New programs will focus on outreach to those in need

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A strong desire to encourage Catholics to reach out to those in need emerged from last year’s diocesan discernment about ordaining permanent deacons.

That desire was behind the establishment of two committees: one to explore the creation of a new one-year “ministry of outreach” formation program that could be connected to the Lay Formation program, and another to explore options for the formation of permanent deacons, based on a model of service.

“We are fostering a vision that would see deacons providing tangible service to those in need, both inside and outside of the church,” said Bishop Donald Bolen. “It would be a deacon’s responsibility not only to be engaged in that outreach, but to encourage the entire community to reach out to others as an intrinsic part of the gospel.”

Service is a gospel call for the entire church, Bolen stressed. “Both of these new initiatives will give us the opportunity as church to be more deeply and more effectively present to our sisters and brothers – including one another, who carry wounds, who are suffering, or who struggle in one way or another,” he said. “The goal is to be a more compassionate and caring community.”

Equipping and empowering Catholics to serve those in greatest need is the vision behind the proposed “ministry of outreach” formation program that the planning committee has begun to sketch out, said Bolen. “It’s very exciting to look at the prospects of what that program could contribute to our diocese,” he said.

“A second committee was established to work specifically on diocesan formation, asking how we could build on existing programs and courses for formation of permanent deacons. They too have made excellent progress and come up with suggestions and recommendations which seem feasible and fruitful.”

Responding to the assisted suicide ruling

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Since the Supreme Court of Canada ruling Feb. 6 striking down the ban on assisted suicide, members of the Catholic community have been among those expressing profound concern about the implications and dangers of the decision.

In media statements, postcard campaigns, letters to elected representatives, letters to the editor, as well as parish and diocesan presentations in recent weeks, Bishop Donald Bolen, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, parishes, organizations and individual Catholics have raised concerns.

“I’m very proud of what the diocese has done and how many people have engaged in this vitally important discussion,” said Bishop Bolen.

“I urge us all to continue our efforts. We are living in a critical moment where decisions are still being made. We are capable of making a difference on this question in the here and now, both on a provincial and a national level.”

The court gave the federal government one year to come up with new legislation around physician-assisted suicide. However, under Section 33 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the federal government also has the power to invoke a “notwithstanding clause” to override the court for up to five years at a time. This is the action that many of those opposed to assisted suicide and euthanasia are requesting.

The court decision leaves health care providers and physicians uncertain about the implications of permitting doctors to help individuals kill themselves. Some organizations are already trying to address it through discussions and in policy.

When the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan recently invited feedback on a draft conscientious refusal policy, a local diocesan working group distributed information and encouraged parishioners to respond.

Some 4,000 responses raised concerns about the draft policy that would require doctors to refer for, or at times provide, services even if those services violate a doctor’s conscience. At a recent meeting to consider the draft policy, the CPSSS sent it back to committee for further discussion (see related article on Page 2).

“We were very grateful to hear of the vigorous discussion among doctors at the meeting of the CPSSS, and that they have chosen to delay the vote in order to discern more about this important issue,” said Bolen.

Bolen also expressed appreciation for the diocesan working group which includes representatives from Catholic health groups, the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy, clergy in the diocese, pastoral centre staff, and the diocesan Justice and Peace Commission.

“Every member of the committee is doing wonderful work, but I would highlight the contribution made by Mary Deutscher, who brought her expertise and her deeply Christian, Catholic moral vision and her extensive knowledge, and put them at the service of the church.”

More on Assisted Suicide Issue INSIDE:

CPSS Policy P. 2 / Congress P. 4 / Concerns P. 6-8
By MARY DEUTSCHER

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (CPSS) ruling council sent their draft policy on conscientious refusal back to a subcommittee for further drafting after a meeting March 28 in Saskatoon. The draft policy, which was approved in principle at the College’s January meeting, proposed a regime in which doctors would be compelled to refer for, and in some cases provide, morally objectionable treatments, such as abortion and assisted suicide.

The decision came following a month of public consultation in which the council received over 4,000 submissions, the vast majority of which supported physicians’ conscience rights.

The council made several major deliberations beginning at a March 26 meeting. Associate registrant, Bryan Salt, presented a new draft that incorporated some submissions made in the public consultation.

Discussion centered on whether or not the policy would include an exemption for the Supreme Court’s Carter decision, leaving assisted suicide as the only “treatment” that physicians could refuse to provide on conscience grounds.

Concerns were raised regarding how long such an exemption would be maintained as assisted suicide becomes legalized in Canada.

Council members also raised concerns regarding the impact the draft policy could have on future generations of physicians. Preston Smith, the Dean of the College of Medicine, stated that, “conscientiousness and perseverance are the two personality indicators that predict high clinical performance.” The draft policy would therefore select against the very people who should be encouraged to enter medical education.

All councilors agreed that the CPSS has an obligation to ensure that patients are not abandoned, but that the council requires more time to draft a policy that balances physician and patient interests.

The council reconvened March 28 to further discuss changes to the draft policy. The council made several recommendations to the subcommittee, including the need to provide a clear definition for the word “referral.”

While “referral” could mean to simply provide information regarding a treatment verbally, in medicine this word is used more formally to mean a written referral in which a physician entrusts care of his or her patient to another physician. While most physicians who object to procedures such as abortion are willing to provide their patients with information, a formal referral is understood to ensure the patient’s decision to pursue an option the physician believes is harmful.

The proposed policy identifies three scenarios in which a physician may refuse to provide information regarding treatment options, he or she should refer the patient or direct the patient to an appropriate physician or service. The council noted that it was difficult to define what constitutes an “emergency situation.”

Regarding the role of physicians in emergency situations, council members had difficulty defining an “emergency situation.” This issue was referred back to the subcommittee.

The council also directed that the policy be changed from “Conscientious Refusal” to the less adversarial “Conscientious Objection.”

The subcommittee will convene to create an alternative draft before the policy can be approved by principle by the council before further public consultation can begin. The council hopes to have completed such a consultation before the end of the month so it will vote on whether or not to approve a final policy.

The CPSS’s meeting was held just weeks after the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)’s March 6 decision to pass a similar policy which infringes on physicians’ conscience rights.

Despite receiving 15,977 submissions, the vast majority of which supported conscience rights for physicians, the CPSO passed a policy that requires Ontario physicians to refer for and in some cases provide morally objectionable services.

On March 24, the Christian Medical and Dental Society and the Canadian Federation of Catholic Physicians’ Societies filed an application asking the Ontario Superior Court of Justice to declare that portions of the CPSO policy violate the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which protects freedom of conscience.

Holy Spirit and McClure United celebrate 15th anniversary of covenant relationship

By KIPLY LUKAS YAWORSKI

Fifteen years ago, McClure United Church and Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Parish in Saskatoon entered into a covenant, promising to journey together in a relationship of shared prayer, study and fellowship.

The anniversary was celebrated March 8 at Holy Spirit, with an afternoon prayer service, followed by a social gathering.

Holy Spirit pastor Fr. Ken Beck welcomed members of both congregations and representatives of the broader community to “celebrate the goodness and presence of God in our communities.” McClure United pastor Rev. Ron McConnell led the call to worship, and a choir made up of representatives of both churches led music for the service.

The chair of the River Bend Presbytery of the United Church of Canada, Rev. Jordan Cantwell, and Catholic Bishop Donald Bolen presented reflections, before together lighting a covenant candle.

Cantwell thanked the two congregations for their strong example of “deep, ecumenical sharing at a very grassroots level.”

Bolen noted that it is not easy to write a beautiful ecumenical covenant, but it is even more difficult to live it. With a steering committee that meets every six weeks, the two churches have opportunities for joint prayer, shared preaching and common mission to keep the covenant relationship alive, he noted with gratitude.

The assembly together prayed the Apostles’ Creed, exchanged the sign of peace, and collected an offering for the Prairie Centre of Ecumenism. Nicole Gursky and John LeFevre led a prayer of intercession, and then Jim Cruthers, Linda Cooney, Carol Pek and Bill Shank read the covenant originally signed by the congregations March 5, 2000.

“In witness to the wider Church and to the world: we acknowledge the fractured Body of Christ and the need for healing, we rejoice in the gift of unity that Jesus Christ gives us, and we commit to work for unity, so that in the communion that we share, we recognize the value of our respective traditions and pledge to continue to grow in them in a manner that unites rather than divides,” the covenant states.

The two churches pledged to engage in regular public prayer for each other and the unity of all Christians, to come together for shared prayer, and to invite members to attend worship services of the other church. The covenant also lists concrete actions, including creating an online presence for the two congregations, and offering worship ministry at least once every six months; sharing Sunday bulletins, newsletters and bulletin board materials; and planning joint educational, social and justice activities.

The Bishop’s Annual Appeal reaches its 2014 goal of $1.5 million

By KIPLY LUKAS YAWORSKI

The Bishop’s Annual Appeal reached its 2014 goal of $1.5 million.

Donations by parishioners to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal achieves 2014 goal of $1.5 million.

The British columbia faithful made a $1.5 million donation to the Catholic Foundation of British Columbia. Bishop Albert Thérèse Guimond, OMI, and Bishop Donald Bolen, CSsR, launched the $1.5 million campaign with a donation of $3.5 million.

With funding from the Bishop’s Annual Appeal, this newsletter is published by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

The 2013-2014 Annual Report for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon is available on the diocesan website at www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news or call (306) 242-1500 to request a printed copy.
DCTR promotes paths of hope and healing

BY KIPY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Paths of hope and healing for the diocese were presented in an Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relative at the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon were described – and built – during a recent Diocesan Pastoral Council meeting.

Members of a new diocesan council working to promote such healing described their mandate, gave an overview of the impact of colonialism in residential Schools, and described a range of projects and initiatives. They also endeavored to engage the reader to reflect on the reality of racism, and find ways to foster dialogue and healing in their own parish communities and local settings.

The Diocesan Council for Truth and Reconciliation (DCTR) was established after a promise made at the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission gathering in Saskatchewan in June 2012, part of a promise placed into the Bentwood Box by Bishop Donald Bolen and representatives of the diocesan Indigenous pastoral communities, and Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Saskatoon.

“The group’s mandate is to provide a forum for listening and sharing, through stories and prayer; to collaborate with the diocese toward an understanding and discerning relationships; and to support healing from the Indian Residential Schools experience,” states the DCTR mission statement.

“Our goal is to raise awareness throughout the diocese, about injustices issues, and barriers to reconciliation, and to discern a way to walk together on a path of understanding, education and action, fostering relationships in light of the gospel.”

Impact of schools

During the March 28 overview presented to the DPC, the history of colonization was summarized, and several stories were shared about the devastating impact of residential schools on generations of First Nations and Métis children, families and communities and on their own families. 

Quoting TRC chair Justice Murray Sinclair, DCTR member MaryAnne Morrison noted: “Reconciliation is about forging and maintaining respectful relationships. There are no short cuts.”

DCTR member Carol Zubiak described the sacred nature of the promise placed into the Bentwood Box by the diocese, pledging to work for reconciliation and healing. “Reconciliation is not going to happen overnight… some of the promises are big. This is our promise, and it’s going to take awhile, there are new relationships that we have to build,” Zubiak said.

Prayer, dialogue, projects

The work of the DCTR has included prayer, dialogue and discussion about a range of initiatives, reported Myron Rogal, DCTR member and coordinator of Justice and Peace in the diocese of Saskatoon. For instance, a pilot project is underway at St. Augustine parish in the city to examine and address the roots of racism, he noted.

Director of Pastoral Services Blake Stittler described diocesan participation in the Moving Forward Together Campaign, a pledge by the Catholic Church in Canada to raise $25 million to put toward initiatives that promote healing, battle racism or strengthen culture.

