Addressing poverty

Local religious groups are among those endorsing a Poverty Costs initiative in the province. In addition to demonstrating the high economic, social and moral costs of poverty, the new Poverty Costs initiative is calling for a provincial poverty reduction plan. A www.povertycosts.ca website has been launched to increase awareness about the cost of poverty and to provide opportunities for advocacy and action. The Poverty Costs initiative is being led by the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre, the Saskatoon Anti-Poverty Coalition, Upstream, and Unite Co-op.

Organizers report endorsements have been received from church leaders of seven Christian denominations, as well as the Unitarian Church, and the Congregation Agudas Israel synagogue. Faith leaders of these communities are describing how the moral imperative to reduce poverty can unite people of faith across the province. Addressing poverty is an issue that transcends politics, say local religious leaders. “This is a responsibility of every political party, and should draw on people of widely diverse political and religious or philosophical – perspectives, with the common mission of reducing human suffering by eliminating poverty,” says Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen.

“The very foundations of religious challenge us to fight poverty,” points out Rabbi Claudius Jodorkovsky of Congregation Agudas Israel. “I believe the person of faith is the one who understands his/her responsibility for making a change. That means a call to be generous and caring, but also to be an activist for change, raising awareness and demanding that leaders along the spectrum make the fight against poverty a priority.”

It is time to move beyond just addressing the symptoms of poverty, agrees Rev. Amanda Currie, pastor of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church in Saskatoon. “Even as we continue to do our best to provide for those in our communities with immediate and urgent needs, we can show love and compassion for one another by looking upstream and finding ways to help all our neighbours to live in health, security, and dignity,” Currie asserts.

Justice and Peace initiatives reported by parishes: Pages 8-9

Parish ambassadors
Laurel and Noah Foster of St. Francis Xavier parish The Saskatoon were among hundreds of parish representatives from across the diocese who travelled to the Cathedral of the Holy Family April 14 to celebrate the Chrism Mass and pick up the sacred oils blessed by the bishop. Find more coverage on Page 16.

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Annual General Meeting includes financial and ministry reports

BY KIPLY LUKAS YAWORSKI

The financial and ministry year from June 2012 to 2013 was the focus of a recent Annual General Meeting for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

The AGM was held March 22 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, after a Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) meeting that included a training session about diocesan goals and priorities.

Financial reports in recent years have been provided at an annual diocesan Administration Day and published in the Diocesan Newsletter, rather than being presented at a public meeting.

“In this retrieval of the AGM is part of our strategic planning – part of a desire to be more transparent about where we are as a diocese, and the decisions and the challenges we face,” said Bishop Don Bolen.

The year 2012-13 was the Year of Faith in the Church, with a number of initiatives undertaken in parishes and in the diocese to foster and celebrate faith. “It was also a year where we were really getting settled into our new catholic,” noted the bishop.

It was a year where a lot of things solidified,” Bolen said.

“The is so much in this diocesan church that attempts to live out faithful discipleship. It is to say that we don’t have real struggles and real frustrations… But this is an inspiring place.”

2012-2013 was a year of transition for the diocesan financial department, with changes in the introduction of new technology and new procedures, the bishop reported. Tanya Clarke is now the diocese of Saskatoon’s financial administrator, working with accountants Kevin Bentler and Denesta Lambert at the Catholic Pastoral Centre.

Clarke presented the financial report, giving an overview of the audited statements for the year, explaining the work of the Diocese of Saskatoon Catholic Foundation (which is the diocese’s fund-raising arm), outlining sources of revenue (such as parish assessments to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal, other donations and assorted income and fees) as well as the expenses of the Chancery and pastoral services provided by the diocese. (See financial statement, lower right.)

Pastoral ministry reports were also presented at the AGM by Co-directors of Pastoral Services, Leah Perrault and Blake Sittler, who have shared the management role at the Catholic Pastoral Centre since February 2012.

Pastoral services in the diocese generally fall into two broad categories: ministries that build Up the church, and ministries that reach out to others. This is a combined program, no longer the Pastoral Services review at the Catholic Pastoral Centre and a strategic planning process launched in the diocese in 2012.

As for ministries, the year 2012-13 saw the diocesan, episcopal and Aboriginal Ministry Office move into new offices at the Catholic Pastoral Centre since February 2012.

“At Christian Initiation and Catechetics underwent a fairly major shift in 2012-2013,” Perrault added. Formerly known as Rural Catechetics, the Christian Initiation and Catechetics office is now serving both urban and rural parishes and supporting catechists, formation and initiation at age every.

The ministry services review led to other changes at the Catholic Centre, such as the Resource Library now being operated with the help of volunteers rather than a paid librarian, and the appointment of Myron Rogal as coordinator of the Justice and Peace Office in addition to half time as coordinator of the Vocational Office.

In 2012-13, the strategic planning process identified two emerging priorities for the Catholic Pastoral Centre, Perrault reported: nurturing both healthy partnerships and vibrant, healthy parishes. Identifying diocesan goals and priorities, Perrault continued, with consultative groups and leaders across the diocese in spring of 2014 to Catholic Lay Foundation on program really but efforts in the future. The DPC engaged in the process at their March 22 meeting, with priests and other ministry and parish leaders undertaking the process at gatherings in May.

In his pastoral report, Blake Sittler described the establishment of the Migration Office and its ongoing evolution in 2012-13. The diocese also began working more closely with the Mosaic Mission, an ecumenical restorative justice group providing outreach to those coming out of prison, he added.

Another item of note was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission national event in Saskatoon in June 2012, which led to a commitment to establish a new consultative body in the diocese, operating alongside the Priests’ Council and the Diocesan Pastoral Council. The new Diocesan Council for Truth and Reconciliation includes Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders in the community gathering to pray and share insights and undertakings, Sittler described.

In 2012-2013, a new diocesan Covenant of Care & Sexual Abuse and Misconduct Protocol was launched, with information and training provided to parish leadership and volunteers across the diocese, he described.

“This is simply a plan to make our communities more safe and more transparent.” It is something that dioceses across the country are engaged in, Sittler added.

Parish Pastoral Council workshops were another ongoing effort throughout the ministry year, helping councils understand their role and “refocusing on how we as parish councils can deepen and nurture the faith of our people in our parish,” he said.

As a final note, Sittler described one effort of collaboration, between the diocese, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, and the Saskatoon Friendship Inn, called “Pool Our Love,” where students and their families are made aware of the needs of the Friendship Inn in responding to hunger in the community, and the collection of puddings pools full of donated most-needed food items for the inn.

The Annual Report published in conjunction with the AGM is available online at www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news.

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon
Audited Financial Statement

For the fiscal year end as of June 30, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUND BALANCE, BEGINNING OF YEAR</strong></td>
<td>929,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FUND BALANCE, END OF YEAR</strong></td>
<td>929,399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>1,046,085</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UNREALIZED (loss) gain in market value of investments</strong></td>
<td>(21,196)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUPPORT AND REVENUE LESS EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>4,936,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue less expenses before the undistributed</strong></td>
<td>110,142</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Loss on disposal of investments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Unrealized (loss) gain in market value of investments</strong></td>
<td>(21,196)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUPPORT AND REVENUE LESS EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>110,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>1,030,838</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parish Assessments</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Investment income</strong></td>
<td>78,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Donations</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brazil donations</strong></td>
<td>146,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ministry</strong></td>
<td>291,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sunday</strong></td>
<td>1,005,121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>EXPENSES</strong></th>
<th><strong>A</strong></th>
<th><strong>B</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pastoral Services</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Outreach grants and donations</strong></td>
<td>381,566</td>
<td>314,412</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clergy and vocations</strong></td>
<td>521,048</td>
<td>584,325</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Brazil mission</strong></td>
<td>146,186</td>
<td>96,305</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Administration and archdiocesan</strong></td>
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<td>1,009,565</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parish support</strong></td>
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<td>324,609</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>4,936,588</td>
<td>3,580,507</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Revenue less expenses before the undistributed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2013</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bishop’s Annual Appeal</strong></td>
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<td>4,936,588</td>
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(A) Revenue from the Bishop’s Annual Appeal does not all come into the diocese. Some of the revenue is dispersed to Catholic organizations and ministries outside of the Catholic Pastoral Centre. Further, the revenue for the 2012-2013 fiscal year includes a segment of funds from both the 2012 and 2013 Appeals.

(B) Allocated donations to the diocese are held by the Diocese of Saskatoon Catholic Foundation. Many of the funds are specified for a particular purpose, and the diocese has the intention of the donors by using these funds as allocated. As per the annual budget, income is transferred to the diocese to cover expenses in these areas. This shows as income for the Episcopal Corporation and expense for the Foundation. The diocese also receives external grant money that is accounted for in this income line.

(C) The deficit in the Episcopal Corporation was covered with a fund transfer from the Diocese of Saskatoon Catholic Foundation after the end of the fiscal year. This money comes from the Unspecified Asset Account.

The 2012-13 Annual Report for the diocese of Saskatoon – including financial statements for the Catholic Foundation and a summary of 2012-13 Bishop’s Annual Appeal allocations – is posted at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

or for an electronic or a printed copy, call the Catholic Pastoral Centre at: (306) 242-1500 or toll free: 1-877-661-5005 or e-mail: communications@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Youth support for BAA

The Servants for Christ youth group at St. Augustine parish in Saskatoon – along with youth from St. Patrick and Holy Spirit parishes – recently held bake sales to raise money for the Bishop’s Annual Appeal. The Servants presented the $700-plus donation to Bishop Don Bolen at Mass at St. Augustine parish in Saskatoon March 16, before joining him for a pancake breakfast. The Bishop’s Annual Appeal supports a range of ministries and initiatives in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon with this 2013 Appeal. For more information about BAA allocations, check out the diocese Annual Report online at www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

Photo by Janine Baker
Diocese celebrates 80th anniversary at St. Paul’s

By Kiply Lukas Yaworski

On March 19, 1934 the official proclamation establishing the new Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon was read at St. Paul’s Catholic Church in Saskatoon – along with the announcement that the community’s first bishop would be elevated to the status of diocesan cathedral.

Eighty years later, Bishop Donald Bolen, St. Paul’s pastor Rev. Piros Schol and a number of other priests concelebrated Eucharist at St. Paul’s Co-Cathedral to mark the anniversary of that historic moment.

Displays and a gala reception were also part of the 80th anniversary celebration held March 21 at the diocese’s original cathedral in downtown Saskatoon.

Bolen described how the new diocese’s first bishop took up his role in the tough times of the Great Depression. Bishop Gerald Murray, CSI, came from Victoria, arriving in Saskatoon on April 18, 1934 in the middle of a dust storm. His first Pontifical High Mass was celebrated at St. Paul’s Cathedral the next day, on April 19, 1934.

Bolen noted the origins of the Saskatoon diocese lie in tensions about language and leadership, and its creation in the hard times of the 1930s, when one leader, Father O’Leary petitioned the bishop to dispense with Lenten obligations, saying “the Depression is penance enough.”

In the ways in which the history of the diocese unfolded, one can see what allowed Bolen to persevere, he said. “When one looks into it, I think it was a trust that God was with them; a trust that God had come near to us and continues to be near to us.”

The annual Saskatoon March For Life takes place on Mother’s Day, May 11 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., along College Drive. This is a peaceful rally of families and persons who support the right to life movement, says Denise Roth of Campaign Life Coalition Saskatchewan. “It is a gentle reminder to the general public that abortion is wrong, that women suffer from abortion and that we should not be paying for abortions through our taxes. It is also a day where we thank our mothers for the gift of life,” she said. Signs are provided and following the march there is a short presentation and refreshments are served. Sponsored by Campaign Life Coalition Saskatchewan, this event will take place reception March 21 at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

Bishop announces pastoral assignments as of July 1

By Kiply Lukas Yaworski

Bishop Donald Bolen has announced a number of pastoral appointments and departures, which come into effect on July 1, 2014:

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Fr. Marvin Lishchynsky, who has been studying Canon Law in Ottawa, will return to Saskatoon. He will continue as Pastoral Administrator for the diocese, a position that has been empty in the diocese, will return to the diocese. He will work as a priest moderator at St. John Bosco parish in Saskatoon, on a pastoral team with Parish Life Director Matthew Courchene.

Fr. Clement Amofah, who previously served in the diocese, will return to Saskatoon, after completing his studies in Canon Law, and will become the Chancellor of the diocese as well as the Adjutant Judicial Vicar. He will also serve as Priest Moderator for St. Mary, Lanigan and Holy Rosary, LeRoy on weekends, serving at Parish Life Director Judy Schmit.

Fr. Paul Papproski, OSB, who was an associate in Lusasset and LeRoy, will now serve as full-time associate pastor at St. Augustine’s parish in Humboldt. Fr. Epiphanius Mansah will continue as Pastor of St. Augustine, Humboldt, Assumption of Our Lady, Marysburg, Holy Trinity, Pilger, and St. Simon the Canaanite, Bum. Fr. Greg Roth, who has been serving as associate pastor in Humboldt, has been appointed pastor of St. Peter parish in Unity and St. Mary Parish in Tramping Lake. Fr. Johny Mangalath, VC, who has been serving in Unity and Tramping Lake, has completed his doctorate, and the superior general of his Vincentian community in India has called him to a new assignment.

Fr. Fred Caylan, who has been serving in the Wadena Pastoral Region, is returning to serve in his home diocese in the Philippines. Fr. Robert LeRoy on weekends, working with Parish Life Director Judy Schmit, who has also been serving in Rome, will serve as half-time associate pastor at St. Augustine’s parish in Humboldt; Fr. Epiphanius Mansah will continue as pastor of St. Augustine, Humboldt, Assumption of Our Lady, Marysburg, Holy Trinity, Pilger, and St. Simon the Canaanite, Bum.

The amalgamation of two of the diocese’s deaneries was also recently announced. In consultation with the parishes in both deaneries, the Saskatoon Rural and Outlook deaneries will be merged into a single Saskatoon Rural Deanery. The chair of the Saskatoon Rural Deanery, Fr. Marvin Lishchynsky, will become the combined deanery, from the former Out- look region. We hope to have that in place before fall deanery meetings,” said the bishop.

The diocese of Saskatoon’s 80th anniversary was celebrated with a Mass and gala reception March 21 at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

Visitors to St. Paul’s Co-Cathedral in February took over displays and historical items at an 80th anniversary “Where It All Began” presentation by pastoral associate Brigid Fuller in February. The diocese’s Paschal Holy Thursday Mass and 80th anniversary celebration was celebrated with a Midnight Mass March 21 at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

The annual Saskatoon March For Life takes place on Mother’s Day, May 11 from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m., along College Drive. This is a peaceful rally of families and persons who support the right to life movement, says Denise Roth of Campaign Life Coalition Saskatchewan. “It is a gentle reminder to the general public that abortion is wrong, that women suffer from abortion and that we should not be paying for abortions through our taxes. It is also a day where we thank our mothers for the gift of life,” she said. Signs are provided and following the march there is a short presentation and refreshments are served. Sponsored by Campaign Life Coalition Saskatchewan, this event will take place reception March 21 at St. Paul’s Cathedral.

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“God is on earth, he is among his people,” Bolen said, quoting St. Basil’s words about the Incarnation. “And the Lord does not only invite us to look at the past... but we are invited to also look to the present, to see the ways in which God is drawing near to us here and now.”

In a reflection on the gospel passage about the Good Samaritan, Bolen said that Jesus is the one who comes to us in the wounded and those needing our help, and Jesus is also the one who burdens our wounds and walks alongside us.

“In Jesus is also the one who sends us out to do likewise,” said Bolen. That instruction serves as a good path to take for the next 80 years of diocesan life, he said.
Justice and Peace

STM conference explores future of relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians

BY BLAKE SITTLER

St. ThomasMore College, the Catholic college on the University of Saskatchewan campus in Saskatoon, hosted a conference March 8 entitled “Respect, Reconciliation and Renewal: Exploring the Future of Indigenous/Christian Relations,” an event including elders, church leaders, community members and academics. The goal was to discern STM’s role in the process of healing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. Giving the conference, STM’s Director of Mission and Ministry, facilitated and introduced the day. She began by recognizing that the workshop was being held on Treaty 6 land.

The gathering opened in the STM chapel. The 70 participants gathered in a large circle as Lyndon Linklater of the office of the Treaty Commissioner facilitated a smudging ceremony under the guidance of the elders. Smudging is a traditional ceremony that many Aboriginal people practice, using aromatic burning herbs to cleanse themselves of any negative feelings or thoughts, in order to communicate in a healthier manner. Linklater explained that a smudging ceremony has a number of different uses, including to purify a setting, to clear negative energies from a space, and to prepare for healing and spiritual activities.

The morning consisted of a panel from three perspectives — Aboriginal, historical, and Church — that examined the context in which Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians find themselves today. Mary Lee, a Cree elder, originally from Chicklak, spoke of her childhood and how she feared speaking about her culture or of participating in any traditional ceremonies. “We are a very misunderstood people,” she said.

She described how she experienced racism in her school when children would chase her and try to rub dirt on her to make her look darker. “I was a good athlete because I had to run for my life after school every day.” Lee spoke of the STM conference as a place where concrete reconciliation continues. “We need to tell our stories so that we don’t hold on to the anger...if we learn even one name...we’re bound to be wondering what that name was.”

Lee also spoke about the importance of young Aboriginal people learning Cree to give them pride in their history. “The Cree language is the future,” she said.

Dr. Timothy Foran, who works at the Canadian Museum of History, shared some of his research that focuses on interactions between Aboriginal peoples and Euro-Canadians. This led to a discussion about the role the early missionaries played at various times, ranging from vanguards of colonialism, to well-meaning evangelizers, to periodic advocates for the Aboriginal people.

