

# Mprairie Messenger



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## Summer schedule

The Prairie Messenger publishes every second week in July and takes a three-week summer vacation in August. Summer issues will be dated July 1, July 15, July 29 and August 26.



## Bred in the bone

Grace must be bred in the bone, says Gordon Smith, president of Ambrose University in Calgary; physicality in our worship is central to true worship. — page 3

## Sisters leave

They came in 1923 to Stockholm and have served in various capacities in the Regina archdiocese since, but with the death of Sister Anastasia Young, the Saskatchewan presence of the Sisters of Social Service is now over. — page 6

## Spanish parish

The only Spanish-speaking parish in Manitoba, *Nuestra Senora de la Asunción*, offers numerous opportunities for the faithful of all ages. — page 7

## Christian-Jewish dialogue

The third instalment of the What Dialogue Looks Like series focuses on Dr. Edward Kessler and Sister Rose Thering, OP. — page 14

## Engaging with problems

“By merely asserting existing doctrines, by clamping down on those who ask difficult questions and excluding them from the conversation, by indulging in group-think or simply avoiding the issue, we (the church) shut ourselves off from the many important challenges of the world we are supposed to engage with,” writes Anthony Egan, SJ. — page 15

# God’s creation is ‘crying out with pain’

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The earth, which was created to support life and give praise to God, is crying out with pain because human activity is destroying it, Pope Francis says in his long-awaited encyclical, *Laudato Si’*, on Care for Our Common Home.

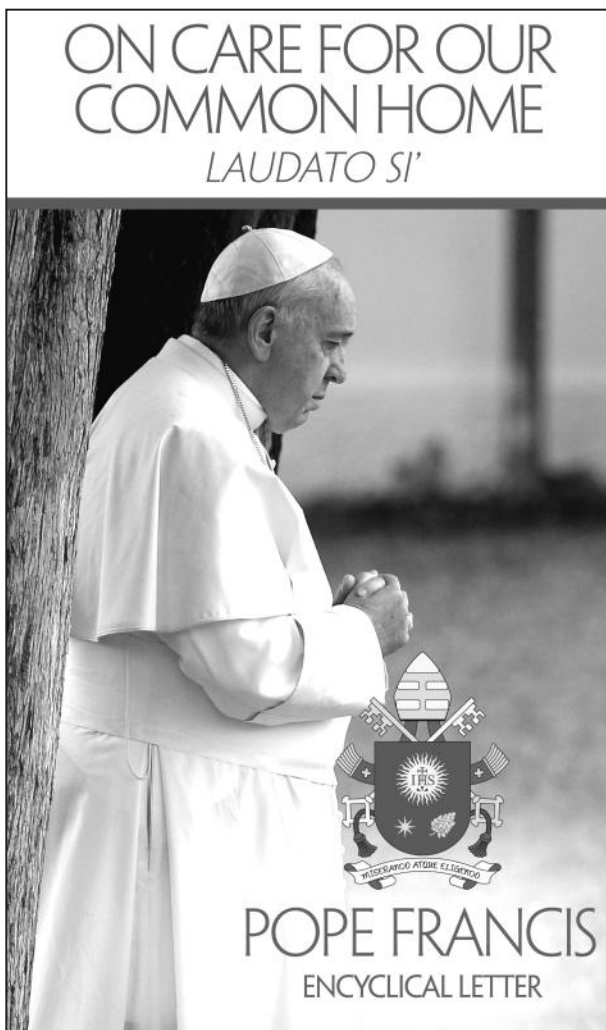
All who believe in God and all people of goodwill have an obligation to take steps to mitigate climate change, clean the land and the seas, and start treating all of creation — including poor people — with respect and concern, he says in the document released at the Vatican June 18.

A lack of respect for creation is a lack of respect for God who created all that exists, the pope says. In fact, he continues, a person cannot claim to respect nature while supporting abortion, nor can one claim to be pro-life without a commitment to reversing damage to the environment.

With unusually blunt language for a papal document, the pope decries centuries of exploiting the earth, exploiting other people and acting as if the point of human life is to buy and consume as much as possible.

“The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth,” the pope writes in the document.

While acknowledging science is not the Catholic Church’s area of expertise, Pope Francis says “a very solid scientific consensus” points to global warming and indi-



CNS/courtesy U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

**LONG-ANTICIPATED ENCYCLICAL — This is the cover of the English edition of Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si’*, on Care for Our Common Home.” The long-anticipated encyclical was released at the Vatican June 18.**

cates “human activity” has seriously contributed to it, threatening the planet and all life on it.

a constant theme of the church’s social doctrine, Pope Francis says the church recognizes the “legiti-

Situating ecology firmly within Catholic social teaching, Pope Francis not only insists that wealthier nations — who contributed more to despoiling the earth — must bear more of the costs of remedying the damage, he also calls for their solidarity with the poorest of the earth. He urges generosity in transferring clean technology, protecting small farms, opening access to markets and protecting people’s jobs.

Quoting St. John Paul II and

mate right” to private property, but that right is never “absolute or inviolable,” since the goods of the earth were created to benefit all.

Regarding pollution and environmental destruction in general, he says it is important to acknowledge “the human origins of the ecological crisis,” and while ecology is not only a religious concern, those who believe in God should be especially passionate on the subject because they profess the divine origin of all creation.

Pope Francis singles out for special praise Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople, who has made environmental theology a key topic of his research and teaching since the early 1990s. Before the encyclical’s release, the pope told a group of priests that he had asked the patriarch to join him for the public presentation of the encyclical, but the patriarch had a scheduling conflict and so sent one of his top theologians, Metropolitan John of Pergamon.

People are fooling themselves, Pope Francis says in the document, if they think “things do not look that serious, and the planet could continue as it is for some time.” Such people in all honesty are giving themselves permission to carry on with their current lifestyles and habits; their attitude is “self-destructive,” he says.

In large sections of the encyclical, Pope Francis’ language is poetic, echoing the tone of St.

— HYMN, page 19

## Laudato Si’: reaction from Saskatoon bishop

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment, *Laudato Si’*, is a beautifully written and accessible document for the whole world, says Bishop Donald Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

“It speaks a word that the world needs to hear at this moment in time,” said Bolen after the pontiff released the encyclical June 18 as part of the church’s social teaching.

“It is a word that many in our society, including our scientific community, are longing to hear, have been waiting to hear. It is an invitation to come to our senses and start to cultivate the larger vision needed if we are to live meaningfully as a human race on this earth which God has given us.”

He noted that Pope Francis’ broad intention resonates in the opening lines of the encyclical: “Now, faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet (3).” The Holy Father

emphasizes the profound and moving reality that earth is “our common home,” the bishop added.

Bolen expressed his delight in the sense of wonder and awe which characterizes this document, so grounded in a healthy relationship with God and with God’s creation.

He observed that the document’s title — *Laudato Si’*, or Praised Be — is appropriately taken from Saint Francis of Assisi’s glorious hymn to creation: “Praised be to you, my Lord, through brother sun, who gives us light. For sister moon and the stars; praised be to you, my Lord, through brother wind, sister water, through all the creatures.”

“The encyclical calls into question how we are to live on this planet, how we are to live in relation to the earth, how we are to deal with the suffering of others, how we are to form societies, cultures,” said Bolen, noting it is a call to conversion and change for each one of us in how we live and in the decisions we make.

He noted that *Laudato Si’* identifies the ongoing dialogue with

scientists, philosophers, theologians and civic groups that has taken place on these issues, and calls for a “conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all.”

Pope Francis identifies that the same spiritual crisis is harming both the environment and human beings, said Bolen.

“Pope Francis makes an appeal on both fronts. The earth is suffering . . . and the greatest impact of climate change falls on the poorest,” Bolen said. “We are faced not with one but two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental (139),” states the document.

Environmental devastation and the human scourges of poverty, inequality, injustice, wars, abortion, and human trafficking are all connected to our “throwaway culture,” that treats other human beings and nature as objects for exploitation and domination.

The market economy and tech-



PM File

Bishop Donald Bolen

nology must be accompanied by a moral sense to protect both the earth and human beings, stresses Pope Francis: “Never has humanity had such power over itself, yet nothing ensures that it will be used wisely,” he writes in *Laudato Si’*. “Our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human

— CONCERN, page 9



# Our loved ones do not ‘disappear into nothingness’

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christian hope and faith in the afterlife mean the sting of losing a loved one does not have to leave behind a poisonous venom in our lives, Pope Francis said.

“Our loved ones have not disappeared into dark nothingness: Hope assures us that they are in God’s good and strong hands. Love is stronger than death,” he said at his general audience June 17.

As part of a series of talks about the family and problems they face, the pope looked at death, particularly the loss of a close family member.

When a loved one dies, especially a child or a parent of young children, “death is never able to appear as something natural,” he said.

It is “heart-rending” when a mother and father lose a child: “It’s as if time has stopped. An abyss opens that swallows up the past and the future,” he said.

Losing a child seems to go against everything life is supposed to be about, he said. “It’s a slap in the face to all the promises, gifts, and sacrifices of love joyously given to the life we have given birth to,” he said.

Just as traumatic is when a child loses one or both parents, he said.

They ask, “Where is daddy? Where is mommy?” or “‘When will mommy come back home?’ Oh, what do you say? The child suffers” and he or she lacks the experience or understanding “to give a name to what has happened,” the pope said.

These experiences of death are

particularly distressing — “like a black hole that opens in the life of a family and for which we don’t know how to give any explanation.”

Sometimes family members will blame God. “I understand. They get mad at God, they curse him,” or begin to question or doubt his existence, the pope said.

“This anger is a bit of what comes from the heart of huge heartache” of losing a family member, he said.

Unfortunately, death has a number of evil “accomplices, who are even worse” and their names are hatred, envy, pride, greed, indifference — basically “the sin of the world that works for death and makes it even more painful and unjust.”

Death’s “auxiliary forces” render so many families helpless and, so often, such horror in some parts of the world starts to seem like an

“absurd normality.”

“May the Lord free us from getting used to this” kind of loss of life, he said.

For the people of God, death never has the last word, the pope said. However, it still takes an enormous amount of love to face “the darkness of death.”

He asked that today’s priests and all Christians find ways to better express what the faith means when facing the death of a loved one.

People need to mourn, “you must never deny people the right to cry,” he said.

Christians must become “accomplices” of love, armed with the faith and able to help families navigate the “very difficult path of death as well as the sure path of the Lord, crucified and risen, with his irreversible promise of resurrection.”

The Lord will reunite everyone once again, and it is this Christian hope and faith that will “protect us from a nihilistic view of death as well as false worldly consolation,” myths or superstition, he said.

The pope reminded people that June 20 marked World Refugee Day, and he asked people pray for all those forced to flee as they search for a new home “where they can live without fear.”

He asked that the dignity of refugees always be respected and encouraged the international community to co-operate and work effectively to “prevent the causes of forced migrations.”

“I invite everyone to ask forgiveness for the people and institutions that close the doors to these people who are seeking a family, who want to be cared for,” he said to applause.

## Pray for justice, terrorists who kill in name of God

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Christians and Muslims should pray for those who have “deviated from the true path of life” and kill in the name of religion, said Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran.

“Our prayer is much needed: for justice, for peace and security in the world,” as well as for those who “commit violence in the name of religion, so as to return to God and change (their) life,” said the cardinal, president of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue.

Tauran’s annual message to Muslims for Eid al-Fitr, the feast marking the end of the month-long Ramadan fast, was published by the Vatican June 19. Ramadan will end on or around July 17 this year.

The message was titled, “Christians and Muslims: Together to counter violence perpetrated in the

name of religion,” and it called for renewed efforts, especially in education and law enforcement, to foster respect for human life and protect people’s rights.

Unfortunately, many ethnic and religious communities around the world, he said, have had to face killings, rapes, enslavement, forced emigration and trafficking, even of human organs and cadavers.

“We are all aware of the gravity of these crimes in themselves,” he said. But what “makes them even more heinous” is the attempt to justify such barbarity in the name of religion. “It is a clear manifestation of instrumentalizing religion for gaining power and richness,” he said.

Nations and communities have a duty to protect their residents and their property “from the blind violence of terrorists,” he said.

But leaders, schools, families and the media also have a responsibility in education, because “violence and terrorism are first conceived in the mind of the deviated persons.”

“All those (who) are involved in the education of the youth and in the various educational spaces should teach the sacred character of life and the derived dignity of every person, regardless of his or her ethnicity, religion, culture, social position and political choice,” the cardinal wrote.

“There is no life that is more precious than another one because it belongs to a specific race or religion,” he wrote. “Therefore, no one can kill. No one can kill in the name of God; this would be a double crime: against God and the very person.”



CNS/Brian Snyder, Reuters

**PEOPLE EXPRESS HEARTACHE AS THEY MOURN SHOOTING VICTIMS — Sister Mary Thecla of the Daughters of St. Paul prays outside the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C. June 19. Two days prior, nine people were murdered during a Bible study session at the church.**



CNS/Catholic Church in Jerusalem

**FIRE DAMAGED BENEDICTINE CHURCH — Fire damaged the Benedictine Church of the Multiplication at Tabgha on the Sea of Galilee in Israel following a June 18 blaze. The Council of Religious Institutions of the Holy Land issued a strong condemnation against the early morning arson attack.**

## Pope, Syriac patriarch pray for unity

By Laura Ieraci

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis and the patriarch of the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch expressed their desire to work toward full communion of the two churches.

The pope met with Patriarch Ignatius Aphrem II at the Vatican June 19. This was Aphrem’s first official visit with Pope Francis. The two church leaders spoke privately, after which each gave a public discourse.

“We express our desire and readiness to look for new ways that will bring our churches even closer to each other, paving the way for Antioch and Rome, the only two apostolic sees where St. Peter preached, to establish full communion,” Aphrem said.

The patriarch also expressed his church’s readiness to come to an agreement to celebrate Easter on a common date. He said the Holy Synod of Antioch, motivated by the Second Vatican Council, adopted a resolution in 1981, expressing “the eagerness of our church” to celebrate Easter “on a

fixed Sunday in April” in common with other Christian churches.

The celebration of Easter “on two different dates is a source of great discomfort and weakens the common witness of the church in the world,” he said, thanking Pope Francis for recently “considering to take the initiative to lead the efforts on this matter.”

Meeting a group of priests in Rome June 12, Pope Francis said the Catholic Church “is willing to establish a fixed date for Easter so that it can be celebrated on the same day by all Christians, whether Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox.”

In the current situation, he said, being ironic, “A Catholic and an Orthodox meet. One says, ‘Your Christ has risen? Mine rises next Sunday.’”

The patriarch also thanked Francis for “courageously” speaking of the Armenian genocide and “opening the way for others to do the same.” The patriarch said about 500,000 Syriac Orthodox died in the 1915 genocide, for which the community continues to seek healing and reconciliation.

In addition, he noted the loss of

life of Christians and others in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, as well as the high number of refugees and the destruction of numerous religious buildings and monuments. He thanked Pope Francis for his prayers for the suffering Christians but urged the Vatican to engage in more diplomatic activity toward peace in the region.

In his speech, Pope Francis urged the two churches to “further strengthen the bonds of friendship and fraternity” during this time of “difficult trial and suffering” for Christians and to “hasten our steps on the common journey, holding the gaze fixed on the day when we can celebrate our belonging to the one Church of Christ around the same altar of sacrifice and praise.”

The two churches should “exchange the treasures of our traditions as spiritual gifts because that which unites us is far greater than that which divides us,” he said.

The Syriac Orthodox Church, he said, has been “a church of martyrs” since its founding and is “still today in the Middle East” along with other Christian churches there.



# Pope's encyclical takes fresh approach to dialogue

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment *Laudato Si'* seeks a dialogue with the whole world and gives new insight into the relationship of human beings to creation, say informed Canadian readers.

While the message about humanity's place in creation is welcomed, however, some are critical of Pope Francis' attitude toward markets, technology and even fossil fuels.

Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) was primarily directed at Christians, but now he wants to dialogue with the whole world in *Laudato Si'*, said Marist Father Yvan Mathieu, a biblical scholar and dean of faculty of theology at Saint Paul University.

Mathieu described *Laudato Si'* as both "in the tradition and new." It is not the first time a pope has tried to have a dialogue with the

world, but the way he has done it is new, he said.

He speaks of wanting to enter into a dialogue with "all people about our common home," but this dialogue "is present even in the way he wrote it," said Mathieu.

"This is not a man locked up in the Vatican reflecting on his own," he said. "He is humble enough to consult and be informed by others, so the encyclical is the fruit of dialogue, and he is clearly wanting to promote dialogue. So that, clearly, is really something new."

While Francis quotes extensively from his predecessors, he also quotes the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. "I don't think I've seen that very often in an encyclical that the pope is quoting an Orthodox patriarch." A representative of Bartholomew's was present at the news conference at the Vatican for the release of the encyclical.

## Dialogue to find solutions

Mathieu also finds the tone of

the dialogue interesting. "He is really pointing at very serious problems," yet even in front of those problems he is speaking to "people of goodwill who have tried to find solutions."

The tone Pope Francis uses is not condemning, even as he states things very clearly, Mathieu said. He shows the problem, invites dialogue and proposes some guidelines to help.

While some people are going to be enthusiastic or not so enthusiastic with the encyclical, he's "taking a very clear position in favour of ecology" and showing the consequences of "wild capitalism" and consumerism.

Joe Gunn, executive director of the social justice think-tank Citizens for Public Justice, notes that environmentalists have moved away from the position held in the 1970s and '80s that population control is the solution to the environmental crisis. In the encyclical Pope Francis firmly comes out against both population control and abortion.

"I've seen a real change, where the environmental movement is now wanting to work with churches," Gunn said. "They've seen it's not just about protecting wetlands, or using alternative technologies, but what we're really talking about are pretty massive changes in how we operate on the planet."

Faith communities have much to contribute to the environmental movement through their stress on the benefit of thinking about the common



PM

Joe Gunn

good, and of sharing and caring for others.

"I think environmental leaders will feel they have a friend in the leadership in the Vatican," Gunn said. "When he talks about the spiritual roots of environmental problems, I think quite a few of us are getting to the point where we appreciate that; it crosses ideological boundaries."

## Encyclical a 'tipping point'

He thinks the encyclical may bring about a tipping point in the debate on climate change and the ecology.

The pope has issued a challenge to community networks, including the Catholic community, to work with politicians on shaping a policy response on issues such as replacing fossil fuels, developing renewable energy and helping poor countries, Gunn said. "It's remarkable how weak international responses have been."

"The fact that he uses the word sin when he talks about attacks on nature allows us to move the debate" into asking people what they are doing when they deny the

peer-reviewed science on climate change, he said.

"He really wants action," Gunn said. The encyclical should challenge us as church communities. "If our parking lot outside mass looks the same as Wal-Mart's two hours after mass," with trash, "the kind of cars we drive, the way we do our shopping, the amount of fossil fuels we use," he is challenging us that our personal lifestyle has to change, our life as an institutional church has to change and government policy has to change."