Funds raised in the diocese have gone towards local events, including a conference at STM about racism, and a 10,000 Healing Steps conference about reaching out and healing those trapped in a gang lifestyle.

The DCTR also studied a federal report on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women and worked with Bishop Donald Bolen to write a pastoral letter on the issue (see related article, below).

As a result, an ecumenical event was initiated to listen to Aboriginal women and their families on the issue of missing and murdered women (Voices of Our Sisters, to be held at the Catholic Church in Saskatoon).

Local cultural and language programs exist in the city, including a conference at STM on the Cree language to introduce teachings, prayer, crafts and song, and to begin developing materials in Cree for the sign of the cross, the Hail Mary, Glory Be, and other prayers.

Weenie is also involved in a Canadian Bible Society project to translate the Bible into Cree: the team is now working on the Gospel of John.

Fr. Mick Fleming, CSSR, priest moderator at Our Lady of Guadalupe parish, described a program for single parents, grandparents or other family members raising children in difficult circumstances, offered at three schools with Barb Farthing of Catholic Family Services. Fleming noted the joy and consolation such a program brings. “Are all their problems solved? No. But they know they are not alone. They know there is support.”

The Redemptorist order also recently took on a project to create a DVD of local elders presenting the seven sacred grandfather teachings. The DVD has been made available to Catholic schools, Fleming reported.

Our Lady of Guadalupe

Debbie Ledoux, Parish Life Director at Our Lady of Guadalupe, first shared her own experience at residential school, before expressing her gratitude for the healing God has brought into her life. She described walking as a leader with those who have experienced abuse and hurt, and are dealing with the fallout of the wounds in their lives.

Ledoux provided an overview of the history and role of Our Lady of Guadalupe parish, which began 25 years ago, receiving official parish status in 2007. The community is now seeking a church building, a goal also mentioned in the diocese’s Bentwood Box promise to the TRC.

Right now the community operates out of a house on Avenue J, and rents St. Mary’s parish on 20th Street for their 7 p.m. Sunday Eucharist, but more space is needed for much-needed programs, wakes and other services.

Justice & Peace and Native Ministry are supported by Bishops Annual Appeal

“People are moving back to the parish, feeling at home, living their First Nations spirituality in our Catholic faith, just as Saint John Paul II gave us permission to do: to share our culture within our Church.”

Walking together

The DCTR is playing a role similar to the Council of Priests and Deacons, Bishop Donald Bolen, “giving advice, offering suggestions, and promoting practical initiatives which will help our diocesan church to walk with First Nations and Métis peoples, to value their gifts, and to build together a healthier community, which is engaged in the hard work of starting, healing, understanding and decisions from the past that were hugely unjust to our indigenous peoples.”

The goal is to learn to live well together in communion, he said. “We stand in need of the spiritual wisdom and experience of our Aboriginal sisters and brothers.”

Other highlights of DPC meeting

Other highlights of the March 28 DPC meeting included deeney reports, suggestions for revitalizing diocesan council, renewal of permission to hold an annulment about the annulment process for Fr. Marvin Limchynsky and Donna Rogal of the Marriage Tribunal of the Diocese of Saskatoon, as well as the evaluation and answer session with the bishop.

The DPC meeting was followed by an Annual General Meeting for the diocese. Find the Annual Report on the diocesan website at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

With input from the DCTR, bishops address issue of missing and murdered women and girls

BY KIPY LUKAN YAWORSKI

In November 2014, Saskatchewan Bishop Donald Bolen issued a pastoral letter about the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women, calling on Catholics and the broader society to become better informed and to pray for those whose sisters and daughters have become victims of this ongoing crisis.

Bolen wrote the letter after discussion and consultation with the Diocesan Pastoral Council for Truth and Reconciliation (DCTR).

The DCTR has been discussing the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women since the publication of the March 2014 parliamentary report on the status of missing and murdered women, entitled “Invisible Women: A Call to Action.” In the pastoral letter issued Nov. 3, the bishop recommended the parliamentary report as a starting point for learning more about the issue.

“Nearly 1,200 Aboriginal women have been murdered or have gone missing over the past 30 years, according to police records. This issue does not affect just Aboriginal women but all Canadians, all people,” Bolen said in the pastoral letter.

“One thing has been dreadfully wrong, and the pain and suffering of the Aboriginal families and communities who have lost loved ones calls out for a response.”

If one part of the body suffers with it, says Bolen, citing Paul’s letter to the Corinthians: “This same idea is found in traditional Aboriginal ethics when it is said, ‘The hurt of one is the hurt of all.’”

“The issue of missing and murdered women can be connected to larger societal problems, says the bishop. “Like the residential schools, missing and murdered women can be connected to systemic problems, and we have a desire to walk and work together toward a new day, an exercise which will make our communities healthier and safer, for Aboriginal women and for all of us.”

He adds: “What has become clear to us is that we need to listen more closely to the voices of the survivors and family members of the women lost to us; and we need to walk with their communities as they seek to name underlying problems and to take steps towards healing the brokenness that has allowed this tragedy to systematically continue. We all need to be more aware of what has happened and what we have to fail to do.”

The diocese is working with other faith communities in organizing an ecumenical “Voices of Our Sisters” event April 18, to listen to the stories of those who have suffered through the experience of missing or murdered sisters and daughters. This is a chance “to hear from those who walk with the most vulnerable in our midst today, to listen to various voices and proposals suggesting a way forward, and to begin to discern what steps we might take as we learn to walk together in solidarity and friendship,” says the bishop.

“Education, prayer, hospitality and empathy are crucial,” says Bolen, calling for “partnering with all those who see the need for renewed faith and reverence for dignity of our lost daughters, sisters, mothers, and kokums.”

In celebration of the April 18 event and the March 11 gathering and reading the March 2014 “Invisible Women” document, individuals and parishes are also asked to lift up prayers for those who are grieving murdered Aboriginal women, and those who are still living with the deep suffering of those whose sisters and daughters remain missing.”

The letter is found online at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news/bishop-donald-bolen
Discussion, information and consultation in three locations

Parishioners and pastors from the Humboldt and Wadena deaneries gathered March 14 for a Congress Day held at St. Augustine parish in Humboldt, one of three such Days held across the diocese.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Synod on Family feedback

Members of the diocesan Marriage Task Force led each Congress Day group in discussion of seven questions distilled from the Synod document, “The Vocation and Mission of The Family in the Church and Contemporary World.”

The document is being used to generate reflection and input from throughout the Church, in preparation for the worldwide Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be held in Rome in October 2015. Mary and Phil Wrubleski led the discussion in Kindersley and Humboldt, Wanda and Lynn Freistadt presented in Kindersley (See the article about the Synod on the Family discussion, Page 5).

Year of Consecrated Life

Vocations Office Coordinator Myron Rogal introduced the Year of Consecrated Life in presentations at both the Saskatoon and Kindersley Congress Days. In Humboldt, Fr. Geoffrey Young, a member of the diocesan Vocations Commission, led the presentation.

Promulgated by Pope Francis and beginning on the first Sunday of Advent, 2014, the Year of Consecrated Life will continue until the Feast of the Presentation, Feb. 2, 2016, which is also celebrated each year as the World Day for Consecrated Life.

The purpose of this special year is to look to the past with gratitude; to live consecrated life in the present with passion, and to embrace the future with hope, said Rogal.

In a video message about her vocation, Sr. Myra Arines, PM, described consecrated life as living with an ‘undivided heart’ focusing on Christ, who matters most.

Small groups at Congress discussed the witness of those in consecrated life and how the Church grows by attraction rather than proselytizing. The session concluded with Congress participants prayerfully recalling the impact of consecrated religious in their own lives – whether sisters, brothers or priests in religious orders.

Dangers of euthanasia and assisted suicide

During each of the Congress Days in the Deaneries, guest speaker Mary Deutscher also gave an overview of the issue of assisted suicide and euthanasia.

She described those who will be threatened if euthanasia and assisted suicide is legalized, detailed the failure of safeguards in jurisdictions where such killing is already legal, and focused on the need to expand palliative care to ensure that pain relief and loving support is available to all Canadians facing illness.

Deutscher, a member of the diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, who has a bachelor of science and a BA in philosophy from the University of Saskatchewan and an MA in public ethics from St. Paul University in Ottawa, is presently a PhD candidate in public policy at the University of Saskatchewan. She has also served as a Roman Catholic chaplain at Pasqua Hospital in the Archdiocese of Regina and held a term position with the Catholic Organization for Life and Family. She was also the keynote presenter at the diocesan-wide Congress Day for leadership held Nov. 27, 2014 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

Deutscher emphasized that euthanasia is the active killing of an individual by another person to relieve suffering. Respecting a patient’s refusal of treatment or a person’s request to discontinue treatment is NOT euthanasia; nor is letting someone die naturally by withholding or withdrawing medical treatment when its burdens outweigh its benefits. In assisted suicide, one person provides the means for another person to kill himself/herself, by providing information or lethal substances such as pills or injections, she explained.

On Feb. 6, 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that those who are disabled or suffering should have the right to kill themselves, and to receive assistance to do so. The court gave the federal government one year to come up with new legislation.

Meanwhile, in the province of Quebec there is an attempt to legalize euthanasia as “medical aid in dying” in Bill 52, passed earlier this year – it asserts that euthanasia is part of health care, which falls under provincial jurisdiction.

Now is the time to lobby governments, Deutscher stressed, in advance of these dangerous practices, Deutscher said.

“If Canada legalizes euthanasia and assisted suicide, there will be many vulnerable members of our community who will be put at risk,” she stressed, listing those suffering from depression and mental illness, the elderly, and persons with disabilities as those in greatest danger.

The legalization of assisted suicide creates a situation where elderly persons or those with disabilities would not be given the same suicide-prevention options and support that able-bodied persons receive. Deutscher predicted. Rather than being offered the kind of assistance that would help them recognize their value and support them in the courageous choice of living, too easily society could default to simply killing them, she said.

With elder abuse already a problem, legalizing assisted suicide or euthanasia will threaten vulnerable seniors, many of whom already face depression, or fear as if they are a burden, said Deutscher, asking how long will it be before there is a pressure or “duty to die.”

It is already being suggested that euthanasia and assisted suicide will help in controlling health care costs, she added, which indicates that there could also soon be an economic pressure to offer death to patients.

The experience in jurisdictions where euthanasia and assisted suicide have been legalized shows that safeguards do not work, Deutscher stressed, reviewing how euthanasia and assisted suicide expands and evolves once in place.

For instance, in the Netherlands, euthanasia was originally only for terminally ill patients, but quickly moved to include those who were suffering from depression.

“If we start calling this a right, it has to be available to every human being,” warned Deutscher. “If we open up this door of euthanasia and assisted suicide to certain groups of people, would we really be able to protect others, such as those suffering from depression?”

Death is not an isolated event, she said, noting how “suicide contagion” becomes a concern in communities or schools where one youth’s suicide can and does lead to others.

“How would suicide prevention be affected if assisted suicide becomes an acceptable option?” she queried.

Assisted suicide and euthanasia do not exist in a vacuum, she added, noting the effect such practices would have on families, communities and caregivers. “When someone is being killed, that means that someone is doing the killing and the assisting.”

The impact on a person who is responsible for ending someone else’s life is not often considered in the public discourse about these issues, Deutscher said. “How will this affect our doctors, if they are asked to become killers instead of healers?”

She pointed to a recent policy set forth by the Ontario and Saskatchewan colleges of physicians, which would require doctors to refer or provide procedures, even if they are morally opposed. This would include assisted suicide or euthanasia if these practices are legalized, she said.