Foran explained that the Church had a three-fold plan to evangelize the “new world” through the sacraments, preaching and prayer, and the now notorious boarding schools. “We have to enter into this dialogue with the awareness that we either all win or we all lose,” he stated.

Weisgerber stressed that non-Aboriginal Canadians need to break down the walls of falsehood that support racist attitudes. To this end, he ensured that when he was Archishop of Winnipeg that every priest under his leadership participated in Returning To Spirit, a program designed by both Aboriginal and Church leaders, aimed at reconciliation.

Weisgerber quoted Pope Francis about the need for on-going dialogue and reflection. “We need to get to know each other better so that we can see that the Spirit has sown there in each other as a gift for us.”

Weisgerber also described the moving experience of being spiritually adopted by four Aboriginals as a sign of their forgiveness and love.

“...in adoption, both sides say, ‘You’re not going to lose your baby, it’s about losing touch...we’re going to stay here and work out our differences...and this is where we meet God...in the ‘otherness’ of others.”

Littlechild spoke about the various types of reconciliation needed: financial, legal and linguistic, as well as a reconciliation of history, in which the story of the Aboriginal people will be more fully understood and taught.

“Faith groups are going to be very instrumental in reconciliation moving forward,” he said.

“There are many steps between truth and reconciliation. It is a journey of forgiveness and justice — and healing. Then you can talk about reconciliation,” he said. “For me, in broad strokes, I think relationships are getting better...not only between the federal government and First Nations, Metis and Inuit but among us all,” he concluded.
STR8 UP conference: Gang recovery through healing, kinship and a ‘jobs not jails’ strategy

By Kiply Lukas Yaworski

A recent sold-out conference in Saskatoon was a powerful experience of solidarity, with a diverse crowd of ex-gang members, representatives of government, police, church and community all coming together to reflect on the need to heal the root causes of gang involvement: poverty, trauma, addictions, and the inter-generational legacy of racism and abuse.

Some 650 attended the 10,000 Healing Steps: Resilience and Community conference held Feb. 5-6 at TCU Place.

The conference involved both STR8 UP, 10,000 Little Steps to Healing, Inc. – a Saskatoon organization helping young men and women leave the violence and despair of a gang lifestyle and find hope and healing to become good parents, faithful partners and responsible citizens – and Homeboy Industries, a much-larger gang recovery organization based in Los Angeles. Representatives of both groups offered insights and powerful testimonies of hope and healing.

The founders of the two organizations – who are both Catholic priests – were opening speakers. Fr. André Poilièvre of STR8 UP and Fr. Greg Boyle, SJ, founder of Homeboy Industries, share a common vision of walking in friendship and compassion with those trying to turn their lives around.

Partnerships

The conference was organized by STR8 UP in partnership with the Menomonee Central Committee, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, the Aboriginal Education Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan, the Saskatoon Crime/Gang Reduction Strategy, Saskatoon Police Service, the Aboriginal Student Community Union. The conference was also supported by the national Moving Forward Together campaign of the Canadian Catholic Church.

In opening the conference, Poilièvre emphasized appreciation for the work of the organizing committee and the support of the community, and he thanked the young men and women who have had the courage to change their lives in the face of huge challenges.

“Our thanks and respect to all past and present STR8 UP members for your courage, your strengths, your tenacity. You are truly the heroes of this conference,” Poilièvre said.

Paths of healing

Stories of those on long roads of healing were heard throughout the two days, presented by both ex-gang members and those who walk with them.

David Johnson, a young father of two daughters, described his earliest years, born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and abandoned by his mother.

“When my mom was pregnant with me, she was incarcerated for stabbing and killing my dad. So before I was even born, I was already in jail,” he said.

“Right from the delivery room I was put into the system, and I bounced around foster homes,” Johnson described. “I went through all the abuse, all the horror stories you hear about: the sexual abuse, the physical abuse, the emotional abuse.” Eventually, addictions and gang involvement led him down a dark and dangerous path.

After encountering Fr. André, and hearing his explanation of the medicine wheel, Johnson said he realized that healing was possible. Johnson joined STR8 UP and did everything the program asked of him: dropping gang involvement, dealing with his addictions, living honestly and with humility, and sticking with the program for at least four years.

“STR8 UP has given me so much – it has given me hope,” said Johnson. “I’m lucky to have somebody in my corner who cares about me.”

As a result, Johnson’s life has turned around. “Eight years ago, I wanted to run the streets, now I run a house. I used to get money, now I make a living. I used to want to die young, now I’ve got something to live for. This is what STR8 UP has done for me.”

Similar stories of healing echoed throughout the conference – in presentations by other ex-gang members as well as Poilièvre, and Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries and author of Tattoos on the Heart.

Homeboy model

For those leaving gangs in Los Angeles, Homeboy Industries offers a wide range of support and programs to address mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence issues, while also operating businesses – such as a bakery, a diner, and a silk-screening shop. These businesses help fund the support services, as well as providing transitional employment and job skills to ex-gang members.

This “jobs not jails” model is something that STR8 UP is striving to emulate, said board member Diann Bloch.

The fundamental kinship between human beings was the focus of Boyle’s opening address, which followed presentations about STR8 UP methods and goals.

“STR8 UP makes something happen. It imagines a community of kinship such that God might in fact recognize it,” said Boyle of the Saskatoon group.

“We must come to a realization that ‘we belong to each other,’” he added, quoting Mother Teresa.

The benefits of walking alongside recovering addicts and former gang members go two ways, he stressed. “It’s mutual.”

Other conference presentations included an overview of gangs in Canada by sociologist Mark Totten, information about agencies working collaboratively presented by Sgt. Craig Nyfors of the Saskatoon City Police, and a panel discussion.

Breakout sessions addressed a number of related issues: community-wide approaches to gang intervention and recovery, Circles of Support and Accountability, ways of encouraging social enterprises such as those created by Homeboy Industries, and a youth session led by members of the two gang recovery programs, Homeboys and STR8 UP.

Lives matter

Boyle and Justice Murray Sinclair of the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission were keynote speakers at the banquet which also included entertainment by comedian Maureen Belanger.

Youth are never seeking anything when they join a gang, Boyle stressed. “They are always hearing something, always.”

To offer a “treatment plan” for those caught up in gangs, it is vital to have the right diagnosis, and to recognize the fundamental need for healing, he described.

Citing scripture, Boyle posed the question: “how do we obliter ate once and for all the illusion that we are separate?”

He added: “Our health as a community may well reside in our ability to stand in awe at what the poor have to carry, rather than to stand in judgment.”

Boyle urged his listeners to strongly resist an idea that has taken root in the world: the mistaken idea “that there might be lives out there that matter less than other lives.”
Refugee sponsorship, collaboration focus of ecumenical consultation

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAVORSKI

Finding ways for Christian churches to work together to collaborate in refugee sponsorship was the goal of a recent consultation held in Saskatoon.

Some 50 representatives of local churches and other organizations representing the three major groups that care about refugee sponsorship and how they might work more closely together for the benefit of refugees resettled safely in the community.

The consultation included an introduction to the plight of refugees in the world and an explanation of the pioneer sponsorship system in Canada, as well as presentations by local groups about their experiences of refugee sponsorship, and round-table discussions about creating a stronger sponsorship community.

The Feb. 26 event was organized by local representatives of several Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) groups: Dana Kushel of the Mennonite Central Committee, Ellen Erickson of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, Erickson said that refugee sponsorship is not always simply a matter of a family approaching a church asking for help to bring over relatives they left behind. Many refugees who desperately need a place of safety do not have any family contacts outside the homeland they are fleeing.

“The archdiocese of Toronto has some one to midtown Manhattan to come find people who need sponsorship...”

In Canada, there is an eight-month turnaround coming from a central processing office. For instance, sponsoring an Iraqi or Syrian refugee out of the Middle East can take between 22 and 24 months in the embassies of there and eight months here, noted. “We’re looking at 30 months before we’re going to see the family.”

Klaus Gruber noted that under our Canadian law, it is possible to resettled to Canada must pay for their medical exam and background checks and the support community. Since most refugees have nothing, and can’t afford these expenses, Canadian governments offer them a loan that they must later repay, with interest. This is an additional burden for refugee families struggling to start a new life in Canada with debt up to $10,000, he said.

Sponsorship experiences and benefits

The consultation included presentations by representatives of sponsoring groups – Forest Grove Community Church, Nest Saskatoon, St. Martin’s United Church and McClure United Church – along with administrative responsibilities of refugee sponsorship.

For John and me, this has been an amazing opportunity to serve God, to rise to the challenges put in front of us and this family,” said pastor of Forest Grove Church, which has undertaken refugee sponsorship of a family from Eritrea, who lived for many years in limbo as refugees in Sudan.

Sponsorship provides an opportunity to help on God, to deepen relationships in the church community, and to form a bond with the refugee family, the Pearsons described. “Probably for the rest of our lives we will be friends with this family,” said.

Rev. Darren Wooff of St. Martin’s United Church said the consultation was a helpful way to connect with groups in the community who are engaged in refugee sponsorship.

There is potential for future partnering among groups,” Sittler said. This might eventually include an ecumenical sharing of resources, such as jointly funding a staff person to take on some of the often daunting administrative tasks associated with sponsorship, he noted.

In the meantime, the diocese of Saskatoon will continue with its Office of Migration, established in 2012 with a bequest from the late Mr. Paul Donlevy and family, set up to assist in welcoming newcomers and to administer the diocese’s role as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder.

Longtime volunteer Ellen Erickson was hired to coordinate the office in a half-time position. As she now prepares to retire, the diocese is seeking a half-time person to provide this administrative and technical support to parishes and groups involved in refugee sponsorship.

Deadline to apply is May 28.

Holy Spirit parish funding

Holy Spirit Catholic parish in Saskatoon, recently announced that the parish will financially support the diocesan Office of Migration for three years. This support will be a huge help in continuing the ministry, Sittler said, expressing the diocese’s enormous appreciation to the parish for their support.

For many years Holy Spirit parish has been actively involved in working with the diocesan Office of Migration as a way to help the entire diocese in the important work of helping refugees, he said.
St. Mary’s sponsors family fleeing religious persecution

By Kiply Lekan Yavorski

The very word “cold,” the heat of 17 different kinds of chili and the warmth of community characterized a refugee sponsorship fundraising and awareness event held Jan. 26 at Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Saskatoon.

The Chili Cook-Off included a panel of judges selecting the winning chili entry (submitted by parishioner Carol Denis), as well as a silent auction, displays about refugee-producing countries, and a talk by the father of one family recently welcomed to the community.

“Thank you for everything that you did to help us,” said guest speaker Mesmer Mesmer, who came to Canada to study together with his wife Hajar and two young daughters, fleeing from persecution and danger in their home country of Eritrea and then as a refugee in Sudan.

“Whatever we want to tell you today is that Saskatoon is not cold. You have been very warm for us in all aspects,” said Mesmer, smiling broadly, and emphasizing his family’s gratitude for the parish’s help and support: “Thank you. Thank you.”

The Mesmer family came to Saskatoon as a family-linked sponsorship supported by relatives Glahyde and Lejam Petros, members of Our Lady of Lourdes Parish. The application was administered through the diocese of Saskatoon’s role as a Sponsorship Agreement Holder, with the parish providing friendship and additional help as needed.

Describing the terrors of life in Eritrea under an oppressive regime, and the hopelessness experienced as a refugee in Sudan, Mesmer said there were times when he and his family “felt like the hundreds of refugees from his country who have died on the Mediterranean Sea in recent months. Thankfully, family member Glahyde in Canada convinced his family to hold fast, he described.

“She gave us hope so we could bear all the hardships we had in Sudan,” he said, describing how Glahyde said she would approach her Catholic parish community in Saskatoon for help.

“We said: ‘Oh, there is something else we can do and we want to save us from the risks that we were thinking of,’” said Mesmer.

The family received a life number, but still had to wait about three years before fleeing to arrive in Saskatoon.

“But because of that atom-sized hope, we could feel time passing fast.”

For those who do not know the situation in Eritrea, it can be difficult to comprehend why people risk their lives to escape, Mesmer said, describing persecution and violence, and the reality that people are killed, disappear, or are treated “just like property, not like a human being.”

Mesmer said he loves his homeland, its culture and relationships, “but, due to the persecution, I risked my life going to Sudan, knowing that the chance is one in a thousand, because the rule there is shoot to kill — but staying in Eritrea is more difficult than that.”

A Christian refugee from Eritrea who fled Sudan is set up to collect donations of household items, clothes, food, moving, driving… and maybe most importantly the “small gestures” that compassionately reaches out to those in need. Retired Parish Life Director Sharon Goodwin, as well as Erickson, also attended the event, continuing years of encouraging the parish to welcome new comers.

“The last year, we have been actively involved with five different families. We have made every effort,” reported June Rivard of the parish refugee committee. Four of the families are full sponsorships supported by St. Mary’s Parish, and the fifth is a partial sponsorship supported by another parish, she noted.

Opening the Chili Cook Off, pastor Fr. Phong Pham prayed that the community would continue to nurture the “growing seed” that compassionately reaches out to those in need. Retired Parish Life Director Sharon Goodwin, as well as Erickson, also attended the event, continuing years of encouraging the parish to welcome new comers.

“Our Lady of Lourdes highlights refugee outreach

By Kiply Lekan Yavorski

Shahid, a Catholic Christian from Pakistan, and his wife Sarwat — a Muslim who converted to Christianity — are another example of family fleeing from persecution in Pakistan, under a full refugee sponsorship undertaken by St. Mary’s parish.

The couple spent seven years in Malaysia, where they were welcomed by a Catholic parish and the diocese. Eventually, they were able to escape back to his wife and children.

Shahid was able to escape — something he believes is a miracle. Fleeing in just his underwear, he was assisted by a Christian who had to pay for visas and transit through the bank, he said.

Years of trying to flee their difficult situation in Malaysia left the family feeling great despair and fear, Shahid described. “I thought maybe we would die in that country.”

However, family members and fellow Christians urged the couple to persevere, and provided financial assistance when they could. “A refugee in Malaysia cannot work, cannot do anything. We considered paying officials for any kind of help. The police knew their story as a Christian couple, and they were forced to flee danger several times, he said.

The Catholic Church in both Pakistan and Malaysia was unable to do anything to help the family, Shahid reported. Christian churches live in fear of violent repercussions falling upon already-besieged Christian communities.

Shahid believes that it is only by the help of God that the family was able to come to Canada. “St. Mary’s parishioner Nadeem Bhatti, another Catholic Christian, who also fled Pakistan for several years to get this new refugee family safely to Canada. Shahid did not personally know the family, but heard their story from a Christian friend who attended a Catholic youth conference in Malaysia. Shahid helped the family in the Canadian process to sponsor the couple to Canada.

Bhatti did not personally know the family, but heard their story from a Catholic shepherd who had attended a Catholic conference in Malaysia. Bhatti helped them in the Canadian process to sponsor the couple to Canada.

“St. Mary’s parish is eager to help them get settled.”

Meanwhile Shahid wants Canadians to know about the suffering endured by Christians in Pakistan and Malaysia. “No one is helping,” he said. “We’re enduring persecution, often for many years, for their Christian faith.”

As a Christian couple, they were welcomed at Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Saskatoon as refugees fully sponsored by St. Mary’s parish. The one thing is to see how to get out of Sudan. That is why many young men and young women — they risk themselves, and go through the Sahara to reach Israel. We go to Libya and then to Spain and risk themselves on the Mediterranean Sea.”

Mesmer is now working as a youth programmer at the Open Door Society. He described the beauty of his home country of Eritrea and a longing that one day he might return, and welcome his new Canadian friends to his homeland.

“We experienced a lot of difficult things as human beings, but the day was elected in the Saskatoon airport, and the way we were welcomed as members of our church, and our new home and new beginning,” he said.

July Rivard and Our Lady of Lourdes pastor Fr. Phong Pham at the parish Chili Cook-Off, held to raise awareness about refugee sponsorship.
Diocesan focus on poverty issues includes reports from parishes

St. Mary, Lanigan

- Fundraisers are held for devastated families when needed - involving Catholic Women’s League (CWL), Knights of Columbus (KC) and the parish - Charity
- Operation Christmas Child is held annually - St. Mary parishioners prepare boxes of gifts and supplies for children in poor areas of the world - Charity
- Mass is offered when someone is sick involving CWL and the parish - Charity
- Donations to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal involving the CWL, KC, and the parish - Charity and Justice
- Monetary donations are available for those recovering from addictions to alcohol and/or drugs as needed - involving CWL, KC and the parish - Charity
- Participated in the Red Letter Campaign in Spring 2013, encouraging people to write to the provincial government about ending public funding of abortion - Justice
- Monthly donation to Development and Peace by the Catholic Women’s League in the parish - Justice and Charity
- World Day of Prayer was hosted in Spring 2013 with the theme “I was a stranger and you welcomed me…” involving the CWL and the parish - Charity
- Birthday parties are held at nursing homes, in addition to regular visits - involving the CWL and the parish - Charity
- Collect stamps for missions - involving the CWL - Charity
- Support for foreign missions - involving the CWL and the parish - Justice and Charity

Poverty is a Justice and Peace theme in the diocese of Saskatoon for 2013-2014, with a focus on encouraging, initiating and highlighting projects and enrichment undertaken by parishes. Here are some of the ways that parishes are working in charity and in justice to lend a helping hand and work for change, to address causes of poverty, and to alleviate the suffering that it causes.

