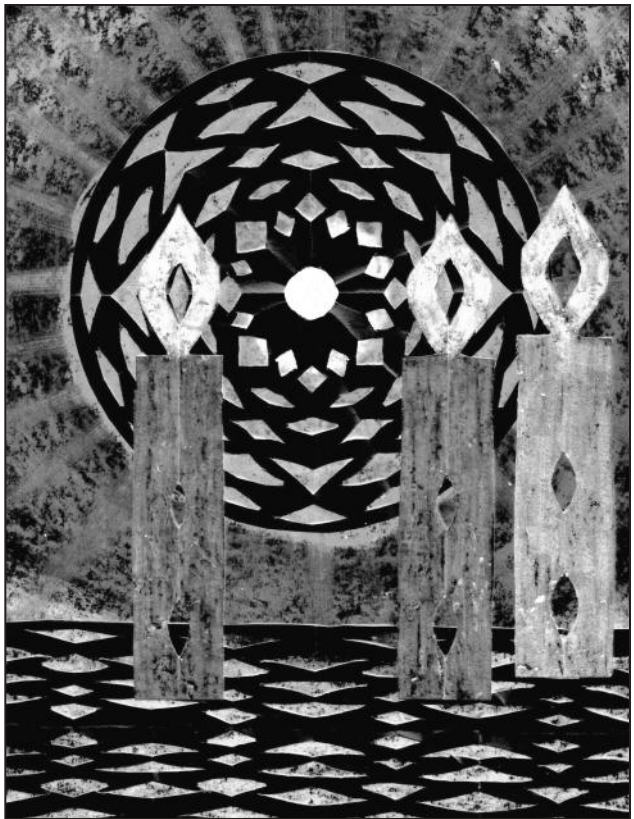
This nearness of the Lord to those who are attentive seems to be a difficult message in the hustle and bustle of the preparations for Christmas. We find ourselves saying, “God might be near, but I still have six gifts to buy, a Christmas tree to decorate, two more staff parties, and I haven’t even found a free-range turkey for Christmas dinner!” Somehow, the spirit and purpose of the season can get lost in the din of activities and packed schedules.

In the Gospel, John the Baptist is calling for a conversion of the people. When they ask him, “Teacher what should we do?” they are wanting to know what needs changing in their lives. Sharing your clothes, your food, your material possessions with those who need them, and doing it with a joyful compassionate heart will help you recognize the presence of the Messiah.

I think of the desperate refugees, especially the faces of women and children, who are fleeing a war and seeking a safe place to live and raise their children. Their attraction to our country is that they know we live in peace, security and safety. These are things we often take for granted. Their faces are before us in the news every day. If our hearts turn cold against them, we might rationalize and say: “They are harbouring terrorists, so why let them into our country?” Or, as one journalist reported, “Give them guns and make them go back and fight their own war. Keep us out of it.”

It is to such as these that Jesus says: “If you did it to the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me” (Mt 25). And in today’s Gospel it is John the Baptist who

reminds us that if we live in a position of plenty (i.e., we have two coats and only need one), we should be generous with what we have been given. But the coat that the poor are in need of is the extra coat of a country at peace. Would



Stushie Art

you not give anything to have your children grow up in security and safety?

As we prepare to sing Silent Night and celebrate the fact that the Lord is near, let us be filled with joy at his “closeness.” Let us be filled with joyful and generous hearts. During this season of great gifts, let us be challenged to be more open to the little ones in our world. For we can be grateful that we have been graced with a position and capacity to bring good news to others in need. Because, with the Messiah in our midst, *you never know who among us is the “Messiah!”*

Merry Christmas, my friends!

Time to establish a greater solidarity with people of the Muslim faith



This is not a good time to be a Muslim in the western world. As the violence perpetrated by radical

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Islamic groups such as ISIS, al-Qaida, and Boko Haram becomes more and more prevalent, huge numbers of people are becoming paranoid about and even openly hostile toward the Islam religion, seeing all Muslims as a threat. Popular opinion more and more blames the Muslim religion itself for that violence, suggesting that there is something inherent in Islam itself that’s responsible for this kind of violence. That equation needs to be challenged, both in the name of truth and in the name of what’s best in us as Christians.

First of all, it’s untrue: painting all Muslims with the same brush is like painting all Christians with the same brush, akin to looking at the most depraved man who calls himself a Christian and saying: “That’s Christians for you! They’re all the same!” Second, it’s also unfair: Islamic militants no more speak for Islam than Hitler speaks for Christianity (and that comparison isn’t idly chosen). Finally, such an equation

misleads our sympathy: the first victim of Islamic terrorism is Islam itself, namely, authentic God-fearing Muslims are the first victims of this violence.

When we look at the history of any terrorist Islamic group such as ISIS or al-Qaida, we see that it first establishes itself by terrorizing and killing thousands of its own people, honest, God-fearing Muslims. And it goes on killing them. ISIS, al-Qaida, and Boko Haram have killed thousands more Muslims than they have killed Christians or persons of any other religion. While their ultimate target may well be the secularized, Christian West, but more immediately their real war is against true Islam.

Moreover, the victims of Islamic terrorists are not just the thousands of moderate Muslims who have been direct victims of their violence and killings, but also all other Muslims who are now painted with the same brush and negatively judged in both their religiosity and their sincerity. Whenever Islamic terrorists perpetrate an act of violence, its victims are not just those who die, are injured, or who lose loved ones, it’s also all true Muslims, particularly those living in the West because they are now viewed through the eyes of suspicion, fear, and hatred.

But the Muslim religion is not to blame here. There is nothing

inherent in either the Koran or in Islam itself that morally or religiously undergirds this kind of violence. We would holler “unfair” if someone were to say that what happened during the Inquisition is inherent in the Gospels. We owe Islam the same judgment. One of the great students of world religions, the renowned Houston Smith, submits that we should always judge a religion by its best expressions, by its saints and graced history rather than by its psychopaths and aberrations. I hope that others offer us, Christians, this courtesy. Hitler was somehow a product of the Christian West, as was Mother Teresa. Houston Smith’s point is that the latter, not the former, is a truer basis for judging Christianity. We owe our Islamic brothers and sisters the same courtesy.

And that’s more a recognition of the truth than a courtesy. The word “Islam/Muslim” has its origins in the word “peace,” and that connotation, along with the concept of “surrender to God,” constitutes the essence of what it means to be a Muslim. And for more than 90 per cent of Muslims in the world, that is exactly what it means to be a Muslim, namely, to be a man or woman of peace who has surrendered to God and who now tries to live a life that is centred on faith, prayer, responsibility, and hospitality. Any interpreta-

tion of Islam by a radicalized group that gives divine sanction to terrorist violence is false and belies Islam. Islamic extremists don’t speak for God, Muhammad, Islam, or for what it means to surrender in faith, but only for a self-serving ideology, and true Muslims are, in the end, the real victims of that.

Terrorist attacks, like the recent ones in Paris and Mali, call for more, not less, sympathy for true Muslims. It’s time to establish a greater solidarity with Islam, notwithstanding extremist terrorism. We are both part of the same family: we have the same God, suffer the same anxieties, are subject to the same mortality, and will share the same heaven. Muslims more than ever need our understanding, sympathy, support, and fellowship in faith.