Palliative Care needed

Ensuring that every Canadian has access to effective palliative care is important, she said. “We also want to look at focusing our energy on providing this support,” she said.

“It’s not enough for us to say that we can’t have access to euthanasia; we want to give people a better option. We want to look at ways that we can actually help people, so that these requests for suicide and euthanasia disappear.”

Deutscher urged Congress Day participants to continue to express their concerns and tell their stories, pointing to resources such as those available from the Catholic Organization for Life and Family.

Her presentation concluded with a moving video produced by Real Life Catholic, featuring young mother Lizer Lovett of Portland, Oregon, who is suffering from an aggressive and terminal cancer, but who has rejected assisted suicide in favour of living and loving to the end of her life.
Synod on Family feedback gathered at Congress Days: how do we meet pastoral needs in challenging contexts?

BY KIPLY LEKAN YAWORSKI

Gathering input for the Synod on the Family in Rome was part of this year’s Congress Day in the Deaneries, held in three locations across the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

As a follow up to the Extraordinary Synod on the Family last year, bishops from around the world were asked by Pope Francis to reflect upon the “Lineamenta” – a summary document about the vocations and mission, and pastoral needs of the family in the Church and in the world – and to respond to a series of questions, in order to assist in preparing for the Ordinary Synod of the Bishops that will be held in Oct. 2015.

Feedback was gathered by the diocese of Saskatoon – including submissions through the website and from local leadership, as well as input from the public at recent Congress Days – has been forwarded to the Canadian Catholic Conference of Catholic Bishops, which will in turn prepare a response to send to the Vatican.

Bishop describes Synod process

At each of the three diocesan Congress Day locations – in Saskatoon on Feb. 28, in Kindersley on March 7, and in Humboldt on March 14 – Bishop Donald Bolen introduced the discussion with an overview of the Synod process.

With the help of a Salt and Light Television video, the bishop described some of the many contexts in which families around the world live and struggle – facing a huge range of issues, such as war, Christian persecution, poverty, divorce, secularism, homophobia, and much more.

Bolen noted Pope Francis’ strong desire that the Synod process would involve open dialogue and frank discussion, with bishops from around the world sharing their reflection and experience with each other in the Synod Hall.

Bolen noted that in responding to the Synod report, the diocese of Saskatoon is part of the worldwide process of maturing, “with true spiritual discernment,” the proposed ideas and concrete solutions to difficulties and challenges confronted by families: “to give answers to the many discouragements that surround and suffocate families.”

Marriage Task Force leadership

At the Congress Day in Kindersley, discussion about the Synod on the Family report was led by diocesan Marriage Task Force members Wanda and Lynn Freistadt. In Humboldt and in Saskatoon, Mary and Phil Wrubleski of the Marriage Task Force summarized the report, known as the Lineamenta, outlining its guidelines and questions.

“I upon first reading of the Lineamenta, as a lay person, the document was heavy: I found it very difficult but it is incredible,” said Mary Wrubleski. “We are overwhelmed by the fact that the Synod fathers are so in touch with the world today.”

The document begins by describing the family as “a school of humanity” for a wounded world. “There are signs of trouble, but the great part is though, that the desire to marry is still very strong. People want to become family,” she said. “The family is for the Church. The Church needs to re-discover the family as an agent to evangelize and to be a witness to the Christian mission.”

Mary Wrubleski identified three parts to the document: listening, which includes a look at the context and the challenges facing the family; looking, which includes looking at Christ, as well as considering the gospel of the family; and confronting the situation from pastoral perspectives.

“There is a crisis of faith which points to great difficulties in marriage and family life,” reported Mary, citing the document. “A couple of the symptoms of these challenges in society are loneliness and powerlessness.”

The negative impact of this crisis in faith is said to be seen in the difficulty of raising children, a hesitancy to welcome new life, considering the aged a burden, living together before or instead of marriage, secularization, children born outside marriage, single parent homes, blended families, absent fathers, violence against women, sexual exploitation of children, crime, and pornography.

At the same time, “more people have a desire to take better care of themselves, to know themselves better, to live in harmony with their emotions and feelings, and to seek better relationships.”

In turn, the Church needs to offer hope, truth and support in the way of valuing marriage, humanity and the family. “Families and couples need help with their hunger for God and to feel part of the Church,” summarized Mary.

Helping families reach fullness of God’s plan for them

Phil Wrubleski continued, saying the document acknowledges that “in order to deal with these challenges, we need to have our gaze focused on Jesus Christ – to be rooted in Christ.”

“The family is the domestic church, the smallest unit of church. Love needs to be at the centre of the family. The document speaks of marriage as a sacrament of redemption,” he said. “The indissolubility of marriage should be seen not as a yoke but as gift. The goal is ‘forever marriage,’ sacramental marriage, which, among other things, includes the giving of oneself and having an openness to life.”

The church has the responsibility of helping all couples reach that fullness of God’s plan for them, he added. As a vocation and a journey of faith, Christian marriage must be a place of evangelization for current and future generations, continued Mary. “Marriage, as a vocation to love, means engaging the troubles of the world. The church needs to accompany couples along that journey. The family then is missionary to our neighbours and society.”

Pastoral needs identified

There is a need for more formation and training of priests, deacons, catechists and pastoral workers, as well as better preparation for couples who plan to marry, and better support for couples in their first years of marriage.

Assistance and guidance are needed in caring for separated, divorced or single parent families. These wonderful persons should be able to count on the Church. The document asks for courageous pastoral choices to find solutions and to show love and respect as we attempt to walk in their shoes. We must show a respect for the suffering of (those who are) separated, (or) divorced,” Mary continued. “As for those with homosexual tendencies, the Synod fathers suggested there are no grounds for unions but there needs to be respect and sensitivity. We need to listen and be present to their experience and their pain.”

Congress participants were then asked to engage in discussion by tackling one of seven questions about how the church can respond in pastoral activity to areas of challenge and hurt. Responses, recommendations and discussion points were recorded, and were used in framing the diocese’s response to the document.
A Statement about Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia by the President of the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan, Therese Jelinski, which has been endorsed by Bishop Donald Bolen and the diocesan Justice and Peace Commission

“Not the Canada I Want...”

The Supreme Court of Canada wants to change the rules against assisted suicide and euthanasia. The Feb. 6, 2015 ruling has huge implications for health care and for our society.

Here’s why we should all be concerned if Canada adopts state-sanctioned suicide and gives physicians permission to kill their patients:

● No human being dies in a social vacuum. Anyone who has been touched by suicide, for example, knows how the effects of one person’s death ripple through a community. Likewise, other people would be impacted by assisted suicide (providing the means for someone to kill oneself) and euthanasia (killing someone, such as by lethal injection, to end their suffering). What about the impact on the person who is responsible for ending someone’s life?

● The solution to suffering is not to be killed, but to have proper pain management and proper support from the medical system. Parliament passed a motion in 2014 calling for a pan-Canadian palliative and end-of-life care strategy. Now it needs to act on it. Timely access to universal, palliative care must be a priority.

● The absolute ban on assisted suicide and euthanasia is the norm in all but a handful of countries, where the initial restrictions against abuse quickly eroded. There is well-documented evidence of the abuse of euthanasia and of its expansion, showing that safeguards do NOT work.

● Many doctors and other health professionals who want nothing to do with killing their patients will leave the profession, and many young adults considering a medical profession will choose another path if they are expected to become killers instead of healers. This will compound the difficulties many communities already have in recruiting and retaining physicians. No health professional or organization should be obliged to participate in assisted suicide or euthanasia.

● The natural process of dying might be recast as a process to be avoided, so that assisted suicide and euthanasia could become the norm. Might there also be pressure to offer death to patients as a cost-saving measure?

● How will the normalization of suicide affect suicide prevention programs? What will happen if suicide, instead of being a tragedy to avoid, becomes an acceptable option, a right that we must uphold? Will people with disabilities be given the same suicide-prevention options and support that able-bodied persons receive, or will we just kill them?

● People with disabilities merit protection against discrimination. Instead, the Court’s decision entrenches the idea that some lives are not worthy of living.

● Elder abuse and neglect is already a problem in society and could be extended to include pressure to request euthanasia or assisted suicide, becoming the duty to die.

● All human life deserves respect and protection, but many people will be put at risk: persons who are elderly, disabled, mentally ill, depressed, or who have dementia. What is initially considered a compassionate course of action could eventually evolve into eugenics.

● The Court ruling states that a person need NOT have a terminal illness to request assisted suicide, only a “medical condition” (including illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering (physical or psychological) that is intolerable to that person. This throws the gates of assisted suicide wide open, forcing the state to agree to assisted suicide in every situation.

● Patients already have the right to refuse medical treatments that they consider burdensome. They are not required to do everything possible to stay alive as long as possible. Also, giving patients enough medication to provide pain relief is not euthanasia, even if the higher dose might unintentionally shorten the person’s life. (The intent here is to reduce suffering rather than to hasten death, unlike assisted suicide and euthanasia whose intent is to make the patient die before his or her time.)

Do you want to live in a Canada that allows some people to kill others?
Do you want to live in a Canada that considers taking a life to be a positive good, a “service” to be performed at public expense and the state’s obligation to facilitate? That subtly or overtly pressures the most vulnerable among us to end their lives? That blurs the line between suicide and assisted suicide? That pressures doctors to kill patients against their will and better judgment?

This is an issue of public safety and of preserving our social heritage of caring.
What kind of world do we want to leave for our children and grandchildren?
Dangers of euthanasia discussed at diocesan event

Contact the Government of Canada and your elected representatives to ask them to take action to STOP the legalization of Assisted Suicide

Contact your MP and Hon. Peter MacKay (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada 284 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0B8, no charge). Postal Services are available at local post offices or online at
www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/office-justice-and-peace-0 stating:

"I am concerned about the recent Supreme Court decision in the Carter Case. Striking down the law against physician-assisted suicide will endanger the lives of many of our most vulnerable citizens, including persons with disabilities, our elders, and those suffering from mental illness. It will fundamentally change Canadian healthcare and the values we hold in common."

"I urge the government to take immediate steps to protect Canadians. Use the "not-withstanding" clause to uphold Parliament's past votes against assisted suicide and euthanasia. People who are contemplating suicide require care and support from our health and social systems and not pressure to end their lives."

Let your voice be heard during this one-year hiatus provided by the court!

A big Thank You to Alliance for Life for taking on the cost of printing the postcard for parish distribution at the Chrism Mass on March 30, 2015.

Justice and Peace

Justice and Peace is supported by

Bishops Annual Appeal

By Kiply Lunak Yaworski

The dangers of assisted suicide and euthanasia, strategies to work against their legalization, as well as ways to support those who are ill or dying were among the issues addressed Nov. 26, 2014 in Saskatoon, during a multi-faith meeting with my two members of the Christian Medical and Dental Society (CMDS) of Canada.

The “Living With Dignity” event was organized by the diocesan Justice and Peace Office, and featured guest speakers Larry Worthen of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, a lawyer, a permanent deacon and the executive director of CMDS – and Dr. Margaret Cottle of Vancouver – a palliative care physician and member of both CMDS and the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition.

After a prayer led by Mary Deutscher of the diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen welcomed some 50 participants to the public ecumenical event held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family.

“The gospel that Jesus proclaims is a gospel that calls us to life, and it values human life. God creates human life as a treasure, and as Christian churches it is part of our responsibility to uphold the dignity of the human person, to defend human life when it is threatened,” said Bolen. “It is a great joy when we can gather together as Christians to give common witness.”