Gunn said the encyclical will also bring about new reflections in theology. He noted that in a search for the word "stewardship," he finds it only once in the document, in a quote from a bishops' conference. The idea of stewardship, that humanity is "put in control," is an idea that CPJ has moved away from, toward a view that encourages "the flourishing of all creation."

CPJ has been moving away from the idea that the human being is above all nature rather than a part of nature, he said. That's part of the criticism Christian theology has received, the command to dominate nature. The fact that Pope Francis stayed away from the word "stewardship" will "ensure the encyclical will be studied and commented upon" in theological schools.

## New theological insights

Mathieu said he usually teaches Genesis I, which includes the Creation narrative. The Christian view of dominion over creation has often been condemned as "the source of all evil, as if you can pollute as much as you can."

What God means when God gives human beings dominion is that they are meant to "protect and care for the order God has creat-

— INDIGENOUS, page 10



Art Babych

**ENVIRONMENTAL ENCYCLICAL** — A yellow warbler takes a bath near the Ottawa River. Pope Francis' long-anticipated encyclical on the environment was released at the Vatican June 18.

# Grace needs to be bred in the bone; it needs to be embodied

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

SASKATOON — As an Evangelical Christian, Dr. Gordon Smith has been enriched by his encounters with Catholics. He described some of "what Evangelicals can learn from Catholic Christians" during a recent presentation at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

Smith told the gathering that he was speaking as an Evangelical "who is deeply indebted to the perspectives and wisdom from the Catholic tradition that have enriched my Christian journey, and my ministry."

The presentation at the cathedral was organized by the local Evangelical-Catholic dialogue group that has been meeting for the past three-and-a-half years in Saskatoon. Dialogue co-chairs Nicholas Jesson, ecumenical officer for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, and Rev. Harry Strauss of Forest Grove Community Church, welcomed the diverse crowd to the April 30 event. A similar session on what Catholics can learn from Evangelical Christians is planned for the fall.

A committed lifelong Evan-

gelical Christian and the president of Ambrose University in Calgary, Smith said that he has grown in faith and understanding through the Catholic emphasis on sacramentality, as well as receiving new insights into the Gospel, spiritual formation and liturgical renewal from his Catholic sisters and brothers.

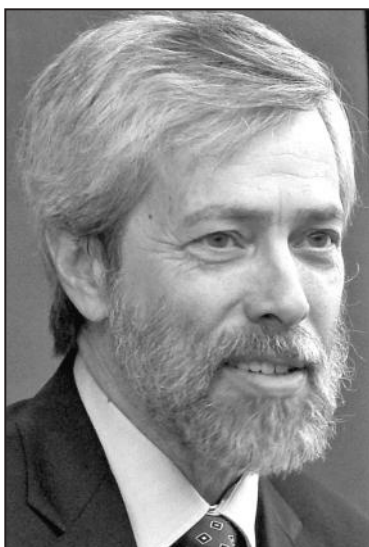
Smith added that he has also been blessed by ancient Catholic sources of Christian wisdom — including John of the Cross, Theresa of Avila, Ignatius Loyola and many others — and has been enriched by the Catholic emphasis on the importance of the intellectual life for faith.

However, it is the meaning of church (ecclesiology) which is the most critical issue for conversation, learning and dialogue between Catholics and Evangelicals, asserted Smith.

"The fundamental matters separating Catholics and Evangelicals is not, in my estimation, tradition and Scripture, it is not faith versus works, it is not even Mary or celibacy or sacraments and their meaning, or even the centrality of Christ for worship and piety," Smith said.

"We might differ on some or all

of these matters, but they are not the fundamental point of divide. Rather the most pressing issue is very simply: what does it mean to be the church? And in this regard, I suggest to both parties that we need to listen twice as much as we speak."



Yaworski

Dr. Gordon Smith

Evangelicals need to do some homework and some due diligence, Smith suggested. "Our radical individualism, our propensity for divisiveness and sectarianism, is some-

thing for which we need to repent, and then from this penitential posture, begin to read and listen to Catholic theologians, and to local clergy, and to Catholic sisters and brothers, on what does it mean to be the church as a liturgical, catechetical and missional community."

Smith noted that one of the goals of ecumenism is not simply to map out agreement and disagreement, but to determine "where and in what ways can we learn from one another, and where and in what ways can we learn together."

For instance, he said, "Catholic voices and perspectives that have helped me and many other evangelicals come to a greater appreciation of the place of the sacraments in worship — that embodiment matters, that materiality is inherent to our way of being, that physicality in our worship is central to true worship. The sense that if it only happens in our heads, and only happens in our hearts, and does not happen in our bodies, perhaps it doesn't happen, perhaps it doesn't take deeply and thoroughly."

He emphasized the importance of an embodied faith. "There are two threads within my tradition: there is the rational thread, that

everything happens in my mind, and there is the sentimental thread, that the only thing that worship is, is good feelings. But if our faith is not embodied, it is a fair question to ask if it takes. Grace by its very nature needs to be bred in the bone. It needs to be embodied if it's going to have its transformative effect."

Smith concluded with a quote from a letter that John Wesley, one of the Evangelical founders of Methodism, wrote in 1789 to a Roman Catholic friend: "Let us . . . endeavour to help each other on in whatever we are agreed leads to the Kingdom. So far as we can, let us always rejoice to strengthen each other's hands in God. Above all, let us each take heed to himself (since each must give an account of himself to God) that he fall not short of the religion of love."

Smith added: "If Wesley was so inclined in 1749, how much more generous should we be of our assessment of each other today, being eager to learn together, serve together, worship together in mutual respect and love. Yes with discernment — but I would suggest with the discernment not of critics, but of fellow learners."



# Ottawa resident recalls work with Archbishop Romero

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — A former member of El Salvador's national police force, Jose Escobar used to catechize people who were preparing for sacraments in his parish.

Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was assassinated while saying mass on March 24, 1980, and beatified by Pope Francis on May 23, visited the parish several times to observe what Escobar was doing.

"He saw I was doing well, so he said to the priest, 'We can trust him,'" Escobar said in an interview at his home in Ottawa. "I like the way he teaches the people. We can work together with him and he can help us to protect the people."

Romero faced opposition and threats to his life from all sides, Escobar said. Though he stressed the preferential option for the poor from the beginning of his episcopate, the communists thought he was with the government. Government paramilitary groups were killing poor people, farmers, labourers, student leaders, priests and catechists. They would give 5,000 pesos (about \$500) for the killing of a priest, Escobar said.

Many of the people in his parish sympathized with the Communists, but Escobar tried to stick with the Gospel and the church's teaching, steering a middle course which he said the archbishop appreciated. When police or military would come to search for weapons, they would recognize Escobar as a police officer and take his word that no weapons were present.

The government, however, had his parish priest arrested three times, then exiled him from the country. Romero told Escobar he was afraid if he appointed another priest government militia would kill him right away. He could not



Robert Du Broy

**FRIENDS OF ROMERO — Family and friends gathered at St. Elizabeth's Parish in Ottawa on May 23, the day of Archbishop Oscar Romero's beatification. From left, starting from back row: Jose Escobar, his son Norman Escobar, his friend Sarah Du Broy, front row: Rev. Daryold Winkler, Jose Escobar's wife Josephine and their daughter Virginia.**

ask new seminarians to come since they had told him they were afraid they and their families would be killed. So he asked Escobar to lead the parish.

"We have to work together," Escobar said the archbishop told him. "You don't go for any ideology. That's good." Romero told him he did not want any member of the community dying for an ideology. He gave him the task of being the spiritual guide for the parish.

Spies from the paramilitary were infiltrating his community. "I had to take care not to say anything against the government," Escobar said. Romero visited and was surprised to find the church

so full considering they had no priest. Many from the community were being manipulated by the guerrillas trying to recruit them, but Escobar steered a pastoral course. On one of his visits he told Escobar: "Congratulations, you are doing a great job."

He came about once a month to run retreats at the parish. Meanwhile persecution against Catholics was increasing, as anyone who identified as a member of the church was considered "dangerous to the government," Escobar said.

People had to avoid carrying a Bible, a book, a camera, even a piece of paper or risk being killed on the spot, he said.

Despite the turmoil, Romero was honest, polite, friendly, Escobar said. He and others thought he acted like a saint. He never got angry, even when people insulted him. He would give away his clothing to the needy right on the spot. He had enemies on both sides, and he began to wonder where he would die, and who would kill him, Escobar said. The parish had many problems and every time Escobar approached the archbishop for help, "He never said, 'I'm sorry Jose, I can't do anything.' He always gave us hope."

Escobar became aware members of the national police force and the army were complicit in murders that included massacres of small communities. He told his wife Josephine, "This is not right."

"When I became a policeman, I wanted to protect people not kill people," he said.

His wife Josephine encouraged him to quit. "I don't think we will die if you no longer work for the police," she said. The couple had four small children at the time.

Leaving the police force, however, would make him a target.

He went to work for a local family that owned a funeral home. As the civil war picked up, many more killings took place. Escobar's job was to pick up the bodies. He said he arrived at some massacres while the perpetrators were still there, cleaning off their knives. Escobar stopped staying overnight at his home, for fear of paramilitary groups. After seeing so many dead bodies, he could no longer eat meat. "I was getting very skinny," he said.

"The only one that cared for the people was the archbishop," Escobar said. But the division that wracked the country also went through the church as well. "Some in the church opposed him; some wanted him to be more extreme."

He was not merely a simple bishop or pastor, he was "almost like a father attending the people," inspiring their "trust and confidence," said Escobar. "He was my spiritual guide."

Escobar recalled the last retreat Romero gave his parish. During a question and answer session afterward, the archbishop told them: "Listen brothers and sisters, it is

OK if you have to run from the persecution, if you have a chance to save your life do it, because you have the right to do the best that you can not only for you, but also for your families. I don't want innocent saints out of any of you."

I know that for me it is impossible to run, because as pastor that I am, I will never abandon my sheep," he said.

Then Romero warned Escobar he would be threatened for the humanitarian work he was doing. He advised him that if he receives a threat not to wait for the second but to get out of El Salvador immediately and go to Mexico. He gave him the name of two bishops there, and said to go see them if he needed help.

"Even if I am dead they will receive you in my name," the archbishop told him. "Take your family with you and don't worry about the rest, because I will bless you and your family always everywhere you go."

Escobar believes the archbishop prophesied his family's exit from El Salvador.

It took nearly a year for Escobar to flee El Salvador, leaving Josephine and the children behind. He managed to cross the border into Mexico, even though he didn't have any money and immigration officials would have deported him had they found out.

In one instance he fled officials into the lobby of a hotel where he found a group of nuns. He snuck under the skirt of one especially tall sister, pleading with her to keep quiet. He spent two weeks in Chiapas, Mexico, without food, until a kind police officer with the same last name lent him money to travel to Mexico City. There, sure enough, the name of Archbishop Oscar Romero opened doors for him and he was able to obtain a job.

Now, the Escobars live in Ottawa. Two of their five children are religious sisters; two sons are engineers. Their youngest daughter is still at home. Jose Escobar believes the intercession of Archbishop Romero helped him and his family every step of their sometimes gruelling journey from El Salvador, to Mexico and eventually to Canada.

## Canadian delegates named for fall synod

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The Holy See released on June 16 the names of the Canadian delegates to the upcoming synod on the family taking place in Rome Oct. 4 - 25.

The delegates are: Archbishop Paul André Durocher, president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops; Valleyfield (Quebec) Bishop Noël Simard; Toronto Cardinal Thomas Collins; and Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith. Alternates, should one of the delegates not be able to attend, are Saint-Jean-Longueuil (Quebec) Bishop Lionel Gendron, who is also CCCB vice-president, and Vancouver Archbishop Michael Miller.

Durocher is the only Canadian delegate who also attended last October's extraordinary synod on the family. An ordinary synod is convened over regular intervals and an extraordinary synod is specially convened to deal with matters on a more timely basis and is smaller. Last October, the extraordinary synod included only heads of episcopal conferences, Curial cardinals who head dicasteries in Rome, and those specially invited by the Holy Father. Pope Francis had decided on a two-stage process

or synodal journey to examine the pastoral challenges to the family in light of the new evangelization.

"I look forward to being part of the discussions relating to the synod on the family this fall," said Collins. "It is an important moment of dialogue for the church as we reflect on how we can support and strengthen families and journey together in faith."

The delegates are selected by both the French and the English-language sectors of the CCCB. They were chosen over a lengthy voting process that began earlier in the year. Bishops in each sector put forward names; those named most frequently became the slate of candidates for each sector, and voting continued until two delegates and one substitute for each sector were chosen. Following this, all the bishops of Canada were asked to vote on each of the six names, and then these were submitted to the Holy See for confirmation by the pope.

The list had to be approved by the pope and names released from the Holy See.

"It's a very strong delegation," said Catholic Organization for Life and Family director Michele Boulva. She described them as

"having a very deep knowledge of the challenges faced by families as well as their strengths."

"They are also very conscious of the necessity to make families aware of their great responsibility for the new evangelization in a society that has become, at least in Canada, post-Christian," she said. "A lot of work needs to be done to make families conscious of their role as protagonists of the new evangelization."

"At this time in the history of the church, the laity has a primary role to play in announcing God's love and Christ's Gospel to a society that resembles very much the Roman world in which the first Christians lived," she said. "We are the first Christians of the third millennium and our responsibility is great."

The synod takes place Oct. 4 - 25, and will come on the heels of the World Meeting of Families Congress in Philadelphia Sept. 22 - 25 and Pope Francis' visit to the United States Sept. 26 - 27 that will include a visit to the U.S. Congress and the United Nations.

The CCCB will hold its annual plenary Sept. 14 - 18. Durocher's two-year term ends after the plenary and a new president will be elected before the October synod.



**NEW APPOINTMENT — The International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG) has announced the appointment of Dr. Monia Mazigh as its new national co-ordinator. Mazigh is a well-known academic, author and human rights advocate best known for her efforts to free her husband Maher Arar from a Syrian prison in 2003. The ICLMG is a national coalition that brings together some 43 NGOs, unions, professional associations, faith groups, environmental organizations, human rights and civil liberties advocates, as well as groups representing immigrant and refugee communities in Canada.**



# Institute observes major social change over 50 years

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — The Vanier Institute of the Family marked its 50th anniversary June 10 - 11 with a conference that revealed how much society and notions of family have changed in five decades.

Governor General Georges and Pauline Vanier founded the institute in 1965 as a non-religious institute to help social scientists understand the family so as to better support it. The Catholic couple for whom a cause for sainthood is underway might be astonished to see how much the family and marriage have been redefined both legally and societally since then.

Mary Frances Coady, author of Georges and Pauline Vanier: Portrait of Couple and the soon-to-be-published *Mercy Within Mercy: Georges and Pauline Vanier and the Search for God* (Darton Longman & Todd) said in an email it would be difficult to speculate on what the Vaniers' reaction would be to the current changes.

"That said, however, I know that the Vaniers believed that a strong and loving family unit was essential for a healthy society," she wrote. "They were under no illusion about the difficulties of marriage and family life, and they saw brokenness within their own family and in families that were close to them. Such experiences deepened their compassion."

"They were obviously people of their time, but their lives were also deeply rooted in the love and mercy of God," she said. "Did they wonder what paths the Vanier Institute might take after their deaths? Not that I can recall from the archived documents."

In a panel on love June 11 at the Vanier Institute conference, a range of experts representing a variety of family backgrounds and present day combinations and working in various advocacy roles painted a complex picture of multiple family types.

Mary Gordon, founder of Roots of Empathy, a program designed to help young children learn how to empathize with others, said that while society may change the shape of the family, "children have the same exact needs you had when you were children."

The first relationship, that of a mother with an infant, is the first relational template that affects the rest of the child's life, she said. "We screw up the family and we have to create a whole host of organizations to deal with the outcome."

Gordon said all children need to "have a sense of belonging," and to be surrounded by unconditional love.

Coming from "a very Catholic" extended family in Newfoundland, Gordon said her mother welcomed everyone, from the unwed mother to the drunk just released from jail to the family table.

Gordon said she experienced a lot of love in her home, and was taught that everyone was a step away from having a hard time. Consequently, she was taught that people experiencing hard times should not be treated as if it is their fault.



CCN/Gyapong

**ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE — A panel on Love at the Vanier Institute of the Family 50th anniversary conference included University of Ottawa professor Jean-Christophe Demers and Queer lawyer Barbara Findlay. Also on the panel were moderator Ann Douglas, Ottawa Mission executive director Peter Tilley, and Roots of Empathy founder Mary Gordon.**

"The family should be cherished and not blamed and shamed," she said.

University of Ottawa sociological and anthropological studies professor Jean-Christophe Demers told the approximately 300 delegates that family bonds are created around love, but that he has found from his personal background that "love is not enough to keep the family together." Demers said he experienced a breakdown in the relationship with his child's mother that has led to difficulties with access to his child.

"Love is not enough to guarantee continuity," he said.

Yet love "as a feeling" has

become so prevalent in defining the postmodern family, he said.

The shift from more traditional notions of family was "extremely brutal," he said. The quest for self-realization and changes in gender roles have created new forms of social ties and new forms of work. Globalization and economic pressures are also having an impact, he said.

Families ties are activated according to preferences, he said, but "that makes relationships subject to change." The family has shifted from being an institution geared to producing children and caring for them, to being one based on relationships that further

self-identity and affective bonds.

But seeing the family in this plastic way, as always subject to change, means that a few decades from now families might not be defined in terms of love, because they were not defined that way in the past, he said.

Demers said the changes proposed by the Second Vatican Council were "so light" the church "had a hard time distinguishing itself." That did not mean the church did not offer alternatives to believers, he said, but the church no longer had the same influence on their lives as societal pushes for freedom and equality.

Peter Tilley, a single father of a

19-year-old daughter, said the empowerment of women has led to great changes in the family. In the 1950s and '60s, the man was the breadwinner, and the woman had no choice to be able to leave, he said. Previously there were few outside influences on the family other than religion, but now there are many more, especially through the role of screens, whether computers or phones. While Facebook may be good to help connect families across generations that are now living in different parts of the world, social media now have a great influence on developing a child's values than their families, he said. "Parents have no control."

As executive director of The Ottawa Mission, an outreach to homeless people, Tilley said most of the people they serve come from "broken" family units. "Most are no longer in touch with their families," he said. Many have mental health and addiction issues, he said.

He sees bonds form among the homeless, who then look out for each other. Tilley said when a homeless person goes into hospice care and the Mission contacts the families, "it's amazing how fast people want to reconnect."

Sometimes they'll take mats to sleep on the floor of their family member's room, through a "desire to understand and to get closure." These might be "families without

— RELATIONSHIPS, page 19

## Rallies protest against refugee health care cuts

By Deborah Gyapong

OTTAWA (CCN) — About 150 people, including doctors, health care professionals and lawyers gathered on Parliament Hill June 15 to protest against 2012 federal government cuts to refugee health care.

"Health care professionals, social workers, and other concerned citizens across the country warned the government at the time of the potential harms of targeting such a vulnerable group," said Dr. Doug Gruner, a family doctor who has worked with refugees for the past 15 years. "Did the Harper government listen? No they did not."