Check out the website as other parishes continue to submit their initiatives: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/office-justice-and-peace/poverty-justice-and-peace-parish-reports

St. Eugene De Mazenod, Luseland

Assumption of Our Lady, Kerrobert

Immaculate Conception, Major Our Lady of Grace, Dodsland:

The 5% Pledge - Beginning after the 2013 harvest season, these four parishes decided that five per cent of their combined collection would be directed to a local charity. Each month, one of the Parish Pastoral Councils (PPC) in Luseland / Kerrobert / Dodsland / Major chooses a local charity to support.

For example, St. Eugene de Mazenod PPC recently selected the Luseland Food Bank. As part of the 5% Pledge, parishioners receive information about the work of the organization being supported, and awareness is increased through verbal announcements at Mass and by ongoing information in church bulletins.

Prayer for Justice and Peace – In Lent 2014, St. Eugene de Mazenod parish at Luseland began praying a special prayer for justice and peace after the Prayers of the Faithful at Sunday Mass (see prayer, below, to the right). The reason for the prayer was explained by the pastor and members of Parish Pastoral Council.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Wishart & St. Joseph, Kindersley

Loose Change for Change – Beginning in January 2014, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Wishart and St. Joseph in Kindersley are both taking up a second collection of brunch events, and helping to increase awareness. The project is being promoted through parish programming, announcements, bulletins and posters.

Holy Spirit, Saskatoon

Coffee House at KAP (the Kinsmen Activity Place) - On the third Wednesday of each month from noon to 2 pm., members of Holy Spirit parish assist McClure United Church in an outreach/coffee house project at KAP, which is home to a variety of helping organizations and community outreach groups and programs. Coffee and food are served to drop-ins at KAP by the volunteers involved in this parish ecumenical committee project.

Holy Spirit CWL and Knights of Columbus councils are also donating proceeds of brunch monies raised as well as providing education at council and parish levels. Promotion has been undertaken by posters and by word of mouth. The number of drop-ins varies, depending on the time of year. What began as a coffee house was transformed into a lunch program to meet the need.

L’Arche Barbecue - This come and go event was held July 31, 2013, organized by the Holy Spirit ecumenical committee in conjunction with McClure United Church. It was a family-focused casual barbecue, with proceeds going to L’Arche.

The Knights of Columbus assisted with the event. Holy Spirit CWL and Knights of Columbus councils are also donating proceeds of brunch monies raised, as well as providing education at council and parish levels. Promotion happened through the bulletin. The event attracted many families and was also attended by members of the Saskatoon L’Arche community. A total of $770 was raised and presented to L’Arche.

Refugee outreach and sponsorship - for many years, Holy Spirit in Saskatoon has sponsored refugees fleeing persecution and life-threatening circumstances around the world. The parish recently announced that it will fund the diocesan Office of Migration for three years, to assist the entire diocese with refugee outreach.

A Prayer for Justice and Peace (Luseland)

Come Holy Spirit, Help us to put our trust in your power of good to overcome evil, your power of love to overcome hatred.

Come Holy Spirit, Enlighten us with your wisdom and faith, to believe in a new world where fear no longer leads us to commit injustices, nor selfishness to bring suffering to others.

Come Spirit of Wisdom and Love, source of all good, teach us your truth and guide our actions in your ways of justice and peace.

“...I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us… in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them. The new evangelization is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to believe in a new world leads us to commit injustices, nor selfishness to bring suffering to others.

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium #198

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Come Spirit of Wisdom and Love, source of all good, teach us your truth and guide our actions in your ways of justice and peace.
St. Philip Neri, Saskatoon

- **Refugee Sponsorship** - An active committee has been in place for many years, resulting in the sponsorship of several families. The current sponsorship will soon come to an end, opening up the possibility of applying to sponsor a Christian family from Syria in the near future. The needs of refugee families are at times met by advertising in the Sunday bulletin. Funds are raised through the weekly collection, using special envelopes, springtime tomato plant sale, sale of fair trade goods from Ten Thousand Villages, (held twice per year before Mass in the welcome area)

- **The Bridge on 20th** – receives financial support from St. Philip Neri’s annual Holy Thursday collection and the parish’s BAA rebate. Preparations scheduled around Mass included speakers explaining the mission and work of The Bridge on 20th, a faith-based outreach program, meeting the needs of the inner city.

- **Catholic Family Services** - St. Philip Neri partnered with Catholic Family Services to assist a low-income family with monthly housing costs/rent, with the parish donating $500 per month (see boxed news item, right).

- **Food Bank and Friendship Inn** - St. Philip Neri collects donations of most-needed food items on a monthly basis. Preparation of food is undertaken by parishioners. Members of the parish also help out at the depot as required.

- **Christmas Hampers** - Families or small groups from St. Philip Neri prepare and deliver 40 hampers, as requested, by St. Mary’s parish

- **CWL Clothing Depot** - Clothing items are collected and picked up regularly. Members of the parish also help out at the depot as required.

- **Extendicare** – A weekly lay-liturgy is held when a priest is unavailable. The Knights of Columbus also conduct a weekly bingo at Extendicare, coordinate yard work with parish youth, and organize a ‘coffee with the boys’ outing to Market Mall.

- **Missionary Work** – Outreach at Fort Providence NWT, began as a youth mission ministry initiative to visit and provide needed assistance. Now in its second year, an annual visit is planned, with supplies taken to a parish in Fort Providence. Parishioners have been asked to provide some financial assistance. This is a three-year commitment.

St. Gabriel Parish, Biggar

- The Knights put on a breakfast and gave the proceeds to Philippines relief efforts after the flood.

- St. Gabriel CWL holds a clothing drive in the fall and spring – proceeds from this go to a local charity such as the food bank or Kids’ Sport. Any clothing or articles that are not sold are donated to the CWL Clothing Depot in Saskatoon.

- The local Catholic school held a “We Day” to highlight ways to create a better world, both locally and globally.

- The annual Share Lent collection for Development and Peace is done as one of the designated parish envelopes – and parishioners are encouraged to donate.

- The St. Gabriel CWL supports an international family.

Cathedral of the Holy Family, Saskatoon

- **Prayer service** from the diocesan Justice and Peace office is used to open a meeting held at the Friendship Inn, as well as at Parish Pastoral Council meeting.

- **Visioning process** identified an emphasis on “Making a Difference in Our World” with one global strategy and one local strategy.

- **Saskatoon Friendship Inn** – The parish’s local strategy is to partner with the Friendship Inn. This year, Holy Family engaged 170 volunteers to serve 12 meals throughout the year at the Friendship Inn. That is more volunteers than are needed, so the parish is working with Friendship Inn to discern how to get more involved.

- **Haiti Mission** – As its global strategy, Holy Family sent 15 missionaries (10 teens and five adults) to work with Wings of Hope and St. Joseph Home for Boys in Haiti in August 2013. Knights of Columbus in the parish provided 15 wheelchairs for residents of Wings of Hope.

Holy Family will continue with mission trips to Haiti in 2014 and 2015. In 2016, the parish hopes to send missionaries to the Diocese of Bunda in Tanzania.

- **Chalice sponsorships** - Holy Family continues to sponsor children internationally through Chalice.

- **CWL Clothing Depot** - Holy Family regularly collects items for the CWL Clothing Depot.

- **Christmas Hampers** – Holy Family gives out 80 hampers at Christmas time.

- A variety of other ongoing efforts, such as outreach to inmates in prisons, etc.

**Bishops’ Annual Appeal**

**St. Francis Xavier, Vanscoy**

- St. Theresa, Asquith

- **St. Theresa, Asquith**

- St. Theresa gives a yearly donation of $500 to the Asquith school lunch program.

- **Share Lent** yearly donations are sent to Development and Peace.

- **Weekly food donations** are collected for the Saskatoon Friendship Inn.

St. Augustine, Saskatoon

- St. Augustine, Saskatoon plans to pause and reflect on all current works of outreach and charity from a justice perspective. This will include the Knights of Columbus and Catholic Women’s League members, as well as the Finance Committee, and Pastoral Council.

**Prayer, action and advocacy part of parish initiatives related to poverty**

With outreach to the community as one of the pillars of a parish vision of “Joyfully Building Up the Church,” St. Philip Neri in Saskatoon undertakes a number of justice and peace initiatives. This includes a helping hand for one local low-income family that is making a huge difference in their day-to-day existence and their hopes for the future.

Working in partnership with Catholic Family Services (www.ctsa.saskatoon.sk.ca), St. Philip Neri provides $500 in monthly support that goes toward the family’s housing costs, as a way to put them on the road to achieving greater independence and stability, explains parishioner Bill Fletcher. It is a five-year commitment.

A lack of safe, affordable housing created a stressful, transient life for this family, as they were plagued by a series of negative rental situations, describes Fletcher.Securing stable housing was a huge help, eliminating a pattern of having the children constantly uprooted and changing schools.

The head of the family has done well at various entry-level jobs, and now hopes to undertake training or education.

“It seems to be going very, very well,” Fletcher says of parish support for the family. The parish respects the family’s privacy and leaves it to them to determine the relationship they wish to have with parishioners, he adds.

“We do want to see this idea presented to other parishes as something they might consider doing – it is a way to really make an impact,” he says with conviction. Fletcher adds that St. Philip Neri or Catholic Family Services can provide information to other interested parishes about how the arrangement works.
Poverty awareness event co-hosted by Catholic diocese and Jewish congregation

By Kiply Yaworski

A Poverty 101 awareness event was held March 13 at the Jewish Community Centre in Saskatoon, co-hosted by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon and the Congregation Agudas Israel.

On display were words and photos by low-income women given disposable cameras as part of a Photovoice project to depict the impact of poverty and of policies related to housing, education, employment, childcare and income assistance. Tables were decorated with a quote from Gandhi: “Poverty is the worst form of violence.”

Poverty Costs

Information from the recently launched Poverty Costs initiative was available at another display table.

“Saskatchewan has a long legacy of strong, hard-working communities, and we are rightfully proud of our generosity and economic success. But 100,000 people in Saskatchewan continue to live in poverty, costing $3.8 billion in heightened service use and missed opportunities,” said Person.

“Poverty costs all of society in higher health care costs, justice system costs and missed opportunities for individuals, families and communities,” Person said, adding that in spite of a growing economy, poverty has not gone away.

Those with disabilities, recent immigrants, racialized and marginalized groups are all at higher risk for living in poverty. Person described the budget of a single mother with three children, living on social assistance.

Stress, fear, humiliation and anger related to living in poverty take their toll on individuals, families and the community, Charles said.

Together is better

However, resiliency and friendship are also part of living on a low income. “It’s a lot easier to get through poverty when you have a circle of supportive friends,” she said.

“The milk of human kindness is badly needed,” Charles added, calling on groups and organizations to keep the needs and the dignity of those living in poverty in mind when they undertake outreach or plan events.

“Be inclusive when you are arranging events,” she said. Having a low-income fee option, considering transportation or child care needs, and providing food at a refreshment table can all be invaluable to those who might be struggling on a low income, Charles pointed out.

Offering to sew curtains for someone who can’t afford such luxuries, or donating clothing to places that don’t charge a huge cost — such as the Saskatoon Food Bank or the CWL Clothing Depot at the Friendship Inn — might be other ways to help, she suggested.

The bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon and the rabbi of Congregation Agudas Israel spoke during the event, describing the moral imperative to address the issue of poverty.

A call to action

A number of Christian churches, the Unitarian Church and the Congregation Agudas Israel have signed a document of support for Poverty Costs, the bishop noted.

“Is it a movement to raise awareness and is it appealing to all the political parties and to each and every person to take the steps, to address poverty and to make it a priority?”

Boles called for all politicians and the entire community to “rally together around what is very obviously a common good.”

Benedict of上游 urged all those who are concerned about poverty to write their political leaders or to visit the website: www.povertycosts.ca to sign a letter of support for a comprehensive poverty reduction plan.

Hear the voice of God

Sometimes prayer is a call to hear the voice of God is making us uncomfortable, said Jodorkovsky.

To conclude the awareness evening, the rabbi led the gathering in prayer, asking God to “help us to understand that we are your partners in making this world a better place.”

Jodorkovsky asked God for a blessing upon leaders and politicians, and for the inspiration to challenge leaders to make fighting poverty a priority.

“Give us the strength and determination to work towards solutions and policy changes that can free our sisters and brothers in our province from the chains of poverty,” he said, praying “for strength, determination and willpower to do and not only to pray, to become instead of merely to wish.”
Priest serving in diocese fears for South Sudan

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Fr. Martin Vuni has followed news reports from South Sudan with great fear at the prospect of an escalating civil war and the ongoing suffering of the people in his homeland.

Originally from the Loa parish in the village of Pageri, near the Ugandan border, Vuni recently arrived in the diocese of Saskatoon on a leave of absence from his own diocese. He is presently providing ministry in parishes at Vanscoy, Delisle and Asquith, as well as at Samaritan Place in Saskatoon.

Distressed by news from his home country, Vuni said he hopes more Canadians will become aware of the situation in South Sudan, and will support the Canadian government and religious leaders to take an active role in working toward a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

“I have, almost on a daily basis, been in contact with the people at home, monitoring through online resources, through friends whom I can reach,” said Vuni. “The best chance for peace is advocacy. I am hoping that the world takes this crisis seriously.”

Violence in South Sudan broke out Dec. 15 between government troops and those who support the country’s former vice president. It is estimated that a half million people have been displaced by the current conflict, with tens of thousands killed.

With a population of some nine million, South Sudan achieved its independence from the Sudan in July 2011, through a peaceful referendum after decades of civil war. That fragile peace is now being threatened, along with so much of the rebuilding that has been undertaken in the north-eastern African country.

Christian churches can play a powerful role in working for peace, Vuni said. “There would not have been peace in 2005 if it had not been for the advocacy that the churches carried out through the entire world.”

The current conflict in South Sudan, it was the churches who worked to bring forward the viewpoint of the people, and to highlight their suffering, and the churches were the primary advocates for peace, Vuni noted, noting that too often in peace negotiations the views and concerns of ordinary people of the country have not been heard.

The present conflict is about politics, and not about tribalism as is so often portrayed in news reports, stressed Vuni. “This is not tribalism. It is about people who hold political power, who hijack the state and turn it into their own private organs for making money for themselves.” It is not tribalism. It is politics gone awfully bad.

Vuni said that the traditional tribal leaders in South Sudan are not the ones creating conflict. “Almost all of the churches are very honest, what they also want is peace. But their voices get drowned out.”

While many areas are still waiting for the government to rebuild schools or health centres, Vuni remains hopeful that things will again improve for South Sudan. “I do have hope. I think not to have hope for me would be a crime… that is how we have lived until now, and how we have kept going.”

The connections between Vuni’s home and Saskatoon are particularly close, thanks to a Saskatchewan grassroots non-profit organization, Friends of Loa, which has been connected to the Loa area since about 2005, raising funds to build and repair schools.

The connection with the Saskatchewan group started in the way that empowered local people to rebuild – had a big impact on the community. Vuni said that “The school, classrooms, staff rooms and now the hostel for girls were constructed, and the school children did not get numbers and they were accommodated in these facilities and they used these facilities.”

ED Feehan donations to children in Uganda

Inspired by Educational Assistant Judith Amolo (right), who was born in Kidera, Uganda, and who is still actively involved in her home community, ED Feehan Catholic high school’s social justice team has been raising money to supply soccer equipment and running shoes for the many orphaned children of that community. Judith Amolo is part of the locally-based organization called Friends of VAKU (“Victims of AIDS in Kidera, Uganda”). During yearly visits, she works with mothers and grandmothers who are living with the affects of HIV and AIDS and raising their children, grandchildren and other orphans throughout their village. Under the leadership of high school chaplain Gayle Brodie (holding soccer ball) and motivated by the need in Kidera, students have spent the last three years sewing soccer bibs, salvaging soccer balls and collecting running shoes for the children of Kidera. The supplies were delivered to the children in Uganda in February. (Photo by Kate O’Gorman)

BY MICHELE PETERS

“Kenya Orphanage Mission: Jesus Leads Us” is a non-profit organization under the umbrella of International Christian Mission Services. Administration committee members are Betty Posseberg and Michelle Peters of Saskatchewan and Jaclyn Sandmaier of Alberta.

The organization raises money to help build a boarding school in Kenya. The school’s goal is to house mainly orphans and raise them in the faith, while also providing excellent academics.

Last year, two young women from Saskatchewan, Ana Perrault and Chelsea Pratchler spent three months with the Sisters of the Handmaids of the Holy Child Jesus, who run the school and project.

There is a growing demand for a sponsorship program to increase the number of orphans in the community. Kenya Orphanage Mission is currently working on putting together this program so that the doors of the school may be made more accessible to children who have a committed sponsor. The planned sponsorship program will ensure that the cost of a child’s education and basic needs are met.

“It is with a lot of heartfelt gratitude to God and to you that I write to inform you that we have managed to complete the first floor of the dormitory block,” says Sr. Louise Onyenueas. This has been part of the mission’s goal. Right now, the girls have occupied the first floor while the boys are on the ground floor. The completion of the first floor is served to attract more orphans to the dormitory, thirty boys and thirty girls.

As with all projects, there are setbacks. In early February, the one and only school bus was destroyed by an electrical fire. A replacement of 3.5 million Kenyan shillings and the school is shopping for a used one at 2.5 million Kenyan shillings (about $34,000 USD). The convent and school were devastated by the incident and morale was at a low point. They have received 1.5 million shillings from the Saskatchewan organization since the accident. Kenya

Justice and Peace

YDA continues to support range of sustainable projects in South Sudan

Although violence has rocked parts of South Sudan since December, the Western Equatoria region where a Saskatchewan-based agency is encouraging sustainable development has not been affected, says director Ron Schira.

“The Yuba Development Agency (YDA) is continuing with development plans in the Tombura area, including a much-needed expansion to a health centre, he describes. “The present conflict has prompted fear and concern among area residents, and prevented Schira from making a planned trip to South Sudan this spring, but it is not deterring him from projects, he says.