Worthen explained that the CMDS represents some 1,500 members from a range of Christian denominations and background: “We are very involved in advancing a protection of the conscience rights of physicians, and also to argue to support and defend our patients against threats like the legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia.”

Vulnerable at risk

Worthen provided an overview of the issue of euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada and other parts of the world, noting the importance of putting a human face to the issue in a way that highlights the dangers that legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide would pose to vulnerable persons.

“The media discussion has been focused on a number of individuals, who have become very public in their end of life plea for legalizing euthanasia,” he noted. “But the concern that I have is that we don’t see the other people who will be affected by legalization, those who will be affected negatively.”

Worthen stressed that the option for assisted suicide as outlined in the Carter decision would not be confined to those who are terminally ill. He noted that those who would receive a difficult diagnosis, or suffer an injury that leaves them a paraplegic or a quadriplegic, often do suffer depression and exclude themselves from helping themselves.

He reviewed the current laws against euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada, and gave an overview of past and present challenges to the law, such as the Supreme Court of Canada decision in the Sue Rodriguez case in the 1990s and the parliamentary defeat of a 2011 private member’s bill to legalize euthanasia.

Worthen also summarized current challenges. At the time, the Supreme Court ruling on the Carter case had not yet been announced, but by February 2015 the court struck down the ban on assisted suicide in Canada for those with a terminal illness (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual.” In Quebec, the legalization of euthanasia as “medical aid in dying” in Bill 52 is an attempt to circumvent the federal criminal code by asserting that euthanasia is part of health care, which falls under provincial jurisdiction.

Experience in other countries

In Belgium and the Netherlands, the numbers of euthanasia deaths are increasing rapidly and are largely because they are aged, lonely or bereaved.”

The pro-euthanasia lobby in Holland is now proposing that anyone over the age of 70 should be able to get access to euthanasia, and that it should not necessarily be provided by medical personnel.

Worthen presented a pastoral concern about members of my parish who are elderly, living alone, isolated,” he said. “When society accepts that someone’s life is no longer good for living, don’t they get the message? They do. They feel undervalued as is.”

The faith of Canadians is not being heeded in discussions and decisions around euthanasia and assisted suicide, even though it is part of the fabric of this country, he added. The Hippocratic Oath is being threatened, and there is also the question of how to provide freedom of conscience protection for doctors, pharmacists, nurses and other care providers.

“Bill 52 would require that every nursing home and every hospital in Quebec allow euthanasia. Why the patient refuses to want to be euthanized? Where will they go?”

Worthen added: “The reality is, that even though this is characterized as a patient’s choice – of live and let live – the proponents of euthanasia and assisted suicide are actually forcing this on other people.”

The media are failing us

The media are not asking hard and probing questions about the consequences of legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide, or investigating the abuses and wrongful deaths that are happening where it is legal, said palliative care physician Dr. Margaret Cottle.

“If this was a pipeline or a nuclear power plant, they would go anywhere in the world to find out what was going on someplace else, but that’s not the case with this issue.”

Worthen added: “The reality is, that even though this is characterized as a patient’s choice – of live and let live – the proponents of euthanasia and assisted suicide are actually forcing this on other people.”

Palliative Care physician Dr. Margaret Cottle and Larry Worthen, director of the Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada spoke at “Living with Dignity” in November.

The dangers of assisted suicide and legalizing euthanasia as “medical aid in dying” in Bill 52 is an attempt to circumvent the federal criminal code by asserting that euthanasia is part of health care, which falls under provincial jurisdiction.

Cottle stressed.

As for how to journey with those who are ill or dying, “90 per cent is just showing up,” she stressed, before providing tips for practicing compassionate care.

“If we need to have the right to kill ourselves, that means that love has failed,” Cottle said.

She quoted Dr. Sheila Cassidy on the importance of caring for those facing death in a spirit of love and compassion. Such care is “an affirmation that people matter, about the unique value of the human person, irrespective of age, social class or productivity. It is an affirmation that people matter just because they are people, because God made them and loves them, just the way they are, not because they are good or wise or physically beautiful,” wrote Cassidy.

Cottle also strongly urged her listeners to get informed, to tell their own stories, and find some points about this debate that they are comfortable speaking about to others.

“Learn your little ‘elevator speech’ so that when people say to you ‘why are you opposed to this?’ – you will have this little speech you can give. Memorize it, and make sure it focuses on something like public health.”

She added: “Stay on topic. Don’t let them push you off. When people say things like ‘We treat our dogs better than we do people,’ I would respond: ‘Well, the dog didn’t get to choose. We do, in fact, treat people better than we do our dogs.’”

Cottle also urged all those concerned with the issue to continue to contact government representatives and officials, including the federal ministers of health and justice.

Protecting a precious heritage

“What kind of social world do we want to leave for our grandchildren? Are we being good stewards of our cultural heritage of caring and respect for life?” she asked, urging those in attendance to protect the inter-generational river of compassionate caring.

“People are dying of loneliness. It is both powerful and healing. It’s time for our generations to pass along this heritage to the next ones and to protect it from those that would destroy or diminish it in any way.”

Worthen and Cottle also participated in the Catholic Diocesan Congress Day about euthanasia and assisted suicide that was led by Mary Deutscher Nov. 27, 2014, and were featured on Dr. Margaret Cottle’s Facebook page for Christian leaders held Nov. 28 at St. Anne’s parish.
Those at their lowest point need love and care, not assisted death, says Mark Pickup

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAVORSKI

Hearing of Multiple Sclerosis for some 30 years, Mark Pickup knew what it means to struggle with a chronic and debilitating condition. He also strongly asserts that legalized assisted suicide and euthanasia offer a false compassion that will threaten the lives of Canadians at their most vulnerable moments.

The recent decision of the Supreme Court of Canada to strike down the law banning assisted suicide is dangerous, immoral, and a threat to those suffering illness or disability, he said. “It was a terrible decision that will irreversibly alter the character of Canadian society.”

Pickup, who lives in Beaumont, Alberta, was the keynote speaker at a March 7 banquet held during a Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon Sobor 60 & Action Conference at Bishop James Maloney high school in Saskatoon.

“It was not a victory for liberty. It was a victory for license and the abuse of human freedom,” said Pickup, describing the court decision as “morally twisted.”

The court cited Section 7 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms ensuring the “right to life, liberty and security of person” as the reason to end a prohibition on physician-assisted suicide for “competent adults who seek such assistance as a result of a grievous and irremediable medical condition that causes enduring and intolerable suffering.”

The ruling reveals “just how wide this death net of our Brave New World of the Canadian landscape is going to be,” described Pickup, stressing that the court does not restrict assisted suicide to terminal illness but opens it up to any “grievous and irremediable medical condition.”

The court sets “broad, gaping parameters” which would also permit assisted suicide for any kind of intolerable suffering – physical or psychological. “They threw the gates of assisted death wide open,” said Pickup.

“A national campaign in favour of palliative and home care and against euthanasia and assisted suicide”

Pickup then spoke “Christian to Christian” about the concept of suffering and the redemptive power of one’s grief, loss and pain to Jesus Christ.

“Jesus healed the sick, raised Lazarus from the dead, gave back sanctity to the deranged, but never did He practice, or include, killing as part of the mercy that occupied His heart. His true followers cannot but adopt the same attitude.”

– Malcolm Muggeridge

However, all rights carry responsibilities, Pickup said.

“If we accept that there is a right to life, then surely we also have a responsibility to love that life to its natural conclusion – not only for ourselves but for the common good,” he said, stressing that an individual’s decisions always affect others.

“If I opt for assisted suicide it will affect my wife, my children, and my grandchildren. It will affect my doctor – because I will ask her to stop being my healer and become my killer – and it will affect my society, because in a small but not uncertain way, it will help entrench the notion that there is such a thing as a life unworthy to be lived,” he said.

“We are interdependent beings, not autonomous beings in a jungle of self interest,” Pickup asserted. “No matter how sick I become, I still have a responsibility to the common good. And I have a right to expect the best palliative care and those things that will foster life in me, even when life is ending.”

He cautioned against euphemisms like “death with dignity,” “right to die” and “medical aid in dying,” which are used to give an air of medical legitimacy to killing. “Clothe it in the most clever euphemisms, it is still murder.”

“Let me tell you about death with dignity: it is not achieved by injecting someone with poison when they are at their lowest point,” he said.

“People in psychological pain need counseling therapy, even when they are in the thrall of depression or grief, and don’t recognize that they need counseling.”

“‘If I carry my cross of suffering, in union with Christ’s redemptive suffering, it does not lead to a twisted.”

Mark Pickup spoke March 7 Saskatoon.

Life-Giving Love:

A national campaign in favour of palliative and home care and against euthanasia and assisted suicide organized by the Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) supported by bishops of Canada (CCCB):

www.lifegivinglove.com
Justice and Peace

Event focuses on persecution of Christians, need for peace

By KYLE LEKAN WYCKOFF

An evening of information and reflection about the persecution of Christians around the world – and how to foster peace in the face of that persecution – was held Nov. 12, 2014 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

The evening seminar was held to raise awareness and to enter into solidarity with those who are suffering because of religious persecution, said Myron Rogal, coordinator of the diocesan Justice and Peace Office, who organized the event.

“This another reason we come together tonight is to ask the justice questions,” Rogal said. “What is it regarding our collective systems, our systems of politics, economics and governance that enable so many people across the world to be diminished, losing their very basic right to practice their faith and worship as is allowed today in our country?”

Rogal stressed that Christians share their hope in the risen Lord, and thus can be Christ-like as agents who promote peace – we really need to unify and to look for the voices of those who are marginalized and suffering without causing further division in our midst.

The seminar began with reports about persecution of Christians in two areas of the world: Pakistan and Iraq.

Speaker Nadeem Imitiaz Bhatti described the dire situation facing Christians in Pakistan, where the blasphemy laws restrict religious freedom and are used to justify violence and persecution of individuals and Christian communities. He shared video news reports about the recent murder of a young married couple by a mob after they were accused of defiling a copy of the Quran, and news about a death sentence facing a Christian mother, Asia Bibi, who was recently upheld.

“These laws are misused as an excuse to kill Christians,” said Imitiaz Bhatti, describing horrific attacks on religious minorities in Pakistan, including the destruction of a Christian village, the vandalizing of Christian churches and schools, theft of property, imprisonment, torture and murder.

Politicians are reluctant to take action or bring perpetrators to justice, for fear of retaliation, he said, pointing to the assassinations of Salmaan Taseer, the governor of Punjab, and of Imitiaz Bhatti’s own close relative, federal minister Shahbaz Bhatti, after they spoke out against blasphemy laws.

“Pakistan’s blasphemy laws are a violation of fundamental human rights, which in practice promote religious hatred and violence,” said Imitiaz Bhatti.

A local group called Friends of Pakistan has been created to encourage governments to stand up for human rights and to extend assistance to the victims of religious persecution in Pakistan, he said. (The group held a second fund-raising and awareness evening March 29, 2015 at Rock of Ages Church in Saskatoon.)

Maggie Aziz of Sacred Heart Chaldean Catholic Church in Saskatoon, spoke on the witness and martyrdom of Iraq, home to one of the oldest Christian communities in the world.

She described the history of Christianity in the region, and presented statistics about the decline of the Christian population. According to United Nations estimates, some 2.2 million Iraqis have been displaced since 2007, with the vast majority of these being Christians and other religious minorities, she said.

“The estimated number of Christians remaining has dropped to less than 450,000 as of 2013.” That number has declined even further in recent months, with escalation of religious persecution and violence led by ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria).

Christians in the area now face an ultimatum: either pay a tax, convert to Islam or stay and be killed by the sword, Aziz said.