The protest organized by Canadian Doctors for Refugee Care was among 20 in cities across Canada as part of the fourth National Day of Action against the cuts.

Gruner said the federal government refused to meet with frontline workers and with the more than 20 national health care organizations that asked the immigration minister to "reconsider the policy as it was clearly not informed by the experts nor by evidence."

University of Ottawa law school professor and member of the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers Peter Showler expressed outrage that the federal government is appealing last summer's federal court decision in which Justice Anne McTavish described the cuts as unconstitutional on grounds of cruel and unusual punishment. The appeal will be heard in October. Showler demanded the government "uphold the McTavish order" and fully reinstate the programs, beyond the partial response they have made

to the court order.

Showler rebutted government arguments for the policy. The government has argued the policy is meant to discourage fraudulent refugee claimants, but Showler pointed out it applies to all refugees, not just the fraudulent ones.

The government has described the refugee health care plan as "gold-plated," but Showler said it was "fundamental basic health care," the same as that received by "indigent" Canadians.

Showler warned that cutting back on preventive health care ends up costing the government more money because of greater use of emergency care.

Dr. Allison Eyre, founder of the New Canadians Clinic at the Centretown Community Health Centre, said refugees had their health care cut because some might be bogus, that "some people might not be following the rules."

"I read the news," she said, noting there are "some politicians who are not following the rules and I haven't seen any call for anyone to suspend their health care coverage."

Canadian Pharmacists' Association government relations director Jeff Morrison urged those present to make refugee health care an election issue. "Bring this issue



CCN/Gyapong

**NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION — Dr. Doug Gruner speaks at a demonstration on Parliament Hill June 15 organized by Doctors for Refugee Care. This was the fourth national day of action to protest against federal government cuts to refugee health care.**

up" when politicians come seeking to be elected, he said. "Let's remember this."

Dr. Hasan Sheik, a family medicine resident, described his first refugee patient as a 17-year-old child who had been tortured in his home country and suffered from PTSD and thoughts of suicide. With the cuts to refugee health care, the medication to help him with the PTSD was no longer covered, he said.

Dr. Pairsa Rezaiefar, a family doctor and former Iranian refugee, said she could have been the 18-year-old refugee claimant she re-

cently treated. She had been raped but could not receive the care she needed for her subsequent pregnancy. "We are very ordinary people who have lived some extraordinary adversity simply for being who we are," she said.

Many refugees have been abused and tortured simply for being members of religious minorities, or the wrong tribe, she said. They arrive in Canada with the "baggage of physical and emotional loss" as well as "shame" and "fear of authority."

"Do we just let them suffer?" she asked.



# St. Boniface launches marriage preparation

ST. BONIFACE — In 2014, the Archdiocese of Saint Boniface launched a new mentorship-based marriage preparation program, For Better and Forever.

Tim and Louise Scatliff, of Ste-Hyacinthe Parish in La Salle, who have been married for 42 years, are a sponsor couple with the new marriage preparation program. They are currently accompanying two couples who are preparing for marriage, and will continue to meet with them over a brief period of time after their wedding, as well.

“We help engaged couples talk about different subjects that could become issues between them,” explains Louise. “We let them read a chapter of the program, answer the questions individually and share their answers between them, and then we get together and chat. The aim is that they foster good communication skills and learn to understand each other better.”

Indeed, For Better and Forever is a marriage preparation program that is based simply on discussions between two couples of the same parish. The engaged couple meets the sponsor couple five times before the wedding, and once or twice afterward. Tim Scatliff explains that they aim to talk 30 per cent of the time and give the engaged couple the space to talk 70 per cent of the time.

“Our role is to listen to them and share our experience if it can be of any help to them. We don’t judge! At any rate, what is said between us stays between us; we won’t even share anything with the priest, unless the couple agrees to it.”

For Better and Forever puts the two couples on the same level. No one has all the answers, and everyone benefits from the program, including the sponsor couple.

“We, as sponsors, also read the chapters and answer the ques-

tions. That allows us to discuss, and thus strengthens our bond,” says Louise.

“It is a satisfying experience for us and an excellent way to enrich our own marriage,” adds her husband.

Married in December 2014, Krystal and Ben Mitchell fol-

lowed the program with Tim and Louise. “They had a lot of stories and ideas to share with us,” admits Krystal. “We talked about so many things that no one else would suggest you should discuss when you are about to get married! It was really good for us.”

For the time being, Tim and

Louise Scatliff are the only sponsor couple in their parish, but they hope that another couple will soon be trained as mentors. So far, approximately thirty couples have been trained in the diocese. There is a continued need for more married couples who would be interested in taking part in the adventure.

## Prince Albert clergy appointments released

PRINCE ALBERT — The following is a list of the new clergy appointments for the 2015 - 2016 year, effective Aug. 4, 2015:

Deanery 1: Rev. Jim Kaptein, pastor of St. Mark Parish in Prince Albert, continues as director of Vocations, director of the Permanent Diaconate Program, and chaplain of the Diocesan Service Committee. Deacon Brad Taylor, full-time chaplain at the Prince Albert Saskatchewan Penitentiary, is permanent deacon at St. Mark Parish in Prince Albert.

Deanery 2: Rev. Dong Doan, pastor of St. Dominic in Hudson Bay and St. Peter in Mistatim, studies online and continues as director of Pastoral Care. Rev. Manh Nguyen is pastor of St. Eugene in Nipawin and St. Mary in Choice-land. Rev. George Canto, pastor of St. Brieux in St. Brieux and Mary, Mother of God in Kinistino continues as dean. Rev. Mariusz Zajac, pastor of Immaculate Conception in Tisdale and Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Porcupine Plain continues as co-ordinator of World Youth Day 2016. Rev. Millan

Sajonas is pastor of Notre Dame de la Nativité in Zenon Park, Canadian Martyrs in Carrot River and St. Lucy in Arborfield.

Deanery 4: Rev. Tuan Doan is pastor of St. Jean Baptiste in Debden, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Big River, Notre Dame des Victoire in Victoire, and Sacred Heart in Whitefish. Rev. Tuyen Vu is pastor of Ste. Solange in Hafford, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Muskeg, St. Andrew in Blaine Lake, and All Saints in Mayfair. Rev. Peter Nnanga, MSP, is administrator of Sacred Heart in Spiritwood, St. Thérèse de l’Enfant Jésus in Leoville, St. Rita in Medstead, Our Lady of the Lake in Chitek Lake (summer only), and Our Lady of Smiles in Shell Lake (summer only).

Deanery 5: Rev. Roger Lavoie is canonical pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Cut Knife, St. Joseph/St. Charles in Marsden/Neilburg, with Rev. Greg Elder as administrator. Deacon Ghislain Bellavance, permanent deacon at St. Andre and Notre Dame in North Battleford, is co-co-ordinator of Aboriginal Ministry for the Battlefords and area.

Deanery 6: Rev. Sebastian Kunnath, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows in Paradise Hill, St. James in Thunderchild, and canonical pastor of Holy Rosary in Onion Lake, continues as director of Aboriginal ministry.

Miscellaneous: Rev. Michael Averyt is director of formation for the Permanent Diaconate Program. Rev. Alberto Dela Pena is on leave eight - 12 months for studies, and Rev. Andrew Szablewski is on leave for two years for studies in Rome.

Tom Zerre, who is doing a seminary internship at Notre Dame in North Battleford, is co-co-ordinator of Aboriginal ministry for the Battlefords and area.



**CORRECTION — In the June 10 issue of the PM, page 6, health care options detailed to CWL, the picture titled Dr. Heather Hadjistavropoulos is actually CWL national president Barbara Dowding. Dr. Hadjistavropoulos is depicted above. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.**



FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY — St. Joseph’s Church in Balgonie, Sask. was where Rev. Fred Hengen celebrated his fiftieth anniversary as a priest. Some 40 priests, family and friends were on hand to celebrate that vocation.

## Hengen celebrates 50 years of vocation

By Frank Flegel

BALGONIE, Sask. — Graduation from Campion College was coming up and a young Ed Hengen decided it was time to do something about his feeling that he wanted to be a priest.

“I made an appointment to see the bishop (Michael C. O’Neil) and told him I wanted to be a priest. They took it from there. Encouraged me, and with the support of my family I entered the seminary that fall.”

He was ordained June 5, 1965, by Archbishop O’Neil in his home parish in Windthorst. Fifty years later, June 5, 2015, in St Joseph’s Church here, some 40 priests, family and friends celebrated that vocation.

Hengen said there was no single moment of revelation in which he felt the call to the priesthood; it was something that grew within him because of his faith-filled

family. There were six boys and two girls in the family. He and a younger brother, Francis, who is pastor at St. Gerard Parish, Yorkton, gravitated to consecrated life.

The family was friendly with their parish priests but it was a Dutch priest who served at Windthorst that supported and encouraged Hengen’s early thinking about being a priest. “As a matter of fact when I celebrated my 50th anniversary, the chalice I used was the chalice he gave me before he went back to Holland.” The red chasuble he wore for the anniversary was also a gift. His mother gave it to him when he was ordained.

He began his journey at St. Pius X Seminary in Saskatoon which had just opened, and from there to St. Paul’s Seminary in Ottawa.

Hengen said he has had many experiences during his vocation and each gave him a greater understanding of the ministry. One of his highlights came during his three

years as the first pastor of Regina’s Holy Family Church. St. Jerome and St. Bernadette elementary schools were part of his parish. “The CBC had a program called Meeting Place and they televised our mass from St. Bernadette’s gym on the second Sunday of Easter. That was kind of a highlight.”

He said if he hadn’t been a priest he probably would have gone into farming. “I loved farming but I don’t know if I would have kept up with that,” he said laughing. A grade 12 aptitude test pointed him in the direction of being an engineer but he never explored that.

He estimates he has served in 52 archdiocesan communities, almost all of them rural parishes. His only urban church as pastor was at Holy Family.

“I always feel fortunate that I can share in the joys that people have and also to be with them in times of struggle and sadness.”

## Sisters of Social Service leave Saskatchewan

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — They came in 1923 to Stockholm, Sask., and have served in various capacities in the Regina archdiocese since, but with the death of Sister Anastasia Young, the Saskatchewan presence of the Sisters of Social Service is over. They are in the process of divesting their property in Regina, a house and all its contents.

“It’s a sadness yet a joy,” said director general Sister Jeanine Scarfone, speaking with the PM during a June 19 yard sale. “It’s sad because we are leaving but a joy because we have made our presence felt.”

She referred to the number of people who have come to help the Sisters sell off everything. “The joy that I have is in the number of people we have touched who have come to help us divest of our things here.”

She was joined by Sisters Elaine Arsenault and Kathleen

Kelly who came from Ontario to help out. “We’ve sold almost everything,” said Arsenault. “I’m lucky to have a bed to sleep in.”

All three Sisters were involved in the yard/garage sale along with dozens of volunteers who came over the four-day sale in June.

The sale was in two locations; the yard and garage and the garage of St. Peter’s Church across the street

Kelly will remain in Regina until the end of June which by that time they expect the house to be sold. Both Kelly and Arsenault said it was sad that the Sisters of Social Service will no longer have a presence here but Arsenault, who was the last director of the John Paul II Centre before it was



**Sisters Kathleen Kelly and Elaine Arsenault, SSS**

sold, said she will return to visit. “I have a lot of friends here now.”

The house is a 2,500 square foot home with five bedrooms, a garage. The community purchased the house in 1985. It is directly across the street from St. Peter’s Church, St. Peter’s Elementary School and O’Neil Catholic High School.

“We’re not giving it away,” said Scarfone, “but we expect a fair price for it.”



# Association celebrates Year of Consecrated Life

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — A full day of celebration, discussion, speakers and sharing of stories celebrated “2015 the Year of Consecrated Life” announced by Pope Francis November 2013.

“It was a really positive experience,” said Marian Grady, a member of the secular institute, Oblate Missionaries of Mary Immaculate and one of the organizers of the event. The Sisters Association of the Regina Archdiocese (SARA) organized the day.

It was an open event that in-

cluded both secular and those living consecrated life. It included talks by several who described their vocations and how they came to it, and one presentation by David and Faye Helmsen describing their experiences working with some consecrated life communities. Both are retired and volunteer in hospitals and the Marian Centre a downtown Regina soup kitchen operated by members of the Madonna Apostolate.

There are 17 Congregations of Women Religious working in the Regina archdiocese and almost all were represented at the event held

July 13 at Holy Child Parish.

Sister Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, came from Saskatoon and gave a history of how sisters arrived in Saskatchewan and the work they did establishing schools, hospitals and other programs. Eric Hanna, on a journey to ordination in the Jesuit Order, gave a PowerPoint presentation of Jesuit life. Carmelite Solitary Sister Benedicta of the Cross described her life as a solitary; members of Madonna House described their vocation operating soup kitchens and prayer houses in Canada and several other countries; Myriam Family of the Prairies talked about their arrival in Saskatchewan and their work with churches and children, and, between the various presentations, there were table discussions and sharing of stories.

Sister Yvette Plessis, SCSL, chair of the event, said in an interview with the PM that vocations in the western world are declining and the huge numbers of the past is longer the reality. “Smaller individualized not institutionalized personal ministries I think are going to be the new normal.”

Working in partnership with other committed lay men and women and other consecrated persons is also the new shape of consecrated men and women today. “We’re not going to be six to eight people running something but we’re working in partnership.” Vocations are increasing in the developing countries, said Plessis.

“The day went really well. We have different forms of consecrated life and each person spoke to their form of life. We had time for prayer, to sing. We had really good feedback,” said Plessis.

Plessis was also one of three Sisters celebrating significant anni-



Grady

**SARA — (From the left) Sister Bernadette Feist, OSU, outgoing president of the Sisters Association of the Regina Archdiocese (SARA); Sister Theresa Frey, IBVM, incoming president of SARA; and Sister April Mireau, PM.**

versaries. She and Sister Bernadette Feist, OSU, celebrated 50 years and Sister Agnes Fillion, RNDM, celebrated 75 years of vocation.

The event also saw a change in SARA executive, with Sister Theresa Frey, IBVM, as the new president and Sister Bernadette Feist ending her term.

## Evangelization means getting hands dirty

By Paul Paproski, OSB

MUENSTER, Sask. — North Americans are generous in giving to charities and supporting programs that help the poor, but they have become disconnected with people, Rev. Gregory Hrynkiw of Saskatoon said at the annual Ukrainian Catholic clergy retreat of the Eparchy of Saskatoon.



Paproski

**Rev. Gregory Hrynkiw**

It is good to be concerned about the less fortunate, he said June 11 at St. Peter’s Abbey. However, Christians must become involved with their community and build solidarity with others.

“We like to do our charity at a distance, but that is not what evangelization is about. Evangelization is a messy word because we are dealing with people. Evangelization requires of us to get our hands dirty. It requires that we invest our own resources for others,” he commented.

The theme of the retreat June 9-12 was *lectio divina* (spiritual or divine reading) which is a practice of finding identity in God’s word through reading, meditation and contemplation. These facets of divine reading help steer a person toward discernment, involvement and mature decision-making, he said.

Speaking on the theme of involvement, Hrynkiw said it is important to know and understand our faith, but that is not enough. It is essential to turn faith into action.

Citing the example of the parable of the rich official (Lk 18:18), Hrynkiw explained that Jesus was asked by a rich man how to inherit eternal life. Jesus explained the importance of following the commandments, and the man said he

observed them. Jesus told him to go further and sell his possessions and give the money to the poor and then come and follow him. The rich man was very sad because he had many possessions.

In another parable a lawyer asked Jesus about inheriting eternal life. Jesus told him to love God with all his heart and his neighbour as himself (Lk 10:25). The lawyer inquired about who is neighbour was and Jesus answered with the parable of the Good Samaritan which identifies a neighbour as someone who shows mercy (Luke 10:29).

The parable of the Good Samaritan speaks of a traveller who had been beaten and robbed. The victim’s life was saved when a Samaritan took him to an inn and paid the innkeeper to take care of him. The suffering traveller was ignored by a priest and Levite who, when seeing him, passed by on the other side of the road. Jesus told the lawyer to be like the Good Samaritan.

The Good Samaritan made the decision to cross the road to be with the victim, Hrynkiw commented. The Samaritan could have justified his refusal to help through the law, but he knew that his faith was based on loving one’s neighbour.

“The one who shows mercy is the neighbour. We decide to be the neighbour. . . . We have to pray for the disposition to be merciful so that God can move us to be merciful,” Hrynkiw commented.

Compassion is a gift, a way of suffering. God moved the Good Samaritan’s passivity into action. Compassion is not the same as having pity on others because pity does not move us to come to know others and become directly involved with them. Compassion means “to suffer with” others, Hrynkiw said.

The priest and Levite may have had pity on the dying traveller, but they did not have any tenderness of heart. They did not have the moral courage of the Good Samaritan who crossed the road and used his own oil and wine to cleanse the wounds of the beaten traveller. The Good Samaritan put the injured man on his own animal and went out of his way to take him to an inn.

The Good Samaritan came personally into the life of another person. He interrupted his business and his work schedule to help the distressed traveller, he commented.

## Spanish parish attracting many

ST. BONIFACE — The only Spanish parish in Manitoba, *Nuestra Senora de la Asunción*, offers more than 30 opportunities of various types for the faithful of all ages.

*Nuestra Senora de la Asunción* in Winnipeg encompasses no less than 33 different groups, including the Knights of Columbus, catechetics, the Nueva Jerusalem Charismatic Prayer Group, the liturgical committee, *Equipos de Nuestra Senora* (Our Lady teams) for couples, F.A.C.E Youth Ministry, an Arise group, and the Neocatechumenal Way, among others.

Pastoral co-ordinator Melvin De Paz, who is one of those responsible for youth evangelization, explains, “This all started with the charismatic prayer group. We now have five catechetical groups for children three years and older, as well as for adults, a liturgical committee, six different choirs, and many other groups! In addition, we have one of only five Spanish Knights of Columbus Councils in Canada.

“Here, everyone, from the age of three to the elderly has the opportunity to participate in parish life,” he emphasizes. “Our parish priest, Father Jorge Mario Londono, is extremely open to new ideas; he is not afraid to take risks!”

But how do these groups function in harmony? “The key is communication,” states De Paz. The group leaders meet every two months to share their activities and challenges. That is how they are active and dynamic, having so much to offer!”

A relatively new parish, *Nuestra Senora de la Asunción*, with its 220 families, remains very active, while nonetheless welcoming many recent immigrants.

“In 1986, a group of people requested a Sunday mass in Spanish in the Diocese of Winnipeg’s St. Ignatius Parish, but soon realized something more was needed, and in 1992 the charismatic prayer

group Nueva Jerusalem was born,” explains Laura Garcia, co-ordinator of the charismatic group.

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

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

One of the reasons for this success is that it is an immigrant’s

personal parish (not geographical). As the only Spanish-language parish in Winnipeg, it welcomes the faithful of 21 countries from all over the city, who find here a sense of community and family.