Christian de Cherge, the Trappist monk who was martyred by Islamic terrorists in Algeria in 1996, wrote a remarkable letter to his family in France shortly before he died. Well aware that he had a good chance of being killed by Islamic terrorists, he shared with his family that, should this happen, they should know that he had already forgiven his killers and that he foresaw himself and them, his killers, in the same heaven, playing together under God’s gaze, a gaze that lovingly takes in all of God’s children, Muslims no less than Christians.

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Time changes our ways of seeing, understanding

By Paul Paproski, OSB

There are many sayings that speak of time as a good teacher. One saying is attributed to a Greek statesman, Pericles, who lived some 400 years before the birth of Christ. Pericles described time as “the wisest counsellor of all.” The wisdom of this maxim is captured well in my love of photography. I enjoy taking photographs of old abandoned buildings. A couple of decades ago, I considered these objects to be merely garbage. Now, much older and a little wiser, and having an interest in history, I look

Paproski is a Benedictine monk of St. Peter’s Abbey and pastor of St. Peter’s Parish, Muenster, Sask.

upon neglected buildings from the past as prairie art, exhibits of another era. Abandoned churches, and farmyards, with their houses, granaries and barns, are important windows onto the past. They are like covers of history books concealing valuable stories within.

Several months ago I visited an abandoned church alongside a rural gravel road. The church looked, exteriorly, to be in good condition. Like many older churches it had a bell tower on the front that gave it a sense of dignity and purpose. The church sanctuary was an elegant worship space. The front altar area was painted in green, a colour I had never seen covering church walls. The shade of green gave the space much beauty.

The sanctuary appeared to be frozen in time, seemingly in the same condition as it was when it had been last used. At the front was a large crucifix hanging above an altar that held large wooden candleholders. A statue of a saint stood on one side and the sacred heart of Jesus was positioned on another. The holy figures looked straight ahead to the pews, stations of the cross on the side walls and more statuary at the back.

An organ and small cabinet with church hymnals sat in a front corner of the sanctuary. There were hymnals lying on the church pews. The hymnals appeared as though they had been left after a parish celebration, and were waiting: waiting to be used again or waiting to be put away.

The hymnals had been waiting a long time. They were covered in dust. The sanctuary had been left untouched for what seemed to have been many years. It was now a window onto the past, looking exactly as it had following the last parish celebration. The sacred space still conveyed a sense of reverence as it remained empty, in silence. Now, all it could do was wait. It once waited for the parishioners to return. Now it waited for a decision to be made on its future.

Near the church is a small cemetery. It is well maintained and in good condition. I wondered if the graves had names of people who had helped build the church and raise funds to furnish the building.

I am the pastor of St. Peter’s Church in Muenster, which has stood for 105 years. The parish recently celebrated the completion of renovations that lasted for seven years. The restoration both refurbished the church for the next generation and honoured its pio-

neer families by commemorating them in new stained glass windows.

Two churches stand as witnesses to how attitudes change in the passing of time. One generation sacrificed to build a charming church that was later abandoned by the next generation. Another church was restored and now enshrines the memories of previous generations in stained glass windows.

We are in Advent, a liturgical season of setting aside “time” to reflect on the birth of Christ, and on the second coming of Christ. God revealed himself fully in time through the Incarnation in which the Son of God left timelessness and “in the fullness of time” (Gal 4:4) came into our time. Mystery unfolds in time and, if we let it, mystery brings us to come to terms with who we are and who we are in relationship to others, and to God in the Incarnation, the Prince of Peace. Time changes the way we see things. It is a wise counsellor.



P. Paproski

FULLNESS OF TIME — The light of an Advent candle invites us to reflect upon the mystery of the Incarnation and the Second Coming of Christ. The Son of God left timelessness and came into our time. God became one of us. We will meet the Son of God again.

Looking beyond the surface of things



Figure of Speech

Dr. Gerry Turcotte

Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.— Luke 6:36

There is a well-known joke about a court jester who deeply offends his king and who is subsequently sentenced to death. The entire court lobbies the king for mercy and they are partially successful. The king refuses to commute the death sentence, but he allows the jester to decide how he will be put to death. Without skipping a beat the court jester says, “I’d like to die of old age, please!”

What, exactly, do we mean by mercy? When Pope Francis calls for a Holy Year of Mercy, to begin

on the 8th of December and conclude on Nov. 20, 2016, what exactly will we be celebrating? The Oxford English dictionary provides a number of definitions for this, including the most used, which is the demonstration of forgiveness toward someone over whom we have power. Alternately, mercy is described as a relief from suffering. Ironically, phrases connected to mercy include mercy killing (the taking of a life) and a mercy dash (the saving of a life).

However we define it, we should know that an act of mercy is both a wonderfully selfish and an altruistic gift. After all, mercy is a gesture of forgiveness, hospitality, inclusion or help, but one that is never one-sided: we give to ourselves when we give to others. Mercy should never be about

power over others. It should be understood as an opportunity to grow the soul through an exchange of grace. And surely that can be gifted by a child to an adult as much as from a doctor to a patient . . . or indeed, a jester to a king.

As Pope Francis himself has explained, “The church must be a place of mercy freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel.” He goes on to say, “The call of Jesus pushes each of us to never stop at the surface of things.” And then again: “No one can be excluded from the mercy of God!” In *Evangelii Gaudium*, where he uses the word 32 times, he reminds us that “God never tires of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy.”

So it’s hard to say what the year of mercy will entail, but I hope it includes this much: a deep reflection on our failures to forgive; an immediate but permanent undertaking to reach out to others; and a moment to understand our own need for mercy, even for self-forgiveness where it’s needed. Now that would be a tender mercy.

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Bury the dead: a work of mercy through the centuries

By Carol Glatz

ROME (CNS) — If a pilgrim walking to Rome for a Holy Year fell mortally ill far from home or a poor tenant farmer died working in a field or an unidentifiable victim of murder was found, a group of courageous Christians buried these anonymous or forgotten dead with dignity.

Founded in 1538, the Archconfraternity of St. Mary of the Oration and Death in Rome spent nearly 500 years offering a Christian funeral and burial to those who would otherwise never have one.