“We refuse to stop unless there is no other choice. This is an example of what cooperation and an attitude focused on the common good can lead to,” he says of the hope-filled projects YDA is working on.

Local business owner Schira and former South Sudan resident Luka Pierre Francis (who initiated YDA as a way to help his home community) were committed to initiating projects that will be self-sustaining in the long run. “The community also wants to move forward as individuals, families and communities with the pride and dignity of knowing they can own their future,” Schira says. Opening in July 2012 as a YDA project, the Yuba Health Clinic treats up to 1,100 patients a month, and within a year of opening, it was receiving 100 per cent of its operating costs, says Schira.

The demand for medical services as the clinic has increased to the point that an expansion is now vital, he adds.

A machine to build bricks for the expansion project is now in place and this source of building materials will assist in getting the project completed in this remote region. Some 7,000 bricks have already been produced.

Other YDA initiatives include skills training, an agricultural program, partnering with the Catholic church and religious sisters in the area, and support for an orphanage.

Schira personally covers the cost of all administration and travel for YDA, ensuring that 100 per cent of any donation goes directly to development projects.

For more information about YDA, which is a registered charity (able to issue tax receipts) see the YDA website at: www.ydahelps.org. YDA news or contact Ron Schira at: ron@schira@asknet.net

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Local organization strives to meet needs of orphanage school in Kenya

Inspired by Educational Assistant Judith Amolo (right), who was born in Kidera, Uganda, and who is still actively involved in her home community, ED Feehan Catholic high school’s social justice team has been raising money to supply soccer equipment and running shoes for the many orphaned children of that community. Judith Amolo is part of the locally-based organization called Friends of VAKU (“Victims of AIDS in Kidera, Uganda”). During yearly visits, she works with mothers and grandmothers who are living with the affects of HIV and AIDS and raising their children, grandchildren and other orphans throughout their village. Under the leadership of high school chaplain Gayle Brodie (holding soccer ball) and motivated by the need in Kidera, students have spent the last three years sewing soccer bibs, salvaging soccer balls and collecting running shoes for the children of Kidera. The supplies were delivered to the children in Uganda in February. (Photo by Kate O’Gorman)
Memories of time in Brazil

By Sr. Claire Novecosky, OSU

As Sr. Louise Hinz and I prepare to leave our adopted home in Brazil and return to Saskatchewan this summer, many memories come to mind.

Back in January, 1973, as I stepped onto Brazilian soil for the first time in the city of Belem, our point of entry, I felt like I was stepping into a sauna. The warm, moist, air engulfed me and for three months I could not stop sweating.

Not only the warm air, but also the warmth of welcome of our Brazilian brothers and sisters has sustained me throughout these years. Exchanging family news, miles and miles away, but the people here told us many times, “we are your family,” and they are, with their welcoming, hospitable and open hearts.

The memory of the efforts made to implant the teaching of Vatican II in the Liturgy, in the formation of pastoral agents, in the catechetical renewal, in the creating of basic Christian communities, of having the Word as the source and inspiration for our activities, all left a deep mark on everyone involved.

The many liturgical celebrations throughout these years were highlights as we praised and thanked the Lord for young people committing themselves to the different pastoral works in the parish. We celebrated the adults who faithfully visited the sick and shut-ins. We celebrated the 25 years of the mission which made the presence of Al Herriott, one of the pioneer missionaries.

With periods in which there was no regular pastor, we celebrated the Word in many of our communities. It brought people committing themselves to our different pastoral works, inspiration for our activities, all left a deep mark on everyone involved.

The gap between the rich and the poor in Brazil is still sugar cane, though the harvesting is becoming more mechanized. Maceió is also developing into a Christian is meant to do, recognizing all the wonders that God has worked among us and God’s constant presence in our midst.

So we prepare to leave our beloved second homeland in celebration, grateful that our parish has been deeply blessed with the presence of the Carmelite priests who will continue to strengthen, encourage and bring to fruition any seeds we may have planted. Praise be to God.

Both arriving and departing involve blessings and challenges

Missionaries from the diocese of Saskatoon are leaving the Brazil Mission in the summer of 2014 and returning to Saskatchewan. Watch for details about an event Oct. 19 celebrating the Brazil Mission.

I remember driving from the Maceió airport in my first visits and seeing families living in shacks made of discarded tin and plastic. The houses, though not the least a bit better off, living in better houses.

The missionaries worked with social workers to improve the lives of their parishioners, a lot of biblical, liturgical and catechetical formation with them and, in this way, empowered them to assume their role as Christians in their communities.

However, the use of drugs has more recently become a big problem. The two Sisters of Mission Service currently working in São José da Laje, Sr. Jeanneand Sr. Mette-Noëlle Rondot, reported that they used to minister to families in the outlying areas of the town. However, a drug gang has moved into the area, making it unsafe for them to venture into that neighbourhood.

The two Ursuline Sisters, Sr. Claire Novecosky and Louise Hinz, used to walk from community to community in the evenings after dark. They had a novel way and it was safe. However, in the last few years they no longer feel safe going out after dark. The influence of small Pentecostal churches is evident, and we heard loud music and singing each evening.

Missionary church adapts to changing circumstances

I was stepping into a sauna. The warm, moist air engulfed me and for three months I could not stop sweating.

We often realized that we were not alone

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The memory of the efforts made to implant the teaching of Vatican II in the Liturgy, in the formation of pastoral agents, in the catechetical renewal, in the creating of basic Christian communities, of having the Word as the source and inspiration for our activities, all left a deep mark on everyone involved.

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The gap between the rich and the poor in Brazil continues after a long history. One of the main crops in the Maceió area is still sugar cane, though the harvesting is becoming more mechanized. Maceió is also developing into a tourist attraction because of its beautiful beaches.

But, what is most attractive in Brazil is its people. Despite their poverty, the people are friendly and energetic. There are lots of young people, in the thousands of the poor who have lived here.

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“Our diocese needs the mission more than the mission needs us”

By Bishop Don Bolen

Over 25 years ago, while a seminarian at St. Paul’s Seminary in Ottawa, I began hearing about the diocesan Brazil Mission from Fr. Bob Ogle, who was a missionary at that time. Although he had only been at the Brazil Mission for six years, it had changed his life and his way of thinking, and he was passionate about Brazil and Canadian Catholics acting responsibly towards our brothers and sisters in the Global South.

Upon returning to Saskatoon four years ago, I was eager to visit the Mission, but other commitments made it difficult. A few years later, inevitably, the word came that the four sisters serving in the Mission would be returning to Canada around the end of August of 2014, and I knew that it was “now or never.” I only had a week there, in late February, but it was a week to remember.

My first and constant experience during that week was exceptional hospitality. From being met cheerfully at the airport after an ill-planned 3 a.m. arrival, to being shushed about to the various locales of our Missionaries, who were expecting me, the hospitality was overwhelmingly gracious. And while the people of Alagoas are normally very graceful, it was clear that the hospitality was also a reflection of a relationship that had spanned 50 years.

The deep gratitude that local communities feel towards our missionaries past and present was readily apparent. Fr. Emile April arrived in Brazil when I was there, and walking down the street with him in Uniao dos Palmares they never got more than 10 metres before another person or group of people spotted him and came out to say hello and to welcome him back.

Accompanying Sr. Jeanine and Sr. Marie-Noëlle to visit a street Mass in São José da Laje was another adventure, with the deep affection for our sisters evident in so many ways.

Starting from their home of Santa Rita outside of Maceió, Sr. Claire Novecosky and Sr. Louise Hinz brought me to the Fazenda de Espirito Santo farm, where they have befriended and supported a residential program to assist those recovering from addictions. The next day we attended a Mass as they were thanked for their presence of many decades in the region. They are held in great esteem and much loved.

At Itabuque, where Fr. Les Paquin served prior to returning to Canada, a group of people came out to the church when they heard that Padre Les would never come back. We spent close to an hour simply sharing stories, drawn together by mutual affection and friendship for our brother Padre Les.

Over the past 50 years, our missionary priests built a bridge between two dioceses, two cultures, two peoples. They went to serve, and their service has been a gift for the people of Alagoas. In turn they received gifts from the experience.

It was very clear to me when Fr. Les was resident we were in Saskatoon that he had become part Brazilian, and this is the case for all that I encountered there, so I was able to connect with him as well.

The main purpose of my visit there was to greet friends who are dying of cancer. It was wonderful for the two of us to meet and still old times when we had worked together on a diocesan committee for land reform. That evening we had dined at a supper with some other people who had worked with us at the diocesan level during those years.

One advantage that we priests have when we return to the mission for a visit is being invited then to celebrate Mass with communities in various areas of the parish. It gives us an opportunity to meet many people at once and to be invited into some of the homes. One area whose people have invited me to celebrate Mass each time I go to Brazil is a farm area called Pindoba. It is a beautiful site with all kinds of fruit trees like banana, pineapple, coconut, mango, jaca, orange, etc., but the best part is that the people are overjoyed to see us again.

In Uniao dos Palmares itself, I caught the last few days of a ten-day festival in honor of St. Mary Magdalene, the patron saint of the parish. The main event is the procession on the afternoon of Feb. 2. About 20,000 people follow the procession and another 10,000 line the street to watch it go by.

The sights and sounds of this event are absolutely fabulous. There are usually about twenty floats with statues of saints, plus fireworks, people singing, people waving, people in long black dresses or robes fulfilling their promise to a saint, people taking pictures, and dogs weaving in and out. The procession lasts about two hours for those who follow it and about half an hour if you just watch it go by.

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The single most memory deeply pressed into my mind was that of accompanying Sr. Marie-Noëlle and two local parishioners to visit a slum area above São José da Laje.

The area has increasingly come under the thumb of drug lords and gangs, which has made life even more difficult for the local residents. Sr. Marie-Noëlle had been cautioned not to visit the area, but wanted me to experience ministry to the people there.

Sr. Marie-Noëlle and the two women went without fear into the slum, and went from home to home visiting people, giving hugs of support, asking how their families are doing, bestowing dignity by their affectionate presence. It was an extraordinary experience to see these good women bear Christ and bring his presence to others.

The Holy Spirit has been at work at both diocesan ends of this Mission, and it has been a source of life and blessing.

We will do well later this year to celebrate what has been lived over these past 50 years, to give thanks to our missionaries as we welcome them back to their other home, and to prayerfully discern how we will continue to live this covenantal relationship with the people of the Archdiocese of Maceió.

Relationships and care continue

By Fr. Emile April

In the years since my return from the Brazil mission in 2001, I have tried to continue a relationship with the people of the parish of Uniao dos Palmares by visiting every two years.

My visit in August of 2010 focused on the impact of the terrible flood at the end of June of that year. On my return there in 2012, I witnessed the efforts of the Archdiocese of Maceio to deal with the problem of women who had given birth during the aftermath of the flood. A project called Benvolte Bebe was created, toward which the diocese of Saskatoon, in a spirit of solidarity, contributed substantially.

This year, my visit was principally to renew friendships and express a continued interest and care for the people of Uniao dos Palmares, where the diocese of Saskatoon supported a mission for almost 40 years, from 1964 to 2002.

During my recent visit to the people of Uniao dos Palmares, there were a number of highlights. One of these was when I met Padre Cleirnaldo, the new pastor of the parish — a wonderful man who is not only filled with missionary zeal in supporting the small communities that make up the parish, but who is also very aware of the need for transparency with regard to the use of resources and the impact they have had in the early period following our departure from the parish in 2002.

Another important visit I made was to the family of a young lady who lives in the district called Padre Romanos — named after Fr. Don Macgillivray (a priest from the diocese of Saskatoon who served for many years in Brazil). Maria suffers from severe arthritis and other disabilities; she is unable to speak, but her big smile was enough for me to see how happy she was to see us. Since the last time I had visited her family, she had obtained a wheelchair for her, something for which she and her family are very thankful.

Padre Alde, an Italian missionary priest who had worked in another parish of the archdiocese of Maceio when we were in Uniao dos Palmares many years ago, had also returned to Brazil for a visit with the parish, but he and I were invited to the family of a young lady who lives in the district called Padre Romanos — named after Fr. Don Macgillivray (a priest from the diocese of Saskatoon who served for many years in Brazil). Maria suffers from severe arthritis and other disabilities; she is unable to speak, but her big smile was enough for me to see how happy she was to see us. Since the last time I had visited her family, she had obtained a wheelchair for her, something for which she and her family are very thankful.

The main event of his visit there was to receive the blessing of the statue of St. Philip’s parish ask me “How was the trip?” I start by saying that the weather was not hot for my body — then I quickly add that I had a wonderful time; it was partly holiday and partly an effort to maintain a continuing missionary presence in Brazil.

As the missionaries prepare to leave Brazil, it is very encouraging to see and hear what fond memories they have of the Brazilians, keep of the 50 years of having a Saskatoon mission team among them.
Four profess temporary vows as Benedictines

By Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB

Four novices at St. Peter’s Abbey in Muenster entered a new stage in their monastic journey, April 12, when they made their profession of temporary vows in Sts. Peter and Paul Church before Abbot Peter Novoceosky, OSB, the monastic community and friends and relatives.

The novices have now entered the juniorate, a period of discernment covering three years. The juniorate is the final stage of four and a half years of formation before final or solemn vows.

During the celebration, Novoceosky described visiting Fazenda da Esperança – Community of Hope, a drug rehabilitation centre in Brazil. He asked the 40 young men in that program what they felt was the most difficult part of their rehabilitation. Everyone agreed the most challenging struggle was community life, he recalled.

The Community of Hope rehabilitation program has a similarity to monastic life, in the way that it strives to bring a conversion of life in a community setting through prayer and work, Novoceosky said.

“There are many ways to seek God, whether through marriage, family, the single vocation, but the monastic way of life is guided by three pillars which are very similar to the Community of Hope,” the abbot commented.

Monastic life is grounded in vows which include stability (living in one community), conversion to a monastic way of life (daily change); and obedience (to the Rule of St. Benedict and the abbot). The juniors will be making a commitment to a new life that is centered in love, he said.

The four juniors first entered the monastery in September of 2012 and lived as candidates until March 2013, when they became novices for one year.

The youngest, Br. Stephen (Linden) Predy, 20, is originally from Saskatoon. He entered St. Peter’s Abbey after studying religious traditions for one year at the University of Saskatchewan through St. Thomas More College.

Br. Damian (Christopher) Weber, 37, comes from Hanover, Ontario. He completed a year of studies in theology at the Seminary of Christ the King in Mission, B.C. He resided in the diocese of Antigonish, Nova Scotia, where he lived and worked at Our Lady of Grace Monastery, doing maintenance and assisting in the retreat house.

Br. Dominic Leo, 43, was born in Bangalore, India and later moved to Vancouver. He worked as an Information Technology (IT) technician and computer program- ming analyst in Vancouver. He spent two years of seminary at the Benedictine monastery at Westminster Abbey in Mission, B.C.

Br. Benedict (Peter) van Ginkel, 31, is from Winnipeg. He is a musician and taught music in Winnipeg.

The ceremony for profession of temporary vows began with Abbot Peter asking the novices what they wanted of God and his holy church. They responded with, “We ask for the mercy of God and for the grace to serve faithfully in this community.”

The abbot and monastic community responded with approval to their request.

Prior to the ceremony, the novices wrote prepared statements (formulas) seeking entrance into temporary profession. During the celebration, each read his statement out loud and then signed it on the altar. St. Peter and Paul Church.

A traditional part of the ceremony for profession of temporary vows began with the singing by the juniors of the “suspira,” a prayer of openness to God’s love and guidance.

The abbot then presented the juniors with the Rule of St. Benedict and their monastic hoods saying, “Put on this clothing as a sign of your vocation; may you keep in your heart that dedication to the Lord which this habit outwardly proclaims.”

Gibney studying at seminary in Rome

By Kiply Lukev Yoworski

A lifetime of strong Catholic roots, service as an active member of the Knights of Columbus and a career as a sculptor slowly but surely led a young man to attend a total of five days in the monastery at Pontifical Beda College in Rome, an English-language seminary with roots in the United Kingdom and a focus on later-in-life vocations. This is also where Brother Cosmas Epifano, OSB, of St. Peter’s Abbey in Muenster is studying for the priesthood.

His studies have included scripture, theology, spirituality, pastoral theology, liturgy, philosophy, human development and church history. “The College has a very balanced structure of intellectual, spiritual, pastoral and human formation,” Gibney notes.

The young man from Muenster, a son of the late Hubert and Adeline (Duncan) Gibney, Ed Gibney recalls growing up in a family grounded in faith and love of the Church. His prayer life and commitment began to deepen when he was elected to the Saskatchewan Knights of Columbus state board some 12 years ago, serving on various positions over the years, before finally serving two-year term as State Deputy.

“I wouldn’t say there has been a flash of lightning or anything. It has been a steady call to discern,” he said in an interview before leaving for the seminary. Find the complete interview online at www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

Standing in back row (left to right): Maureen Smith-Windsor, Kent Smith-Windsor, Cathy Chatlain, Harvey Chatlain, Louis Roth, Dan Sautner, Maureen Young, Joe Bayda, Jerald Young, Russell Jacobucci, Mario Jacobucci, Jim Penna, and Jim Ramsay. Seated in front row (left): Madeleine Yasinski, Dave Yasinski, Denise Houjulet-Roth, Jeanne Syrene, Madeline Schroh, Barbara Blom, Marion Penna, and Melanie Ramsay.

Parents of priests and seminarians gather for friendship and support

By Denise Hounjet-Roth

In the last few years, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon has been blessed with a good number of vocations to the priesthood.