“Our parish is a family for many immigrants,” states Rev. Jorge Mario, who is originally from Colombia.

Nowadays, however, along with the important sense of community and the use of the Spanish language, first and foremost, the parish in answer to Archbishop LeGat calling to be witness in a secularized society, wishes to open itself up to the Manitoban milieu dominated by the English language.

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

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

## Regina clergy moves listed

By Frank Flegel

REGINA — This year’s list of clergy moves in the Regina archdiocese is the shortest in years, with only four priests affected.

Rev. Hope Klutsey, SMA, and Rev. Joseph Strohhofer change places, with Strohhofer taking over as pastor at St. Albert at Mankota, St. Jean Baptist in Ferland, St. Joseph in Glentworth, Ste. Therese in Wood Mountain and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, Val Marie, for two years. Klutsey becomes pastor at Our Lady of Assumption co-cathedral in Gravelbourg and Ste. Radegonde in La Fleche.

Rev. Maurice Minne continues to provide sacramental ministry to the parishes of St. Joseph in

Hodgeville and St. Charles in Coderre, but only for one more year. He is listed as retired in the archdiocesan directory.

Rev. Rene Mangahas continues his service as administrator for the parishes of St. Joseph in White-wood, Holy Name of Mary in Broadview and St. Elizabeth in Stockholm, but only for one more year.

The appointments are effective Aug. 1, 2015, and are supposed to be for six years, but that applies only to Rev. Klutsey. The other three have specific terms on their appointments.

Director of Personnel and Human Resources, Rev. Danilo Rafael, said more moves would be announced before the end of July.



# Two great docs and the drama of the month

## Screenings & Meanings

Gerald Schmitz



I've highlighted documentaries in recent months because so many offer a richer viewing experience more deserving of attention than most titles on the theatrical marquee. Exposing our flawed tax systems may not seem like a fun time at the movies but you owe it to yourself to see Harold Crooks' brilliant take on who pays, who doesn't, and why.

### The Price We Pay (Canada)

**The Price We Pay** (<http://www.thepricewepay.ca/>) argues that many large multinational corporations and wealthy individuals engage in tax avoidance to the tune of trillions of dollars annually through a sophisticated and secretive network of tax havens that have developed in recent decades. It started with the "Eurodollar" market of the post-war period that turned the City of London into the leading global financial centre attracting big money from all over in search of shelter from governments and tax authorities. The city still runs much like a private club that makes its own rules.

A number of offshore havens have also emerged in the British Channel Islands, Caribbean islands such as the Caymans (where Canadian banks have a strong presence), and elsewhere. These very low-tax or no-tax jurisdictions become the nominal "headquarters" for hundreds of corporations to declare income even though their activities are located in others places. In effect, it's a legal fiction for the sole purpose of escaping taxes. I like the French term *paradis fiscaux* — fiscal paradises. Great for big business and the one per cent, but with the result that the state is deprived of needed revenues while shifting more and more of the tax burden to the 99 per cent.

Among the film's many merits is the in-depth and coolly analytical way in which Crooks (The Corporation) examines the various schemes and strategies employed for avoiding or minimizing tax. He interviews a wide range of financial experts and scholars, including Brigitte Alepin and star economist Thomas Piketty. Some of the most telling dramatic moments are drawn from hearings in the British Parliament and U.S. Congress in which the actions of high-tech corporate giants (Apple, Amazon, Google) have come under withering scrutiny — not for being illegal but on the grounds of questionable ethics. (Would that the Canadian Parliament were as aggressive.) Indeed the rise of the digital economy has increased the opportunities for vast sums to be shifted around in cyberspace in ways that lower taxes for the wealthy few. A discussion of high-frequency trad-

ing in which monetary exchanges occur electronically in nanoseconds leads to a modest proposal for a small financial transactions tax (akin to that advocated by Nobel economist James Tobin; sometimes referred to as a "Robin Hood" tax).

The highly informative approach taken by Crooks is very persuasive, making a compelling case that doesn't depend on emotional or ideological rage against the financial system as one finds in documentaries on the Occupy movement (and Michael Winterbottom's *The Emperor's New Clothes* featuring Russell Brand). At the same time the evidence is so convincing that

— MERU, page 17



Gerald Schmitz

**MERU** — Daring failed attempts and the eventual extreme conquest of the mountain are the subject of *Meru*, co-directed by Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin, one of the climbers and cinematographers. At the podium: Jimmy Chin. Standing: co-director Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi, team leader Conrad Anker and wife Jenni, and Renan Ozturk.

## This wedding song playlist won't include Seger

By Caitlin Ward

We approach zero hour, my friends. Now, I know I've been writing about riots and misogyny, losing our civil rights and warfare abroad, lately. But it is a whole other kind of madness of which I speak today.

You see, in three days, my sister gets married.

### Old Time Rock and Roll Bob Seger

Now, it's not that it's a big wedding, or anyone's being particularly unreasonable about anything. There haven't been loads of massive blow-ups or organizational nightmares. It's just that there's something about weddings that brings out a sense of total imbalance: the frenetic energy of knowing there's far too much to do in too few days. There are lovely offers of help from all sorts of people, but there's also the feeling that no one's got enough of a handle on what's going on to delegate responsibilities.

Of course, I haven't helped matters for myself. Two days after the wedding, I leave at 4 a.m. for a mountain community in the Dominican Republic. I'm going there for work, and it's the sort of thing that sounds relaxing until I explain I'm travelling via donkey because it's the only way into certain communities. Not all the way to the DR, obviously — there's a plane for that — but once we get outside of Bonao, roads are rustic, at best and treacherous, at worst. So a'donkeying I go.

Upon hearing this, my physiotherapist got a bit stressed. With

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

my still-injured back cracking every time I move, she talked me into going to the chiropractor. I tend to be a bit skeptical of chiropractors, so it's only in desperate times that I can be compelled to see one. It's not that I have an aversion to alternative therapies in general, but this is my spine we're talking about. Spines are serious business.

Luckily, I have a very nice chiropractor who also likes to mock me mercilessly. Chatting during the appointment, he stopped in the middle, listed off all the things I had to do this week and next, and finally said, "Caitlin, do you think your back problems maybe have a little bit to do with stress?" I took this under advisement, and I might have gone so far as to believe him. In the next minute, though, he was folding me into a pretzel and sitting on me, so I'm not sure how seriously I should take his advice.

Throughout all of this, there's a sense of, "if only . . . if only —" in my mind, at any rate. If only there were a list exhaustive enough, a schedule detailed enough, a plan comprehensive enough, everything would be fine. I am my mother's daughter. In our family, we believe in lists with the same intensity of feeling we believe in the blessed sacrament. On busy days, a little more so.

You laugh, but the list is a thing of beauty. It is a comfort in times of trouble and a practical tool when reality feels impossible to navigate. I would be nowhere without lists, either in shopping or in life.

It is this list business that prevented my sister and her fiancé from hiring anyone to help with music for their reception, actually. She is a woman of particular taste, my sister is, and there was the general sense that we likely wouldn't be able to find anyone who would meet her standards. Or, more specifically, we couldn't find anyone who would be guaranteed not to play a song that she or her fiancé hates. I

proposed that we could give any DJ a list of songs not to play. That said, she reminded me that lists are made by human beings, and as such, can be flawed, or problematic, or at the very least, incomplete. There was no guarantee we wouldn't forget to put something on the list, and everything would be fine, and then suddenly, out of nowhere, Robin Thicke's *Blurred Lines* or Rick Springfield's *Jessie's Girl* or, worst of all, *Old Time Rock and Roll* by Bob Seger would come on.

And more than anything, it would just be so infuriating. That stupid Bob Seger song comes on at every wedding and every dance and every bad bar at some point during the night. This would be the one time when she could have guaranteed that song wouldn't come on, and yet somehow, because of her oversight with the DJ, there it would be. Playing. At her wedding.

It was more than she could bear. And thus, we are building our own list — a list of songs that will play in the background at the wedding. Songs that she and her fiancé like.

The irony, of course, is that *Old Time Rock and Roll* is about having very particular taste in music. And based on what Seger says in the song, I'm not sure he and I would disagree overly much about what sort of music we like. I'm trying to get the entire Chess Records back catalogue on the wedding playlist, for example. But every time that track comes on, all I can think is, "Bob. If you like that old time rock 'n' roll so much, why have you written such a crap song about it?"

before I beat a hasty retreat to the door. To be completely honest, part of me is horrified I have allowed the lyrics to be reprinted somewhere. It's a little painful.

You might say it's just a song. But here's the thing planning a wedding has taught me: you're right. It is just a song. But sometimes the song is the important part. The dress, she made. The centrepieces are sanctuary candles from a market down the street from my house. We're picking flowers from the garden for bouquets and we're drinking wine out of jam jars instead of glasses —

Just take those old records off the shelf  
I'll sit and listen to 'em by myself  
Today's music ain't got the same soul  
I like that old time rock 'n' roll  
Don't try to take me to a disco  
You'll never even get me out on the floor  
In ten minutes I'll be late for the door  
I like that old time rock 'n' roll  
Ooh

**CHORUS**  
Still like that old time rock 'n' roll  
That kind of music just soothes the soul ooh  
I reminisce about the days of old  
With that old time rock 'n' roll

Won't go to hear them play a tango  
I'd rather hear some blues or funky old soul  
There's only one sure way to get me to go  
Start playing old time rock 'n' roll  
Call me a relic, call me what you will  
Say I'm old-fashioned, say I'm over the hill  
Today's music ain't got the same soul  
I like that old time rock 'n' roll

**CHORUS x2**

not because it's kitschy or cute, but because it's inexpensive and I'll use them for canning afterward.

In the end, it's about the sacrament, not the stress, but it's also about the song. There is no list comprehensive enough, no plan detailed enough, no person organized enough, so you just have to choose the things that matter the most. Or the things that annoy you the least.



# Pope has practical tips for helping environment

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’*, on Care for Our Common Home, is a call for global action as well as an appeal for deep inner conversion.

He points to numerous ways world organizations, nations and communities must move forward and the way individuals — believers and people of goodwill — should see, think, feel and act.

Here are some of the pope’s suggestions, with references in parentheses to their paragraphs in the encyclical:

- Do not give in to denial, indifference, resignation, blind confidence in technical solutions. (14, 59)
- Have forthright and honest debates and policies; issues cannot be dealt with once and for all, but will need to be “reframed and enriched again and again” by everyone with plenty of different proposals because there is no one way to solve problems. (16, 60, 185)
- Reduce, reuse, recycle. Preserve resources, use them more efficiently, moderate consumption and limit use of non-renewable resources. (22, 192)
- Slash pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions. Transition to cleaner and renewable energies and replace fossil fuels “without delay.” (26, 165)
- Promote green construction with energy efficient homes and buildings. (26, 180)
- Protect clean, safe drinking water and don’t privatize it with market-based fees for the poor. (27-29, 164)
- Keep oceans and waterways clean and safe from pollutants; use biodegradable detergents at home and business. (30, 174)
- Be aware that synthetic pesticides and herbicides will hurt birds and insects that are helpful for agriculture. (34)
- Leave room for wandering and migrating species by creating “biological corridors”; don’t let dams, highways and construction lead to their extinction. (35)
- Protect biodiversity, especially wild forests, wetlands, coastal areas, mangrove swamps. (39)
- Promote smart growth. Create livable communities with beautiful design and plentiful green spaces for everyone, especially the poor. Tackle noise and “visual pollution,” and save cities’ cultural treasures. Design spaces that help people connect and trust each other. (44-45, 113, 143, 147)
- Put an end to “mental pollution.” Think deeply, live wisely, love generously. (47)
- End the tyranny of the screen, information overload and distractions. Watch out for media-induced melancholy and isolation. Cultivate real relationships with others. (47)
- Get down from the ivory tower and stop the rhetoric. Get to know the poor and suffering; it will wake up a numbed conscience and inspire real action. (49)
- Stop blaming problems on

- population growth. The real threat is excessive consumerism and waste. (50)
- For genuine change, put the common good first. Special interests manipulate information, offer “superficial rhetoric, sporadic acts of philanthropy and perfunctory expressions of concern.” (54)
- Sweat it out. Increasing use and power of air-conditioning seems “self-destructive.” (55)
- Even if it doesn’t fix the world, beautification and goodwill gestures inspire and remind people that “we were made for love.” (58, 113, 212)
- Get back to nature — “the caress of God” — to recharge. Be more attentive to its beauty and wonder and revisit places that left you with happy memories. (84, 97, 215, 233)
- Be consistent. Pro-life, environmental and social justice movements are all connected. Protecting vulnerable species must include the unborn, endangered animals and the exploited. (91, 120)
- Use technology to solve real problems and serve people, helping them have more dignity, less suffering and healthier lives. (112)
- Believe in a happy future, a better tomorrow. Slow down, recover values and the meaning of life. Putting the brakes on “unrestrained delusions of grandeur” is not a call to go back to the Stone Age. (113-114, 225)
- “Business is a noble vocation.” Create jobs that allow for personal growth, stability, living out one’s values. (124-128)
- Listen to, protect lands of and involve indigenous peoples. The disappearance of cultures is even more serious than losing a species. (145)
- Create neighbourhood networks and improvement programs. Create welcoming spaces that help people connect and trust each other. Do something nice for your community. (148-150, 152, 219, 232)
- Make public transportation a priority and a more pleasant experience. (153)
- Provide essential services to rural areas. (154)
- Accept and care for the body God gave you. Value sexual differences and your own gender. (155)
- Join, implement and police global agreements on sustainable development, caring for the ecosystem, limiting greenhouse gases, handling hazardous wastes, ozone protection. Nix the “ploy” of trading carbon credits. (164, 167-171)
- Politicians: don’t be afraid of long-term goals and upsetting people with measures that affect levels of consumption, financial risks. Citizens: put pressure on your representatives. (177-180)
- Less is more. Stop needless consumption. (193, 203, 222, 211)
- Harness purchasing power. Examine what you buy and know that boycotts make a difference. (206)
- Plant a tree. Take mass transit. Car pool. Turn off the lights when you leave the room. Chilly? Wear a sweater. Little things add up. (211)

- Moms and dads: teach kids to use things properly; to respect, take care of others; to ask permission politely; to say, “Thank you”; to control temper; to ask forgiveness; share. (213)
- Find happiness in simple

- things: get-togethers, helping others, honing a talent, enjoying art and music, praying. (223-224, 226)
- Say grace before meals. (227)
- Love your enemies. (228)
- Practice “the little way” of

- St. Thérèse. (230)
- Go to Sunday mass; receive the sacraments; encounter God in everything; rest on Sundays. (233-237)
- Sing as you go. (244)
- Pray. (246)



Paul Paproski, OSB

**ALL CREATION** — Hundreds of snow geese take flight on the prairies in autumn. Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si’* on Care for Our Common Home, released June 18, said all creation is singing God’s praise but people are silencing it.

## Concern for environment not optional

Continued from page 1

responsibility, values and conscience (105).”

It is clear that the relationship with nature will not be renewed without a renewal of humanity itself, Pope Francis adds. “The same mindset which stands in the way of making radical decisions to reverse the trend of global warming also stands in the way of achieving the goal of eliminating poverty.” (175)

“Pope Francis invites us to listen to the suffering, and to an ‘ecological conversion,’ to use an expression of Pope John Paul II. We are invited to change direction by taking on the beauty and responsibility of the task of caring for our common home,” said Bolen.

“This document is saying with new force that concern for the environment is no longer optional for a believer. Caring for the environment is now even more clearly and surely part of Church teaching,” he stressed. “Pope Francis quotes Saint John Paul II: ‘Christians in their turn “realize that their responsibility within creation, and their duty toward nature and the Creator, are an essential part of their faith” ’ (64).”

Bolen identified several calls to conversion emerging from the document. “On a personal level this includes a need to decrease consumption and rethink consumerism, to examine our own lifestyle and acknowledge harm to God’s creation through our actions or failure to act, to foster and celebrate beauty, and to keep the Sabbath,” he listed.

“It also means a communal conversion: ensuring that ecological education takes place in a vari-

ety of settings (including schools, media and parishes), fostering a culture of care and implementing needed changes as a community, such as increasing regulations to protect the environment and thinking about the global implications of our actions and policies,” said Bolen.

Pope Francis also states in the document that fossil fuels must be “progressively replaced without delay.” The pope adds: “Reducing greenhouse gases requires honesty, courage and responsibility, above all on the part of those countries which are more powerful and pollute the most. (169)”

The encyclical invites a deep discernment also on the level of nations, in terms of economic and political priorities, said Bolen. Pope Francis addresses political and business leaders boldly in asking, “What would induce anyone, at this stage, to hold on to power only to be remembered for their inability to take action when it was urgent and necessary to do so? (57)”

As for questions about whether the church has a role in this discussion, Bolen insisted that politics and economics are not off limits to people of faith, but engaging in these areas is an integral part of working for the common good.

“I think of the old Jewish Midrash: when God gets up in the morning, he gathers the angels around him and asks, ‘where does the world need healing today,’ ” said Bolen. “The Church needs to be involved in this issue, because it is of concern to God, because God loves the earth and loves human beings.”

He added: “Neither the Jewish nor the Christian tradition has ever seen fit to leave politics and

economics to others and say that is off territory for God and faith. Much to the contrary.”

The papal encyclical reflects profoundly on the common good — not only for humanity today, but extending to future generations. “We hear ‘the environment is on loan to each generation, which must hand it on to the next,’ and a very simple question and a common sense summons: ‘What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?’ ” said Bolen.

“Do we love our children, our grandchildren? Enough that we might want to give them a chance to love their grandchildren? Then let’s start shifting our priorities as a society, as a nation let’s start being a leader on environmental issues, let’s start taking responsibility for our part in wounding a suffering world and working toward its healing,” Bolen urged.

The document is ultimately grounded in hope, Bolen said. “It’s not too late. Hope flows through the entire encyclical. And the ultimate ground of hope for the Christian is our hope in God.”

In section 245, before offering a prayer for the earth, the encyclical concludes: “In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us, he does not leave us alone, for he unites himself definitely to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward.”

“That great love and mercy of God is our hope and our joy,” said Bolen. “It is what will help us as we reorient our lives, to find new ways of living and responding to these challenges so clearly articulated for us by Pope Francis.”



# Defining moment: glossary of terms in *Laudato Si'*

By Cindy Wooden

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In his brief pontificate, Pope Francis has coined some colourful terms to get his points across, for example, using “bat Christians” to describe

those who hide their faith.

While the new phrases he uses in his ecology encyclical are not as punchy, they succinctly help illustrate his points that care for the environment is a human and moral obligation, that global warming

and pollution have an unfairly heavy impact on the poor and that a real commitment to ecology will entail individual conversion and changed political and economic priorities.

The following is a list defining some key phrases Pope Francis uses in the encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, on Care for Our Common Home.”

— “Integral ecology”: The heart of Pope Francis’ teaching in the encyclical is his affirmation that the environmental crisis is not only about polluted land, water and air, but includes dangerous attitudes toward other human beings as well as economic practices that harm people and the environment.