“Time after time, our churches have been sacked, holy places of worship burned and relatives have been desecrated, churches have been bombed, churches (have been) converted to mosques by force, our priests and clergy have been kidnapped, held ransom or killed,” she said, and some of those who fled are dying of hunger and thirst in the mountains.

Dr. Chris Hrynkow, who teaches in the department of religion and culture at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon, led the second part of the evening seminar, focusing on how to foster cultures of peace, even in the context of religious persecution.

Hrynkow began by describing the concept of positive peace as more than simply the absence of war. Positive peace also eliminates the structural violence of unequal or oppressive applications of power and the distribution of resources. “It holds that without social justice and the reform of existing oppressive structures, there can be no sustain- able or authentic peace.”

He then introduced the concept of “cultures of peace,” which has been explored by a number of thinkers, recognizing the importance of ordinary people finding a way to cooperate on a daily basis and live together in a peaceful manner. Fostering cultures of peace is a way to creatively deal with difference and conflict, grounded in relationships, recognizing that this will take different forms around the world. The presence of religious persecution can act like the ‘canary in a coal mine,’ alerting us to barriers that prevent the flourishing of cultures of peace,” he said, before suggesting a number of practices that can help foster conditions under which cultures of peace can flourish. “It is important to have advocates for cultures of peace with strong grounding in their own faith tradition speaking to their co-religionists about creative ways to deal with conflict and diversity.”

Practices that would promote cultures of peace include comparing and contrasting “like with like” as a starting point, avoiding the path of being too quick to condemn others; and holding to the basic principle of humility, which holds that full truth will only be revealed at the end of time. Working on common projects and placing a high value on dialogue and shared identities also fosters peace.

Finding a way of policing that protects basic rights and promotes tolerance is important, he added, citing the United Nations Police motto: “sustainable peace through justice.”

The U.N. General Assembly’s 1999 “Declaration and Programme of Action on Culture and Peace” names eight areas that can contribute to cultures of peace. Promotion of human rights, peace education, sustainable development for all, participatory governance, gender equity, multi-faceted freedom of expression, disarmament, and tolerance, empathy and solidarity are “key forms of leaven that will grow a culture of peace,” Hrynkow listed.

“Incarnating cultures of peace is a major challenge that can be faced with the passion and profoundly the love of faith,” he concluded.

Catholic Social Teaching: Political, but not Partisan.

Office for Justice and Peace, Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

We all know that factors such as the availability of health care, access to land and food, safe and affordable housing, quality education, peace and freedom from violence and oppression are among the factors that deeply influence the length and quality of people’s lives. The call to social justice is to address these issues where needed, especially with a concern towards those struggling most in our midst, in order to change lives for the better.

Political decisions made at local, national and global levels determine to a large extent what a society offers to its people. It is not about compromise; rather, faith brings to our public life a set of values that can help foster conditions under which cultures of peace can flourish. For the Church, however, the separation between political and partisan is crucial.

Any one of these practices would likely not be enough to eliminate religious persecution, however among several of them incarnated will represent forms of violence intervention and prevention.

Each of these forms of religious traditions has sources and examples to draw upon in terms of building a culture of peace, he said. “It is important to have advocates for cultures of peace with strong grounding in their own faith tradition speaking to their co-religionists about creative ways to deal with conflict and diversity.”

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Scarf project

Grade 7 students from St. Luke Catholic School in Saskatoon tied scarves they made as part of a class project to trees and lampposts near Saskatoon Friendship Inn in December, leaving them for anyone who might need some extra warmth. Teacher Colleen Doepker initiated the project early in the school year, with a plan for each Grade 7 student to make a scarf for a kindergarten student at their partner school, St. John. The project grew in scope at the suggestion of Doepker’s mother, Lois McKay, with the idea of the 28 students making extra scarves and leaving them in the core neighbourhood for anyone in need to pick up.

Photo by Colleen Doepker.
ABORTION
 Effects of Abortion,” while speaker South, Saskatoon.

SA SK ATC H EW A N PR O -L IFE A SSO C IATIO N

impossible for us to save 100 babies, but we can save

lobbying efforts underway in the province, asking the

prohibitive. For example, if a pregnant teenager is
denied financial support by her parents or legal
guardian due to her refusal to have an abortion, she
could then be deemed emancipated for the purposes of
eligibility for public assistance. That said, the majority
of parents in Saskatchewan have their children’s best
interests in mind and these parents and minors need
to be respected and protected too.

Are abortion rates reduced where Parental
Consent for Abortions legislation is passed?

Yes, Parental Consent for Abortion legislation is
effective at lowering the incidence of abortion among
minors. Many studies prove this, one of which is the 2006
study that was published in the New England Journal
of Medicine analysing the parental consent law that
took effect in Texas in 2000. The study found that
abortion rates fell by 11 per cent among 15-year-olds,
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Environmental action as Christian action: an ecumenical workshop

BY MYRON ROGAL

“Making your Case: Environmental Action as Christian Action” was a day-long ecumenical workshop held Dec. 6, 2014 at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Saskatoon.

The event was organized by Churches for Environmental Action, a newly-named group that strives to connect God’s care for creation found in scripture with daily reality.

The ecumenical event featured Bishop Donald Bolen giving an opening address, followed by Dr. Jim Harding, who was the keynote speaker for the day.

Prairie Centre for Ecumenism Director Dr. Darinne Dahl, who serves as a member of the new group’s organizing committee, welcomed participants to the event.

The opening prayer was a reflection on Psalm 40:5 “O Lord how wonderful is your creation,” which inspired participants to a spirit of wonder and awe, recognizing that the Creator creates “anything and everything,” as creation does not cease.

Renowned poet Wendall Berry was cited, in that “God created the world because God wanted it made,” highlighting the supreme goodness of creation and questioning how we have at times neglected and have even destroyed this wonderful gift.

Bolen’s presentation focused on the 2003 CCCB (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops) pastoral letter “You love all that exists” which drew the audience into three core questions:

• Why environmental issues are moral and faith issues
• How do we reach parishes in the midst of division and inefficiency to environmental issues, and
• How do we speak hopefully?

Bolen stressed the unbreakable connection between the natural world and human ecology. Pope Benedict XVI wrote frequently on this link, which Pope Francis continues to stress as a necessity. Bolen walked the participants through the document’s themes as guidelines to address environmental concerns with urgency.

“We human beings are not only the beneficiaries, but also the stewards of other creatures. Thanks to our bodies, God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a personal tragedy. Let us not leave in our wake a swath of destruction and death which will affect our own lives and those of future generations,” Bolen said.

This urgency was precisely expressed by Saint John Paul II in a 1990 World Day of Peace message when he said: “Faced with the widespread destruction of the environment, people everywhere are coming to understand that we cannot continue to live as if the goods of the earth as we have in the past.”

Benedict XVI further described this intimate bond between humanity and nature in a 2010 World Day of Peace address: “There exists a certain reciprocity: as we care for creation, we realize that God, through creation, cares for us.”

Bolen noted that creation has an intrinsic and intelligent order. He said there is a serious need to examine how we so often separate natural and human ecology. One pertinent example that was lamented is mining in the developing world, which exploits both the people and the natural world, with the poor most often bearing the cost of bad environmental practices.

Bolen highlighted responsible stewardship, drawing attention to a Common Declaration of John Paul II and Patriarch Bartholomew I, looking at how we collaborate with God in creation. Demonstrating the intricate link between moral issues and the environment, Benedict XVI has said that “every economic decision has a moral consequence,” while Pope Francis recently named poor environmental practices as sinful.

Embracing eco-justice requires contemplative, ascetic and prophetic responses, as outlined by the CCCB document. Creation and spirituality play an important part in our stewardship of the goods of the environment around us. “Our churches can be wonderful places for us to experience this,” said Bolen.

“A more grounded sense of hope and faith amidst an ecological crisis.” He expressed that the division of trying to heal is big and growing.

This awakening begins with “understanding the limits and consequences of what we are doing,” he said.

“There is a need to take care of one’s heart, soul and relationships” and to “be aware of how much bad news we take in, balanced with stays of hope,” Harding said. Participants were encouraged in their work to stick with the awakening process by “being fearless in an awakened way, not a delusional way,” followed by suggestions on how to carry on.

“A starting point is to stay locally connected; then, in all of our networks, reach outside of our comfort zones.”

A crucial step in mobilizing social change is to admit that everyone is a resource. Touching on communication, Harding stressed the need to celebrate achievements – even small ones – that lead to momentum and walls of division collapsing.

He added that through our actions we need to continually nurture our relationship with the land, and finally, “there is a thirst to create safe places for people to come together to call out the non-human atmosphere to create and reach out.”

At several points, Harding mentioned the role of faith and reason, noting “religion needs to become more accessible, just as science needs to become more religious,” as science has become an ideology.

Closing remarks shared by participants identified the need to define goals and to break them down.

The heart of the day-long workshop remained the desire for a societal value change, recognizing that ecology is not an option, but a necessary condition which makes it necessary for justice and peace.

To become involved, or for more information about the group’s work, visit their website. For more information on the St. Francis Pledge, found online at catholicismauve.org, contact Carol Zubiak at justpeace@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

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Saint Francis Pledge

E.D. Feehan Catholic High School held its 2015 ThinkFast for Development and Peace, on March 6 and 7, with this year’s theme centering on free farming practices in developing nations. Sixty-five students from Grades 9-12 and six staff members participated in activities designed to teach students about the inequitable and damaging farming practices that are becoming ever more present around the globe and how these practices are impacting the small farming family. As in previous years the ThinkFast Challenge offered students a fundraising opportunity. Students were encouraged to fundraise a minimum of $20, a minimum that many students exceeded, helping to raise a final total of $3098.30.

Think Fast focuses on farming

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Think Fast focuses on farming
Laureen and Paul Millette shared the perspective of being a victim of crime as part of an evening about restorative justice.

Laureen briefly recounted how Paul started to sleep less and was becoming focused on the event when, even to the point of Googling the other driver to find out more about him. “I wanted the book thrown at him,” Paul admitted. “I never thought that I’d participate in a restorative justice experience.”

The Millettes were approached by a group known by the acronym, RAMP, the Regina Alternative Measures Program. RAMP is a First Nations-based organization where Aboriginal Elders facilitate a process of mutual healing between the offender and the offended. Paul was not sure if he should participate. He initially felt that it would be letting the offender “off the hook.”

But he was convinced by a friend on his hockey team (a police officer) to give it a shot, and in July 2013, Paul met in a room with the man who had chased him down and threatened him only months before.

Paul had no idea what was going to happen. He remembered saying and then nearly yelling, “I feared you. I feared for my family. I’m old enough to be your dad!”

For two hours, the two men spoke. Paul shared his feelings, how he was not sleeping well and feeling nervous about interacting with strangers.

The offender, for whom Paul gave the pseudonym “Alan,” read a letter that described his history of concussions from hockey, as well as alcoholism. He also shared that he was working on getting his journeyman ticket.

The whole discussion was overseen by Elder Murray Kewatin, who Laureen described as a “formidable facilitator.”

“The overuse of time, the mood in the room changed from anger to listening,” she explained.

In the end, the two men came up with an agreement involving six steps that Alan would take in order to show Paul that he was serious about his desire to change. The list included community service and a monthly donation to the Salvation Army.

“It was only after that conversation that I started to feel safe again,” admitted Paul. “I saw that it wasn’t about ‘victims and criminals’ or ‘good guys and bad guys,’ but that we are all just humans on a journey.”

Oliver lauded the Millettes for sharing their story in such a public way, as well as for their decision to take steps to achieve restoration rather than revenge.