But there are no magazine articles, no pamphlets, no books or workshops for the family preparing to have their son ordained to Holy Orders. There are support groups for just about everything, but none for parents who have sons as seminarians.

So it was with the second gathering of POPS (Others Of Priests and Seminarians) was born about three years ago when Maureen Young (mother of Fr. Geoffrey Young) and I (mother of Fr. Gregory Roth) were visiting at a local coffee shop.

Shortly thereafter, Maureen Smith-Windsor (mother of seminarian Greg Smith-Windsor) joined the group and MOPS was becoming more than just a passing idea.

We would meet on a regular basis and talk about what it is like having a son as a priest, a deacon and a seminarian. We would discuss experiences, be a support to one another and share a lot of laughs.

The first organized MOPS event was held during Christmas 2012 at the Young home, with fathers of priests and seminarians also present. The group had grown to include other parents, and so that evening POPS – Parents of Priests and Seminarians – was born. It was a great evening of fellowship, food and refreshments.

The second gathering of POPS took place at the Roth residence on Dec. 15, 2013. The group now included parents of any priest serving the Saskatoon Diocese, parents who live in Saskatoon and have a son serving within an order such as the Oblates or Oblate Companions of the Cross, and parents who have a son serving the Eparchy.

Present at this gathering were parents of seminarians, parents of priests, parents of a bishop and parents of an archbishop. Harvey Chatlain (father of Archbishop Murray Chatlain) led the group in a prayer of grace and after enjoying a delicious lunch, the parents shared their stories.

It was a wonderful afternoon of joy, thanksgiving and getting to know one another. We look forward to many more gatherings!

POPS exists for support, fellowship and fun. We thank God for the gift of our sons and pray for a plentiful harvest of vocations to the priesthood.
Bishop Donald Bolen blesses sacred oils:

- Oil of the Sick - used in the sacramental anointing of the sick.
- Oil of Catechumens - for anointing at baptism.
- Sacred Chrism - during the Chrism Mass, the bishop mixes a sweet smelling balsam with the oil, and then all the priests present at the celebration join him in praying over the oil. Sacred Chrism is used at the celebration of baptisms, confirmations, ordinations and for the dedication of churches and altars. Being anointed with oil is a sign of the strengthening presence of Christ, “the Anointed One.”

Parish representatives from across the diocese received the oils.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski (All other photos by Tim Yaworski)
**Vocations and Diaconate Discernment**

**Permanent Deacons:**

**Living out a call to service**

By Paul Labelle, Deacon

My name is Paul Labelle and I am a permanent deacon. I am married to Linda and we have four adult children. Next December it will be 30 years since my ordination as a permanent deacon. When I think about it, it really doesn’t seem that long.

I am currently incardinaded in the diocese of Sault Ste. Marie, but presently living in Saskatoon.

The second, equally important, principle is the involvement of the community in the selection of candidates to the diaconate.

I have been a permanent deacon for 30 years now and during that time I have been particularly involved in the baptismal ministry and have been present on many occasions when the word of God has been proclaimed and the sacrament of baptism has been celebrated. I have also been present when a parish that seemed at the end of its life was reborn to new life and flourishing.

I have a deep respect for the diaconate ministry and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity. It is a privilege to be a permanent deacon and I am committed to following the calling that God has given me.

I believe that the diaconate is a necessary and important part of the Church’s mission and ministry. It is a ministry that is rooted in the Gospel and is grounded in the tradition of the Church.

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I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity and I am committed to following the calling that God has given me.
Most people might think the restoration of the permanent diaconate began in the Second Vatican Council. It actually can be traced as far back as the Council of Trent (1545-1563). However, it took the gathering of bishops at Vatican II in the 1960s that recognized the possibility of the permanent diaconate being restored as a stable Order of the Catholic Church.

However, many are not aware of what infused the Second Vatican Council to reintroduce this role in the church. It actually began with the arrest and imprisonment of some 2,000 Catholic priests in the Dachau death camp under the Nazis. During World War II, one out of every five deaths at Dachau was a priest.

These priest prisoners were kept at Dachau, known as “Der Priesterblock.” For some unknown reason, their imprisonment was to be daily, and even kept the Blessed Sacrament in their block. It was there that the priests began talking about the future of the Church after the war. How could the Church lead with so few priests available to such a deeply wounded flock?

One answer, they felt, would include bringing back an ancient order of service – the permanent diaconate. After the war, some of the surviving priests formed what they called “Der Priesterblock.” They believed the Holy Spirit was calling for a re-institution of the permanent diaconate. These Diacconate Circles included many lay people and clergy who were dedicated to circles of prayer, service, and charity. Among the notable members of this group were: Fr. Otto Pies, Fr. Wilhelm Schanourell and Fr. Karl Rahner of the Archdiocese of Munich to the Holy Father and the Church Fathers of the Second Vatican Council.

This movement gave new weight to the considerations of recreating the diaconate position. But it also calls us to attend to one of the ways that the Holy Spirit was guiding the council in making such a radical change in ecclesiology.

Ordination as deacon

Through my association with the Redemptorists, entitled as a “Lay Missionary of the Most Holy Redeemer,” I enjoyed a full life of service to God’s people, evangelizing through retreats, parish missions, and utilizing the gift of music to aid in this proclamation.

For 27 years I travelled across Canada in this role as a missionary. It was a joyful, powerful, and challenging experience of ministry in the church. I always credited the Redemptorists for fostering and providing me with such a life-giving and collaborative ministry. The shortage of priests beginning to press in on the Redemptorist communities, it was decided that I would be of tremendous help to their parish ministry (immediately at St. Joseph’s parish in Moose Jaw) if I took on a role of leadership there.

Most especially, the provincial of the order saw the benefit if I were to apply to then-archbishop of Regina. Rev. Peter Malan, to consider me for ordination to the diaconate.

This whole process went much more quickly than I could have imagined, as my theological training had already been complete with my having earlier attained a Master of Divinity degree. My many years of experience both on the mission team and as a parish lay minister meant that I – along with Joe Lang – were “fast-tracked” for one year of formation before ordination to the diaconate.

During this year, there was a great deal of consultation with the priests of the archdioce of Regina, our formation directors, and for me, the people of St. Joseph’s parish, who were very encouraging and positive. Added to this discernment process were the many conversations we shared with our wives and families. Though the children were young, they became a part of the process as well.

I have to say that when Deacon Joe and I were ordained at Holy Rosary Cathedral on Sept. 3, 1999, the supportive voices of the archdiocese were etched in my soul, especially as we lay prostrate on the floor and the community sang the Litany of the Saints. To this day, tears flow every time I hear that version of the litany. It is the voice of the whole church like giant waves. It is the sound of you as you lie there on the floor. There’s a good reason why they put you on the floor first – because you would end up there eventually! Wow, what an experience of Church!

Ministry as deacon

Life and ministry did change after ordination. The best way for me to describe the difference is that my every prayer was evangelizing “through the Word.” Now as a deacon I was able to evangelize through both Word and sacrament.

I suppose a good example of this was when I help to prepare a couple for the sacrament of baptism or marriage as a lay person. I was able to walk with them to the actual service, and then watch as a priest took over the sacramental role of presiding.

As a deacon now, I am able to see the whole process through from preparation to celebrating the ritual itself. I am much more able to speak about the meaning and message of friendship with Jesus and his Church at the very event that we are celebrating.

Their “receptivity” is often much more heightened when someone has come to know them is speaking to them about faith, rather than someone who has not made that mutual journey.

We live in a sacramental Church. A Baptism was throughout their lives when they call upon the Church for these “sacramental moments” – birth, initiation, marriage, death – all opportunities for the Church to offer God’s people a much more deeper relationship with the Lord.

While much of this preparation is focused on lay ministers, we will continue to be done by them in community, there are times of heightened awareness when clergy, priests, deacons or even bishops teach, form and instruct from the “sacramental post” of the actual event. The integrity of their message often relies on a bond of friendship that they have formed with those who are entering into a sacramental commitment.

The reality of those receiving sacraments poses a wonderful opportunity for inviting them to become more committed Catholic Christian.

I feel uniquely and particularly called to preach the Word of God, sanctify through the sacraments, and help lead the community in the life of Christ.

There are many unanswered questions about the permanent diaconate but these will only find resolution by living through them, trusting the Holy Spirit will properly form those who have been called to this order.

As Adam said to Eve as they gardened the garden: “My dear, we are entering a time of transition.”

Vocations and Diaconate Discernment

Roots of restoration of diaconate lie in Dachau death camp, describes Deacon Bob Williston

By BOB WILLISTON, DEACON

Mark and Darcie Lich of St. Patrick’s parish in Saskatoon were among those reflecting on vocation during three Congress Days across the diocese Jan. 25, Feb. 1 and March 8.

The couple reflected on their call from God to grow in holiness through the sacrament of marriage, describing how their understanding of their vocation has evolved over the past 15-plus years of marriage and sharing their walk with God as a couple and a family.

Here are a few of their insights:

• “As part of a Congress Day event that we attended, our archbishop challenged us to live in a way that expresses God’s truth and love in the world. It is a way that expresses God’s truth and love in the world. It is a way that expresses God’s truth and love in the world. All love is as God loved us. That has always been our experience of vocation. The way I see it, being single is a consequence of my following my calling rather than my vocation in itself.”

• “I have always experienced a deep sense of calling in my life and have tried my best to respond to those callings.”

• “As much as I am called to be a disciple, I am also called to be part of a community of disciples. I may be single, but I am deeply connected.”

• “In being called to be a disciple, I have also been called to lay pastoral ministry. I know that many people share that calling and some are married, some belong to religious communities – but I happen to live out that calling to ministry as a single person.”

• “We are never called to something for nothing. The call to ministry has been wired into my very being, and following that call has done nothing but give me life.”

Find more presentations by Gertrude Rompré and other Congress Day speakers at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/videos

Vocation: call to discipleship in single life

Religious Life

At Congress Day, Sr. Cindy Lewans of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary spoke about the call to religious life, with its focus on prayer, simplicity of life, self-offering and living in community. “My deepest joy has been companionsing others through hard times, to discover God and meaning in the midst of suffering,” she said.

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Young women find affordable rent, community, and spiritual enrichment at Discernment House

Discernment House in Saskatoon offers a unique housing and faith experience to young women.

Located in the University of Saskatchewan neighborhood, Discernment House is the home of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. Each year they open their doors to young women seeking affordable rent, an experience of community, a homey atmosphere, and opportunities for faith growth through prayer, reflection, spiritual direction and service.

Yvonne Dutallas is a university student majoring in anatomy and cell biology. “I am from Calgary and I moved here to continue my studies and be independent from my parents,” she explains. “I found out about the house through an acquaintance who is a believer in God. He wasn’t real for that time, I wasn’t much of a believer in God; my parents,” she adds. “I found out about the house through an acquaintance who is a believer in God. He wasn’t real for that time, I wasn’t much of a believer in God.”

She adds: “It has not been an easy road for me; this year I learned about my faith, enjoyed the structure of daily prayer, and discovered more about myself through the guidance of my spiritual director.”

Without a doubt, this experience has shaped my life, and I will continue to influence my environment. It has been a blessing to spend a year at the Discernment House.”

Joahnna Digal says that “I feel it not only transformed my life but also it has already touched my heart.”

“I learned that there is something so good about silence. Silence enables me to reflect about life, experience prayer and most importantly it helps me build a closer relationship to God... I am looking forward to what more this can be. I can see it as an opportunity, give me in terms of my spiritual needs and personal growth,” she adds.

The Sisters of the Presentation of Mary are now taking applications for September 2014. For more information contact: Sr. Evelyn Nedelec or Sr. Lucie Hamel at (306) 244-0726 or e-mail: sk.dhouse@gmail.com or see: www.presentationofmary.ca

Local discernment retreat provides desired direction

BY FRANCINE AUDY

Several years ago, I set a goal to walk the Camino de Santiago in September 2014, just before my 50th birthday. I desired to walk the historic pilgrimage trail in France and Spain as a way to take time to actively reflect on what God’s will is for my next 50 years.

God has shown himself faithful in my life beyond all reason, and proven to me abundantly that “I should not fear, because He is providing” for my needs. This has brought me to undertake the big task: to let go of my will, my agenda, and put God and his will for me first.

I first met Sr. Evelyn Nedelec, PM, two years ago, when I participated on another walk: a Hike and Pray weekend in June 2012. Since then, Sr. Evelyn invited me several times to participate in “Discernment Weekend I, Personal History” held in October and January of each year at Discernment House, 851 University Drive, Saskatoon, operated by the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary.

Each time, I either forgot about the discernment weekend, or thought: “I am too old for this!”

However, in November 2013, a discussion at work gave the impression that my employment might be precarious. Prompted to think about life priorities, I contacted the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary to see if they were still accepting people for the discernment retreat starting the next day. I was told to “come with the intent of entering into a journey with your life and the spirit.”

The retreat Jan. 10-12, 2014 at Discernment House was led by Sr. Lucie Hamel, PM; Fr. Mark Blom; and Fr. David Purcell, CSST, with 11 participants. Most were under 30 years old; I was the oldest participant.

It was an intensive retreat with a lot to reflect upon. Our three leaders introduced various methods for discernment, and the work began. We collected data/facts on our life through an abundance of questions in eight categories.

We reflected, prayed, revisited our answers and dug some more. Finally, we brought all that information and reflection together by articulating a personal “Spiritual Positioning” – a kind of mission statement for life.

We also learned the importance of letting go. First, we must let go of the most positive/influential event in our lives, so we can welcome what God wants to give us now, without still being mesmerized by what has gone before. Secondly, we must let go of the most negative event in our lives, so we can regain peace.

The weekend ended with each of us creating a Mandala for our “God moment.” A mandala represents unity, infinity. Like playful children we all drew a mandala – this allowed us to access something that was unconscious.

My mandala was entitled “Let go of safety, Let God guide me.”

At the end of this weekend retreat, I realised that I do not need to walk the Camino anymore, because I have reflected on God’s will for my next 50 years in a packed 2.5 days, without blisters and at a relatively bargain.

My dream now is to bring together a group of 10 to 15 mature adults and ask the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary to provide this same retreat. It could be a great activity for a group of Lay Formation alumni, people from various pastoral parish councils, or members of the Catholic Women’s League.

If this idea is of interest please contact: Francine_Audy@live.com
The 13th annual Marriage Appreciation Banquet

Marriage: a good return

By Blake Sittler

The 13th annual Marriage Appreciation Banquet and Dance was held March 22 at Holy Spirit parish in Saskatoon.

This annual event is held to give thanks for the many couples and priests who participate in any form of marriage preparation or enrichment across the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Harry and Judy Strauss were the keynote speakers, addressing the theme of “Marriage: A Good Return.”

The title of their talk came from the Book of Ecclesiastes 4:9: “Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor.”

Bishop Donald Bolen presided at Mass to begin the evening, and he introduced the keynote speakers at the banquet that followed. Bolen described Pastor Harry Strauss, an associate pastor at Forest Grove Community Church, as a pioneer of ecumenical relations in Saskatoon.

“We have high regard for you Catholic… and for your Pope,” said Harry. “He is capturing the attention of the world with his lifestyle.”

“Your celebration of marriage as a sacrament serves as a perpetual reminder of the sacredness of marriage… your [Engaged] Encounter weekends and your 2010 marriage conference were stimulating and inspiring,” he added.

Harry and Judy shared five returns that they receive from marriage: companionship, better communication skills, intimacy, children, and spiritual oneness.

“We have a regular date night where we go for walks or bike or just go out for fish and chips. The best kind of Facebook is over candlelight dinner,” Harry said.

They highlighted how a couple must plan for success in order to ensure the return of marriage is best.

For Harry and Judy this includes not putting themselves in the wrong place in the wrong time with the wrong person in order to avoid falling into an adulterous relationship. “This may sound conservative in this day and age,” said Judy, “but it works.”

Support for those grieving the death of a spouse

“From Mourning to Dawn” is an eight-week grief program designed to offer healing, encouragement and prayerful support for widows and widowers.

Offered through the diocesan Marriage and Family Life office, “From Mourning to Dawn” is held at the Catholic Pastoral Centre in Saskatoon in the spring and in the fall of the year, and is open to those who have experienced the death of a spouse within the past two years only.

“With a few exceptions, husbands and wives who live out their marriage vocation will at some point be left to mourn the death of their spouse,” notes coordinator Elan Ehresman. “Although we know this is inevitable, we can never be fully prepared to face all the challenges of the loss of our life partner brings.”

Since the first group met in September 2012, four grief groups (24 individuals) have embraced this journey. Groups have reunited for ongoing support after several months, and at Christmas all four groups came together to share their spirit of renewed hope and purpose.

Using the video series, “From Mourning to Dawn”, facilitators who have also experienced the death of a spouse engage with participants on a journey of transformation and healing. As participants share their grief experience and their pain, it is a process to work through. I truly enjoyed the other members of the group – very caring and understanding.

“I can’t change Harry,” Judy said, “but I can choose how I react to him. Through counseling I realized that when conflict arises, it is not the two of us battling each other, it’s that we have a problem that we need to solve together.”

The couple spoke of the importance of sharing affirmation and prayer on a daily basis. The discipline of their marriage forced them to think about sharing some part of their inner life with their spouse. It also allows them to stay on top of any issues that may be bothering them on a regular basis rather than letting them pile up.

Harry addressed the final return of their marriage with another line from Ecclesiastes: “Though one may be over-powered, two can defend themselves, but a cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

“The Office of Marriage and Family Life is supported by the

Facilitator Dianna Knaus leads a session at a recent “Mourning to Dawn” support group gathering for widows and widowers.