His solution is an “integral ecology,” one that challenges all people to broaden their focus of concern

and their daily behaviour to include standard environmental ecology, but also: protection of all human life; concrete acts of solidarity with the poor; ethical conduct in economic affairs; greater attention to urban planning to facilitate social relationships and give all people some contact with nature; and protection of people’s cultural heritage in an era when media saturation tends to erase distinctions.

— “Ecological debt”: The world’s richest countries, the pope says, have an outstanding “ecological debt” to the world’s poorer countries and they have a social and moral obligation to repay it. Particularly between the global North and South, he says, there is a debt “connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment, and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time.” The wealth of the world’s most industrialized countries, the pope says, comes in large part from excessive profits drawn from practices like mining or logging in developing countries and taking

advantage of their weak environmental protection laws and cheap labour.

— “Superficial ecology”: Pope Francis says that in times of “deep crisis” many people try to convince themselves that what is happening around them is not really all that obvious or clear. “Superficially, apart from a few obvious signs of pollution and deterioration, things do not look that serious, and the planet could continue as it is for some time,” he says they tell themselves.

While the attitude sounds passive, it actually takes effort. But, what is worse in the pope’s eyes is that “such evasiveness serves as a licence to carrying on with our present lifestyles and models of production and consumption.” The attitude, he says, is “self-destructive.”

— “Gospel of creation”: In the encyclical, Pope Francis acknowledges that many of the people most concerned about the environment are not religious or, in fact, are anti-religious. While calling on those people to engage in dialogue

— **CONVERSION, page 11**



Paul Paproski, OSB

**NATURE’S MESSAGES — *Laudato Si'*: Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right. (n. 33)**

## Indigenous peoples suffer the most from ecological crises

Continued from page 3

ed,” he said. “We are called upon to be God’s partner in protecting creation against chaos.”

This is exactly what Pope Francis is saying in *Laudato Si'*, Mathieu said.

“The creation narrative presents order and disorder,” he said. “The human being is called to protect that order and to see to it that disorder doesn’t come back. This encyclical is really putting us in front of our common responsibility.”

Mathieu said he was touched by the way the pope is not only taking a position in favour of ecology per se but is “always spelling out the consequences of the ecological crisis on the poor people at international level and the national level.” The section on the city and city life has “a lot to say to us as Canadian citizens” regarding lack of housing and our treatment of indigenous peoples, he said.

“They are the ones who suffer the most from the ecological crisis we are going through,” he said. He recalled working as a priest on the border between Texas and Mexico where the asphalt was made with toxic chemicals. Children would run across it with bare feet, he said.

### Discomfiting for all sides

Co-founder and executive vice-president of Cardus Ray Pennings said the encyclical brings “2,000 years of Christian thought to a contemporary issue that is very political.”

“I think it’s telling that the pope talks about the harmony of God, creation and mankind and the disharmony, the creation that’s broken,” Pennings said.

He finds reaction to the debate even more interesting. “People want to pigeonhole it into their side of the debate, I think actually the document is discomfiting to all parties in that regard,” Pennings said. “On the one hand those who have been resistant to international agree-

ments and to recognizing the seriousness of dealing urgently with some of the environmental challenges, quite clearly the encyclical takes this issue as an important moral and spiritual responsibility.”

“For those who want to focus exclusively on climate change as if that can be dealt with without some of the moral considerations, the encyclical highlights how your view of family and your view of life are tied integrally into your view of creation,” he said.

Pennings said that even though the pope is talking about the scientific consensus on climate change, he also talks about how the church is not an authority in every area. The church speaks to the foundational principles and the framework, but leaves the expertise to develop scientific and political solution to those best qualified to carry them out, he said. “It’s ironic those who are usually most likely to criticize the mixing of church and state are the first to take the pope’s words (on climate change) and apply them as a political solution.”

### Critique of markets and technology

Mark Cameron, an Ottawa lobbyist on energy and a former policy and research director to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, does not dispute the pope’s stand on climate change, though he acknowledged that many conservative Catholics, especially in the United States, have responded negatively because either they do not believe the science is settled on the matter, or because they think this is a policy area outside of the pope’s expertise. Cameron’s criticism lies in other aspects of the encyclical.

“I detect a lot of hostility toward both free markets and technology in general, and thought that was shortsighted,” Cameron said. “Even if one accepts that climate change is a genuine threat, you

would need the full participation of markets and the full application of technology to deal with the threat.”

“Markets are the most powerful tool for meeting human needs, at least at the material needs,” he said. “The wisdom of market solutions has been proven over and over again. If there’s a problem with markets not adequately dealing with environmental problems, then the solution is to have them priced within the market system.”

Carbon credits, which the pope criticizes, are one method; carbon taxes are another, he said. “These are methods of trying to put a price on carbon emissions and seek the lowest cost responses.”

“It’s been proven with things like dealing with sulphur dioxide emissions and acid rain in the Great Lakes,” he said.

As for technology there’s a sense in the encyclical we should go back to a simpler lifestyle, Cameron said. “At a collective level, when dealing with two billion people still cooking on wood stoves, clearly we need dramatic increases of technology and energy to bring the world to even a modest standard of living.”

He also questioned the pope’s singling out of air conditioning. “It’s essential in some parts of the world and without air conditioning you can have mass fatalities.” He noted that during a 2003 heat-wave in France, nearly 15,000 people died.

### Fossil fuels have role

Tim Kennedy, a Catholic who has worked in the energy and environmental sec-

tors for many years, said that while the “call, especially for the developed world to whom so much has been given, to reduce waste and use our resources carefully and live more simply is positive and necessary,” the potentially good role of fossil fuels has been ignored.

“Fossil fuels are a gift of God — and our human ingenuity to make them cleaner and better is a gift of God too — and a fundamental project of justice is to work to reduce waste, improve technologies for fossil fuels and provide the poor with access to cleaner fossil fuels which we take for granted in the developed world,” he said.

“Access to affordable, safe and clean energy is critical to the world and lifting people out of poverty,” he said. “Two in five people in the world still use organic material for heating and cooking — primarily

dung and wood — terrible for human health and the worst polluting energy in the world.”

“Corruption and lack of education keep people in the vicious cycle of poverty, and the infrastructure necessary to provide energy is never realized,” he said.

He gave some examples from First Nations communities in Canada where so many live in poverty. “The dominant energy is electricity from diesel. Or, if they are lucky, connection to the electricity grid. Their homes are incredibly expensive to heat.”

“If one of these communities is able to connect to natural gas, costs are reduced sometimes up to 75 per cent and air pollution is reduced,” he said. “This is all good. And the move to hybrid electricity/power and other technologies have great promise to increase efficiency, reduce waste, and reduce costs.”



J. Weber

**FOSSIL FUELS — From *Laudato Si'*: We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels — especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas — needs to be progressively replaced without delay. (n. 165)**



# Pope's encyclical even more radical than it appears

By Jay Michaelson  
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The most significant feature of Pope Francis' encyclical on environmentalism, *Laudato Si'*, is not about climate change. It is that the document represents a sea change in Catholic — indeed, western religious — thinking on the relationship between human beings and the earth.

Naturally, mainstream media has focused on the political ramifications of the encyclical. And indeed, the document is significant for its unambiguous statement that “a very solid scientific consensus indicates that we are presently witnessing a disturbing warming of the climatic system” mostly due to human activity.

The pope also writes that “technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels — especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas — needs to be progressively replaced without delay.”

But Francis' analysis of environmental problems takes up only 28 out of the encyclical's 184 pages. The overwhelming majority of *Laudato Si'* is, perhaps unsurprisingly, about theology. And while this material has been glossed over by the mainstream press, it is nothing less than a seismic shift in mainstream Christian thought about the human-nature relationship.

First, Francis reads scriptural passages in ways that, while not new, have thus far been confined to liberal theology.

In Chapter 2, he writes: “The creation accounts in the book of Genesis contain, in their own symbolic and narrative language, profound teachings about human existence and its historical reality. They suggest that human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself.”

Note the radically anti-fundamentalist biblical hermeneutic (“symbolic and narrative language”) and the equation of the relationship between humans and the earth with the relationships between humans and one another and between humans and God.

This is not merely a statement that environmental issues are important. This is a radical theological claim, that human life is

centrally defined by the human-earth relationship. How you relate to the earth is as important as how you relate to God.

When liberal religious environmentalists make such claims, they are accused of being “pagan.” But Francis is just getting started. In Chapter 3, he reads Genesis' controversial injunction that humans should have “dominion” over the earth in precisely the terms of liberal religious environmentalism: “Our ‘dominion’ over the universe should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship.”

The language of stewardship is familiar to liberal theologians — but coming in a papal encyclical, it is stunning.

Indeed, it may be read as a response to a half-century-old argument, most famously made by the historian Lynn White, that the biblical relationship of “dominion” is partly to blame for the environmental crisis. Francis is giving a direct refutation of the anthropocentric view that the earth exists only as resources for humans to use.

“The Bible has no place for a tyrannical anthropocentrism unconcerned for other creatures,” he says.

Now, it should be noted that the qualifier “tyrannical” still leaves the door open, and similar qualifiers occur elsewhere: “modern anthropocentrism,” “excessive anthropocentrism” and “misguided anthropocentrism” are mentioned. *Laudato Si'* thus does not squarely overturn one thousand years of natural law, which places the human being on a higher moral level than the rest of the natural world.

Nonetheless, whatever anthropocentrism *Laudato Si'* leaves in place is so heavily restricted as to barely qualify. One passage is worth quoting at length:

“Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures. The biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognizing that they tell us to ‘till and keep’ the garden of the world (cf. Gen 2:15). ‘Tilling’ refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while ‘keeping’ means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature.”

Here, Francis explicitly states

that exploitative readings of Genesis have “incorrectly interpreted” it. Nature is not purely an instrumental good; rather, humans are in a “relationship of mutual responsibility” with it.

What this means is spelled out in the following chapters.

Francis devotes almost half the encyclical to a radical critique of the “dominant technocratic paradigm” and to proposing an “integral ecology” that brings together human, social, cultural, environmental, and economic concerns. Once again, such language would not be surprising coming from a student at a progressive Protestant seminary — but from the bishop of Rome it is indeed surprising.

Finally, Pope Francis' overall spiritual attitude toward nature is perhaps the most radical part of the whole encyclical. He begins with his namesake, St. Francis of Assisi, who found spiritual communion not only in cathedrals but also in forests.

And in the end, he comes back to mysticism again, writing:

“The universe unfolds in God, who fills it completely. Hence, there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face. The ideal is not only to pass from the exterior to the interior to discover the action of God in the soul, but also to discover God in all things.”

Mystical nature panentheism in a papal encyclical! And with a nod to liberation theology! And with a footnote to the Sufi mystic Ali al-Khawwas, no less.

Whatever impact *Laudato Si'* has in the political world remains to be seen. But that the pope is here embracing a nature-based



Design Pics

**OUR HOME — *Laudato Si'*: The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. (n. 21)**

mysticism, a highly adumbrated anthropocentrism, and a radical “integral ecology” places the encyclical alongside the best of radical, progressive religious environmentalism — and far outside

what even mainline Protestant denominations have affirmed heretofore.

*Laudato Si'* may turn out to be politically influential. It is already theologically revolutionary.

## ‘Ecological conversion’ is called for

Continued from page 10

with people of faith, he addresses an entire chapter to Christians on “the Gospel of creation.” Faith teaches Christians that “human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself.”

The Bible, he says, assigns a special place to human beings in the order of creation, but their role is as stewards and not lords. “We are not God,” he says.

“The Gospel of creation” also calls believers to care for and safeguard their brothers and sisters, especially the poor and those unable to defend themselves. It calls them to work for justice and for peace,

starting with the most basic forms of sharing and solidarity.

“Since God created the world for everyone,” he says, “every ecological approach needs to incorporate a social perspective which takes into account the fundamental rights of the poor and the underprivileged.”

For Christians, he says, the incarnation of Jesus adds further proof of the created world being part of God's loving plan of salvation. “In the Christian understanding of the world, the destiny of all creation is bound up with the mystery of Christ, present from the beginning: ‘All things have been created through him and for him,’” Pope Francis writes.

Being a Christian means one recognizes “the teachings of the Gospel have direct consequences for our way of thinking, feeling and living,” he says. The pope calls for an “ecological conversion” in which Catholics make sure “the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.”


— “Ecological culture”: In the encyclical, Pope Francis says it is not enough to make a commitment to certain important actions like recycling or even forging international agreements on carbon emissions. What is needed, he says, is a

whole “ecological culture,” which involves “a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational program, a lifestyle and a spirituality which together generate resistance to the assault of the technocratic paradigm.”


— “Compulsive consumerism”: At the heart of the ecological disaster, Pope Francis says, is a widespread idea that “leads people to believe that they are free as long as they have the supposed freedom to consume.” Instead of being free to find beauty in nature and praise God for the gifts he has given, people actually have handed their freedom over to the world's biggest companies and wealthiest individuals who successfully convince them that the best things in life can be bought.

Over-consumption is at the root of excessive waste, he says, but it also freezes the human heart and makes it unable to recognize the needs of others.


However, he says, a consumer-driven culture does offer some advantages in the field of ecology: Buying only certain products and boycotting others has been “successful in changing the way businesses operate, forcing them to consider their environmental footprint and their patterns of production.”



Human life and dignity must remain at the forefront of any consideration of environmental questions.




Stewardship is the appropriate model for human care for the environment.




Obligations to future generations must influence environmental decision-making.

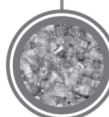
### CATHOLIC TEACHING ON THE ENVIRONMENT AT A GLANCE



In the spirit of subsidiarity, environmental decision-making must be made at the appropriate level.



The right to private property and the mandate to use property for the common good must both be respected in environmental policies.



Environmental concerns are also moral concerns which require radical rethinking of the consumer culture.

Sources: Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church; Lucia A. Silecchia, “Environmental Ethics from the Perspectives of NEPA and Catholic Social Teaching: Ecological Guidance for the 21st Century,” William and Mary Environmental Law and Policy Review, 2004

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# Servant leaders call forth gifts and empower others

## Breaking Open the Ordinary

Sandy Prather



In the first Upper Room, they are gathered for a meal. Jesus removes his outer garment, ties a towel around his waist and, taking a jug and a basin of water, he proceeds to wash, one by one, the feet of the uncomprehending disciples. In the second Upper Room, they are huddled together in fear. The winged Holy Spirit swoops overhead and bright flickering flames descend on each startled head. In the first Upper Room, they are shown what power looks like; in the second, they receive that power. In the first Upper Room, they are told, “Go and do what I have shown you.” In the second, they are sent out to do so.

The link is clear. Christ promises power from on high and, at Pentecost, that power, through the Spirit, descends on them. But the power they receive is Christ’s power, meant to be interpreted by Christ’s gesture of service. “Wash each other’s feet,” is their commandment and servant leadership thus becomes our watchword. Leadership within the Christian community, the use of power within the *ekklesia*, is a leadership and a power that reaches out, not in domination, but in humble care for the other.

It is an idea that seems too frequently to be honoured more in the breach than in the observance. While the phrase “servant leadership” fills our church rhetoric and

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permeates our documents, Pope Francis has found it necessary to point out the gap between “mere talk” and action as he devotes a portion of *Evangelium Gaudium* to the dangers of “spiritual worldliness.” Such worldliness, he points out, takes shape in leaders who hide behind the appearance of piety and even love for the church, but are more interested in seeking not the Lord’s glory but human glory and personal well-being (EG 93). He chastises those who are so convinced of their own soundness of doctrine or discipline that it leads them to a, “narcissistic and authoritarian elitism,” whereby instead of evangelizing, they analyze and classify others, and end up closing rather than opening the doors of grace (EG 94).

It is, indeed, a favourite theme of Pope Francis: the need for the shepherds to “smell like their sheep.” He is constantly calling the hierarchy, priests, bishops and cardinals to service, not self-service, and he warns about the dangers of clericalism and careerism. In late October 2013, ordaining two archbishops, Pope Francis told them: “Keep in mind that you were selected to serve, not to dominate.”

Service, not domination: it is about how Christian leaders are to understand and use power. In itself a neutral word, power is often seen as something negative, especially when it is a power used to dominate others or to impose one’s will on another. We are all familiar with the misuse of power, even in the church.

Yet power is to be valued — being powerless is not a virtue. Insofar as power is the ability to effect change, it can be as much a force for the good as the opposite.



Paul Paproski, OSB

**DOORS OF GRACE —** Pope Francis points out that spiritual worldliness takes shape in leaders who hide behind the appearance of piety and even love for the church, but are more interested in seeking not the Lord’s glory but human glory and personal well-being (EG 93). As Sandy Prather writes, he “chastises those who are so convinced of their own soundness of doctrine or discipline that it leads them to a, ‘narcissistic and authoritarian elitism,’ whereby instead of evangelizing, they analyze and classify others, and end up closing rather than opening the doors of grace (EG 94).”

It depends on how it is used. Power can also be empowerment. Leaders, in this understanding, are those who tap into power in order to enhance and bring life to others.

We see it with Jesus. God’s power flows through Jesus and it is a power that heals illness, forgives sins, arouses hope and builds communion. It is, in a word, generative power. Jesus in turn passes that power on to his disciples. Gifted with his Spirit, they tap into his power in order to bring life as he does. Power in the Christian community is a movement of “salfivic energy” and meant to be released into the world. True Christian leaders will be those who can tap into the power already present in the community so that it might accomplish the purpose for which it is intended.

An ancient verse states: “Go in search of your people: love them, learn from them, plan with them,

serve them. Begin with what they have; build on what they know. But of the best leaders when their task is accomplished, their work is done, the people all remark, ‘We have done it ourselves.’”

A life-giving, servant leader calls forth the gifts of individuals within the community and empowers them to use them. A generative leader welcomes collaboration, knowing that power is not the possession of one but the gift of many. A servant leader walks with and among the com-

munity recognizing that different contributions of all are necessary.

Leonardo Boff, in his book Francis of Rome, Francis of Assisi, warns that the gospel can be obscured when authority understood as service is transformed to authority understood as power. It is only when we remember that we are people of the Upper Room — both Upper Rooms — and so are our leaders that we will hold onto the right use of power and the Spirit-led way of leadership.

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# God’s power is in the irresistible eyes of forgiveness

## Liturgy and Life

Leah Perrault



One of St. Paul’s most frustrating assertions is contained in this week’s second reading: “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” Paul struggled with this too, begging God to take his weakness and struggles away from him.

I find it humbling, and often physically repulsive, to be the first to apologize after an argument. I am getting better at admitting my own failings, but I still wrestle inside myself with blame and arrogance. Surely someone else started it and they should apologize first!