“Being willing and courageous enough to go out and meet with the person who committed a crime against you is a powerful faith statement,” Oliver stated. “Faith in the humanity of other people…and hope about what is possible.”

Marginalization and poverty fueling crime, says police chief

Police Chief Clive Weighill

Police Chief Clive Weighill was the concluding speaker at a restorative justice gathering held Dec 10 at St. Anne’s Church in Saskatoon organized by The Muslim Council of Saskatchewan and the St. Anne’s Parish. Weighill has been the chief of police in Saskatoon since 2006 and was recently elected to the role of president of the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP).

Weighill began by thanking the previous speakers, Chantel Hubick who spoke on “Putting my life back together after prison” and Laureen Millette who expressed “Road Rage and the RAMP Program.”

“What is driving crime? The number one factor is the huge marginalization of the First Nations community,” said Weighill.

He noted that many people in the community do not want to hear such a viewpoint on crime, but he explained that it will only get worse if we do not address this factor.
STR8 UP taking steps toward social enterprise model

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Well-known for walking with ex-gang members through “10,000 Little Steps to Healing,” the grassroots program STR8 UP has recently ventured on some next steps of its own.

A new executive director, a strong volunteer board of directors, charitable contributions, and a responsible program STR8 UP is slowly evolving as a grassroots, member-centred program.

As part of their multi-year commitment to the program, STR8 UP members are required to complete the one-year program and deal with addictions and embrace honesty. The STR8 UP goal is to help each member become a responsible citizen and a responsible partner and a responsible member.

Along the way, STR8 UP members have placed great emphasis on education, job training and employment for young people. According to Munoz, STR8 UP is moving forward in the economic area by entering a social enterprise model, where the community investment is a member centred program.

“We are trying to become a little more proactive in our approach,” said Munoz. “There are no limits to what we can do. STR8 UP’s future.”

A new 18-month program is envisioned, the use of the Homeboy Industries model, unique to STR8 UP’s Saskatoon circumstances, explained Munoz.

“When they enter this 18-month program, it’s a condition that they will have reached a high level of sobriety,” explains Poilièvre. “We have members who have moved up an additional level - are they ready to go from there? They are not ready for employment, they’re not ready even for school, yet. We need to enter into another level that will take them there.”

“It’s based on skill development for individuals and it that says that the community has to be there,” said Munoz. “We need to support them in becoming a skilled, hard-working, healthy individual. That’s the big picture.”

Young men and women seeking a way out of the gang lifestyle generally come to STR8 UP by word of mouth, said Poilièvre. “A lot of our members usually come (to STR8 UP) through the jail system or by accident,” he noted.

Hiring healthy STR8 UP members trained to recruit active gang members to this path of healing is another long-term goal Poilièvre said. “There are tons of kids out there that need this.”

STR8 UP, originally from the Yellow Quill First Nation, is one of the STR8 UP members walking the path to healing. Today he has an interest in film making, and one of his goals is to go to university to study political science. “I want to educate my people around that, so they’ll understand.”

“IT’s not hard to speak up once you have a voice.”

Taysup’s own healing from addictions and that the gang lifestyle has not been an easy journey, but the struggle is worth it, he said. “I’ve received a lot of support, and I’m really grateful, and even ridicule, for my decision. But it doesn’t bother me, because I wake up breathing every day.”

“Because we are all members and we’re related, and that means dealing with a lot of things about yourself, things that you don’t like,” he said.

“There’s a responsibility to make a difference. It’s not just about the individual, it’s about making a difference with others.”

Poilièvre stressed that the strength of STR8 UP is that it is a members’ program. They have to succeed. Poilièvre said everybody we do, because they’re not, we’re going to fail. It’s that simple. They are the foundation, he said.

“Everything we do cannot be taught, it can only be learned. It’s a big difference. I can’t teach a person anything, but he can learn it. We can give them the tools.”

Poilièvre noted that a local business has offered to do free tattoo removal for STR8 UP members, “so we don’t do this face or neck. It’s not every day that you can change a mistake,” says Taysup of the opportunity to remove tattoos that might cause others to judge him.

All of these things are signs of progress, of our movement as an organization.”

“Just to tell them, that’s the key,” Poilièvre said.

“And that is to the all the people who have been so good to us,” he said, listing religious orders, churches and organizations who have supported the program financially and in many other ways. “We can’t grow without the community.”

Weighill also acknowledged Police Chief Clive Weighill. “This support has been so tremendous. He stuck his neck out for us many times.”

There are still hundreds of youth still at risk and actively involved in gangs, added Poilièvre. He stressed the importance of STR8 UP doing more community presentations, and getting people to listen to the call to treat these young men and women who brotherhood, sisters, sons and daughters - rather than taking an attitude of “lock them up and throw away the key.”

“Those are our kids. They’re not anybody else’s kids. They’re Saskatchewan kids. We need to start thinking that way.”

Criminals “can’t be punished back to health” says police chief, calling for better solutions

(Continued from Page 12)

Weighill outlined the two-typical type of people you will run into in a tough neighbour, who was poor and bullied. “He’s going to school with no breakfast. He fails a test,” Weighill went on. “He’s an outsider who is invited in by a gang. This friendship evolves quickly to criminal activity.”

Gang involvement is connected directed at communities that many feel before joining and to the power and belonging that they experience after they do join. “We’re trying to do the work of the local gang recovery program STR8 UP and founder Fr. André Poilièvre for helping reduce violent individuals leave the gang life.

The topic of murdered and missing Aboriginal women was also broached. Weighill said he views this issue as a crime issue, but also as a systemic issue of poverty, violence and lack of education. However, he disagrees with those who are calling for a national commission of inquiry.

“We know what the source is, so let’s act on it,” he opined. “If we spend five or six years on an inquiry, we’re going to lose momentum.”

Weighill assured the audience that he and the police service are very keen on solving the issue of the exponentially high rates of violence against Aboriginal women and that he saw it as the “Rosetta Stone” of criminology.

“If we can’t solve this issue (of high rates of violence and crime in the Aboriginal community), then we won’t solve crime in Canada,” he stated.

Weighill explained how he sees so many of the issues that face both communities as similar. “I feel that the Aboriginal community is the same in Saskatchewan as connected.”

He cited a June 2013 United Way report that entitled “Saskatchewan Plan to End Homelessness,” in which they tracked 23 people in Saskatchewan who were the biggest cost to the civic and provincial system in terms of policing, arrests, health, emergency room visits, and other social costs. Moreover, individuals used $2.8 million worth of resources per year.

These costs drop dramatically so long as they have access to friendship, group support, and healing. explained Weighill.

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Taysup’s own healing from addictions and the gang lifestyle has not been an easy journey, but the struggle is worth it, he said. “I’ve received a lot of support, and I’m really grateful, and even ridicule, for my decision. But it doesn’t bother me, because I wake up breathing every day.”

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“Those are our kids. They’re not anybody else’s kids. They’re Saskatchewan kids. We need to start thinking that way.”

Weighill pointed out that the only way to move forward is for individuals and institutions to work together and cooperate, but that there were many policies that keep people from being able to do so.

Weighill also weighed in on overcrowded prisons and noted that there was not enough transitional support for people getting out of prison.

We need to spend money on long-term programming, “Weighill, “but governments only work on a four-year term.”

One of the insights that he shared was that he has spoken to other police chiefs in Canada where crime rates are incredibly low. “He said that we grow accustomed to a certain crime rate and that we need to think of new approaches to the problem of crime in order to lower rates to historic levels.”

“There is a continuum of criminals out there,” Weighill said. “You can’t be punished back to health.”

The evening ended with a group discussion about the various groups in the city that concerned persons could get involved with to make a difference: ranging from the United Way, John Howard Society, and STR8UP, to the Elizabeth Fry Society, Victim Services, Salvation Army, The Lighthouse and the Friendship Inn. One member of the audience offered that even volunteering to teach a student or new Canadian to read would be a way to create positive community support.
Many things contribute to a positive healing experience within a hospital, including medical expertise, and respectful and compassionate care by physicians, health care personnel, staff and volunteers. But for patients at St. Paul’s Hospital, where the core values go further to include holistic care, the process of healing the body, mind, spirit and soul is enhanced through art.

St. Paul’s Hospital is the first hospital in Saskatchewan to deliver a program that fosters healing through art. The Healing Arts Program’s visual arts component is led by Artist in Residence Marlessa Wesolowski. Since 2005, the Hospital has been using the creative arts to enhance the well-being of patients, families, caregivers and the community.

“Often, someone is ill and feeling vulnerable, it can be difficult to articulate with words what may be going on inside,” says Wesolowski. “At St. Paul’s Hospital, we’ve created safe spaces where patients can use their imagination to express themselves, and create meaning through visual art, music and literary arts.”

Wesolowski says most patients are skeptical about their ability to create. Her role is to support and encourage them to reach a creative state where they are so focussed on their art they forget their pain.

“In this creative state, patients also develop confidence. They can be productive even if they are ill, and that is so important to well-being,” says Wesolowski. “My goal is to help get them to that feeling.”

Patients are referred to the Artist in Residence by doctors, nurses, and other health care staff. She connects with patients at their bedside or in common spaces using a mobile studio, or meets them in the hospital art studio.

“Creating art in the studio is liberating for patients—we get them out of their rooms and engaging with people in a different environment where the focus isn’t on illness, but on creating. The studio is an inspiring space unlike any other area of our hospital.”

Finished artwork is often put up in patients’ rooms and rotated around the hospital. “The walls of this hospital tell the stories of our patients, adding to the special healing environment that already exists here,” says Wesolowski.

Ken Brevik, a 42-year-old former patient at St. Paul’s Hospital says Wesolowski and the Healing Arts Program changed his life. In hospital for surgery from a work-related accident, Brevik also suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, anxiety, and difficulty sleeping.

“I was nervous about painting, but once I started, I stopped watching the clock to see when it was time to take my medication because I forgot about my pain,” says Brevik.

He says the program also helped him with his mental state. “I’m more comfortable with myself, I find it easier to talk to people I don’t know, and I sleep better,” says Brevik. “I feel like I have control of my life again. I am so thankful to Marlessa and the Healing Arts Program.”

The Healing Arts Program also has positive effects on patient families. The children of 91-year-old Stan Macdonald had the opportunity to paint together with their father before he passed away in late December.

“Marlessa asked my brother and my father to paint something that was meaningful to them both,” says Stan’s daughter Brenda Rutherford. “They did a painting of Grey Owl’s cabin in memory of a trip they had taken there together, and I had a chance to add to the painting when I visited Dad. So now we have this framed family memory of painting together in his last days which is very special.”

Rutherford says the Healing Arts Program brought out the sparkle in her father’s eyes in his last days. “His paintings, which he called The Purple Cow and Smiley, let us know that even in Dad’s final days he was still able to find joy in his life. The program, and the wonderful compassionate health care he received at St. Paul’s Hospital, helped make everything a little bit easier.”

Wesolowski says it’s a privilege to come to work and make a difference in peoples’ lives. “The opportunity to see how creative expression contributes to the spiritual, emotional, and mental elements of human health, and to be a part of peoples’ lives when they’re dealing with illness is truly gratifying.”

The Healing Arts Program is presented by the Mission Office in collaboration with Volunteer Workforce, and is funded by St. Paul’s Hospital Foundation. In addition to art, the program includes music therapy with music therapist Lisa Wutch. Volunteer musicians, vocalists, and poets add to the beneficial program by sharing their unique gifts with patients, families and everyone in the facility.

The program also partners with core neighborhood organizations and schools to create art in the studio, which is periodically displayed throughout the hospital. This contributes to the colourful, healing environment at St. Paul’s and brings the program’s benefits to the hospital’s community.