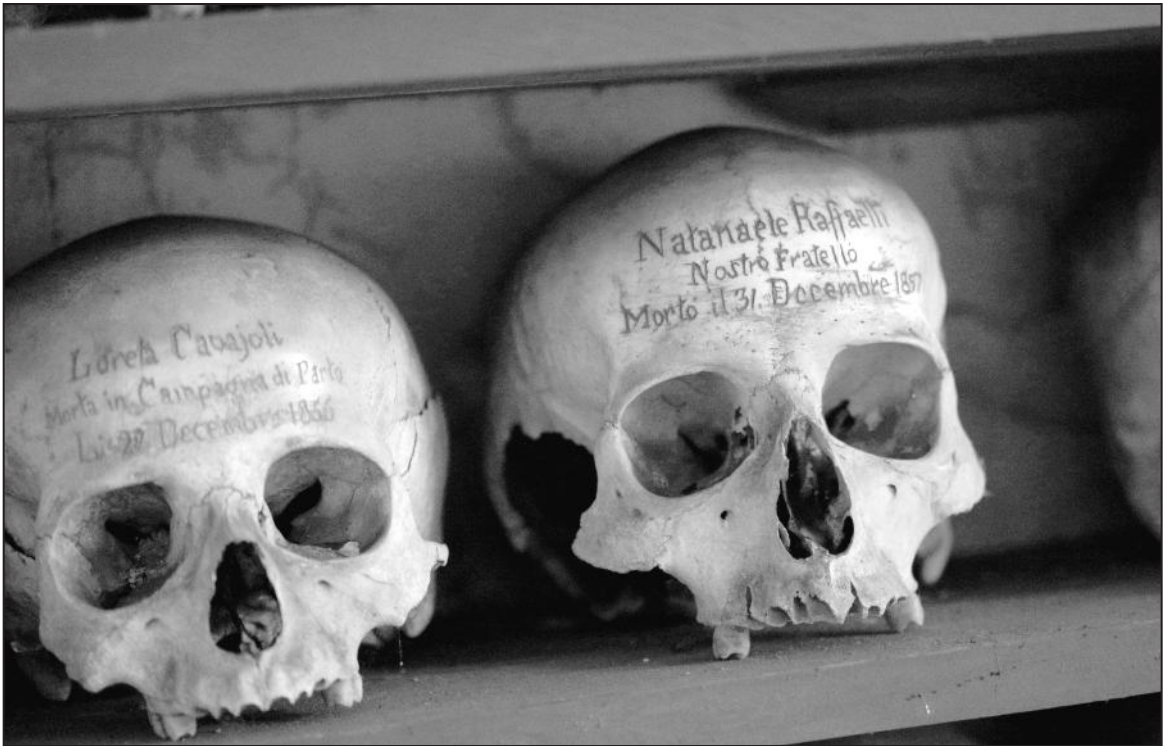
Burying and praying for the dead are among the corporal and spiritual works of mercy Pope Francis has asked people to carry out during the upcoming Year of Mercy.

Many popes, over the past centuries, had supported the difficult and sombre work of the archconfraternity, starting with Pope Paul III, who wanted to see the association formally established, said Alfonso Sapia, head of the archconfraternity.

During Advent in early December in 1538, a Capuchin priest gave such an impassioned homily about the tragedy of those abandoned at death and the immense spirit shown by those who risked danger and disease to bury them, he inspired a huge number of people in the pews to join the new lay association.

Several decades later, Pope Paul V gave the confraternity's chaplains special permission to celebrate mass outside of a church, before sunrise and after sunset if necessary — "prerogatives that had been unthinkable" at the time, Sapia told Catholic News Service in mid-November.

Members often walked long distances at any time of day or night to get to an abandoned body. The spe-



CNS/Paul Haring

WORK OF MERCY — Skulls of a woman who died in childbirth and a member of a confraternity for burying the dead rest in the crypt of the Church of St. Mary of the Oration and Death, the headquarters of a confraternity with a legacy of burying the dead, in Rome Nov. 18.

cial dispensation was granted because sometimes they couldn't get the deceased to a cemetery quickly enough and the dangers of natural disasters, disease, wild animals or advanced decay necessitated immediate burial.

Recognizing the confraternity's important work, St. Pope Pius V granted clemency every year to one prisoner on death row and entrusted the confraternity members and their families to take in the formerly condemned man and his family — teaching them skills, a trade and helping them back on their feet, Sapia said.

The pope also conceded to the confraternity the rare privilege of collecting money on the street and in taverns to pay for the burials of the poor. "It wasn't legal to raise money without authorization from the pontiff," he said.

Because taverns were still a

hothouse of murder in the 16th century, "people would get drunk, and it would end up like in the Wild West: shooting pistols" and smashing things, he said. The owner always kept one of the confraternity's black metal canisters on hand to collect spare change and donations to then pay for any eventual burials.

Located on the wide cobblestone road of Via Giulia, the Church of St. Mary of the Oration and Death — and the confraternity's headquarters — are still surrounded by foreign embassies and ornate buildings once owned or inhabited by noble families and wealthy merchants.

Rome's wealthiest and powerful families were almost always enthusiastic donors and even members of the confraternity, Sapia said.

"The more of a troublemaker

they were, the more generous they were in donations, because that way the people would pray" for their souls and salvation from purgatory, Sapia said.

Large commemorative marble plaques with lengthy inscriptions and entreaties for people's prayers decorate the walls behind a chapel of the church.

Another, more unexpected form of remembrance is seen in the lower portion of the church, where scores of skulls sit neatly in rows on wooden shelves set into the walls. The deceased's name, and date and cause of death are chiseled onto the forehead.

Sapia said many confraternity members had wanted their skulls preserved in the church "as a testimony of affection" and as a way to say, "I love this confraternity and I will never leave it, not even after I die."

Other skulls in the crypt belonged to the poor whose cause of death shows the difficult conditions just a few generations ago: almost all of the skulls belonging to women document them dying during childbirth, he said.

A holy water font is watched over by the upper torso of a skeleton, and the chandeliers lit overhead are an artistic composite of

vertebrae and the triangular sacrum — "the sacred bone" — at the end of the spinal column. He said using bones serves as a reminder that from darkness and death there shall be light.

Sapia said such concrete reminders of death "seems awful and terrible" in today's culture, but back then "people didn't live past 50, and death was much more human," with people being much more aware and accepting of dying.

"Besides praying for and burying the dead, the confraternity also taught people not to be hedonists," living only for the present moment "and doing what we want right now," he said.

"Instead what the confraternity told people was, 'Yes, we have to live well, but most of all we have to die without being afraid of dying,'" which meant being ready for God's judgment by trying to live a holy life.

With the group's last burial in the 1950s, as a post-war Italian government began to provide basic human and social services, the archconfraternity's mission had to change, he said.

Their work is now based "on the three Cs: Christ, charity and culture," he said, as they promote sacred art and music.

Confraternities, Sapia said, have been essential in providing charitable care and preserving the spiritual life of the church, especially during the Reformation.

"When Martin Luther started the reform, people became much more distanced from the Catholic Church," he said.

But while fewer people were attending mass in Rome's major basilicas, he said, the confraternity's smaller churches stayed full, where "there wasn't the arrogance of the cardinal" and people were simpler, more humble and more gracious.

This approach and attitude "helped the church in the Counter-Reformation," he said, as the confraternities "were used to guide the church" toward successful reform.

Sapia said he sees a parallel with Pope Francis.

"The confraternity, as Francis says, smelled of sheep" and members didn't wait for people to come to them for help, but bravely ventured off to bring the church to people in need, he said.

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CNS/Paul Haring

STONES OF REMEMBRANCE — Alfonso Sapia, head of the Archconfraternity of St. Mary of the Oration, points to stones placed to remember and pray for confraternity supporters at the Church of St. Mary of the Oration and Death in Rome Nov. 18.

Violent extremism a perversion of human condition



Everyday Theology

Louise McEwan

"La foi n'a rien à voir avec la morale." Faith has nothing to do with morality.