• “I learned to express my grief and that it is a process to work through. I truly enjoyed the other members of the group – very caring and understanding.”

• “Very helpful! I had read and researched grieving prior to the program but never fully understood it until going through the program. The sharing of our experiences with others that understand was especially helpful.”

• “Difficult to express what has happened to me but whatever happened – it is good.”

• “It was nice to be able to get out and spend time talking and listening with others experiencing the same type of loss.”

• “It was helpful with hearing everyone’s experiences and knowing I am not alone with my thoughts and feelings!”

• “It brought comfort, understanding and friendship with the whole group that understood this hard time in our lives.”

• “I enjoyed sharing with the group and listening to other people’s stories. It was nice to have some people closer to my age. The facilitators gave me so much inspiration and hope for my future.”

• “...more than I expected. The course that was followed was a good one. As time goes on, my comments and sharing will likely change to some degree. My emotions are still very raw.”

• “The program was helpful. The facilitators were willing to share, thus allowing us the participants also to open up and share. The program gave each of us an idea where we were on our grief journey and gave us hope in our journey.”

• “I learned about grieving and (how) only you can do it. Everyone grieves differently. Know that you are not the only one.”

For more information about the widow and widower support program “From Mourning to Dawn” contact Elan Ehresman, diocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life, at: (306) 659-5839 or e-mail: cec.elan@saskatoonrcdiocese.com
Richmond children learn about Jesus while also having fun together in group

BY ALICIA HEMMEL AND TAMMY SOVEREY-WELTE
Richmond’s Little Angels began October 5, 2013. The small but mighty group includes six children: Brock Schell, Hunter Glass, Nevaya Hellman, Patience Hellman and Tayler Soveran-Welte along with two leaders: Alicia Hellman and Tammy Soveran-Welte. The Little Angels group gets together twice a month on Wednesday mornings from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at one of the leader’s homes.

The reason we meet at the home is we want to teach the children that Jesus is everywhere not only in church. Although the purpose is education when we get together, we also try to make it fun.

The first class was about coming together and uniting as a group. Each of the children created an image of their own hand and decorated it. Then the hands were all joined together. This is now the focal point of our circle as we pray.

Throughout the Christmas holidays, the children had the opportunity to go around and collect money at Mass at St. Mary’s parish in Richmond.

Not only were the children very excited about this, but it also brought smiles to many of the church members. One parishioner said how nice it was to see so many children at Mass.

For the money they collected, the children went and bought toys for local children who are not as fortunate, as well as purchasing enough food to make nine baskets full of food for community members in need.

Another highlight for the Little Angels group was a field trip to visit the Holy Sepulchre at the end of the year. The children gathered in a circle and allowed the children the freedom to ask questions and explore. They not only did the children learn, but we as leaders learned a lot as well.

Overall, the children had a fantastic time and enjoyed Father’s company and his creative origami.

The time that we have with the children is so special. It is when we come together as a group we are on a mission to spread love and happiness any way we can.

The children are taking what they have learned into their homes and passing on their knowledge of Jesus to their parents and siblings.

Editor’s note: Baptized as an infant, Kyla Brietta joined the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – RCIA – at Holy Spirit parish in Saskatoon in 2012, and was confirmed and received her first Eucharist at last year’s Easter Vigil in March 2013. She recently finished her first year of studies at St. Peter’s College in Montana.

I received the sacrament of baptism at St. John Vianney in Walnut Creek on Dec. 28, 1996. There began my Christian initiation – the start of my journey in the Catholic faith.

While my journey began in 1996, the road to finishing her first year of studies at St. Peter’s College in Montana, I was far from receiving my baptism.

Being present in a Catholic Church has always been as natural to me as breathing, or, indeed, coming home.

There was always a draw within my heart to join fully into the Catholic Church, yet never was the feeling as strong in me as it was in Grade 8.

Going to Georges Vanier Catholic School in Saskatoon meant a long walk to reach the neighbourhood church, a trip that was taken at the beginning and the end of each school year. At the end of Grade 6, the trip happened on a hot day. So many blocks ahead on the road, and I was followed by words that I was going to get to go to church, and also that I would be singing with the choir. This great joy awakened a desire within me to do everything I could to receive the sacraments, one day as I brought home the bulletin, my Mum pointed out the section on joining RCIA.

Alas, the wishes of a 13-year-old with so very little understanding of the way of church remained unsatisfied for many years. Every time I did get to go to church, I recognized that I was missing something: the more-than-just-symboitic body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, even more was I missing out by not attending church at all, going through a rocky three years of high school – some of the most difficult years of my life.

Often I took refuge solely in God’s gift to me: writing. By Grade 11 year, it had become abundantly clear to me that prayer alone was not enough to satisfy my soul.

During the Easter Vigil of 2012, I witnessed the members of the RCIA group receive the sacraments of Christian Initiation and Catechetics – a moment of recognition for me. Although I had no idea what RCIA was, or how I could become a part of it, my heart’s yearning to attend Mass and become a full member of the Church was reawakened.

At 16, I knew that I could walk this journey on my own, and that I could wait no longer to achieve this desire.

At last in September 2012 I began attending Holy Masses. Although I stepped forward to receive the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, I was myself far away from receiving my sacraments, one day as I brought home the bulletin, my Mum pointed out the section on joining RCIA. She contacted the church after talking with me, and the rest is a blur. I am so blessed to have received this opportunity to journey through RCIA in 2012-2013. Throughout those seven months I met so many people, whether they had journeyed through RCIA themselves, grew up Catholic, or were joining the faith alongside me. Each Monday night, meeting with Arch, the facilitator of RCIA, the other candidates and catechumens, as well as sponsors and relatives has brought me so much fresh knowledge and perspective on the meaning of being Catholic. Some nights, our fellowship and conversations was also blessed with the presence of Fr. Geoffrey Young, the associate pastor of Holy Spirit at the time, who often added insights to our discussions.

At the Christmas Mass in 2012, I joined the parish youth choir as part of my ministry in the Church. It has been wonderful to grow with that community alongside the one that I found at RCIA.

In the final weeks of preparation to receive the sacraments, Arch suggested choosing a patron saint for confirmation. After much reading and deliberation, I chose St. Rita of Cascia, patroness of impossible causes. This decision did not come easily, as the stories of many of the saints indeed captured my attention. Yet it seemed appropriate to choose St. Rita since I had thought that it would be impossible for me to receive my sacraments before I turned 18, and given that my Catholic grandmother’s middle name was also Rita.

I attended a retreat at Queen’s House with the RCIA fellowship on March 23, 2013, led by Sharon Powell. It was a great experience, with the Easter Vigil readings together. After lunch Fr. Geoffrey dropped by so that we could celebrate our first reconciliation. The liberty I felt after the retreat went into a poem (“Our Prayer”) and has stayed with me ever since.

At last, the Easter Vigil! On my wrist, I wore the rosary bracelet, gifted to me by my godparents and godmother. Fr. Geoffrey supported me in coming to the Mass, along with my mother, sitting directly behind me.

After the Liturgy of the Word, the Litany of the Saints began, and everyone from the RCIA group followed the family of the children being baptized out to the baptismal font: we witnessed the blessing of the holy water, as well as the baptisms of the two years earlier.

When we returned to our seats, my excitement turned to nervousness. “Am I ready?” I whispered to Dawn. “You can do this,” she said.

Arch called each of the candidates to stand at the front, one by one. We all proclaimed: “I believe and profess all that the Holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God.”

At this point we were joined by our sponsors and godparents (Dawn agreed to be both sponsor and a “God-friend” for my confirmation), and we went forward in turn to receive the sacrament of confirmation.

Fr. Geoffrey said a blessing over me, applying chrism oil to my forehead, to which I replied, “Amen.”


When all the confirmations were complete, the congregation stood and welcomed us into their community.

During the offertory hymn, I joined others from RCIA to bring forth the gifts. When I placed the offering, all I could think was, “Wow, this is it.”

I think I was still frozen from the whole night, when I received my First Communion from Fr. Geoffrey. The enormity of what I had just received only hit me moments of impossible causes, as I stepped forward to receive the Blood of Christ.

At the Mass, and receiving many congratulations, I ran into one of the altar boys, Zach (who is discerning priesthood). He congratulated me, and not only asked him questions regarding my confirmation, as I stepped forward to receive the Chalice of the Blood of Christ.

At the Mass, and receiving many congratulations, I ran into one of the altar boys, Zach (who is discerning priesthood). He congratulated me, and not only asked him questions regarding my confirmation, as I stepped forward to receive the Chalice of the Blood of Christ.

As I reflect on Holy Week and the Vigil, I reflect on the Easter experience last year, past year, with friends and family, the community, as well as now the gift of the RCIA experience.

I look forward to continuing my journey through the Mystagogy and beyond. Christus Anesti!
**Christian Initiation and Catechetics**

**Setting hearts ablaze for a life-long faith**

**BY FRANCINE AUDY**

Formation that nurtures and inspires committed, lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ within a Christian community is the goal of catechesis for every age and in every setting. Participants heard Feb. 7-8 at a workshop in Saskatoon.

Organized by the diocesan Christian Initiation and Catechetics (CIC) office, the *Setting Hearts Ablaze* workshop was facilitated by Diana Macalintal and Nick Wagner, a married couple from San Jose, California with extensive experience in liturgical and parish ministry. They are co-founders of Team RCIA and experts in ways to implement and enliven the catechumenate process.

The Church’s 1998 general directory for catechesis states that RCIA – the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults – should be the model for all catechesis, said Wagner.

“The first reason why RCIA is such an important model for formation is that it just plain works,” he asserted. “It’s the way that Jesus taught.”

The RCIA process is gradual and takes place within the community. It is grounded in the paschal mystery – the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, involves conversion, and embodies good “adult” learning principals focused on the individual situating each “learner” or catechumen, described the facilitators.

Those are characteristics of RCIA that ministry leaders, catechists and evangelists in every parish ministry can use as a model for all that they are doing, the couple asserted.

“Start believing that we are initiating people every day of the year,” stated the Team RCIA presentation.

“Start the process outside the team and into the community… begin sharing your personal experience of the paschal mystery and move from imparting knowledge to entering into intimacy with the person of Jesus.”

It is important to pay attention to each person, recognizing that their faith journey varies according to the many forms of God’s grace, the free cooperation of the individual, the action of the Church, and circumstances of time and place, summarized the facilitators.

Sharing experiences of the Risen Christ in the Mass, in breaking open scripture, in daily and in peak experiences, is part of the ongoing formation of disciples, they said, describing “event-based catechesis” involving the reollection and reflection on an event, which leads to catechumen, connection and conversion.

Using the scriptural passage about the disciples on the road to Emmaus from the Gospel of Luke, Macalintal and Wagner modeled the process, leading the group through a reflection of that Biblical account as a summary of the catechetical process. Just like Jesus with the two on the road to Emmaus, said Wagner, “in the Emmaus story, this involves walking with people, accepting where they are in their journey, accompanying them and listening to their hopes and fears, before gradually using scriptures, liturgy and the journey itself to bring them to a point of recognizing and encountering the Risen Lord – with “hearts burning within us” – prompting a new direction for their journey; one that leads ever closer to Jesus and to the Christian community.

This is a process that will enrich every kind of faith formation – whether in RCIA, in sacramental preparation, catechism classes, youth ministry or other parish or diocesan ministry or outreach, the gathering heard.

The vision for the workshop – and for catechetics and faith formation in the diocese of Saskatoon – recognizes the “need to use the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults as a model for all parish formation,” said Michelle Sieben, one of the CIC coordinators in the diocese of Saskatoon who organized the conference.

It is a vision of faith formation that was close to the heart of the late Msgr. Michael Koch, who introduced it to Sieben and others in the diocese. Sieben also described discovering the Team RCIA website created by Macalintal and Wagner. “I discovered their vision,” she said, and “wanted to share that vision with the whole diocese.”

Encountering the concept has proven to be “a road to Emmaus” experience, said Sieben.

“My heart has been burning with this vision ever since.” Finding practical ways to implement the concept in parishes is the challenge that the workshop hopefully helped to address, she added.

The goal was “to give those in ministry a new and fresh idea to work with, because what we are doing now does not seem to be working,” Sieben said.

Questions and challenges raised by participants during the workshop included: “How do you encourage a catechumen to become an involved member of the community without it seeming like a directive?”

Another participant wrote: “How do we begin to recognize the story (of the paschal mystery) in our own lives?” While another identified the challenge of moving away from “imparting knowledge” to “intimacy with Jesus.”

Finding creative ways to implement the RCIA principles for children’s catechesis, and how to determine what each individual needs from the initiation or formation process were other questions raised by participants.

The workshop included a working session to design and plan a catechetical session that involved the parish community, using real events recorded in local parish bulletins.

Near the end of the workshop, participants identified a number of insights and priorities. One person pointed to a need to involve the “whole parish in catechesis,” so “evangelization occurs for all.” Another stressed that the “recognition of Christ takes attentiveness.”

Another long-time catechist reminded those involved in faith formation efforts (with adults or children) that “we may not see the fruits of the seeds we’ve sown right away.” So it is important to be “patient and let God work on His time,” she said.

Nick Wagner first got involved with RCIA when serving in campus ministry in the 1980s. “Later, I studied the history of the catechumenate in graduate school at St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota,” he said.

The workshop presented in Saskatoon is part of TeamRCIA’s ongoing effort to “help parishes form Christians for Life,” Wagner said.

“We developed an RCIA Institute to take to parishes in North America, and the diocese of Saskatoon was one of the collaborators in helping us develop that.” In planning the workshop, diocesan CIC coordinators asked for something broader than just RCIA, he noted. “So we worked with them to customize an event that met the needs of the diocese.”

Diana Macalintal is the director of worship for the diocese of San Jose. Holding a Master of Arts in Theology, she has served as a liturgist, music director and catechumenate coordinator in campus, parish and diocesan ministries for over 25 years. Both Macalintal and Wagner have written numerous articles, and Wagner is the author of several books related to RCIA.

Some 55 participants came from about 12 city and 20 rural parishes, with a group from Winnipe also attending the Feb. 7-8 *Setting Hearts Ablaze* workshop.

Earlier on Feb. 7, Macalintal also facilitated a day-long diocesan music workshop for 45 participants focused on the *Mass of the Triduum*.

Sieben said feedback for the diocesan events held at St. Anne’s parish in Saskatoon was extremely positive. She said that her own most memorable memory of the CIC workshop was an evening prayer experience based on the Road to Emmaus.

For more information, visit the TeamRCIA.com website or contact the CIC team at the Catholic Pastoral Centre in the diocese of Saskatoon by calling (306) 242-1500 or e-mailing CIC team coordinators at: cic.mary@saskatoonrcdiocese.com; cic.nick@saskatoonrcdiocese.com; cic.junya@saskatoonrcdiocese.com; cic.ellen@saskatoonrcdiocese.com.

Nick Wagner and Diana Macalintal of Team RCIA facilitated the workshop.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Michelle Sieben of the diocesan Christian Initiation and Catechetics (CIC) office is enthusiastic about the RCIA process as a model for faith formation and catechesis.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Diana Macalintal presented a music workshop on celebration of the Triduum. The music workshop was held during the day Feb. 7, just before the CIC conference Feb. 7-8 at St. Anne’s parish in Saskatoon.

- Photo by Tim Yaworski

Representatives of parishes from across the diocese of Saskatoon and beyond participated in the Saskatoon workshop about forming lifelong disciples.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Eileen Provost of St. Mary’s parish in Saskatoon provides feedback during one workshop session.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski
Youth ministry conference: 

Mercadante stresses authentic relationships and need for Jesus

By Kiply Lukas Yaworski

Youth ministry leaders gathered at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon Jan. 17-19, 2014 for a national conference filled with information and formation, affirmation and celebration.

The Canadian Catholic Youth Ministry Network (CCYMN) conference was focused on the theme of “home” and included keynote talks by Frank Mercadante of Cultivation Ministries; by Bishops Albert Thibeau, Bryan Bayda and Donald Bolen; and by Masson Normand of Pulse; as well as a range of breakout sessions, personal testimonies, prayer experiences and social events.

In the face of declining church attendance, it is vital to evangelize effectively, even though the words “youth evangelization” often inspire a sense of trepidation, said Mercadante. “Evangelization is simply sharing the incredible deal we have in Jesus.”

This generation of “millennials” (born between 1982 and 2002) grew up immersed in technology and social media, and value authenticity, honesty, interaction and experience, he said. They do not respond to quotidian appeals or attractive programming. Rather, this generation of youth are seeking relationships founded on authenticity, honesty, interaction and experience, he said. They do not respond to quotidian appeals or attractive programming. Rather, this generation of youth are seeking relationships founded on authenticity and not having a personal connection.

“Youth are hungry for acceptance for who they really are,” he added. “They want relationships to stand on their own: they want to know that you love them because you love them… even when they disagree with you.”

Millennials grew up feeling special, in an era of reality television and participation trophies. “A special generation wants a special purpose in life,” he noted. “The truth is that we are not over-challenging our young people out of the church. We are boring them out. We have to engage their imaginations and plant seeds for great dreams, to bring the kingdom to the world around them. This is a generation that will respond when we give them a vision.”

Mercadante also noted the many stesses youth are experiencing today. Introducing practices such as contemplative prayer should be part of youth ministry, he said.

“Millenials connect on brokenness,” he added, stressing the importance of the fundamental gospel message: “we are messed up, we need Jesus.”

Response to CCYMN’s event in Saskatoon was enthusiastic. “CCYMN was one of the most amazing experiences I’ve ever had at a conference. To make a professsional grade national conference feel like home is a nearly impossible feat, but CCYMN pulled it off… It was a truly God-filled weekend,” wrote one participant.