To learn more about Marlessa Wesolowski or St. Paul’s Hospital’s Healing Arts Program, contact the St. Paul’s Hospital Mission Office at (306) 655-5808. To help support the Healing Arts at the hospital, contact St. Paul’s Hospital Foundation at (306) 655-5821.

BY LEANNE NYRIWA

Macklin quilters sharing warmth with those in need

The multi-piece quilt cover is tied, completing a durable, warm thickness at regular intervals, thus securing the layers. The yarn is pulled through the entire opening is sewn shut. Using wool yarn and a large needle, the yarn is attached to the inside of the cover with hand stitching. Then the quilt is turned right side out and the opening is sewn shut. Using wool yarn and a large needle, the yarn is pulled through the entire thickness at regular intervals, thus securing the layers. The yarn is tied, completing a durable, warm quilt.

BY NADEG HEWKO

In the last decade, dedicated quilters have made over 1,100 quilts for those in need. The quilt-making project started under the direction of the Macklin branch of the Catholic Women’s League of Canada.

With the cooperative efforts of many women from the town and surrounding area, many quilts are put together every winter.

Since ardent sewers with remnants left over did not want to see the materials go to waste, they put the pieces together to make quilt covers. They sew together fabrics that match to make colourful, attractively designed quilt tops.

Fibrefill batts are ordered and cut into rectangular pieces to fit filling for various quilt sizes. Husbands have been recruited to help with cutting the batts into the correct dimensions. The multi-piece quilt cover is sewn onto a suitable backing like flannel or other soft material and turned inside out, then the opening is sewn shut. Using wool yarn and a large needle, the yarn is pulled through the entire thickness at regular intervals, thus securing the layers. The yarn is tied, completing a durable, warm quilt.

The official quilting sessions usually begin in January, when every Tuesday afternoon the women meet at St. Mary’s Catholic Church hall to begin the work.

The number of volunteers varies from six to twelve or more, depending on weather and other commitments.

Due to health issues, some women cannot come to the hall but are able to work on the quilts at their residence. The covers are sewn at home by many women in the community. Some quilts are tied at the hall and others are given to our senior women at the assisted living facility Villa Marie, to residents at the Countryside Manor and to seniors at their homes for completion.

The group has lost several willing workers over the years but the project still goes on. The quilts are taken to the Catholic Women’s League Clothing Depot in Saskatoon and made available to those in need.

This year, by the end of February 2015, a total of 55 large quilts, 21 baby quilts and five pillows were delivered to the clothing depot. There were still more quilts to complete in March.

Any willing volunteers who are driving to Saskatoon and have room in their vehicle are asked to deliver them. Also some quilts are given to the Macklin Food Bank for those in need.

Working together gives the women a sense of fellowship and a feeling of accomplishment by helping others.

At the mid-session break, a light lunch of tea, coffee or juice and some baking is enjoyed. This project is also an excellent way of recycling fabrics as much material is donated to the sewers for making quilts.
Faith communities to celebrate centennial of historic church

By Elizabeth Hecatcoat

Standing on the middle of the Saskatchewan prairie it is almost as though you can feel the history of the place. You can close your eyes and visualize a young bride full of nervous excitement being escorted by her father. Or sense the energy of children rushing by, eager for a Sunday visit, or hear the joyful chatter of the annual church bazaar reverberating from the basement.

The few cracks in the church’s foundation aren’t wrinkles from strain. Rather, they are the laugh-lines from the memories shared by the few who still live here. The church is Saints Peter and Paul, and the place is the Blumenfeld Heritage Site in the southwest corner of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

It is located 16 km south and 6 km east of Leader, just off Highway 21.

The church’s records go back more than 100 years. They are amongst the first official records to document the early settlers in the area and tell the story of what was once a thriving rural parish.

Centennial Celebration

On Sunday, June 28, 2015, a centennial celebration will be held to mark the 100th anniversary of the church at Blumenfeld.

Additional information and registration forms are online at: blumenfeldheritage.jigsy.com or contact Kendra Volk at 306-666-2017.

The registration deadline for those attending the evening meal is May 15, 2015, and tickets are $20 per adult, $10 per child (7-12), no charge for children 6 and under.

Everyone is welcome to attend the June 28 pilgrimage: Mass will be celebrated at 3:30 p.m. with Bishop Donald Bolen as presider and homilist.

Registration, children’s activities and “gribble” (a local delicacy of fried dough, similar to elephant ears) begin at 10 a.m.

Pilgrimage activities, including the blessing of the cemetery and praying of the outdoor Stations of the Cross, as well as the Sacrament of Reconciliation, start at 1 p.m.

“One hundred years ago, pioneers built Saints Peter and Paul church as a symbol of faith that stood strong against the harshness of the rugged prairie environment,” said Deacon Bob Williston, a member of the Blumenfeld Heritage Committee.

The church is the main beacon of the heritage site. The belfry, spire and cross that rise above the prairie can be seen for miles remaining as a reminder of faith-filled life in early Saskatchewan.

“Through the years many pilgrims have journeyed to this holy ground to gain insight and inspiration. This year we invite you to experience the strength, wonder, and devotion of those who, with very little, were encouraged for greatness,” added Williston.

Known for his gifts of singing and song-writing, Deacon Bob Williston has composed a song for the 100th anniversary entitled Blumenfeld is Softly Calling’.

Local History

The following are snippets taken from a history of Blumenfeld written in May 1955:

“In speaking to some of the oldtimers, they refer to the year 1908, when the first Catholic settlers arrived in the district of Blumenfeld,” begins the author.

The early German settlers came from Romania, Krasna and Bessarabia. Some of the original family names in the area were Hoffart, Guckert, Duchscherer, Drescher, Ziebert, Riffel and Weigert.

From the early years of the parish until 1955, 1,740 baptisms were registered, as well as 254 marriages and 295 deaths.

“The Church of Saints Peter and Paul, and Parish of Blumenfeld, is the mother church of the district... similarly to a mother, who sees her children depart to make their own homes, so too, the mother church of Blumenfeld has witnessed the beginnings and the flourishing of new parishes all around her, which at one time belonged to her care,” wrote the author of the 1955 historic account.

In 1964, less than 10 years after the writing of that early history, the Blumenfeld parish celebrated its last regular Mass. In 1983 the site was designated as a heritage site.

Annual Pilgrimage

Each year, the parish yard is brought back to life for the afternoon of the annual pilgrimage. The pilgrimage is a tradition that began during the 1930s. Those were tough years for the locals, so much so that Fr Father Henry Kelz, OMI, stayed with the Karl Duchscherer family. This was “because of lack of funds to supply fuel and other needs to the upkeep of the parish rectory,” according to the 1955 historic account.

Nevertheless, the parishioners worked to build a place of pilgrimage. In 1936, the grotto for outdoor worship was constructed – primarily of rocks gathered and hauled from neighbouring lands and was blessed for the first pilgrimage.

“We recall the era when our people settled the land. Land carries special meaning for people of an agricultural background. For the last 100 years — and prior for our Native peoples — the land has proven to be a resource of abundance, bounty, limitation and scarce returns at various times,” said Daryl Tumbach of the Blumenfeld Heritage Committee.

In the early years, there used to be up to 2,000 pilgrims walking prayerfully, and for considerable distances, from all four directions toward the Blumenfeld site.

Today, a volunteer committee continues to work at maintaining the site. A few years ago the windows on the north side of the building were replaced for $23,000. The original church, complete with a basement, cost just over $10,500 to build. The rectory cost a meager $1,200.

Operations and upkeep today depend on donations. Current needs include a new roof, chimney, the remaining windows and a wheelchair lift. Sponsorship and donations are greatly appreciated. To either sponsor a project or make a donation to the maintenance of the Blumenfeld Heritage Site, simply add a donation to your registration or make a donation upon arrival for the centennial celebration.

Diocese of Saskatoon Newsletter • April 2015 • Blumenfeld is calling: 100th Anniversary of historic prairie church, Pilgrimage and celebration Sunday, June 28, 2015
Rite of Election: bishop prayed with those who were preparing for baptism at Easter

**By KIPLY LUKA YAWORSKI**

As part of their journey to the initiation step of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist at this year’s Easter Vigil, 10 catechumens from across the diocese were welcomed by Bishop Donald Bolen and wrote their names in the Book of the Elect during the diocesan Rite of Election held on the first Sunday of Lent, Feb. 22 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family.

The Rite of Election is part of the RCIA process (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) by which new members come into the Catholic Church. During the diocesan celebration, catechumens were presented to the bishop, and affirmed in their journey of conversion and faith by their godparents, catechists and the community.

Covenant, baptism and the Lenten period of preparation were themes apparent in the scripture readings and the homily. “The God who made us, loves us and wants to be in a relationship with us, a covenantal relationship. God wants to draw us into his own life,” Bolen said.

“Your experience of being called to be a disciple of Jesus, to be baptized, is part of a covenant which gives life, an everlasting covenant that is our road map for addressing the catechumens who are the time were journeying toward baptism at Easter.”

“Are we drawn into the life of the waters of baptism, he said. “In baptism you are being brought into the church and being born a new person in the entire Christian community, the bishop added. “We are all renewed by this process. We accompany you with great joy.”

At a lunch hour gathering earlier in the day, Bolen also welcomed and blessed 21 candidates – consecrated already baptized in other traditions – who were preparing to come into full communion with the Catholic Church during the Easter season.

**Oblates bid farewell to Mazenod Residence, continue to discern future**

**By KIPLY LUKA YAWORSKI**

Mazenod Residence, a long-time home for Oblates in South Saskatchewan, was demolished at the beginning of March, after an extensive process of discernment and transition for members of the religious order.

Seeing the building come down March 2-3 was another difficult moment of “letting go,” said Fr. Bill Stang, OMI, describing a multi-year process of decision-making and relinquishment, as members of the order grappled with the inevitable. In addition to dealing with a range of health issues, as well as the challenges of the deteriorating residence building, and the ongoing call to continue to live the Oblate mission.

There are no plans to sell the property at the corner of Taylor Street and Saskatchewan Drive, and there are no plans to close Queen’s House, said Stang, stressing that there is an ongoing discernment still continuing about the future of the religious order’s mission and ministry in Saskatchewan.

**Year of Consecrated Life**

We recall with gratitude the establishment of Queen’s House by the Oblates.

**Lay Formation: “grow, pray, sing, laugh, and cry”**

**Lay Formation Alumni Profile**

Joanne and Wayne Kzyzk

St. Anne Parish, Saskatoon

**Missioning Years:** Joanne 2007, Wayne 2010

**Why did you choose to participate in Lay Formation?**

Joanne: I had been drawn to participate in the program for a few years before ever taking the step to actually do something about this call. At the time, I would have liked to have journeyed with my husband - but the Holy Spirit was calling me and not him (not at that time anyway).

Looking back, I’m not sure now that I would have wanted us to go at the same time after all. Going down different paths has allowed Wayne to “be himself” and I didn’t have to feel embarrassed by that or feel the need to nag at him. Going separately allowed us each to be open to the Holy Spirit and all the teachings and fellowship that come with the Lay Formation experience.

Wayne: A good friend, Ivan Hitchings, suggested I should give it a try. He basically kept bugging me until I did. Our family life is such that I can go to any part of the diocese and we will know someone there because of our Lay Formation experience – so it’s like having the same ear thing old. Being able to be a part of small prayer groups this past fall was another gift; allowing a more personal and deeper relationship to develop with the ladies in my group has been such a blessing. Getting to cuddle babies while their natural mothers are out and want to ring other! Lay Formation has been the gift that keeps on giving. I hope to be a part of it in some form or another.