We came upon this piece of graffiti three years ago while in Tournon in southern France. It could have been written yesterday in response to the Islamic terrorist attacks in Paris that killed more than 129 people and wounded scores of others.

When crimes like this one occur, it is tempting to demonize religion and believers. The Abrahamic religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — come under particular scrutiny. Some argue that the Hebrew Bible, the foundational text of these religions, encourages violence and immoral acts. They point to passages of Scripture that command the stoning of adulteresses or the smiting of one's enemies, to the practice of slavery and to misogyny.

These passages are clearly problematic from our moral perspective, and I have no intention of defending them. It would be dishonest to pretend that over the millennia religion has not played a part in man's inhumanity to man. However, it is quite a leap to claim that religion has nothing to do with morality. Faith can be a strong influence on morality and can govern behaviour, for better or for worse. Terrorist attacks committed in the name of religion illustrate the worst of that behaviour.

No rational person, especially

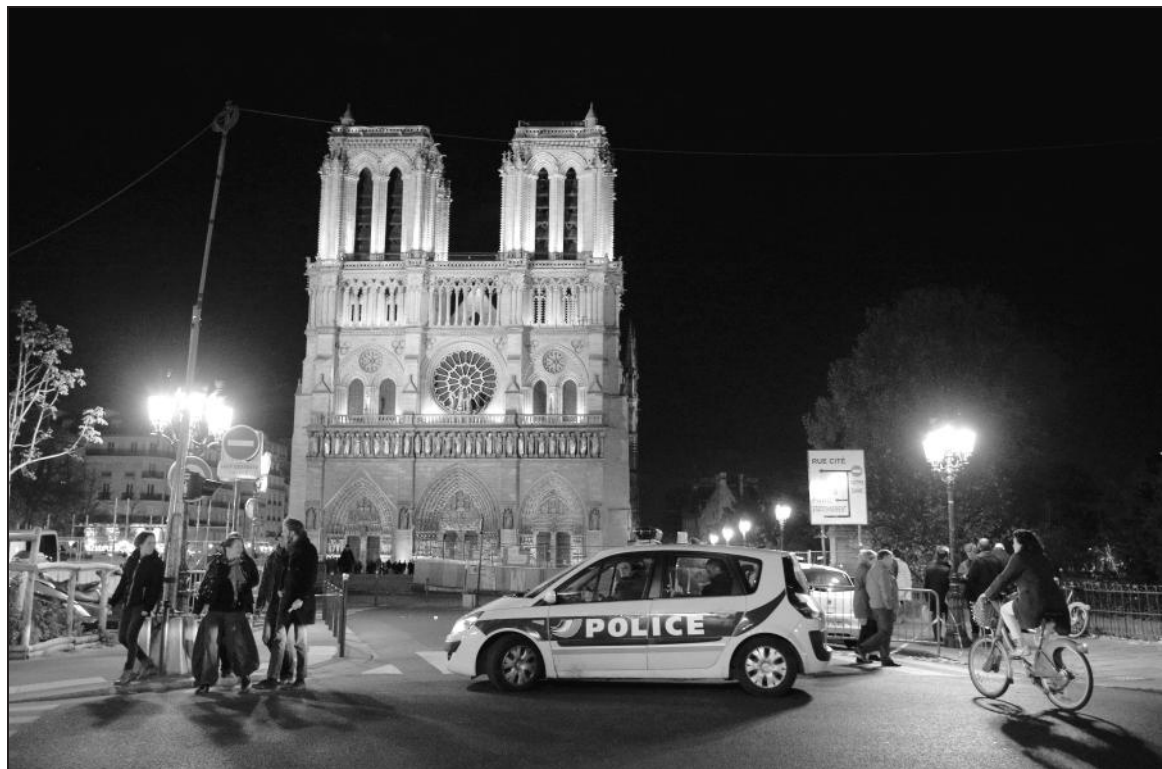
Trail, B.C., resident Louise McEwan is a freelance writer, religion columnist and catechist. She has degrees in English and theology and is a former teacher. She blogs at www.faithcolouredglasses.blogspot.ca. Reach her at louisemcewan@telus.net

a deeply religious one, accepts violence as moral. Rational people (and most religious people fall into this category) share a universal understanding of morality. Boiled down to a basic principle, morality might be summed up as "do no harm" to others or yourself. Violence as an exercise of faith is especially odious since love and compassion are inherent qualities of the world's great religions.

We do not need to think very hard to find inspiring examples of faith-filled moral individuals. Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Jean Vanier and Jimmy Carter spring to mind. I can think of examples from my own small town. Whether they are handing out food at local food banks or spearheading actions to reduce poverty or holding the hands of the dying, religious individuals have a positive impact on my community.

The Judaeo-Christian tradition has shaped my understanding of morality as it has shaped that of much of the western world. Its moral tradition, with which we struggle, precedes and goes beyond the "do no harm" principle. For the prophets, three things were necessary: to love mercy, to act justly, and to walk humbly with God. For Jesus of Nazareth, the great commandment was to love your neighbour as yourself. To love, to be merciful, to be concerned about others, to be humble are some of the ways that a person of faith honours the goodness of God and behaves in a moral way.

Islamic terrorists are not the only group of religious people who commit violence. One need only think of the Crusades, the burning of Protestant "heretics" at the stake, or the bombing of abortion clinics to find other examples



CNS/Paul Haring

VIOLENCE AND RELIGION — A police car is seen outside Notre Dame Cathedral as people leave after a mass celebrated by Paris Cardinal Andre Vingt-Trois in Paris Nov. 15 to pray for those killed in terrorist attacks. When crimes like this occur, it is tempting to demonize religion and believers, writes Louise McEwan. "The Abrahamic religions — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — come under particular scrutiny." But "no rational person, especially a deeply religious one, accepts violence as moral."

of religious zeal gone wrong. In an unequivocal condemnation of the Paris attacks, Grand Mufti Shawki Allam of Egypt wrote, "We must remember that as recent attacks in many parts of the world indicate, violent extremism knows no particular faith. It is rather a perversion of the human condition, and must be dealt with as such."

We cannot let this latest attack on humanity warp our collective moral sense and harden our hearts toward others. Since the Paris attacks, there has been a backlash against Syrian refugees. As I write this, 35,000 Canadians have

signed a petition to stop the resettlement of Syrian refugees into Canada. This is clearly irrational; many of the Syrian refugees are not even Muslim, and the terrorists were French citizens. It is also wrong. Fear of those who are different can prevent us from doing the right thing, as much as it can motivate someone (like a terrorist) to do the wrong thing.

No one has a monopoly on morality. A person does not have to be religious to be good. And while one would hope or expect a religious person to be moral, we know this is not always the case.

Faith and morality are like two

streams flowing into one river, shaping the river's ability to sustain or destroy the life along its banks. For better or for worse, religion can shape behaviour and influence moral decision-making.

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Change shifts common ground

Continued from page 4

"There are some family physicians who have really gone out of their way to be good palliative physicians. I think that's going to be a real trial for them if they don't believe in killing people. What do they do in terms of options?" asked Miller.

"Physicians have to be adept at discussing feelings and interpreting behaviours," says the new College of Family Physicians ethics guide.