This happens most frequently with my husband, because I love him the most and spend the most time with him. I get in a bad mood about something, start cleaning to cope, and then start keeping score of who has done what around the house. He walks in totally oblivious to my mood and my score keeping, sets his stuff on a counter I just cleaned and I start an argument about something totally unrelated. How often I have begged God to take away my grouchiness,

*Perrault is the director of Pastoral Services for the Diocese of Saskatoon. She is co-author of How Far Can We Go? A Catholic Guide to Sex and Dating. She and her husband, Marc, are the parents of three young children.*

inspire me to nap instead of clean when I’m in a bad mood and remove my ability to keep score. So far, no luck. In the silence that follows the argument, I feel the heat in my face and my heartbeat slow to normal and I look straight into the eye of my own weakness. Pause.

The first reading is from Ezekiel, and it is God’s instruction that he is to speak the words given to him whether or not the people listen to him. The result, God promises, is that, “Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a Prophet among them.”

My brother has a dog, a big, playful puppy who is still learning how to belong in their family. Otto knows what the rules are but he still needs to test them. When he takes off before the leash gets on or barks at our kids, he knows he’s done something wrong. When my brother gets after him, Otto turns his face away and then, in time, he turns back and looks up at my brother from below, with big, sad, puppy dog eyes. He may not listen next time, but he knows that he’s been caught. And it is impossible not to love those eyes.

<b>Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time July 5, 2015</b>	<b>Ezekiel 2:3-5 Psalm 123 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 Mark 6:1-6</b>
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My kids, like Otto and the rebellious house of Israel, have those same eyes in weakness. They peer up at me from behind their tears or anger and beg to be loved. When they have intentionally used my favourite lipstick as face paint crushing it into an unusable mess or spoken searing words of hurt, the moments after the timeout are some of the most powerful in our home. They feel themselves small, having hurt instead of loved, responsible for pain but not knowing how to fix it. And in their vulnerability, they

look to Marc and I for both mercy and justice. When Jesus returns to his hometown, the people are not prepared for his message. They know him as the kid that skinned his knees playing, the son of a carpenter, a guy who has always seemed to have answers to questions they did not ask. They cannot see who he has become. His power is weakened by their disbelief and doubting. It is not the first or the only time that people are not expecting his weakness. In the manger and on the cross, people choose not to follow this vulnerable King of Kings. They refuse the power in his weakness. And he is amazed by their unbelief. Perhaps he is the only person in human history who is amazed by it. My unbelief is overwhelming when I need to trust that weakness is my strength.

The Psalmist writes that, “Our eyes look to the Lord, until he has mercy on us.” Un-pause. In the silence after an argument with Marc, I have learned the only powerful solution that actually restores peace is to accept my weakness and look on him until he accepts it too. God’s power is made perfect in my weakness. I do not win the fight. I do not get to continue on in self-righteousness. I do not get to lay claim to perfection while I cast blame on my partner and greatest human love. But, in my weakness, I get the power of being loved as I am.

When we face our weakness, our eyes unleash the mercy and compassion of God. They are a window into our need for each other, a glimpse into our capacity to bless most profoundly from small and insignificant places. God’s power is not like the power of the world, thundering and forceful and demanding. God’s power is in the irresistible eyes of someone who has asked for forgiveness, and in the softened eyes of the one who grants it. I am the most powerful agent of God’s grace not when I get it all right, but when I realize I have gotten it all wrong and I look to him, and to Marc, to be loved.

# Sometimes all we can give is our best effort under the circumstances

## In Exile

Ron Rolheiser, OMI



Recently I led a weeklong retreat for some 60 people at a renewal centre. Overall, it went very well, though ideally it could have gone better. It could have gone better if, previous to the retreat, I would have had more time to prepare and more time to rest so that I would have arrived at the retreat well-rested, fully ener-

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getic, and able to give this group my total undivided attention for seven days.

Of course, that wasn’t the case. The days leading up to the retreat were consumed by many pressures in my regular ministry. These were long days that kept me preoccupied and tired. Indeed, in the days leading up to the retreat, I had to do many extra hours of work simply to free myself up to lead this retreat. So I arrived for this retreat partly exhausted and carrying with me still a lot of pressures from my regular duties.

In spite of this, the retreat still went pretty well. I had enough energy and focus to make things essentially work. But it wasn’t the

best I could do ideally, though it was the best I could do given the circumstances.

Given that confession, it’s fair to ask: Didn’t those retreatants have a right to have me arrive for this retreat more rested, more prepared, and more ready to give them my full, undivided attention? Fair enough. They did have that right, except that this was mitigated by the fact that all the people who are daily affected by my regular duties also had that same right. They too had a right to my time, my unfatigued self, my full energies, and my undivided attention. During that week of retreat, my office also got second best: I was not giving it my ideal best, but only what I could do, given the circumstances.

I suspect most time-management experts, and not a few counsellors and spiritual directors, would tell me the reason this tension exists in my life is because of my failure to set clear priorities and be faithful to them and that this sloppy indecisiveness is unfair to everyone on every side.

If am over-extended, it’s a fault in my life, pure and simple, which I have a moral responsibility to correct.

But is it really that simple? Are we really meant to have this much control over our lives? Don’t circumstance and need perennially trump that? Aren’t the generative years of our lives about much more than ensuring our own health and rest? Even if the purpose of our own self-care is not selfish but intended for the better service of others, isn’t that service itself the final culprit? There are needs all over and our resources are finite, isn’t that always a formula for tension?

Circumstance conscripts us and, in the words of Jesus, puts a rope around us and takes where we would rather not go, namely, beyond our comfort, beyond always being adequately rested, and beyond always being in control of our own timetable and energies. Admittedly it’s dangerous to over-extend yourself, except that it’s equally, perhaps more dangerous, to under-extend yourself so as to always have full control of your own energy and commitments and be always well-rested and not over-taxed. We can burn out, but we can also rust out.

This, of course, can easily become a rationalization for not setting proper priorities and for letting ourselves be non-reflexively buffeted by circumstance. But the opposite can also be a rationalization used to over-protect our own comfort and rest. That’s the tension, and it’s meant to be a tension. Sometimes we over-extend ourselves and sometime we under-extend ourselves. Most of the people I admire most in the world suffer from the former — overextension, and, paradoxically, it seems to give them more energy. Jesus, while cautioning proper self-care (“Let us go away by ourselves for a while and rest” Mk 6, 31) also tells us that we should pour ourselves out completely for others without worrying too much about whether this will kill us or not.

I had all of this in mind as I struggled while giving a recent retreat, knowing that neither the retreatants nor my office were getting my best energies . . . though both got the best I could give, given the circumstance.

And isn’t this a good image for the whole of our lives? We have finite energies, finite time, finite attention, and we are constantly swamped by circumstance, need, and pressure. There’s always something! And so we are often caught in a major tension as regards our time, energy, and attention. In any given season within our lives, if we are honest, we might have to say: This wasn’t the best I might have done ideally, but it’s the best I could do, given the circumstance!

Ultimately this is true for our whole lives. It’s never ideal, but it’s the best we can do, given the circumstance. And that should be more than enough when we stand before our Maker in judgment.

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# What dialogue looks like: Christian-Jewish relations

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

## Dr. Edward Kessler (1963- )

Described as “probably the most prolific interfaith figure in British academia,” Edward Kessler has been a pioneering figure in Jewish-Christian (and Jewish-Christian-Muslim) relations in Great Britain for much of the last two decades. Dr. Kessler was born in 1963, and after a bachelor’s degree in Hebrew and religious studies from the University of Leeds (1985), he pursued a master of theological studies at the



Dr. Edward Kessler

Harvard Divinity School, and a master of business studies from the University of Stirling. Following these studies, he opted to work in a family-owned business for several years, returning to the University of Cambridge for doctoral studies, and receiving his PhD there in 1998.

In 1998, Kessler collaborated with Rev. Dr. Martin Forward to establish the Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations (CJCR) at Cambridge. Eight years later, two other centres were founded at Cambridge — the Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations (CMJR) and the Centre for Policy Public Education (CPPE) — which were eventually brought under a single umbrella structure which today is known as the Woolf Institute; Kessler currently serves as its executive director.

As its website states, “the Institute studies how relations between Jews, Christians and Muslims can enhance our understanding of key concepts of public life: community and identity, mutual respect, personal responsibility, and social solidarity. Combining theology with the social sciences and the humanities, the Woolf Institute seeks to strengthen the ethical framework that is needed for our political, economic and social life.” In the years of its existence, the Woolf Institute has become one of the most fertile, respected and influ-

ential centres for interfaith study in the United Kingdom, hosting conferences and lecture series, publishing cutting-edge research, and offering various public education programs which creatively present contemporary interfaith dialogue to non-specialist audiences. The Institute has made particularly good use of the modern electronic media, offering a number of its graduate courses online, to students around the world.

Kessler has spoken, written and published widely in the field of inter-religious dialogue, including almost a dozen books to date on various aspects of that subject: 1989: *An English Jew: The Life and Writings of Claude Montefiore*, London: Vallentine Mitchell, (second edition, 2002)

2002: *Jews and Christians in Conversation: Crossing Cultures and Generations*, eds. E. Kessler, J.T. Pawlikowski & J. Banki, Cambridge: Orchard Academic

2004: *A Reader of Liberal Judaism: Israel Abrahams, Claude Montefiore, Israel Mattuck and Lily Montagu*, London: Vallentine Mitchell

2004: *Aspects of Liberal Judaism: Essays in Honour of John D. Rayner on the Occasion of His 80th Birthday*, eds. E. Kessler and D.J. Goldberg, London: Vallentine Mitchell

2004: *Bound by the Bible: Jews, Christians and the Sacrifice of Isaac*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

2004: *Themes in Jewish-Christian Relations*, eds. E. Kessler & M.J. Wright, Cambridge: Orchard Academic

2005: *A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations*, eds. E. Kessler & N. Wenborn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

2006: *Challenges in Jewish-Christian Relations*, eds. J. Aitken & E. Kessler, New York: Paulist Press

2006: *What do Jews Believe?* London and New York: Granta Publications

2010: *Introduction to Jewish-Christian Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

2013: *Jews, Christians and Muslims*, London: SCM

Much of Kessler’s work (including his doctorate) has centred on the intersections between Jewish and Christian biblical interpretation, and he is currently working on completing a new book about Jesus, which is to be published late in 2015. His articles and opin-

ion pieces have appeared in a number of Jewish, Christian and secular newspapers and magazines, and in 2006, he was awarded the Sternberg Interfaith Award on behalf of philanthropist Sir Sigmund Sternberg, “in recognition of outstanding services in furthering relations between faiths.” In 2011, Kessler was honoured by Queen Elizabeth II, who inducted him as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE), in recognition of his energetic work to promote better understanding and improved relations between religious groups, nationally and internationally. Dr. Kessler and his wife Trisha have three children.

## Sister Rose Thering, OP (1920-2006)

A native of rural Wisconsin, Rose Elizabeth Thering was born on August 9, 1920, and was one of 11 children in her large German-American family. From an early age, she felt a calling to Catholic religious life and, after being taught by the Dominican Sisters of Racine (Wisconsin), she decided to join that congregation, making her perpetual vows in 1946.

An educator throughout her long religious life, Sister Rose earned a bachelor’s degree from Dominican College in Racine, before going on to graduate studies — a masters degree from the College of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn., and a PhD from St. Louis University in 1961. Her doctoral study focused on the presentation of Jews and Judaism in the Catholic textbooks that were used to teach religion at that time, and uncovered a range of inaccurate, exaggerated or stereotyped images that negatively affected the way in which many parochial school students thought and felt about Judaism. It was one of three textbook studies undertaken at the time under the sponsorship of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), looking at how various religious and ethnic groups were portrayed in Jewish, Catholic and Protestant educational materials.

Aware that her study illumined

of the Servite Order and ethicist, be commissioned to write a book on her dissertation and that of her colleagues Linus Gleason of the Sisters of Charity of Providence and Rita Mudd of the Sisters of St. Joseph, whose dissertations had analyzed literature and social studies textbooks. Pawlikowski agreed; his *Catechetics and Prejudice: How Catholic Teaching Materials View Jews, Protestants and Racial Minorities* appeared in 1973.

Thering had not anticipated the larger impact her study would make when Judith Banki, now working in the Inter-religious Affairs office of the American Jewish Committee, drew upon Thering’s dissertation and the work of Claire Huchet Bishop, who had initiated similar studies in Europe. Banki drafted a memorandum that the American Jewish Committee submitted on July 13, 1961, to Augustin Cardinal Bea, a biblical scholar and head of the Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

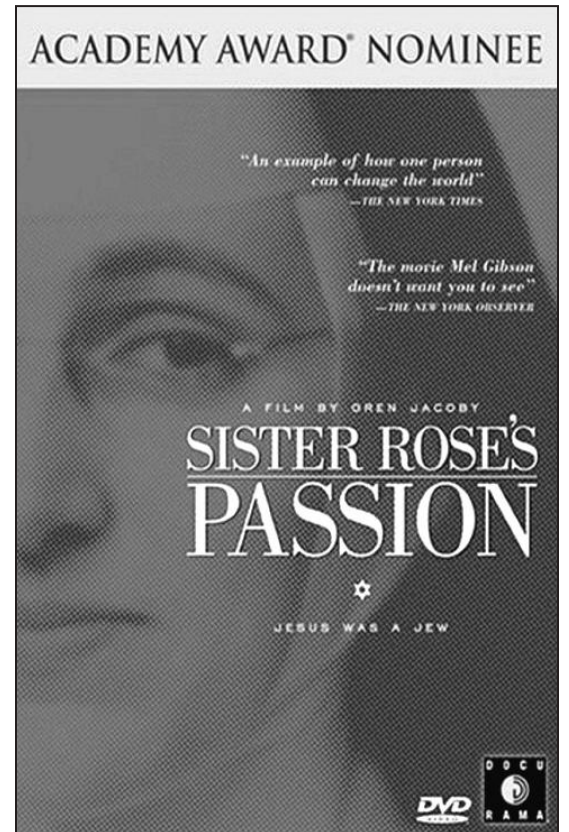
Titled *The Image of the Jew in Catholic Teaching*, the 32-page memorandum detailed the caricatures and distortions of Judaism that the Thering and Bishop studies had uncovered. While no single factor suffices to account for the promulgation of *Nostra Aetate* on Oct. 28, 1965, the textbook studies seem to have exercised a major influence on Cardinal Bea, the driving force behind Vatican II’s declaration. (Mary C. Boys, *Women’s Contributions to Jewish-Christian Relations*, in *Encyclopedia of Women and Religion in North America*, edited by Rosemary Skinner Keller, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and Marie Cantlon. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006, 1277.)

Sister Rose’s textbook study would, therefore, turn out to be an important contributing factor that led to the development of *Nostra Aetate*, with its efforts to uproot traditional Catholic misrepresentations of Judaism. Her textbook studies were subsequently repeated and updated, by Dr. Eugene Fisher (published as *Faith Without Prejudice: Rebuilding Christian Attitudes Toward Judaism*, 1977; rev. 1993) and by Dr. Philip Cunningham (published as *Education for Shalom: Religion Textbooks and the Enhancement of the Catholic and Jewish Relationship*, 1995).

As the late Chicago Cardinal Joseph Bernardin said, “(these studies) have shown a steady development in the presentation of the Catholic-Jewish relation-

ship, from one marked by classical stereotypes to one focused on the bonding of Christians and Jews within the one covenanted family. Not all problems have been resolved, but the progress has been remarkable.”

Sister Rose went on to become a beloved professor on the faculty of Seton Hall University in South Orange, N.J., where she taught for more than 40 years, working as a tireless leader in the development of Jewish-Christian dialogue. As one of her longtime

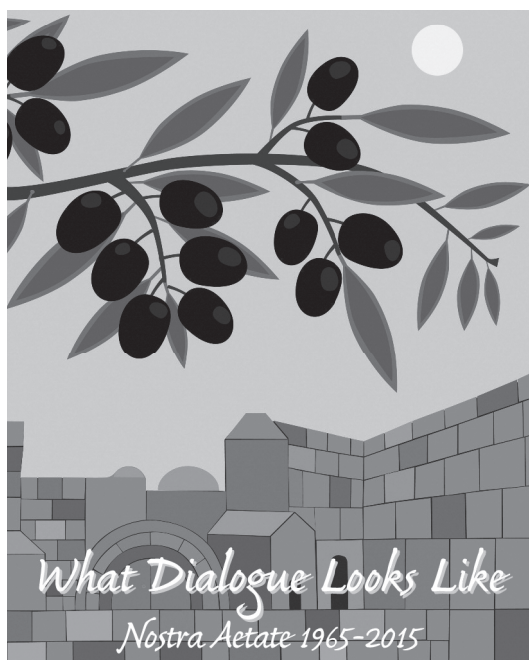


**DOCUMENTARY — Sister Rose’s Passion is the 2006 documentary that celebrates Sister Rose Thering and her dedication to the cause of eradicating anti-Semitism.**

friends and colleagues remembers:

“Rose also played a role in the movement to free Soviet Jewry and in establishing mandatory Holocaust education in public schools. She trained Christian teachers to teach Judaism and led 33 missions to Israel. She went head to head with (Austrian Chancellor and former Nazi soldier) Kurt Waldheim, with the nuns at Auschwitz, with anyone who spoke against Israel or Jews, and even with Jews who tried to hide their identity. Rose related to Israel not only as the Holy Land but as the living, modern Jewish homeland. She understood . . . in fact, whenever a Christian would use the term ‘Holy Land,’ she would recite her mantra, ‘Say Israel.’ ” (Blue Greenberg, *My Interfaith Friendships: Blessings and Challenges*, in *Chapters of the Heart: Jewish Women Sharing the Torah of Our Lives*, edited by Sue Elwell and Nancy Fuchs Kreimer. Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2013, 121).

Sister Rose Thering, a pioneering figure in contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue, died on May 6, 2006, at the age of 85, not long after the premiere of the documentary *Sister Rose’s Passion*, which highlighted her life’s work and her many accomplishments, which continue to be honoured and perpetuated at Seton Hall University.



areas of prejudice in a church unaccustomed to public self-criticism, Thering felt that the Catholic populace would regard her findings as credible only if a priest published them. She suggested John Pawlikowski, a priest



# How will the church respond to Ireland’s challenge?

The following is published with the permission of America Media.

By Anthony Egan, SJ

It may seem strange for a “Dispatch from Johannesburg” to examine Ireland’s recent gay marriage referendum for a United States-based Catholic magazine. But the country’s 62 per cent support for constitutionally redefining civil marriage resonates with all three of our nations and challenges the way we see ourselves as church.

The Irish decision is remarkable. First, Ireland is the first country to introduce same sex marriage by referendum rather than by parliamentary legislation or by judicial intervention. Second, the vote was convincing: the “Yes” vote carried all but one county — winning from liberal areas like Dublin to more conservative rural areas — and was supported across political and demographic lines. Third, this happened in what is still considered a Catholic country.

For South Africans, same-sex unions are nothing new. On Dec. 1, 2005, South Africa’s Constitutional Court, ruling in the case Minister of Home Affairs vs. Fourie, concluded that the existing law that defined civil marriage as between a man and a woman violated our 1996 Constitution and Bill of Rights that insists on, inter alia, non-discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. This made South Africa the first (and only) African country, the first state in the Southern Hemisphere and the fifth in the world to legalize same-sex marriage.