Youth ministry leaders across the country participate in prayer at the Cathedral of the Holy Family during the national CCYMN conference Jan. 17-19 in Saskatoon.

By Laura Rice

Pure Witness Ministries winds up year of events; recruiting young adult leaders

Pure Witness Ministries hosted a Catholic Dinner Theatre March 2 in Saskatoon, featuring a variety of the music, comical sketches and dramas that their team takes into schools and parishes as they travel across Western Canada proclaiming the gospel to youth and families.

Various members of the community, including Bishop Don Bolen, spoke about the positive impact that Pure Witness has been making in the lives of youth and families.

This year, seven young Catholic adults have been working as missionaries to promote the message of challenging Catholics to set Christ at the heart of their lives, putting on local events within the diocese of Saskatoon for youth and families, as well as ALIVE Retreats (“Always Living In View of Eternity”) in schools and parishes throughout Saskatchewan, Alberta and B.C.

Local events are wrapped up for this school year, but watch the website www.purewitness.ca for dates and locations of events beginning in September.

YEP (Youth Evangelization Program) runs once a month, six times a year, for students in grades 8 to 12 from across Saskatchewan. YEP is a fun-filled day with praise and worship, games, talks, and fellowship for Catholic youth who want to grow in their faith.

ReConnect events are also put on throughout the year for families to gather together as a community, celebrating the rich Catholic culture through a variety of events such as dances, adoration nights, variety nights and more.

A choral program started this year, which brings together youth ages 4 to 18 every Monday night to learn music, share faith, and to increase participation in the liturgy of the Mass, while growing in fellowship and having fun.

Pure Witness is seeking dynamic, committed young Catholic adults who want to offer a year of their lives in missionary service to the Church. For more information check out the “Join” page at www.purewitness.com

Youth Ministry is supported by the Bishop’s Annual Appeal

Youth Ministry Events

Rock the Mount 2014 Saturday, Aug. 16 - an inspiring and fun Catholic youth/family all-day outdoor event at Our Lady of Mount Carmel shrine 20 miles west of Humboldt, SK. with music and speakers, and Mass on the picturesque Mount Carmel hill with Bishop Don Bolen. Find out more at www.rockthemount.com. Like us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/rockthemount

FacetoFace BUS TRIP 2014 - FacetoFace Ministries is taking youth (grades 9 to 12) on a nine-day Bus Trip Pilgrimage July 23-31 to St. Paul, MN, USA. Includes participating in a weekend St. Cloud Conference with 2000 other Catholic youth, two days of service work around St. Paul and Fargo, visiting an amusement park, and much more. This trip will change your life! Chaperones 21+ are needed as well. For more information go to www.facetoface.org, call Erin McQuaid at 306-716-7729, or e-mail: bustrip@f2f.ca

Youth ministry seminars - Western Canadian Association of Catholic Youth Ministers (WCACYM), will be offering courses this summer which pertain to Pastoral Care of Youth (Teens) facilitated by Anne Walsh. WCACYM Summer Seminars will take place at Queen’s House of Retreats in Saskatoon, July 19-25. The course Pastoral Care of Youth will be held July 24-25 (two days). Check out “Summer Seminar” information at www.wcacym.ca or call WCACYM seminar coordinator Sr. Maybelle dela Cruz at: (306) 682-2106, or e-mail: wcacym.summerseminar@yahoo.ca

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Life and Family Week May 12-19

Diocesan Date Day: Saturday, May 17

When was the last time you went on a date with your spouse? Plan to spend the day and evening doing something fun together (perhaps one chooses a morning activity—like shopping or spending a leisurely time over coffee – then the other decides how the two of you will spend the afternoon — in the evening, prepare supper with each other or go out to a local cafe. The date does not have to be complicated or expensive.). Then, register whatever you did for your Diocesan Date Day at: coderector@saskatoonrcdiocese.com or call: (306) 242-1500 or toll free: 1-877-681-5005 and your name will be entered into a draw for a night at the Temple Garden Spa in Moose Jaw. For more details check out the website at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/dateday

Youth Ministry is supported by the Bishop’s Annual Appeal
The Joy of the Gospel

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The words and spirit of Pope Francis were explored during three sessions held in the diocese of Saskatoon in Lent 2014.

Evangelii Gaudium – or The Joy of the Gospel – a document written by Pope Francis, was the focus of a diocesan Foundations: Exploring Our Faith Together sessions held at St. Paul’s Co-Cathedral in Saskatoon March 19, March 26 and April 2.


The five chapters of The Joy of the Gospel are dedicated to the Church’s missionary transformation, the crisis of communal consumerism, the social dimension of evangelization, and becoming “spirit-filled evangelizers.” Written around the theme of Christian joy, the document emphasizes rediscovering the original source of evangelization for today’s world and offers a map for the Church’s pastoral mission.

Series facilitators Sr. Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, and Fr. Bernard de Margerie journeyed through The Joy of the Gospel with the near-capacity crowd that filled the parish hall for all of the evening sessions.

The two speakers alternated their presentations throughout the series, with Kambeitz using visuals and familiar examples from the message of the exhortation close to home, and de Margerie examining the meaning, impact and repercussions of the pope’s vision for the faithful.

Kambeitz pointed to three key words that summarize the document: encounter, periphery and priority.

Central to The Joy of the Gospel is the encounter with Christ, who “is presently alive, powerfully active and personally near,” she stressed. “We are talking about a living Christ who is with us in our midst.” The encounter with Christ is the “dynamite” of the gospel, like falling in love, that transforms us and sends us forth with energy and enthusiasm, Kambeitz said.

As for the word periphery, “Pope Francis uses this word to send us out of our comfort zone, out of our discomfort zone and go to the periphery, to the edge,” she said.

To make the encounter with Christ and moving to the periphery, the priority for Pope Francis is the poor, Kambeitz said. “The document provides inspiration, raises questions and poses challenges for every Catholic Christian and for the Church, said de Margerie.

The call to missionary conversion and the call to personal and ecclesial renewal cannot happen without personal encounter, according to the document. It also provides an awareness and reflection about the realities of today’s evangelization field. “To what movements in society do we say no, and to what signs of the times do we say yes?”

The joy of the gospel also deals with temptations that face pastoral workers (to neglect the mission and focus on maintenance work), according to the document. It also provides an awareness and reflection about the realities of today’s evangelization field. “To what movements in society do we say no, and to what signs of the times do we say yes?”

The Joy of the Gospel also challenges us to change our ways to break sins, habits, and “risks of spiritual death” in our own lives, according to the document.

The Pope calls for presenting the gospel message in a spirit of approachability, patience and warmth, ever ready to dialogue and to welcome, rather than “hamming with judgment,” said de Margerie.

As for the social and communal repercussions of that kerygma message of The Joy of the Gospel, Pope Francis insists upon the importance of inclusion of the poor in society and among God’s people, said de Margerie.

Again he quoted from the document. “Only this will ensure that ‘in every Christian community everyone feel at home.’ Would not this approach be the greatest and most effective presentation of the good news of the kingdom?”

The Joy of the Gospel includes an examination of conscience for Christians and for society about matters of the economy, justice, the common good and the needs of the poor, de Margerie described, writing through key paragraphs.

It is not enough to simply read The Joy of the Gospel, we need to act, de Margerie said and as Church to grapple with its challenges, he said.

“We then can begin to give an answer to the question of what we should do about it in our lives, in our parishes and our diocese,” de Margerie said, describing the new papal document as a gift to the Church. “Not to ask, can the big bodies in the church apply The Joy of the Gospel?” he queried.

De Margerie encouraged listeners to continue to wrestle with the document, to read it carefully and let it sink in.

Available from book sellers (such as Universal Church Supplies in Saskatoon) in printed form, The Joy of the Gospel can also be found on the Vatican website at: http://www.vatican.va by clicking on the link to "Apostolic Exhortations.

Divine Mercy Conference held

BY FRANCIS AUDY

The 5th annual Divine Mercy Conference was held March 6-9 at St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission in Brune, SK, involving some 90 participants, including students, priests and women religious.

The theme of this year’s Lenten conference was “Flames of Mercy: Learning to Suffer Well.”

Bishop Donald Bolen opened the 2014 conference talking about crucifixion and resurrection – themes of salvation history that are silently present in the diocesan cathedral.

Keynote speaker was Dr. Peter Fitch, Bishop Don Bolen and Dr. Robert Stackpole at St. Therese in Bruno.

Fitch presented a pastoral application of the main theme, including talks about learning to suffer well, the heart and the skills of a healer; learning to pray well; ways to break sins, habits, and addictions; and the glory of God in all of life.

His sessions were packed with abundant examples easy to relate to and the participants were invited to join the conversation.

Dr. Robert Stackpole, who is now the Assistant Director of St. Therese Institute, as well as the Director of the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy – presented academic and theological background on the theme, with presentations on divine revelation, on the problem of evil, and on redemptive suffering.

The conference included abundant periods of prayer including the communal rosary; in addition to daily chaplet of the divine mercy prayer and worship sessions led by the students of St. Therese; and adoration and benediction led by conference chaplain, Rev. Ephraim Mensah of St. Augustine parish in Humboldt.

Many priests from the area were also on hand to provide the sacrament of reconciliation.

Prayerfully preparing for Easter

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

In a three-part Lenten series offered by the Foundations: Exploring Our Faith Together office of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, facilitator Gisela Bauche explored the link between spirituality and different kinds of prayers.

Each of the three sessions at the Cathedral of the Holy Family included the entire text of the Gospel reading from the Sunday before: the profound readings from the gospel on the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), including the stories of the Samaritan woman at the well, the healing of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus.

Each evening in the series concluded with prayer, using forms such as Taizé prayer, meditation and Lectio Divina.

“There is a hunger in our world for stillness, and a great desire to deepen our prayers,” said Foundations coordinator Sharon Powell about the decision to again offer a Lenten series with a prayer focus. Powell noted that in the RCIA process, Lent is a time of preparation and enlightenment that prepares the elect for their baptism at the Easter Vigil. For the entire parish, Lent is also a prayerful preparation for the Easter renewal of baptismal promises.

During the series, Bauche discussed the nature of spirituality, which includes a profound need to take time out for solitude and prayer.

“We need air, we need food, we need sleep – but close behind those, we need solitude. We need prayer.”

She described the importance of “holy listening” in our spiritual journey, which she said involves “listening with the ears of the heart.”

Bauche urged her listeners to take time out to be present to others and to strive to live in God’s presence.

“The fundamental message is that human life is the home of God,” she stressed. “We must be able to experience God in our ordinary lives, knowing that in the ordinariness of life, God is there.”

Bauche said, adding that it is a mistake to try and compartmentalize our experience of God, and to confine God to only one specific area of life. “The truth is that God is not far from you or I.”

Another element of spirituality is God’s call to do small things with great love, said Bauche, quoting Most Blessed Teresa.

This becomes manifest in our connections with others – “in a human encounter with another person, being present to another person who needs us,” listed Bauche. “We receive in our giving, more than we ever give.”

Finally she stressed the profound spiritual impact of nurturing an attitude of gratitude, quoting Mestert Eckhart: “If the only prayer we remember is that of gratitude, it is enough.”

The final session April 7 included a reflection on the simple and beautiful story about the raising of Lazarus. The gospel reveals Jesus in the fullness of his humanity, deeply affected by the death of his beloved friend, she pointed out.

“The story is also about each one of us. Jesus comes to us to rise us up, to become fully alive,” said Bauche. “He calls you and I out of the tomb which we carry within us. We hear him call us to come out, and the command we long to hear for ourselves: ‘untie him and let him go.’ That is the truth of our faith: that Jesus really does set us free.”

( The dioceesan adult faith formation office of Foundations: Exploring Our Faith Together is supported by the Bishop’s Annual Appeal.)

Dr. Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, and Fr. Bernard de Margerie led the diocesan Foundations: Exploring Our Faith Together sessions on The Joy of the Gospel written by Pope Francis. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Conference speakers Dr. Peter Fitch, Bishop Don Bolen and Dr. Robert Stackpole at St. Therese in Bruno. - Photo by Francine Audy

Gisela Bauche led the Foundations: Lenten prayer series. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski
Queen’s House offers hospitable space for meeting, planning or celebrating

BY BRENDAN BITZ

Queen’s House continues to be a place where our community gathers and the many faces of conversation, reflection, faith and spirituality are able to connect in a spirit of hospitality and welcome.

Many expressions of faith and community continue to find a place at Queen’s House. Here individuals and groups can share, be strengthened and celebrate their work in the world.

To this end, please consider Queen’s House as a setting to meet, to celebrate, to plan, to worship and to learn.

Upcoming opportunities of note:

• Diarmuid O’Murchu presents his retreat on “Reading the Signs of the Times in Our Rapidly Changing World” June 16-18
• Bob McKeon presents on “Social Justice and Spirituality” June 21
• Fr. Joseph Schnerr offers a five-day Ignatian Retreat July 1-6
• Marc Copeland and Fr. Paul Facchet present a Centering Prayer Retreat July 11-13
• Fr. Ron Rolheiser will share “Fear and Her Many Children – Exploring the Roots and Origins of Religious Fear” July 14-17

Queen’s House is located at 601 Taylor Street West in Saskatoon, on the east bank of the South Saskatchewan River. For registration or other information call (306) 242-1916 or visit the website at www.queenshouse.org to review programs, event opportunities and offerings.

Summer program in ecumenical studies

The Prairie Centre for Ecumenism will launch a new Program in Ecumenical Studies and Formation June 24-27 in Saskatoon.

This is a three-year program dedicated to forming Christians in the theology, history and practice of ecumenism within the churches of Canada and abroad.

Anyone who wishes to increase their knowledge of the ecumenical movement for greater participation is welcome to attend. The program assumes no prior theological training and will be offered during the final week of June each summer.

During this first year of the program, seven modules will be presented, including topics such as:

• Biblical Foundations of Ecumenism
• Spiritual Ecumenism
• History of Ecumenism
• Principles of Ecumenical Theology
• Separate Ecumenism

An integration session will be held to wind up the four-day course.

The second and third years of the program will continue with advanced modules dedicated to topics such as ecumenical dialogues (theory, attitudes, methods and discussion of actual dialogues); the practice of ecumenism in common witness and mission; ecumenical covenerance; ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue; cultural issues; ecumenical courtesy; ecumenical leadership, inter-church families; challenging issues (Eucharistic sharing, sexuality and gender, petrine ministry); ecumenism and social justice; and religious freedom.

The first year of the program will begin Tuesday, June 24 with afternoon registration and an opening session, followed by dinner and evening worship.

Continuing each day until Friday, June 27, the first year of the program will conclude with an afternoon integration session and a closing worship.

For more information contact Dr. Darren Dahl at director@pcecmumenism.ca or visit the website at www.pcecmumenism.ca
Mgr Don Bolen a bien le nouveau Centre paroissial Sts-Martys-Canadiens le dimanche 6 avril 2014, après avoir célébré la messes avec l’abbé André Poilâtre et l’abbé Bernard de Margerie.

Le programme comprenait : maître de cérémonie : Raymond D. Lepage ; mots de bienvenue : Ron Sirois, président du Conseil paroissial Sts-Martys ; bénéédiction par l’abbé André Poilâtre ; un mot de la porte-parole des Fils de la Providence, Sour. Dolores Bussière ; une réflexion par l’abbé Bernard de Margerie, puis quelques mots de la Partie du Comité de construction du Centre Dorothée Gaudet-Cousin.

« Ça prend toute une paroi pour bâtir un centre paroissial » a déclaré Dorothée Gaudet-Cousin, présidente des comités de construction, de finance, et de prélevement de fonds.

Elle a présenté un bref historique du nouveau centre paroissial :

2003 - Fin de la rénovation liturgique de l’église… rêve de l’abbé Bernard. Merci de votre engagement à ce projet, l’abbé, projet bien réalisé… elle est très belle notre église et nous en sommes très fiers !

2004 - Début des discussions portant sur une nouvelle salle paroissiale rattachée à l’église.

2005 - Premier vote sur une nouvelle construction… pas assez d’appui… les besoins sont toujours là avec une salle vieillissante et nécessiteuse de réparations majeures.

2006 - Réflexions et délibérations portant sur les rénovations importantes à faire à l’ancienne salle versus la construction d’une nouvelle.

2008 - Vote sur la construction = 76% en faveur !

2010 - Planification de la nouvelle salle.

2010 - Embauche (provisoire) de la firme d’architectes ADDIB.

Plus tard, la planification avec un Comité consultatif de paroissiens et paroissiennes – une vingtaine – qui ont beaucoup contribué à divers secteurs du nouveau projet, musique, sacristie, salles de rangement, salle multifonctions, etc. «Merci à vous tous pour vos idées et précieuse contribution.»

2011 - Vote de clôture et des 3 lots pour la somme de 605 000$ à Maxi’s Excavating de Saskatoon… un très gros merci à Vince et Glenn Dzidyk.

Cet espace et cette salle avaient été achetées au début des années ’80, grâce en grande partie, aux efforts et à la vision de Marcien Gaudet, paroissien à ce moment-là, qui a semblé auparavant déduire des fonds pour nous donner ce centre paroissial !

2012 - Déménagement du presbytère et préparation du terrain.

2014 - Nouvelles ! Voilà ! Ce que l’on s’est donné paroissiens.$$e vote sur la nouvelle construction est le résultat d’abord et toujours chacun – dans un grand esprit de collaboration, de générosité et d’engagement à notre paroisse.» dit Gaudet-Cousin. «Soyons en fers ! Merci à la Providence ! Merci à tous ! Et félicitations !

New parish centre officially opened with joyful celebration

By Kilyan Lukawy

Saskatoon’s Francophone Catholic parish marked an historic milestone April 6, joyfully celebrating the official dedication of a new parish centre attached to Sts-Martys-Canadiens church.