The change in the law shifts the common ground upon which most people base their ethical reasoning, said Miller.

"We assume that the law provides us with the ethics of these things," Miller said. "It's legal therefore you can do it, therefore. . . . Unless we put really strict

limits on doctors, it's wide open."

An imbalance has entered into society's thinking about issues of life where the only value to be considered is personal, individual autonomy, said Miller. The idea that life is shared and not merely personal property to be disposed of as one chooses gets no traction, he said.

"From a Catholic ethics point of view, this isn't about the principle of autonomy," said Miller. "It's not about what people want. It's about whether it's good to do these things. Somebody argues, 'This is good for me because I don't want to live any longer.' For the rest of us to agree with that is going to mean that it's good to kill you. It means that your life isn't worth living any more. I really disagree with that way of approaching things."

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Taking time to read the story of another's life

Soul Searching

Tom Saretsky



I had a chance conversation with a student about a novel she was reading. It was a thick novel — almost 900 pages. She obviously wasn't judging the book by its cover, as it was one of her favourite authors. I stated the obvious, "You like to read," to which she refreshingly, and enthusiastically, responded, "Yes," and then added, "I will be finished it in a few days."

I was impressed. Reading is one of life's great pleasures, and to lose oneself in the pages of a good novel or an interesting short story is time well spent, providing you stay with it awhile.

I like to read, although I'm not a very fast reader. The 900-page novel my student was reading would take me considerably longer than a few days.

My sister is a voracious reader, and she instilled a love of reading in her own children. Her children were always exposed to good books when they were young. The time she spent reading to them inspired me to do the same with mine. The world of imagination opened up for her kids, and their current creativity and artistic flair for language, music and art was borne out of those precious times with good books.

Saretsky is a teacher and chaplain at Holy Cross High School in Saskatoon. He and his wife, Norma, have two children.

One of the greatest gifts you can give to children is your time spent reading to them, but I don't think people read much anymore. Reading is being replaced with quicker, more instantaneously gratifying pursuits like games on computers, iPads, iPods, or smartphones. I fear the sound of a turning page or the smell of a new or old book is giving way to the lights and sounds of high-tech computer wizardry.

It takes time, effort and patience to read, because one must stay with it awhile. Attention spans are not what they used to be. French mathematician Blaise Pascal lamented a few hundred years ago that all human evil comes from man's inability to sit still in a chair for 30 minutes. Thirty minutes back then was considered a short period of time. Today, the attention span is hardly 30 seconds!

Do we not have time anymore? Are we too busy? Do we think the same attitudes or excuses we make for not reading could also be applied to relationships? Do we not have time for them anymore? Do we think they're too much work?

Social media, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, appear to be shortchanging relationships. How well do we really get to know someone through social media? Based on someone's posts, we get snapshots of their lives: occasionally a few ref-

erences from their past, and sometimes short hints about what they're doing. There's no full understanding of who they really are. They leave their story with many blanks to fill, and depending on what they share, we will fill the blanks with false assumptions and harsh judgments, because we don't completely know their story.

This has been especially true in the aftermath of the deadly terrorist attacks in Paris, Beirut, Mali and elsewhere. Take a quick glance at any social media site, and you will discover vitriolic anti-Muslim sentiment. Facebook posts, tweets, retweets, and shared links would have us believe that Canada is about to allow 25,000 terrorists

into the country, that Shariah law will be the norm, and that the Islamic religion will be a threat to our way of life. The atrocities of the IS terrorists are concerning, but their story isn't the same story of the thousands of Middle Eastern refugees fleeing their country, looking for a safe homeland.

Do we care to read a refugee's story, or listen to accounts of their experiences of homelessness? Facebook posts passing personal opinion as fact simply weave a stickier web of ignorance that can snare many who prefer not to listen and understand. Ignorance is an insidious disease, but taking the time to read, to listen and to being open enough to learn can cure this ailment.

The author R.P. Evans once wrote, "Rarely do we invest the time to open the book of another's life; when we do, we are usually surprised to find its cover so misleading and its reviews so flawed." My prayer is that we never judge a person by what we see on their cover, but that we take the time to open the book of their life. May we find the time to turn their pages, attend with interest, read carefully the words they speak, and discover what makes their life such an interesting and engaging story. It's this kind of listening that creates a sanctuary for the homeless parts of another person. You never know — you might just stay with it awhile, and they might find a home in you.



Design Pics

CAN WE TALK? — While social media has many benefits, it is also shortening our attention spans, writes Tom Saretsky. Not only do we not take the time to read books, we are not taking the time to pay attention to our relationships.



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Advent is a time of preparation

By Jeanette Martino Land

In the season of Advent, we busy ourselves with decorating our homes, baking goodies, writing cards, and wrapping gifts. We conscientiously prepare for visiting relatives and friends. Yet, in the hustle and bustle, we can neglect to prepare our hearts for the coming of the king whose birthday we celebrate.

How can we set our minds and hearts on seeking to understand the mystery of Christ's coming?

Advent calls us to *refocus*: to take time to *reflect* on God's promise — what God has done for his people and his faithfulness in keeping his promise. And to ask, "What has God done for me in my life?"

To *renew* the promises we have made to the Lord. And to ask, "Can God count on me to keep these promises? Will God find me faithful?"

To *rejoice* in the fulfilled Promise: the birth of the Messiah. And to ask, "What does the

Incarnation mean to me, personally?"

Consider the words of Pope Francis, in a November daily homily: "Jesus, God, has taken his wounds with him: he makes them visible to the Father. This is the price: the hands of God are hands blistered by love! And this consoles us much."

When we begin to understand this mystery of God's great "blistering" love for us, our Advent preparations will take on a deeper meaning, as we wait in awe-filled anticipation for the Christ Child to be born anew in our hearts.

As we ready our homes, let us be more aware of the meaning of some of the decorations we use. The Christmas tree is symbolic of our immortality, while the star atop the tree, like the Star of Bethlehem, announces the arrival of the Saviour. The Advent wreath, circular in form, reminds us that God is one and God's love is everlasting. Lighted candles in the window are signs of welcome, while the beloved manger scene speaks to us of the Christ Child's poverty and love.

As we make the Christmas

goodies, let us rekindle the tradition of baking bread, in honour of Bethlehem, the "City of Bread," where Christ was born. When we write cards and wrap gifts, let us say a prayer that each recipient will be present to the presence of Jesus in a special way this Christmas.

Perhaps we can add a couple of new traditions to our family celebration this year: hanging a Christmas stocking for Jesus and filling it daily with notes of gratitude for blessings received during the year; and making a birthday cake for Jesus. After all, it is Jesus' birthday we celebrate!

As we prepare our hearts spiritually, let us also remember to welcome the stranger in our midst as readily as we extend hospitality to relatives and friends. In this way, we will make our hearts and our homes even more hospitable to Jesus.

This Advent, as we take time to *refocus*, *reflect*, *renew*, and *rejoice*, let us thank God for our giftedness, and ask ourselves how we can be gift to others. Then, our hearts, as well as our homes, will be ready to celebrate the greatest love-gift of all time — Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us!