In summing up the Court’s judgment, Judge Albie Sachs wrote:

“The exclusion of same-sex couples from the benefits and responsibilities of marriage . . . represents a harsh if oblique statement by the law that same-sex couples are outsiders, and that their need for affirmation and protection of their intimate relations as human beings is somehow less than that of heterosexual couples.

Anthony Egan, SJ, is America Magazine’s Johannesburg correspondent.

It reinforces the wounding notion that they are to be treated as biological oddities, as failed or lapsed human beings who do not fit into normal society, and, as such, do not qualify for the full moral concern and respect that our Constitution seeks to secure for everyone. It signifies that their capacity for love, commitment and accepting responsibility is by definition less worthy of regard than that of heterosexual couples.”

The Constitution with its Bill of Rights is the supreme law of the land, and the Constitutional Court is the final arbiter of all laws. Had there been a referendum in South Africa, same-sex marriage would have lost. Large segments of South African society are deeply against it. (Homophobia is evident within parts of South African society — though there are suggestions that, particularly among younger people, this is changing.)

To accommodate this opposition, South Africa allows religious ministers to function as civil marriage officers under a kind of compromise: clergy are not obliged to perform marriage ceremonies that go against their conscience or religious doctrine. This privilege does not extend to civil service officials, however.

Part of the reason for this, and for South African homophobia, is that South Africa is a religious country, influenced by a literalist reading of the Bible (though, as in Ireland and the United States, there is a marked shift toward secularization). There is also a strongly homophobic strand in traditional African culture — though many anthropologists argue that this is a product of 19th-century colonial influences.

Though we now both belong to a small but growing group of nations that have enacted these new laws, South Africa and Ireland are different in how this happened. What we have in common however, together with all other members of the club, is strong official religious opposition to these changes — and the fact that that opposition failed.

Why did it fail? In South Africa, it’s quite simple: no referendum, therefore no way that churches could mobilize voters, many of them already hostile to the idea of same-sex unions. Ireland’s vote, we may assume, was partly a result of public irritation at a long history of the Catholic hierarchy’s often heavy-handed intervention in public life, further compounded by the child abuse scandals that have shaken even committed Catholics’ trust in the bishops and clergy.

The claim of “poor catechesis” or insufficient evangelization is another popular reason given for the support among Catholics for same-sex policies throughout the church — one that is also frequently used as we read of the divergent views being expressed by Catholics in the run-up to October’s synod on the family.

But I am unconvinced by this. It presumes that “if we tell them what the truth is, they’ll believe and follow.” This assumes a kind of non-thinking approach to catechesis, based on a memorize-and-believe model of education that presumes omniscience of the sender and acceptance of the receiver. It assumes, too, a church that is the sole provider of information and the source of all knowledge: in most parts of the world this situation no longer exists.

Science, the observation of nature, has advanced in so many areas about human and animal biology, particularly about the existence of same-sex oriented minorities in about 2,000 higher species. Genetic and neurological research strongly suggest natural in-built tendencies toward one’s own gender in such minorities, not as disorders but as differences that can be seen as having the same ultimate significance as being left-handed or ambidextrous. If we no longer hold to the prejudice against left-handedness, why discriminate on this matter, one might well ask.

For the church the answer is obvious: doctrine is unchanging and unchangeable. A corollary to this (made often in the debate around the family synod) is: if we change this, then everything is up for grabs and our authority collapses. (We’ve heard this before.) Better to deny everything, even if we reject evidence and common sense in the process, even if we



Design Pics

**REMARKABLE DECISION** — The Irish decision on gay marriage is remarkable, writes Anthony Egan, SJ. “First, Ireland is the first country to introduce same sex marriage by referendum rather than by parliamentary legislation or by judicial intervention. Second, the vote was convincing: the “yes” vote carried all but one county — winning from liberal areas like Dublin to more conservative rural areas — and was supported across political and demographic lines. Third, this happened in what is still considered a Catholic country.”

develop counter-theories that appear like pseudo-science.

Earlier I quoted Judge Albie Sachs’ argument in the South African Fourie judgment. Having read the judgment a number of times, I am struck that no one, so far as I know, ever used this eloquent statement to reflect theologically on what we might learn from it. Such reflection should not have been alien to us as Catholics — we do it all the time in Catholic social ethics. Catholic social teaching is a classic example where the idea of doctrinal change and development is not only common, but integral.


Catholic social teaching would be meaningless and useless without constant engagement with contemporary socio-political realities, with sciences like economics and politics, and with the best of secular political philosophy. Why did we not engage with Judge Sachs’ reasoning? Speaking personally, it was fear: fear of where an honest engagement with it in the light of our teachings on marriage and sexuality would lead. Fear, too, of how such conclusions would fly with superiors and authorities in the church and how this would have an impact on my ministry as priest and scholar.

The problem is that assuming this approach, we, the church, lose authority. By merely asserting existing doctrines, by clamping down on those who ask difficult questions and excluding them from the conversation, by indulging in groupthink or simply avoiding the issue, we shut ourselves off from the many important challenges of the world we are supposed to engage with. Most Catholics cannot withdraw from the world, many find themselves in a permanent state of cognitive dissonance: professing one thing, living another.


Such a split-level life adds ammunition to the new atheists, who quite happily exploit our tendency to teach our Catholics to lump together tradition into unchanging and unchangeable doctrine. This makes our deepest fear of collapse a self-fulfilling prophecy, particularly since living in cognitive dissonance is unhealthy and ultimately unsustainable.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin of Dublin rightly commented that Ireland’s referendum was a “reality check” for the church. But poor catechesis and bad evangelization are not sufficient explanation for the church’s “loss” in Ireland. We need a new, more open approach to theology, a return to the disambiguation of levels of doctrinal truth and how we understand faith. It has been heartening to see a greater openness to internal dialogue under Pope Francis, saddening to see so much resistance too. An event like the Irish referendum will test our resolve to be more open, more critical in our understanding of tradition. Or it may be read as a call to draw the wagons into a tight circle to fight off the forces of secularism.

None of this should surprise us. More than when it happened in South Africa, Ireland has thrown down a challenge to all. How will the Catholic Church respond?



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# Suffering and loss have many lessons to teach

By Paul Paproski, OSB

My sister Gwen was diagnosed with cancer five years ago. The diagnosis was a shock — she was in very good health and lived a healthy lifestyle. A model cancer patient, Gwen, 45, faced her life-threatening illness with a positive attitude. She was determined to be strong and optimistic. She had a zeal for life and loved her husband and two children dearly. They, in turn, gave her tremendous love and support.

Our family rejoiced when we learned, after months of chemotherapy and radiation, that Gwen was diagnosed cancer free. We were sure this dark stage of her life was over. Our hopes were dashed three years later when we learned the cancer returned and it was aggressive. The treatments resumed again, only this time they were much stronger.

Gwen didn't make it. She died May 19, five years following her first diagnosis. She was 50 years old. Her death came only weeks before her daughter graduated

from high school. We were stunned to learn in her final two weeks of life that she had lost her battle. Gwen's optimism throughout her ordeal led us to believe she had many years left. She often expressed her readiness to return to work and prepare for her daughter's high school graduation. She looked forward to continuing with her hobbies, volunteer work and doing some traveling.

Some things come to mind when I think about my visits with Gwen in Pasqua Hospital in Regina and at her home:

I cannot imagine the pain felt by cancer patients, whether physically or emotionally.

Cancer affects everyone. The cancer patient does not suffer alone. Family and friends feel pain too. I cannot imagine what other family and friends went through during this long ordeal. I know it was not easy for me.

Words are powerful and can be very helpful. It meant a lot to hear people say they are so sorry for Gwen and what our family was going through, and that they can't image how we feel. It meant a lot to hear people say they are praying for us.

Life is fragile. Cancer attacks people of all ages and backgrounds, even the healthy and



Paul Paproski, OSB

**THE WORLD CHANGES — When a loved one dies too soon, the world changes. Nothing remains the same. The reflection of a cross in a water fountain symbolizes the mystery of life and death. It speaks to the tension felt through knowing a loved one is at peace, while missing her terribly.**

*Paproski is a priest and Benedictine monk of St. Peter's Abbey. His sister Gwen is survived by her parents, three siblings, her husband and two children.*

## Geothermal and solar as heat sources

### FARMLAND LEGACIES

Don Sutherland



For thousands of years First Nations and Inuit people have been innovative learners and compassionate teachers. These gifts were prerequisites to prosperity and survival on Turtle Island. In 1812 the half-starved and often ill Selkirk settlers, former highlanders, would have been decimated by the extreme cold and lack of food if not for the leadership, generosity and teaching skills of Chief Peguis and his people who resided at that time near the Forks in what is now Winnipeg.

Peguis, the largest First Nation community in Manitoba, now located 145 km north of Winnipeg, is once again emerging with members who are leaders and teachers equipping home after home with geothermal heat. Another important development is the installation of solar water heating panels on houses, often crowded for living space, with resulting heavy demand for hot water to shower.

*Sutherland, MBA, is a personal coach and relationship builder in Winnipeg.*

Recently I had the opportunity to accompany three Winnipeg-based creative leaders, Shaun Loney, Darcy Wood, and Kate Taylor of Aki Energy, on one of their periodic northern trips designed to stay in personal touch with geothermal, solar, and other projects now rapidly emerging with First Nation initiatives.

Manitoba Hydro provides the upfront financing, but each householder gradually retires the loan by paying monthly at a rate less than the bill savings resulting from the retrofit. The Fisher River Cree Nation, situated close to Peguis, is also up and running with geothermal installations. Both First Nations have developed a cadre of skilled and certified leaders ready to undertake a training and leadership role with other First Nations who want to dramatically reduce their household heating costs.

The high cost of food, particularly nutritious food such as meat and milk, is a serious financial and health issue in "fly-in" communities such as Garden Hill First Nation. AKI staff is supporting the development of local produce supply sources with the assistance of agriculture faculty members at the University of Manitoba. Work done in Germany shows considerable promise for communities with shrubs and trees but little soil. The technique is called hugelkultur — composting with shrubs and long and short logs used as a base with soil added. The wood gradually decays, gives off heat, and supplies plant nutrients. Chickens and bees are on the "let's investigate" list.

I asked if I could interview someone currently working on site in geothermal installations. Tyrone Choken of the Fisher River First Nation stepped forward. Tyrone is a father of five children. After high school graduation he worked at seasonal jobs such as trucking and snow removal. He was proud to point out that he was on welfare for only nine months. He is now a certified geothermal installer. He says he and his family like the reliability of a regular paycheque and he says he looks forward to opportunities to go to other First Nations to teach and lead. Geothermal, solar, composting, and local supply all fit well with First Nation philosophy centred on reverence for the earth.

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# Treating others with respect is always in fashion

## Around the Kitchen Table

Maureen Weber



An obsession with shoes is often regarded as frivolous and indulgent, a la Carrie Bradshaw (of *Sex and the City* fame), so my obsession is something I generally keep in the closet, in pairs. I'm exaggerating, but I do like shoes, maybe because the feel of a substantial sole makes me feel grounded.

Then again, it could be inherited — both my parents loved shoes. Dad was a schoolteacher and later high school principal who walked miles in the hallways over the years. I loved the heft of his leather-soled wingtips and the way stones would crunch to powder underfoot.

My mother loved shoes as well. She wore a creamy white suit for her 1957 wedding with a robin's egg blue camisole and matching blue kid leather pumps. They were gorgeous.

My favourite pastime when I was a little girl was to go into Mom's closet and clomp around the kitchen in her shoes — brown suede with bows, shrimp-coloured snakeskin, butter yellow leather — pretending I was as

beautiful as she was.

In those days, craftsmanship was impeccable, the materials of good quality (no synthetic knock-offs) and the service one could expect not only in shoe stores but most other stores was welcoming and gracious. Whether you appeared sophisticated or undistinguished, beautiful or plain, you were accorded the same treatment. That is not always the case these days.

Some businesses cultivate an elite clientele that becomes almost like a private club. I've walked into such stores and had the feeling I was crashing an invite-only party when stopping in to browse. A couple of tittering insiders and the shopkeeper turn to give their appraisal (*she's probably in the wrong place*), and go back to their conversation. One such day, though, after I picked up a shoe the brand of which I knew well, the young clerk marched over, as if on a mission.

"Those are made in Spain," she exclaimed triumphantly. I nodded and smiled. As if dissatisfied with my response, she said again, "This

shipment just arrived *from Spain*." I remained dispassionate. She tried again, with increased volume: **THEY ARE FROM SPAIN**. Perhaps she looked at my grey hair and thought I was deaf as well as obtuse.

This new age of exclusivity features stores that issue invitations to announce the acquisition of new brands. The merchandise is indeed in stock, but only those who attend a special soiree are allowed to buy. New styles are presented on silver platters and elite patrons not only feast on wares, they have the satisfaction of knowing they have indulged before we plebeians have even gotten the chance to look.

There's a reason I'm thinking about this now. It's the end of June and in days gone by the end of June signified two important events: the last day of school, and my Auntie Marg's June 30 birthday, which was always a joyous celebration. She died in 2004 and I think of her more at this time of year.

Auntie Marg was beloved by all, but the kids especially adored her. A single woman who looked after children for much of her life — a nanny by today's standards — her patience for reading books or playing was matched only by her endless supply of cookies and love.

Marg was a tiny woman who had a spinal deformity that resulted in a prominent hump on her back. She was self-conscious

about her physical appearance. For those of us who knew and loved her, she was beautiful, but she mostly did not feel that way and I understand how she worried about the scrutiny of strangers. So it was gratifying for me to remember the city shopping trips she went on with my mom (I got to tag along) and how well Marg was treated wherever she went.

Marg loved shoes as much as we did, and her feet were slender and delicate. The shoe store was always the last stop, and the most fun. The staff waited on Marg with respect and gentleness, taking delight in her love of shoes and making her feel beautiful, at least for a little while.

I was trying to imagine my aunt feeling comfortable in some of the stores I've visited recently, but I couldn't. And you might be thinking, what difference does it make? It's only shopping. Maybe so, but I think it is also indicative



Saretsky

**IN HER SHOES** — The only time Maureen was ever seen wearing heels was when she was barely two years old, in her mother's shoes.

of a general societal shift in attitude: it's not so much about feeling better about yourself as getting pumped up with the feeling of being better than everyone else.

The store we shopped at with Auntie Marg has been in existence for 76 years and though the original family of owners is long gone, their approach is still one that shows wisdom in how they treat others. Respect and kindness never go out of fashion. If new entrepreneurs want to be around very long, they would do well to pay attention.

# Emotional depth of Meru makes it more than extreme sports story

Continued from page 9

you may well be aroused to protest the fundamental unfairness of it all.

## Meru (U.S./India)

This spring's devastating earthquakes in Nepal took a toll on the camps of elite mountain climbers and their sherpas. While reaching the summit of Everest has become big business, the ultimate Himalayan climbing challenge belongs to Meru in northern India near the headwaters of the Ganges. Until recently the sheer wall leading to Meru's peak, known as the Shark's Fin, had never been successfully scaled. John Krakauer, author of *Into Thin Air*, calls it the "anti-Everest" because climbers are entirely on their own, doing all the work and assuming all risks. Daring failed attempts and the eventual extreme conquest of the mountain are the subject of **Meru** (<http://www.merufilm.com/>), co-directed by Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi and Jimmy Chin, one of the climbers and cinematographers. It's an extraordinary story that won the Sundance audience award after playing to standing ovations.

The driving force of the three-some tackling Meru is Montana-based enthusiast Conrad Anker who made a first unsuccessful attempt in 2003. Despite pleas from wife Jenni (the widow of his late celebrated climbing partner Alex Lowe), Anker could not let it go at that and brought in Chin and

another young American, Renan Ozturk, to make an audacious 2008 attempt that came agonizingly close but had to be aborted due to impossible conditions. Just 180 metres from the summit, it was a heartbreaking decision. Chin's and Ozturk's cameras capture the drama in intimate detail. The film also delves into the personal motivations of the climbers, especially Anker with his adopted family and narrator Chin, the son of Chinese refugees.

The intrepid trio refused to give up the dream, even after two of them almost died — Ozturk in a ski crash, Chin in an avalanche four days later. Incredibly, only five months later in 2011 the team was back preparing another assault on the Shark's Fin from the 14,500-foot base camp. Over-

coming storms and mishaps in a sequence of death-defying feats, this attempt finally reached the top in a burst of exhilaration.

What is as astonishing is how Chin and Ozturk managed to shoot spectacular footage while themselves engaged in such a demanding and dangerous physical effort. Meru has some of the most amazing cinematography you will ever see. A last image of the mountain on a starry night as the three make their descent is cosmically breathtaking. This is more than an extreme-sports movie. Its emotional depth and intensity moved me to see it twice at Sundance. Watch for an August theatrical release and a television broadcast on the Showtime network later this year.

A title like this might lead one to expect a weepy teen melodrama

and take a pass. But director Alfonso Gomez-Rejon's second feature, with a brilliant screenplay adapted by Jesse Andrews from his eponymous novel, is fully deserving of its double honours at Sundance where it took both the top jury and audience awards. It's also the subject of an admiring cover feature essay in the spring issue of *Filmmaker Magazine*.

The "me" in the picture is Greg Gaines (a superb Thomas Mann), a geeky, acutely self-conscious and awkward high-school senior who hangs out with his more confident only pal Earl (first-time actor RJ Cyler, equally excellent). Greg covers his shyness with self-deprecation and an avoidance of social interactions. Instead the pair amuse themselves making bizarre mock versions of classic

movies. (These are delightful wacky home-video creations, and indeed movie references pop up everywhere.) But then Greg's mom learns that a classmate, Rachel (Olivia Cooke), has been diagnosed with leukemia and guilt pressures Greg into spending time with her. What feels forced if painfully honest at first develops into a truly beautiful friendship.

## Me and Earl and the Dying Girl

(U.S.)

The story delivers no romances or miracles. There's pathos, gentle humour, moments of joy and sorrow, with never a false note or lapse into maudlin sentiment. Seldom have adolescent anxieties and emotions been conveyed with such complexity and depth by actors equal to the task. The movie also gains authenticity by being shot in writer Andrews' hometown of Pittsburgh in familiar locations including the house where he grew up.

Greg is a changed person as he narrates what he insists "isn't a sappy love story." Key to his maturation is looking beyond himself through Rachel and applying his amateur filmmaking talents to give her a lasting tribute. As Gomez-Rejon says: "It's a very important part of Greg's coming-of-age story that he learns to make a film for someone *else*."

Now in theatres, **Me and Earl and the Dying Girl** is one of the best movies of the year.



Chung Hoon Chung

**COMING OF AGE** — RJ Cyler (left) and Thomas Mann star in *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl*. Now in theatres, the film took both the jury and the audience awards at the Sundance Film Festival in January.



Can the earth be saved?