The new parish centre, which includes a hall, offices, a state of the art kitchen, a sacristy, storage rooms, and a multi-function room, takes the place of a parish hall located a few blocks away from the church building. The old hall property was sold for $605,000 to Maxi’s Excavating in Saskatoon.

Bishop Donald Bolen, president at Mass with Priest Moderators Fr. Bernard de Margerie et Fr. André Poilâtre, before the parish community moved into the new parish centre for the blessing. Bolen walked through the hall, which was packed with parishioners and families gathered for the official dedication, a catered meal and a program of speakers.

Master of Ceremonies Raymond D. Lepage introduced Ron Sirois, president of the parish council, who welcomed everyone to the celebration. The program also included reflections by de Margerie, St. Dolores Bussière et Dorothée Gaudet-Cousin.

Gaudet-Cousin provided a brief history of the parish centre project, describing how discussions about a new hall began after a 2006 renovation of the church building. The land and the hall itself had been owned by the parish since the early 1980s, thanks to the efforts and vision of parishioner Marcien Gaudet, the gathering heard.

A vote was first held about the proposed creation of a new parish centre as part of the 2006-2007 capital campaign. When the vote was taken on the construction, 76% voted in favor of proceeding with the project.

A second vote on the 2006-2007 capital campaign was held in 2008 with 76% in favor of proceeding with a new construction of a building attached to the church.

Another vote was held in 2009, this time with 76% per cent in favor of proceeding with construction of a new parish centre.

In 2012, the site was prepared, with construction starting in 2013.

An advisory committee of parishioners assisted in planning and recommendations related to a new addition to the college, and others helped with various aspects of the project, described Gaudet-Cousin, thanking all those who helped with the project or donated in any way.

Downey notes the results of the Creating More campaign’s other initiative – the Chair for Catholic Studies – are equally positive.

“The Leslie and Irene Dubé $1-million endowment will support scholarship and research related to Catholic teaching and tradition, foster Catholic education, and promote awareness of other faith traditions. It will serve as intellectual leadership and the broader Catholic community.”

The Chair has already sponsored a number of lecture and conference events for the community.

Dianne Antony, development officer said the campaign has so far raised $4 million of the $6 million goal. “We’ve had great support and some extraordinary individual donations. This allowed us to proceed with the expansion and the Chair in Catholic studies before the campaign was concluded.”

Antony adds that staff and faculty of St. Thomas More College were also very supportive of the Creating More campaign. “The majority of our staff and faculty have generously contributed to the campaign which shows they are committed to STM and ensuring excellence in teaching opportunities for students.”

Antony reminds the community that the campaign is not over. “We wanted to raise $2 million for the construction project in 2005, but there was not enough support to go ahead. In the years that followed, reflections and deliberations continued about the need for repairs and renovations of the old off-site hall versus construction of a new building attached to the church.

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“The Leslie and Irene Dubé $1 million endowment will support scholarship and research related to Catholic teaching and tradition, foster Catholic education, and promote awareness of other faith traditions. It will serve as intellectual leadership and the broader Catholic community.”

The Chair has already sponsored a number of lecture and conference events for the community.

Dianne Antony, development officer said the campaign has so far raised $4 million of the $6 million goal. “We’ve had great support and some extraordinary individual donations. This allowed us to proceed with the expansion and the Chair in Catholic studies before the campaign was concluded.”

Antony adds that staff and faculty of St. Thomas More College were also very supportive of the Creating More campaign. “The majority of our staff and faculty have generously contributed to the campaign which shows they are committed to STM and ensuring excellence in teaching opportunities for students.”

Antony reminds the community that the campaign is not over. “We wanted to raise $2 million for the construction project in 2005, but there was not enough support to go ahead. In the years that followed, reflections and deliberations continued about the need for repairs and renovations of the old off-site hall versus construction of a new building attached to the church.

Another vote was held in 2009, this time with 76% per cent in favor of proceeding with a new construction of a parish centre.

In 2012, the site was prepared, with construction starting in 2013. An advisory committee of parishioners assisted in planning and recommendations related to a new addition to the college, and others helped with various aspects of the project, described Gaudet-Cousin, thanking all those who helped with the project or donated in any way.
A new salary grid was implemented March 1, 2014 for the employees of the diocese of Saskatoon, both in parishes and at the Catholic Pastoral Centre.

The new grid will mean higher salaries for pastoral workers, administration and custodial staff. Increased salaries for priests will also be gradually implemented over the next five years.

In early 2013, Bishop Donald Bolen asked a sub-committee of the diocesan Personnel Committee to review the diocesan salary grid and to propose revisions.

"Since I arrived as Bishop, and in conversation with Bishop Albert (former Saskatoon Bishop LeGatt), salaries have been an important topic of dialogue and a pressing concern," says Bolen.

Since August 1990s, the diocese has provided a normative salary grid for lay pastoral employees, which has been adjusted for cost of living and annual raises for some 20 years. In recent years, the depression of the grid had fallen behind, as salaries began to reflect retention rates and morale among employees.

"We have a dual responsibility when it comes to employing people in the Church," says Leah Perrault, director of pastoral services for the diocese.

"The gospel makes it clear that ministry is not primarily about money, but rather it is a response to God’s call. Those who feel called to work for the Church are not going to earn the same kind of money that they could make in other industries. At the same time, however, the social justice teaching of our tradition reminds us that employers are called to pay just and living wages to those who labour."

Over the spring and summer of 2013, the sub-committee assessed North American, national and regional trends in church compensation for employees, trying to balance the parity of salaries and the often-declining revenue bases of parishes.

"The Holy Family Cathedral Administrator, Patrick Clarke chaired the sub-committee. Our sub-committee worked diligently through the entire process to hold two gospel values in tension, namely: the dignity of the human person and our responsibility as employers to honour that dignity by paying a just wage and at the same time, that those of us who feel called to work in Christ’s church would do so in a spirit of generosity knowing full well that we will not be rewarded in the same fashion as those who work in the corporate world," says Clarke.

"I believe the grids, although not perfect, do a good job of honouring both of these values," he says.

Through the fall of 2013, pastors, parish life directors, staff and parish finance and pastoral council members across the diocese were asked to provide feedback on the diocesan first draft of the salary grid at Congress Days in October and during a series of meetings held across the diocese in late November.

As a result of that consultation, the committee added two new grids to the original pastoral salary grid, one for pastoral and religious staff and another for administrative and bookkeeping staff.

In January, the proposed grids went to the Diocesan Finance Committee and the Administrative Council, where final changes were made and the grids were approved. All three grids went into effect March 1, 2014.

At the same time, the Council of Priests underwent a review of national clergy salaries, and recommended that the diocese prepare to increase priest salaries as well. The clergy are not tied to the same grid as lay employees, but had also fallen behind.

"The new salary is still below the national average," says Rev. Pius Schroh, chair of the Priest Personnel Committee, "but it is closer to that of other dioceses outside the United States."

The priests’ salary adjustments will be implemented gradually over the next five years, to minimize the impact to parish budgets.

"I think we will add additional financial pressure on parishes and the diocese, and it is not something that the bishop is taking lightly, "Bolen said.

Bolen added that the new grids will have an impact to parish budgets.

"For many of our parish communities, additional expenses are worrisome," acknowledges Bolen.

"The new grids have 21 steps, both to move us gradually towards higher salaries, and to allow our parish pastors flexibility in being present with financial and pastoral resources," he says.

"I have strongly encouraged the bishops and the diocese to move toward gradual implementation, which at the same time will work diligently to develop strong and forward-thinking stewardship plans. These plans will work to mitigate expenses for all of us, and we need to be careful not to treat our employees as a fixed expense, when other bills rise with inflation," says the bishop.

"I am grateful for the planning, the consulting, the financial office, the stewardship office of the Catholic Foundation, and through pastoral services, notes Perrault."

Parishes struggling to make ends meet are being encouraged to work with their boards, in their financial setting and with the diocese to ensure that parish life is vibrant and dynamic for the next couple of years and into the future, she says.

By JOCELYNE HAMOINE

I am grateful that the tax season comes. First of all, my Dad taught me that when we pay taxes, it is a sign that we have been blessed. Secondly, this is a time to give thanks for the previous year and the gift of having a job and an income. A significant question in my mind is that I manage my finances to ensure that I always receive a refund – this becomes a source of funding to invest, pay off a bill and save, use to help someone else and/or have a bit of fun.

What does a form of charity? A significant percentage of our taxes are used for what could be considered charitable purposes: social justice teaching of our generation, public healthcare and public education, to name a few. Historically, many of these services were provided through religious congregations or orders of priests, monks or sisters. However, that still left many needs unmet, and gradually over the years, governments began to tax citizens to redistribute wealth as a way to provide these important services for the sake of the common good.

Even so, the needs of our society continue to exceed what governments are able or willing to support. Additionally personal charity is still required to fill in the gaps, to support and improve our society, and to share our blessings with others.

In Jewish law and tradition, tithing (contributing 10 percent of one’s income) became a shared levy to support the poor and provide for other religious needs (the church). Jewish law calls upon the faithful to sacrifice away money, we are not only helping institutions and people; we are also transforming ourselves, turning from self-absorbed living and focusing on G ood’s work. The first time I give to my church or another charity, I know that I am fulfilling an inner need or desire to look beyond my own self need; a discipline that will break me of my selfish habits, a discipline that will teach me to hold two gospel values in tension, a discipline that will teach me to be careful not treat our employees as a fixed expense, when other bills rise with inflation," says the bishop.

"I am grateful that tax season comes.

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A weekly children’s story time at the Msgr. Michael J. Koch Library at the Catholic Pastoral Centre was introduced this fall.

Every Thursday morning children and their caregivers arrive at the second floor of the diocesan Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon for a time to read, share and listen to stories read by volunteers. Depending on the storyteller, the half-hour session might also include crafts and fingerplays, or, and show and tell as when Bishop Donald Bolen showed children his mitre, zucchetto, and staff. Additional personal stories are included for stacking and socializing. Visitors are also welcome to look around the diocesan Resource Centre and borrow materials.

It has been a year of transition for the Msgr. Michael J. Koch Library, with a cut in staff and a greater focus on the generosity of volunteers to keep the library going, notes part-time library coordinator Sharon Leyne. A self-check out system has also been introduced.

The Resource Library offers a range of faith enrichment materials, including books, periodicals, CDs and DVDs. The catalogue can be searched at: www.saskatoonccdceo.library and a book return box is available on the building elevators to return materials after hours.

Msgr. Michael J. Koch is open Monday to Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 4:30 p.m. on the second floor of the Cathedral of the Holy Family. For more information e-mail Sharon Leyne at library@saskatoonccdceo.com

Msgr. Michael Koch Resource Library is supported by the Bishop’s Annual Appeal

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"I think we will add additional financial pressure on parishes and the diocese, and it is not something that the bishop is taking lightly, "Bolen said.
During this year’s February break, a group of young people and their families from Saskatchewan, Ontario and British Columbia were part of an unforgettable trip to the Holy Land.

The experience began when Brad and Rhea Johner of Saskatchewan decided they wanted to take their family on a meaningful trip before their children started leaving home. Having been interested in traveling to the Holy Land, they were not interested in a typical trip to Disneyland, or to the beaches of Hawaii or Florida. Seeking something more, they joined a number of other families on the trip to Israel, and, after connecting with Fr. Kenneth LeBlanc, LC, of Oakville, Ontario, a spiritual director from the Regina Christi lay movement.

“Fr. Kenneth takes a group of pilgrims each year in May to the Holy Land. Because there were so many families (and one farmer!) we asked him if he could possibly go during February. We were willing to pay more than they asked to accommodate us,” said Rhea. The group of 45 travellors included 31 participants (five families) from Saskatchewan, as well as three participants from B.C. and 11 from Ontario.

Departing from Toronto, the group landed in Tel Aviv, Israel, and travelled north to the Sea of Galilee where they spent three nights at the Mount of Beatitudes. They were accompanied by Fr. Kenneth, who was the running missionary of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

“We did many things here in this part of Israel, such as sail on the Sea of Galilee, visit Capernaum and Nazareth, Cana, this part of Israel, such as sail on the Sea of Galilee, visit Capernaum and Nazareth, Cana, and the other places mentioned in the Gospels,” said Fr. Kenneth. The group went on many day trips, including visits to Bethany, Bethlehem (where they visited an orphanage), Jericho, the Mount of Temptation, the Jordan River, Masada and the Dead Sea. Each day, they celebrated daily Mass at sites that included the Shepherd’s Cave, Calvary and the Holy Sepulchre.

Several of the young participants from Saskatoon recently described highlights and the ongoing impact of the trip. “This pilgrimage was the most amazing experience of my life! Being where Jesus lived and walked was absolutely incredible and I will cherish the memories forever,” said An Smith, 15.

“I’ll remember this trip because we learned more about Christ. Going on the trip gave me a good thing because I understand the Bible more. My favorite part was being with family and friends,” said Grace Smith, 11.

“Our trip to Israel was a deep spiritual awakening and revitalization for me. Becoming immersed in the culture and history of the Holy Land and walking the same paths Our Lord walked, really brought everything I’d learned and experienced about our beautiful faith to new life,” said Kate MacLennan, 16.

“It was an amazing spiritual experience that touched me on so many levels. I still can’t believe that I walked in Jesus’ footsteps and touched hands with many people that I ‘love’,” said Elle MacLennan, 14.

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**Program prepares students to lead prayer in their schools**

**BY KIPLY LyKAn YAWORSKI**

Students from four Catholic elementary schools in Saskatoon were commissioned as liturgy leaders April 3, after meeting over several weeks to learn about prayer forms and liturgical traditions. Sixteen students were accompanied by a teacher from each of their schools – Sr. O’Brien, St. Frances, St. Peter and St. Gerard – in the Youth and Liturgy Program sponsored by the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) Foundation.

“It’s been a time of learning, it’s been a time of understanding and a time of great joy,” said Darcie Lich, of the GSCS religious education department, who coordinated the 2014 Youth and Liturgy Program.

“They have grown in their understanding of the liturgical year, when we went to St. John Bosco parish, of First Nations spirituality when we went to St. Mary’s; and of the Byzantine tradition at Dormition Mother of God (Ukrainian Catholic parish),” described Lich.

“They spent time learning about music, liturgy, sacraments, prayer and ritual. Under the guidance of their teachers who journeyed with them, they return to their own schools ready to make a difference, and to take to heart Jesus’ command to go and make disciples.”

Gathered in Our Lady of Peace Chapel at the Cathedral of the Holy Family for their final session, each school group presented a prayer service that they had planned and prepared, putting into practice what they had learned during the previous weeks, before being commissioned by Fr. David Tumback.

The sample liturgies included a celebration for the end of the school year, a prayer service focused on the life and example of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, a liturgy about love and friendship, and an Easter season liturgy that included processing outdoors to send forth helium-filled balloons carrying prayers into the world.

“You all are ‘the twelfth disciple,’” said Tumback, reflecting on the gospel reading about the commissioning of eleven disciples by Jesus at the time of his Ascension. “You hear the Word, and you are the ones that respond to that Word, and take that Word into the world… that great love of God into the world.”

He then asked the students to declare their willingness to teach the Good News to others, to lead praise and worship of God, and to build community by drawing others together as a sign of God’s love in the world.

To conclude the commissioning, each participant was presented with a lit candle. “Christ is the light of the world. Your task is to walk in that light and share it with others,” said Tumback.

**Lay Formation Alumni Profile:**

**Discerning God’s call to do more**

**BY KATE O’GORMAN**

For Sandy Stack of St. Theresa parish in Asquith, the Lay Formation program was a time of deep discernment.

“I knew I was being called to do more. I was drawn to the inner city and I knew I wanted to work with Aboriginal people but I really had no sense of where God was calling me to go. I was in a place of searching at the beginning of my two-year journey and when Executive Director Linda Brazeau, was invited to speak to us at Lay Formation during a session on social justice, I felt immediately connected and I knew that God was calling me to do more,” she says.

She began by volunteering at Saskatoon Friendship Inn. “I started an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting first, and I very quickly came to know that this was where I was supposed to be. The Friendship Inn just fit – it was a home for me. I could see Jesus here and I could feel that this was where I was being called. Because I have journeyed through a path of addiction myself, I understood the sense of hopelessness that many people here experience and I felt that I could genuinely be of service.”

Stack currently works full time at the Friendship Inn managing the Family Services department. She travels into Saskatoon every day from Asquith to work at the Friendship Inn. “The commute actually really works for me. I use it as my prayer and meditation time. It’s my quiet time to be alone with God and to process all that I experience in my day,” she says.

“Lay Formation was really transformative for me. It was a spiritual transformation, an emotional transformation – and even though I didn’t go through the Lay Formation program with my husband, it helped to transform my marriage as well. “I did a lot of work in those two years in the stillness and silence of my room in the middle of the night during those Lay Formation weekends. I did a lot of prayerful work,” she describes.

“I really embraced my time in Lay Formation as a time of change. I used it as a gift to discern and listen to God’s voice and to be transformed. Lay Formation is very special to me and I would encourage anyone who feels that they are in that place of change to consider going through the program.”

For Sandy Stack of St. Theresa Parish in Asquith, Lay Formation was a transformative experience. She completed the two-year program in 2013.

**Humboldt prayer ministry**

Hand-made prayer shawls were blessed by Bishop Donald Bolen March 8 in Humboldt, at the conclusion of Mass at St. Augustine parish. Crafted with care and prayer by St. Augustine parishioners, the shawls are provided to those who are sick as part of the parish’s pastoral outreach.

**Diocese of Saskatoon**

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