Martino Land is a freelance writer from North Palm Beach, Fl.

Flying with the pope

Prairie Messenger readers likely won't ever get to ride on a plane with Pope Francis during one of his papal visits.

As I write, Pope Francis is making his long-anticipated visit to Africa. Unlike the mythical Christmas trip of Santa Claus, real people are on the plane and his stop in conflict-torn Central African Republic is much more dangerous than sliding down the mythical chimney.

What does a trip on a papal plane look like? Veteran Vatican commentator John Allen Jr. recently shared his experiences on his Crux blog.

The pope travels with an entourage of about 30 people and 70 reporters. The papal party is typically composed of the cardinal secretary of state; one or two other cardinals and bishops; 10 priests, most of them officials of the secretariat of state; and 20 laity, most employees of the Vatican Press Office as well as plainclothes agents

of the Vatican security service and the Swiss Guard. The pope takes the Italian national airline, Alitalia, to wherever he's going, and then flies the national carrier of that country on his return. The papal plane is a normal commercial jet; usually the only real perk enjoyed by the pope is that he gets to sit in the first row of business class by himself.

The first pope to fly was Pope Paul VI, who flew to Jordan and Israel in January 1964. In 1965 he visited New York and gave his famous speech at the United Nations, before returning to Rome for the closing session of the Second Vatican Council.

In the early years of his papacy, St. John Paul II would come back to the economy section and talk to reporters in language groups, Allen writes. "It was all off-the-cuff, and all on-the-record."

Pope Benedict XVI would conduct a sort-of press conference at the beginning of the trip. They were highly choreographed affairs, with the Vatican

spokesperson collecting questions and picking a few to ask the pontiff.

Pope Francis has changed the style to moving around the plane to say hello to reporters on the outbound leg of the flight, then holding a full-blown, no-holds-barred news conference on the way back.

For reporters, Allen writes, the best moments on long flights often come "when members of the entourage come to the back of the plane to use the bathroom, and can be pulled aside to take a question, provide background on something, or simply offer some insight into what the pope's doing up front."

Fifty years ago Alitalia would treat reporters with bottles of wine and perfume, cartons of cigarettes, boxes of chocolate, and so on. Now it only provides a cloth headrest with the papal seal that most reporters snag as they disembark.

For reporters, it's a privilege — and includes many hours of hard work. — PWN

Using temporal goods in the church is subject to numerous safeguards



Canon Law For Today

Rev. Frank Morrissey

In my last column I made reference to a number of actions to be taken by administrators in relation to the proper administration of the temporal goods entrusted to their care. However, these actions often cannot be taken by the administrators acting alone. Before proceeding, they need the intervention of certain groups of persons who will review the proposed act and express an opinion on its eventual significance for the diocese or religious institute.

At the diocesan level there are two entities to which I have referred in earlier columns: the

diocesan finance council, and the college of consultors.

To carry out acts of major importance, a diocesan bishop must consult both of these bodies. He is not bound by the outcome of the consultation, but he is called upon to listen seriously to the advice received.

When, however, it comes to acts of extraordinary administration, he needs the consents of these groups, and not just their advice. If either or both bodies deny consent, the bishop is unable to act.

For instance, in Canada, initiating or responding to a lawsuit is considered to be an act of extraordinary administration. The members of the finance council might consider in a given case that it would be preferable to settle the suit, rather than going to court to respond to it and risk having an adverse precedent established. Without their consent, the bishop, even if he wanted to take the case

to court, would be unable to proceed.

For acts of alienation of stable patrimony, such as the sale of property, the finance council and the diocesan consultors are again involved. When appropriate, the code also calls for the consent of interested parties; such persons might be the original donors, or those who have used the property for many years. The consent of each of these is required if the value of the property being sold exceeds a minimum threshold (currently in Canada, this minimum is slightly above \$500,000).

Furthermore, if the value of the property exceeds the maximum sum determined for Canada (presently just above \$5 million), the permission of the Holy See is also required. These amounts apply likewise in the case of mortgaging properties, granting perpetual servitudes, and the like.

Of course, it is not always easy to determine the value of a piece of property or a building. We could consider depreciated value, replacement value, insurance value, and so forth. Today, however, the standard is to use what is known as "fair market value," based on evaluations provided by two independent appraisers.

These measures are certainly important to assure sound administration. When large sums of money are involved in a transaction, it would not be prudent to act solely on one's own information. There are so many factors to be taken into consideration. Very few companies would allow the chair of the board or the CEO to spend such amounts without involving the board or specially designated persons, and so it is not surprising to find similar policies in effect in the church itself.

The code gives to the diocesan bishop the responsibility of overseeing the proper use of temporal goods. Thus, on certain conditions, he can intervene in parish temporal administration, he can visit the parish and examine the books, he can also make provisions for particular situations. The Holy See has likewise reserved to itself the right to intervene when there is serious improper administration of diocesan funds.

There are similar norms in effect for religious institutes. The same maximum threshold applies as for dioceses, and the permission of the Holy See is also required in

such cases. However, for transactions below the maximum amount established, the institute's own law determines which levels of consultation and approval are required. These can vary, depending on the size and geographic extension of the institute.

In addition, other safeguards are foreseen in the canonical legislation. For instance, a diocesan bishop can issue instructions applicable

in his diocese, and these apply to all parishes. Thus, the intervention of the parish finance council can be required when a request for expenditure is to be presented to the diocesan authorities for approval. Norms can be issued regarding the counting of Sunday collections — such as, for instance, that there are always two sets of counters, that no

— BUDGET, page 19

Former convent a centre for living without ‘garbage’

Building a Culture of Life

Mary Deutscher



Last year was a rough year. Between the legalization of euthanasia and efforts to change policies that protect conscience rights, I've been feeling like I have spent too much time in this column describing attacks on the culture of life, and not enough time describing our continuing efforts to build a culture of life. So you can imagine my joy when one day, in casual conversation, I came across something beautiful: the Leipzig Serenity Retreat.

Feeling in need of a retreat after months of staring at my computer, I decided to reward myself with a day trip to see the retreat centre for myself. Initially, all I knew about it was that a group of people in Leipzig, Sask., had restored an old convent one room at a time to welcome people into the alcoholics anonymous 12-step program. This simple description did not prepare me for the beautiful home that greeted me when I arrived one sunny afternoon in September.

The brick building that now houses the retreat centre was originally the convent of the Sisters of Notre Dame, who served Leipzig and the surrounding area as school-

teachers. It was built in 1927, but fell into disrepair after the sisters left in 1969. When restoration of the building began in 2008, the rooms were filled with garbage and debris, but the walls were still as sturdy as ever.

It took the labour of many hands to transform the building into more than just a shelter for the people who come through its doors. After years of work, each room now provides a warm, healing environment, far from the sterile spaces of city life.

As I walked through the old convent, I was struck by how much the building's history reflected the lives of the people who now came to it for healing. As I am sure most people with even a passing knowledge of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) are aware, people who enter into the 12-step program begin by stripping away all the extra baggage they have brought with them.