I have met Asians in airports who wear masks to protect themselves against air pollution. I have seen pictures, and read stories, of smog so heavy in the industrialized cities of China that people need to wear masks regularly, and they rarely are able to breathe fresh air.

Where I live on the Prairies, we are blessed to have fresh air and sunshine every day. It's a gift that not everyone on this earth enjoys. We also are not threatened by rising sea water or melting glaciers.

Of more concern to many Prairie citizens is the amount of chemicals in our food and water. Our weather patterns are changing, too, and we are uncertain what the future will hold. Will tornadoes and hurricanes soon become common on the

Prairies? Will storms become more violent? Will we turn into a desert in a few decades, as some people predict?

As we ponder the reality of climate change today, Pope Francis has given all of humanity a new focus. He has his critics as well as his enthusiastic supporters. This week's PM coverage of his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, On Care for our Common Home, gives a good overview to his long-anticipated teaching.

Climate change is nothing new. It is part of our history and will be part of our future. However, the cycle of climate change extends over long periods of time. For most people the cycle extends beyond our lifetime, and we don't notice it to any full extent.

However, most serious scientists agree that the speed of change has increased measurably since

the industrial revolution. We are heightening the degree of change that does occur naturally. And those who argue that we can control climate change or weather patterns through technology stand helpless in the face of severe droughts or raging hurricanes.

Pope Francis reminds us that the Christian tradition says that the earth is given for the good of all humanity. Humans are called to care for the earth, and he calls us to reflect on what resources we will leave for future generations. He reminds us that those who are poor and powerless do not share the earth's resources to the same degree as the rich and powerful.

He is not the first to call our attention to the crisis we are facing. Perhaps his stature will get the serious attention of more people, both Catholics and otherwise. — PWN

Papal pull-out quotes from his encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'*

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The following are selected quotes from Pope Francis' encyclical letter, *Laudato Si'*, on Care for Our Common Home:

— The earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth. (n. 21)

— Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right. (n. 33)

— This is the way human beings contrive to feed their self-destructive vices: trying not to see them, trying not to acknowledge them, delaying the important decisions and pretending that nothing will happen. (n. 59)

— We are not God. (n. 67)

— The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God. (n. 84)

— It is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted. (n. 91)

— This situation has led to a constant schizophrenia, wherein a technocracy which sees no intrinsic value in lesser beings coexists with the other extreme, which sees no special value in human beings. (n. 118)

— Since everything is interrelated, concern for the protection of nature is also incompatible with the justification of abortion. (n. 120)

— The acceptance of our bodies as God's gift is vital for welcoming and accepting the entire world as a gift from the Father and our common home, whereas thinking that we enjoy absolute power over our own bodies turns, often subtly, into thinking that we enjoy absolute power over creation. (n. 155)

— Leaving an inhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. (n. 160)

— Doomsday predictions can no longer be met with irony or disdain. We may well be leaving to coming generations debris, desolation and filth. (n. 161)

— We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels — especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas — needs to be progressively replaced without delay. (n. 165)

— Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change. (n. 202)

— "Less is more." A constant

flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment. (n. 222)

— In reality, those who enjoy

more and live better each moment are those who have given up (grazing) here and there, always on the lookout for what they do not have. (n. 223)

Pope Francis encourages aid agencies

By Carl Hétu, Ottawa

It's not every day you are rallied by Pope Francis. From June 15 to 17, I attended the annual meeting of the Reunion of Aid Agencies for the Oriental Churches (ROACO) at the Vatican. About 24 Catholic aid agencies came together to share analysis, current action plans and develop common solutions to the many violent conflicts affecting millions in the Middle East — in particular, Christian minorities.

I stayed in the *Domus Sanctae Marthae*, the same residence where the pope lives. Almost every day I crossed paths with him in the hall, the elevator, the dining room and, with a quick smile, he'd greet me with a "*buona sera*." The interactions were brief. Even though I work for his papal agency where we carry out pastoral and humanitarian work on his behalf, it was no time to talk business as he needs his rest, too.

On June 15, after meeting with the Russian Orthodox Church's foreign affairs representative, he joined the 60 of us before we started our meeting. It was the fourth time I've had the privilege to meet Pope Francis, but this time, something was different. Despite his packed schedule, he certainly didn't show any signs of being tired as he delivered a strong, direct and decisive message. "I encourage you while you carry forward the service of Christian charity to denounce all that crushes the dignity of men and women."

We were a bit surprised but certainly energized by these words. He dared us to do more than just aid the poor, the refugees and the displaced but to be compassionate and truly find ways to stop the metaphorical and literal bleeding. "Every good work, in order not to fall into efficient-ism, or into an assistance-ism, which does not help persons and peoples, must ever be reborn from this benediction of the Lord, which comes to us when we have the courage to look at reality and the brothers in front of us. . . . May their cry become our own and together may we break down the barriers of indifference."

please, but rather, to challenge all of us and to get us out of our comfort zone.

We can't separate nature from God and people. The current state of the planet, its conflicts, the increasing poverty, climate change and how we consume are all connected and, thus, become the responsibility of individuals, but also that of decision makers, our politicians, business and financial leaders and civil society as whole.



Carl Hétu

The time for empty speeches and empty promises is over. We need to open a dialogue that goes beyond religious and ideological differences. It won't be easy and many bumps are sure to be felt along the way, but the alternative is simply not an option.

Talk to the Filipinos who endured the worst typhoon to ever touch down, those experiencing drought in the horn of Africa over the last seven years or to the millions of families in the Middle East that are on the run — they're all a testament to this. Tragically, the list goes on.

No, contrary to some media reports, this pope isn't tired. He is inspiring, defiant and, above all, wants all of us to debate and enter into dialogue in order to find new and lasting solutions. He is showing us the path to save ourselves and all of God's creation. It is now up to us to push for the political will to make the necessary transformation to build a world where all can live in dignity and in peace.

Some may call this Utopia, but it is all about redemption and comes down to Jesus' message of forgiveness, reconciliation, compassion and love that is ours to grasp. Let's not miss this opportunity to get back on track. In one sense, Pope Francis can relax a little now that he passed this responsibility onto us.



CNS/Ritchie B. Tongo, EPA

**PHILIPPINE MUSLIM REBELS LAY DOWN ARMS** — Moro Islamic Liberation Front chair Al-Haj Murad Ebrahim holds a surrendered rocket propelled grenade launcher during the first phase of the decommissioning of rebel weapons in Maguindanao, Philippines, June 16. During a ceremony attended by Philippine President Benigno Aquino III, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front handed over weapons under a year-old peace agreement.

*Hétu is the Canadian national director of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association.*



Pope Francis brings everyone on-board with his encyclical

**The Editor:** Do you remember about a year ago when Pope Francis pulled two little boys up into his pope mobile? The boys rode around St. Peter's square with the pope. His security people most probably chewed him out for such an action.

Last week, Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment pulled many people on-board. He has made many friends worldwide.

He included some of the teaching of the Orthodox world. He

included a Sufi poet (not a Christian) plus many scientists and social thinkers. Has this ever been done in an official papal document?

He has pulled on-board people of faith and no faith who are concerned about our earth, our common home.

He has extended his hand to all the poor of this world (the majority of humanity).

And, he includes his fellow bishops worldwide who have deliberately taught on our responsibility

toward ecological questions. This is new in papal pronouncements.

There is a new and welcome wind blowing in our world. It will only be the old stuffy security guards who will shake their fingers and say, "You can't do it like that."

He did it and the entire world (Christian, religious people and people with no religious faith) are taking notice.

Well done, Pope Francis. — **Rev. Nestor Gregoire, OMI, Saskatoon**

St. Francis' hymn of praise quoted

Continued from page 1

Francis of Assisi's Cantic of the Creatures, which is the source of the *Laudato Si'* (praised be you) in the encyclical's title. He quotes a large section of the hymn of praise in a section on the place of each creature in the harmony of creation. The cantic is most famous for its references to "Brother Sun," "Sister Moon" and "our sister, Mother Earth."

But, the pope says, "sister earth" is crying out, "pleading that we take another course" marked by healing and protecting the earth and all its inhabitants.

While Christians cannot "put all living beings on the same level nor . . . deprive human beings of their unique worth and the tremendous responsibility it entails," St. Francis' hymn expresses the truth that God is creator of all things, that every part of creation speaks of God's love and power and that every created being is part of interdependent whole, the pope writes.

"Everything is related," the pope says, "and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters

on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth."

In the document, Pope Francis calls on national governments and the leaders of international institutions to be serious and courageous in adopting strict measures to slow and reverse global warming, protect the rain forests and ensure the availability of clean water for all. Courage will be needed, he says, to adopt policies that initially may slow the pace of economic growth, but which will be farsighted in ensuring a future for their voters, their voters' grandchildren and all humanity.

"We know that technology based on the use of highly polluting fossil fuels — especially coal, but also oil and, to a lesser degree, gas — needs to be progressively replaced without delay," he says.

But he also calls on every Catholic and all people of goodwill to do their part by, for example, using only non-polluting detergents, recycling paper, using public transportation and putting

on a sweater instead of raising the heat in the winter.

And he urges Catholics to return to the practice of saying grace before meals, a habit that reminds them regularly that the food they are about to eat is a gift that comes from the earth and from God.

At the end of the document, Pope Francis offers two prayers he composed himself: A Prayer for Our Earth and A Christian Prayer in Union with Creation.

The first prayer includes asking God to "bring healing to our lives that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction."

The second prayer includes the petition, "O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty."

In the encyclical, Pope Francis urges Catholics to cultivate simplicity; it is good for the soul and for the planet, he says. "A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment," the pope writes.

The encyclical presents the vision of an "integral ecology" that highlights not only the interconnectedness of all created life, but recognizes how political, economic, social and religious values and decisions are interrelated and impact the way people live with one another on the planet and use its resources.

"A sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings," Pope Francis insists.

For example, he says, "it is clearly inconsistent to combat trafficking in endangered species while remaining completely indifferent to human trafficking, unconcerned about the poor, or undertaking to destroy another human being deemed unwanted."

"Everything is connected," the pope writes. "Concern for the environment thus needs to be joined to a sincere love for our fellow human beings and an unwavering commitment to resolving the problems of society."



A. Wicks

Surrender

My brooding over,  
I leave the nest  
of expectations  
that all I've given birth  
might fly into its own —  
wings of thought,  
body of song,  
a feathered comfort  
in changing wind.

By Nancy Compton Williams

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# Pope Francis calls Shroud of Turin ‘icon of love’

By Laura Ieraci

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — It took place in silence and lasted only a few minutes, but Pope Francis’ time of prayer and contemplation before the Shroud of Turin was marked with gestures of reverence and tenderness.



**POPE MEETS YOUNG PEOPLE IN TURIN — Pope Francis greets a child during a gathering with young people in Piazza Vittorio in Turin, Italy, June 21.**

## If you let greed into your heart, all other vices follow

By Carol Glatz

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — If you give the key to your heart to greed, it will leave the door wide open to vanity, arrogance and all of the other vices, squeezing God out of the way, Pope Francis said at his morning mass.

Wealth isn’t “a statue” that stands inert and has no impact on a person, the pope said June 19 during the mass in the chapel of the *Domus Sanctae Marthae*.

“Wealth has the tendency to grow, to move around, to take a place in one’s life and heart,” and once it moves in, fanning the desire to always accumulate more, the heart becomes “corrupted,” he said.

The pope focused his homily on the day’s reading from the Gospel of Mark (6:19 - 23), in which Jesus tells his disciples to “not store up for yourselves treasures on earth,” but rather “store up treasures in heaven,” because “for where your treasure is, there also will your heart be.”

Pope Francis said that deep down, people’s search for more is rooted in a desire for a sense of security, but there is a high risk

Revered by many as the burial cloth of Jesus, the shroud was the second stop on the pope’s packed itinerary for his two-day visit to the northern Italian town of Turin.

The pope did not give a speech June 21 in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, where the shroud is housed, but he described it later as an icon of Christ’s great love for humankind.

“At the end of our celebration, our thoughts go to the Virgin Mary, loving mother and attentive to all her children, whom Jesus entrusted to her from the cross, while he offered himself in the greatest act of love. The icon of this love is the shroud,” Pope Francis said before reciting the mid-day Angelus prayer.

“The shroud draws (us) to the face and martyred body of Jesus and, at the same time, impels us toward the face of every suffering and unjustly persecuted person. It impels us in the same direction as Jesus’ gift of love,” he said, making reference to the words of St. Paul.

After his first meeting in Turin, a gathering in a public square with thousands of people from the world of work, Pope Francis walked to the cathedral nearby. He entered the church at 9:15 a.m. and walked directly toward the shroud, which had been on public exhibit since April 19.

The pope stood before the shroud for about 20 seconds, then crossed himself before settling into a wooden armchair, set several feet from the shroud. He sat in dim lighting and in silence, with his head bowed for several moments. He crossed himself again before approaching the shroud, stopping only a few feet away. He stood there, contemplating it for another 20 seconds or so, before walking right up to its case, touching it gently and crossing himself again.

He then prayed before a side altar in the cathedral, the location that person will become a slave of wealth, accumulating it only for oneself and not in order to serve others.

Soon, any sense of security gives way to vice and division, even in the family, he said, according to Vatican Radio.

“Also the root of war lies in this ambition that destroys, corrupts,” as so many wars are being fought because of “greed for power, for riches,” he said.

It’s a war that can be raging in one’s own heart, he said, “because greed keeps going, keeps moving forward,” stringing the person along a path of vice one step at a time.

Greed “opens the door, then comes in vanity — to think you’re important, to believe you’re powerful — and, in the end, pride, and from there all the vices, all of them,” he said.

What is important is that Christians see the goods God has given them as being at the service of others and the common good, he said.

“It’s not easy to become an honest administrator (of God’s gifts) because there is always the temptation of greed, of becoming important,” he said.

of the tomb of a native of Turin, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, who died at age 24 after a short life dedicated to helping the poor.

The pope then celebrated an outdoor mass in one of Turin’s central squares, Piazza Vittorio. Officials estimated the crowd at 100,000 people.

During his homily, the pope reflected on three aspects of the love of God. God’s love is faithful, recreates all things anew, and is stable and sure, he said.

On the first aspect, the pope said God’s love does not disappoint and never fails and is incarnate in Jesus.

“For love, he became man; for love, he died and resurrected; for love, he is always at our side, in beautiful moments and in difficult ones. Jesus loves us always, until the end, without limits and without measure. And he loves all of us to the point that we each can say, ‘He gave his life for me.’ For me,” he said.

“The faithfulness of Jesus does not give up even in the face of our own unfaithfulness,” he added.

A person experiences the ability of God’s love to recreate when one realizes his or her own mistakes, sins and weakness and

opens up to the forgiveness and love of Jesus, the pope said.

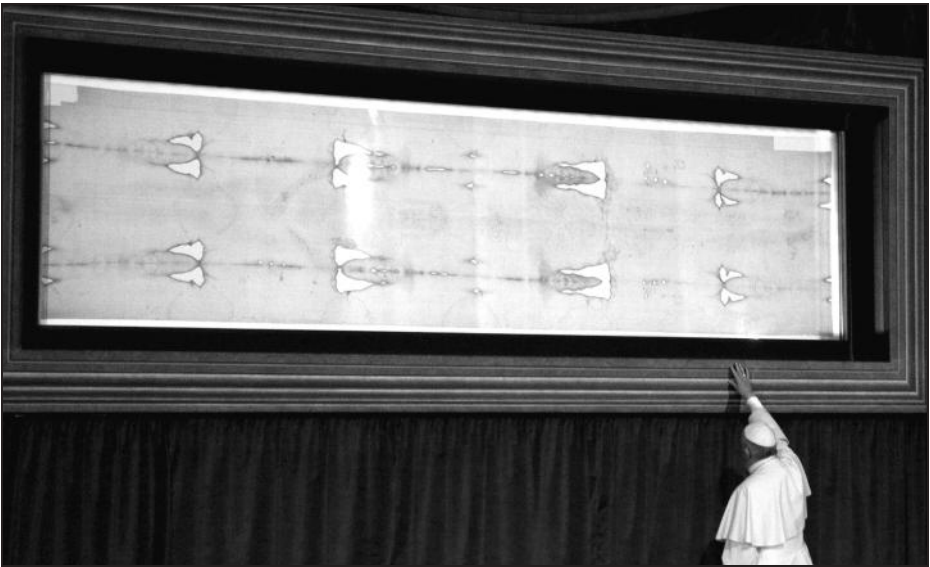
“The spirit of the world is always searching for newness, but only the faithfulness of Jesus is capable of true newness, of making us new people, of recreating us,” he said.

The day’s Gospel reading about Jesus calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee demonstrates the third aspect: the stability and sureness of God’s love, said the pope.

When people feel they are unable to go on, he said, Jesus offers them “the rock of his love, onto which each person can grasp, certain they will not fall.”

“How many times have we felt that we cannot go on,” the pope said. “But (Jesus) is always beside us, with an extended hand and an open heart.”

The pope then urged the faithful to reflect on whether they are living on the “rock” of God’s love. People, including even Christians, run the risk of forgetting God’s love and of feeling “paralyzed by fears of the future and seeking security in passing things or in models of closed societies that tend to exclude more than to include,” he said.



**SHROUD OF TURIN — Pope Francis touches the case holding the Shroud of Turin after praying before the cloth in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Turin, Italy, June 21.**

## Lack of Scripture weakens church: pope

By Laura Ieraci

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — A lack of enthusiasm for Scripture weakens well-established churches and stunts the missionary verve of newfound Christian communities, said Pope Francis in a written message shared with members of the Catholic Biblical Federation.

Meeting federation members — including representatives of bishops’ conferences and some 200 Catholic biblical institutions — Pope Francis spoke spontaneously, but gave them a copy of his prepared text in which he noted the importance of Scripture.

The audience June 19 came during the federation’s plenary assembly June 18 - 23 in Nemi, outside of Rome.

“The lack of support and vigour for the Word leads to the weakening of Christian communities of ancient tradition and halts the spiritual growth and mission-

ary fervour of young churches,” the pope wrote.

Therefore, he said, there must be a pastoral commitment to make Scripture central to church life, and an “encounter with Jesus” through Scripture must be part of the habitual activities of all religious communities, parishes and movements, he added.

“Servants of the Word,” including bishops, priests, religious or laypeople, he said, must promote this encounter with Christ, which inspires faith and transforms lives.

Places exist where the Gospel has not yet been proclaimed, where it has not been “wel-

comed as the Word of salvation,” or where it has been “emptied of its authority,” Pope Francis wrote.

“Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ,” he said, citing St. Jerome. In order to proclaim the Word, people must have experienced it first: “listened to it, contemplated it, almost touched it with their hands,” he said.

Christians, he added, must “venerate, read, listen, proclaim, preach, study and diffuse the Word of God.”

The assembly was chaired by the federation’s new president, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila.

Prayer is sitting in the silence until it silences us, choosing gratitude until we are grateful, praising God until we ourselves are a constant act of praise.

— Rev. Richard Rohr, OFM