Their first steps are to admit that they have no control over alcohol, and to turn their lives over to a greater power. This seems to perfectly mirror the experience of the people who renovated the Leipzig Serenity Retreat: as they stripped the building down, they had to rely on something greater than any individual worker to reveal the beauty of their sacred space.

I had studied the 12-step program before, but as it was being

— HONESTY, page 19



CNS/Siegfried Modola, Reuters

WOMAN FINDS SHELTER NEAR MOSQUE — A woman sits outside her tent in a compound sheltering internally displaced Muslims Nov. 25 at the central mosque in Bangui, Central African Republic. Pope Francis visited a mosque during his Nov. 29 - 30 visit to Bangui.

Privatizing liquor stores may sell the province short

The Editor: I’ve recently learned that Brad Wall’s Conservative government is in the process of privatizing this province’s liquor stores. Considering the fact that the loss of the profits from these stores would affect everyone in our province, this action strikes me as being politically and extraordinarily shortsighted. Some years ago, while making a purchase in the liquor store in a

small town a friend of mine and I asked the person in charge about the total amount of liquor sold annually in that particular store located in a large rural area. His answer was “about a million dollars.” When the province no longer has access to the profits from these stores, the people of Saskatchewan will still have to bear the social costs of the improper use of

liquor, e.g., accidents caused by drunk driving, splitting of families while one of the partners has taken on excessive use of alcohol, and the increased cost to our health care programs, etc. The above is not meant to oppose private business operations. But if privatization is so beneficial, why don’t we privatize all governmental departments? — **Leo Kurtenbach, Saskatoon**


Apparitions of Mary help deepen faith

Continued from page 1

caused by religious extremism. Orth, a practising Catholic, who certainly knew about Mary before this assignment, said she learned a great deal from talking with scholarly experts and reading mystics who wrote about the life of Mary but whose observations didn’t make it into the article. She came away with a “more personal relationship” with Mary than an intellectual one, saying she understood Mary more as a person after talking with so many who are devoted to her. She also witnessed the deep faith of many who have travelled great distances to be where apparitions of Mary are said to have taken place such as Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, where six village children said they first saw Mary in 1981 and continue to see apparitions there. A Vatican doctrinal congregation is still studying these claims. In the small village, Orth met four stage-4 cancer victims last November: Two have since died, one is under treatment and another shows no signs of the disease. All four spoke of spiritual conversions and inner peace, she said. A 59-year-old hockey dad from Boston told Orth that in 2000 one of the Medjugorje visionaries prayed with him for a cure of the

cancer that riddled his body, giving him only months left to live. During the prayer, he felt a sensation of heat in his body. When he went back to Boston a week later, a CT scan at Massachusetts General Hospital revealed that his tumours were almost gone. Since then, he’s been back to Medjugorje 13 times. The editors at National Geographic wrote in the margin by Orth’s account of his story: “Why do miracles happen to some people and not others?” Orth, who doesn’t have an answer to that theological query, noted the challenge of explaining spiritual accounts in a scientific magazine. One of Orth’s most inspiring stops for the story, primarily because she had not been unaware of it, was the small village of Kibeho, Rwanda, described as the place where Mary appeared to three young girls in the 1980s and foretold the genocide that took place in that country in 1994. In 2001, the Vatican verified the claims of the three girls. One had been killed in the genocide, one became a monastic sister in Italy and the third fled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and then Kenya during the three-month onslaught when the majority Hutu attacked the minority Tutsi and more than 800,000 people were killed.

The girls, Orth writes, “said they spent countless hours in conversations with the Virgin, who called herself *Nyina wa Jambo*, Mother of the Word. Mary spoke to the girls so often that they called her Mama.” But even though Mary is said to have spoken of the love of Jesus and gave these girls motherly advice, she is also said to have shown them images of heaven, hell and purgatory along with horrific images of genocide that she warned could happen if Rwandans did not renew their hearts and dispel evil. Orth said that the people she spoke with who said they saw apparitions all seemed genuine. She approached them as she would an investigative journalist. Their stories have been consistent throughout the years and they also have undergone extensive questioning from Vatican officials. Orth pointed out that very little is known about Mary from the Bible, but as her story reveals, the lack of details about Mary has not stopped people from reaching out to her in prayer and devotion as a way to better understand and approach God. “The number of people who use her as their guide and their way to a higher meaning, that was impressive across the board,” Orth said.



N. Sassi

A Crisping Frost

A crisping frost’s breath
Stamps the maple leaves with gold . . .

Lone squirrel scampers.

By Jeanette Martino Land

Program demands complete honesty

Continued from page 18

described during my tour of Leipzig, I was struck by just how much the program demands complete honesty from anyone who comes near it. Every person who goes through this program must be stripped bare before they can begin the task of opening themselves up to life once again. Much of our world’s heartache is a result of how good we have becoming at lying to ourselves. Humans have always been great at convincing ourselves that we are in complete control, but there is a growing trend today not only to tell ourselves this lie, but also to demand that others reinforce the lie for us. The 12-step program breaks free of this pattern. It empowers


individuals to see who they truly are, to love this person, and to re-enter the world. This is a rare gift that many people will go their entire lives trying to find. But the amazing thing is that once someone is able to tap into this type of honesty, they are able to bring it back out into the world. I once had a friend tell me that she appreciated speaking with priests and sisters because they were so honest with themselves that it was impossible to hide from herself when she was talking to them. I believe this friend had hit on the great value of self-awareness. It impacts much more than just the self-aware person, serving as a lighthouse for anyone who wishes to find the truth. During my visit I learned that

since the beginning of its restoration in 2008, the Leipzig Serenity Retreat has helped more than 300 people on their road to recovery from drug and alcohol addictions. That’s over 300 people who have come to accept and value themselves despite the message the world is sending them. If they can bring even a fraction of their peace beyond the borders of Leipzig, just imagine how they could change our world. The Leipzig Serenity Retreat is a beacon of hope that is a source of inspiration for anyone who is working to build the culture of life. Our world is crying out for something more than individualism and autonomy can provide. Self-awareness about our place in creation is the first step to reclaiming our world for life.



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Parish approves budget

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two members of the same family can be involved, that the money is never to be taken from the church property, and so forth. With sound management techniques, many expenditures can be foreseen in the annual parish budget to be approved by the bishop. In such cases, it is not always necessary to return for authorization for each individual act. Canon 1287 also calls for periodic accounts to be given to the faithful concerning the use of goods which they have donated to the church. In order to determine which goods are subject to these various rules, canon 1283 calls for detailed

inventories to be drawn up and kept up to date in each parish, religious institute, and diocese. Likewise, the code provides a number of possible penalties against those who do not observe the canonical legislation applicable to the proper administration of temporal goods. Although, hopefully, it will not be necessary to invoke these provisions too frequently, nevertheless they are there in case of necessity. Cases of embezzlement, of false reporting, of improper use of funds, and the like, can occur. In such instances it is important to have a canonical mechanism available to address the situation and take appropriate measures for the well-being of all concerned.

Pope ends African visit with pleas for peace, mercy

By Cindy Wooden

BANGUI, Central African Republic (CNS) — Pope Francis ended his visit to the violence-torn Central African Republic with cries for peace and pleas for a mercy that seeks and grants forgiveness.

In a country where political and ethnic rivalries also have split

the population along religious lines, Pope Francis began Nov. 30 with a visit to the Koudoukou mosque in Bangui.

After two years of civil war, much of the recurrent violence in the country involves the murder of a Christian or a Muslim, then retaliations from members of the other community. Most areas of Bangui are divided into Christian

or Muslim neighbourhoods with “buffer zones” between them patrolled by UN peacekeepers.

“God is peace, ‘salam,’ ” the pope said in his speech at the mosque, where armed UN peacekeepers monitored the crowd outside from each of the three minarets.

“Christians and Muslims are brothers and sisters,” created by the same God, he said, and they must act like it.

“Together, we must say no to hatred, to revenge and to violence, particularly that violence which is perpetrated in the name of a religion or of God himself,” Pope Francis insisted.

“The recent events and acts of violence which have shaken your country were not grounded in properly religious motives,” he said, but some have used God’s name as an excuse for their actions, which “disfigures the face of God.”

Pope Francis prayed that the elections scheduled for Dec. 27 would be a symbol and victory of national unity rather than being seen as the victory of one particular faction.

“Make your country a welcoming home for all its children, regardless of their ethnic origin, political affiliation or religious confession,” the pope urged the people.

Tidiani Moussa Naibi, the imam of the mosque, assured the pope



CNS/Paul Haring

HOLY DOOR IN BANGUI — Pope Francis opens the Holy Door as he begins the Holy Year of Mercy at the start of a mass with priests, religious, catechists and youth at the cathedral in Bangui, Central African Republic, Nov. 29.

that Central African Christians and Muslims know that they are brothers and sisters. “Trouble mongers could delay the completion of a particular project of common inter-

est or compromise for a time a particular activity, but never, ‘*inshallah*,’ (God willing) can they destroy the bonds of brotherhood that unite our communities so solidly.”

After the speeches, Pope Francis asked the imam to show him the mihrab, which indicates the direction of Mecca, the direction Muslims face when praying. The pope and imam stood in front of it for several moments of silence.

The Catholic archbishop of Bangui, the president of the country’s evangelical Christian alliance and another imam have been leading a very public campaign of education and co-operation to end the violence. The three were present at the mosque for the pope’s visit.

Afterward, the pope visited the camp for displaced people that has sprouted around the mosque, just as other camps have mushroomed around the city’s Catholic parishes.

To show just how special the visit was, Pope Francis personally opened the Holy Door at Bangui’s cathedral Nov. 29, nine days before the official opening of the Year of Mercy.

The last event on the pope’s schedule was a mass in a sports stadium, where he urged the Catholic community to participate in the Year of Mercy by moving forward courageously toward peace and reconciliation.



CNS/Paul Haring

POPE VISITS CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC — Pope Francis walks with Catherine Samba-Panza Bangui, transitional president of the Central African Republic, as they arrive for a meeting with leaders of the nation Nov. 29. Samba-Panza — a Catholic and longtime politician — publicly addressed the pope just a few hours before he opened the local celebration of the Year of Mercy by opening the Holy Door at Bangui’s cathedral. “On behalf of the ruling class of this country but also on behalf of all those who contributed in any way whatsoever to his descent into hell, I confess all the harm that has been done here over the course of history and I beg forgiveness from the bottom of my heart,” she said.

‘The God we seek to serve is a God of peace,’ pope says

By Cindy Wooden

NAIROBI, Kenya (CNS) — Respect, unity and service are the foundations of a strong family, a solid democracy and a healthy response to the gift of faith — any faith, Pope Francis told the people of Kenya.

Meeting ecumenical and inter-religious leaders, celebrating a large outdoor mass and greeting priests, religious and seminarians in Nairobi Nov. 26, Pope Francis insisted faith means serving one’s fellow human beings.

The pope’s day began early on the rainy morning with an intimate meeting with 40 representatives of Kenya’s Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Sikh and Buddhist communities, as well as with a Masai elder and other leaders of communities that have maintained their traditional African beliefs.

During the meeting in the Vatican nunciature, Pope Francis remembered the terrorist attacks on Kenya’s Westgate Mall in 2013, Garissa University College in April and Mandera in July, and urged a common recognition that “the God who we seek to serve is a God of peace.” The Somali-

based militant group al-Shabab claimed responsibility for all three attacks the pope mentioned.

“All too often, young people are being radicalized in the name of religion to sow discord and fear, and to tear at the very fabric of our societies,” the pope said. “How important it is that we be seen as prophets of peace, peacemakers who invite others to live in peace, harmony and mutual respect.”

Abdulahfur El-Busaidy, chair of the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims, greeted the pope as “a revolutionary-minded man of God” on behalf of the country’s Muslims, who, he said, make up about 30 per cent of the population.

“As people of one God and of this world,” he told the pope, “we must stand up and in unison clasp hands together in all the things that are essential for our collective progress as one humanity, one world irrespective of location, culture, language, race, ethnicity, status, politics . . . for we are citizens of the same world.”

Peace in the world is not possible without peace among religions, he said, citing the work of “the German philosopher Hans Küng.”

“Together, we must say no to hatred, to revenge and to violence, particularly that violence which is perpetrated in the name of a religion or of God himself.”

— Pope Francis in Central African Republic

Pope recalls martyrs’ witness in Uganda

By Cindy Wooden

KAMPALA, Uganda (CNS) — As Pope Francis encouraged Ugandan Christians to draw inspiration from the 19th-century Ugandan Martyrs, he carried with him graphic images of the horrors the 45 Anglican and Catholic martyrs endured.

The pope made an early morning visit Nov. 28 to the Anglican shrine and museum located on the site where many of the martyrs died. The main exhibit features realistic statues of men being tortured, bound and thrown on a fire.

Pope Francis had a look of shock on his face as Anglican Archbishop Stanley Ntagali of Uganda explained how the martyrs were executed on the orders of

King Mwanga II in the late 1800s.

Afterward, the pope celebrated a mass outside the nearby Catholic shrine to the martyrs. The shrine has an artificial lake, and Ugandan security patrolled it in a little rubber boat throughout the liturgy.

In his homily, Pope Francis honoured all the martyrs, noting that they shared the same faith in Jesus and they offer a witness to “the ecumenism of blood.”

Honouring the martyrs is not something to be done only on their feast day, he said, but must be done daily through upright behaviour and loving care for others in the family, the neighbourhood, at work and in society.

Keeping one’s eyes focused on God, he said, “does not diminish

our concern for this world, as if we only look to the life to come. Instead, it gives purpose to our lives in this world and helps us to reach out to those in need, to co-operate with others for the common good and to build a more just society which promotes human dignity, defends God’s gift of life and protects the wonders of nature, his creation and our common home.”

Heartbreaking modern challenges to faith led Pope Francis to abandon the text he had prepared for an afternoon meeting with Ugandan youth. Instead, he tried to respond directly to the young woman and young man who addressed him, although the effort was plagued by technical problems with the microphone.



CNS/Paul Haring

POPE VISITS UGANDA — Young people cheer before Pope Francis’ arrival for a meeting with them at the Kololo airstrip in Kampala, Uganda Nov. 28.