**Would you recommend Lay Formation to others?**

Wayne: I would tell people to go to Lay Formation and learn to live – try the program – that way everyone could do the best they could to learn everything – to have all your questions answered and a hundred more questions unanswered; to journey with like-minded individuals, to grow, pray, sing, laugh, and cry.

**Christian Initiation and Catechetics is supported by**

Bishop Donald Bolen welcomes catechumens and their sponsors at the diocesan Rite of Election held Feb. 22 in Saskatoon. - Photo by Tim Yaworski

**Queen’s House Director**

Brendan Biz (left) and Fr. Bill Stang, OMI, talk about the transition that will happen at Trinity Manor.

- Submitted photo

**What are some best memories of your Lay Formation experience?**

Joanne: The greatest gift of Lay Formation is being formed as disciples of Christ through a wonderful couple and their growing family that is sure to continue for a long time. Participating separately gave us each the freedom to go through the program while maintaining commitment to our children.

Wayne: The greatest gift of Lay Formation has been the multitude of people we have met and the relationships that have developed as a result. We can go to almost any parish in the diocese and we will know someone there because of our Lay Formation experience – a “church family” has grown exponentially.

Joanne: What are some best memories of your Lay Formation experience? Our “church family” has grown exponentially. We enjoy helping out as needed as well as being able to sit on in the different sessions. Presenters change, as do their presentations, so it’s like having the same ear thing old. Being able to be a part of small prayer groups this past fall was another gift; allowing a more personal and deeper relationship to develop with the ladies in my group has been such a blessing. Getting to cuddle babies while their natural mothers are out and want to ring other! Lay Formation has been the gift that keeps on giving. I hope to be a part of it in some form or another.

Wayne: I would tell people to go to Lay Formation and learn to live – try the program – that way everyone could do the best they could to learn everything – to have all your questions answered and a hundred more questions unanswered; to journey with like-minded individuals, to grow, pray, sing, laugh, and cry.
A Christmas spirit of giving and of thanksgiving was all wrapped up together in a project undertaken this year by residents of St. Ann’s Senior Citizens’ Village in Saskatoon.

Dozens of wrapped gifts and shoeboxes filled with Christmas cheer were put together by St. Ann’s residents, their families, volunteers and staff. The gifts were then presented on the Feast of St. Nicholas, Dec. 6, to participants in the Aboriginal Catholic Lay Formation Program to take back to families, elders and those in need in their home communities across the north, on area reserves, and in the inner city of Saskatoon.

Gathering at Queen’s House of Retreats in Saskatoon once a month, the Aboriginal stream of the Lay Formation includes participants from the Catholic dioceses of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Keewatin-Le-Par – including some who spend many hours on the road to attend.

Aboriginal stream participants were surprised to receive a visit from Sr. Kathleen Bolton, SND, in November, asking them to provide a list of names and ages for the St. Ann’s Christmas project. When later presented with the boxes of gifts in December, members of the Year I class expressed delight, awe and appreciation that the elderly residents of St. Ann’s wanted to give gifts to people they didn’t even know.

“In our culture, it’s usually the other way around – we give to honour the elders. It was a surprise to us that the elders were giving this to us. And it was wonderful that they were thinking of other people to help, including people in the north,” said Brenda Montragrand, who travels each month from Savoie, Sask., to attend Aboriginal Catholic Lay Formation.

The Christmas project was initiated as a way for St. Ann’s residents to experience the blessings of giving, explained Carla Bergermann, Director of Recreation at St. Ann’s Senior Citizens Village. “These are a group of people who in their lives were always contributing, always doing things for their community – they were involved in CWL, and in their churches and their communities. Sometimes there is a feeling that they had to lose all of that once they are in long-term care,” she said. “We wanted to find a way to give our residents back that experience of helping others.”

In addition to the nursing home, St. Ann’s also offers independent living and enriched living. The entire St. Ann’s community, including staff and volunteers, participated in the project in many different ways, said Bergermann.

Knowing that 90-year-old St. Ann’s tenant, Sr. Kathleen Bolton was still actively involved in outreach and various parish organizations, Bergermann asked for her advice about who might benefit from the Christmas project.

“Sr. Kathleen said that she would think about it, and 24 hours later, she had the entire plan,” Bergermann said.

Sr. Kathleen had attended the 2014 Lay Formation missioning celebration, and was touched by the commitment of participants, especially those in the Aboriginal program who would travel long distances and make other sacrifices in order to attend. “These people come to Lay Formation every month for two years, some of them from great distances. To gain what I got for free,” she said. “That was in the back of my mind – I thought, if I ever get a chance to help them, or encourage them, I will.”

At the same time, the idea of Christmas shoeboxes, often sent to children in developing countries overseas, was in her mind. “I always thought why don’t we do something like that for Canadians?”

Sr. Kathleen connected with Lay Formation coordinator Mona Goodman at the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon to launch the project, and also invited lay Associates of her religious congregation, the Sisters of Notre Dame d’Aurvergne – to help in shopping, collecting and wrapping the gifts. Residents felt like they accomplished something in helping others, she said, describing how one assistant would encourage nursing home residents to assist in holding the wrapping paper or a ribbon, making sure all could help.

Bergermann agreed that the response of the St. Ann’s community was heartening. “It was really neat to see the families stopping by and helping out… and to see the impact of the residents and tenants knowing that they are giving back, and that they are part of a community that cares for others,” she said.

“Our mission is to live the Catholic tradition, to give care the way the sisters started it here at St. Ann’s,” Bergermann noted. “Our vision right now is ‘A Place to Call Home’ – and we are trying to make that happen for our residents in many ways.”

“I think it was a great idea coming from the elderly people,” said Alexander Morin of Sandy Bay. “It surprised me!”

Alvina Halkett of LaRonge chose to deliver gifts to children who recently lost their grandmother. “They will be surprised to be getting gifts from Saskatoon. They will be surprised that somebody that they don’t know there is thinking about them – other grandmothers.”

“The family I chose just lost their mom last month, and they all feel kind of lost. It’s going to be hard for them,” said Virginia Bird of LaRonge.

Veronica Favel of Cumberland House works with 14 families in a Kids First program, as a home visitor. On her list to share gifts from St. Ann’s were two high-risk families dealing with a number of different issues.

Others who received gifts from the St. Ann’s seniors: a family that just lost their husband and father; a single dad and his eight children; elders in several communities; and a mother grieving the death of her son, who benefited from knowing someone cares – just as her own grandmother used to care for her.

Sandi Harper of Saskatoon recalled how her mother used to knit gifts from Saskatoon. They will be surprised to be getting a gift from St. Ann’s.

“I just want to let them know that we will be praying for them.”

You are invited to attend the 27th annual diocesan Lay Formation Missioning Celebration

Sunday, June 7
2:30 p.m.
Cathedral of the Holy Family
Reception to Follow
Excerpts from reflections on Consecrated Life

In this Year of Consecrated Life, reflections and vocation stories are being collected in writing as well as on video.

Here are a few excerpts of reflections that can be found in full on our website:

www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com

“As God would have it, I have spent the greater number of years of my priestly ministry as a Dominican, engaged in the combined role of preaching and teaching... I can say it loud and clear that I am a happy, joy-filled and fulfilled priest.”
- Fr. Iheanyi Enwem, OP

“I always felt this was where God was calling me, and I always felt very happy... If I can bring the love of Christ to whoever I meet, this is my dream.”
- Sr. Dolores Bussière, FDLP

“I moved into Discernment House in Saskatoon, a place where one could receive spiritual direction, discernment and live in a community of faith with sisters and other young women. I felt like I had come home. I enjoyed living as a part of a community. In fact, I realized that I had been thirsting for it: to belong, to be part of something bigger than myself... the Word of God and be able to love all people as required... it is a great gift, I have been able to share my life.”
- Sr. Jemimah Wanjiku, ASN

Describing the freedom to love all that comes with religious life: “You are able to go out there and spread the Word and be able to love all people as required... it is a great gift.”
- Sr. Jemimah Wanjiku, ASN

“Go into all the world” - especially to the peripheries, to the suffering, to the poor.

“A time of transformation” - may this be a time of dialogue and renewal.

Highlights of a letter to consecrated religious, in which Pope Francis described his hopes about the focus for this special year:

- “Where there are religious, there is joy.”
- “I am counting on you ‘to wake up the world’, since the distinctive sign of consecrated life is prophecy.”
- “...make the Church the home and the school of communion.”
- “Go into all the world” - especially to the peripheries, to the suffering, to the poor.
- “A time of transformation” - may this be a time of dialogue and renewal.

“I believe that it is this unfailing and caring presence (of God) that has led me to places where I would not have chosen to go, but where I truly discovered joy – a deep sense of purpose – and how wonderfully close God is, when one dares to step into the unknown and live life with an open heart.”
- Sr. Marie-Noëlle Rondot, SMS

“I smile because consecrated life fills me with so much joy, I cannot help but share it everywhere that I go. It really is a great gift.”
- Fr. Steve Morrissey, CSSR

“On feeling the call to be a sister, even as a child: “That thought often came back to me during my teenage years and into adulthood. I tried to ignore it for a long time. But our God is a persistent God and finally at the age of 26, I succumbed to the call.”
- Sr. Anne Flegel, SMS
Vocations: Year of Consecrated Life

The Year of Consecrated Life

...to look to the past with gratitude, 
...to live the present with passion, 
...to embrace the future with hope!

What is Consecrated Life?

“The life consecrated through the profession of the evangelical counsels (of chastity, poverty, and obedience) is a stable form of living by which the faithful, following Christ more closely under the action of the Holy Spirit, are totally dedicated to God who is loved most of all, so that, having been dedicated by a new and special title to His honor, to the building up of the Church, and to the salvation of the world, they strive for the perfection of charity in the service of the kingdom of God and, having been made an outstanding sign in the Church, foretell the heavenly glory.”

- Canon 604

Prayers of thanksgiving to our God for all the consecrated women and men who have served among us in the diocese of Saskatoon:

Orders of Women Religious
- Franciscan Sisters of the Eucharist (FSE)
- Franciscan Sisters of St. Elizabeth (OSSE)
- Sisters of the Holy Family (Ukrainian Catholic)
- Ursuline Sisters of Bruno (OSU)
- Ursuline Sisters of Prelate (OSU)
- Basilians (Congregation of St. Basil, CSB)

Orders of Men Religious
- Benedictines (Order of St. Benedict), OSB
- Dominicans (Order of Preachers, OP)
- Missionaries of the Holy Family (MSF)
- Redemptorists (Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, CStR)

- Sr. Felicitas Drobig, OSU
- Sr. Nileen Mong, OSB
- Sr. Agatha Ogunkorode, SSMA
- Sr. Lucie Hamel, PM
- Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSM
- Sr. Renee Buliard, SMS
- Sr. Jeannine Rondot, SMS
- Sr. Louie Lizzi, OSU
- Sr. Lucie Hamel, PM
- Sr. Renee Buliard, SMS
- Sr. Jeannine Rondot, SMS
- Sr. Louie Lizzi, OSU
- Fr. Mark Blom, OMI
- Sr. Gertrude Sopracolle, OSU
Wadena pastoral region gathers togerher to pray for vocations

Submitted by Wadena Pastoral Region

Parishioners from throughout the Wadena Pastoral Region joined together with Fr. Emmanuel Banahene and Fr. Geoffrey Young on Feb. 2, 2015 to pray for vocations to the priesthood and to consecrated life. The “Candlemass” celebration at St. Mary parish in Wadena included the blessing of candles during the Mass on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, St. Blaise’s blessing of throats, the anointing of the sick, confessions and adoration. The evening of prayer (and subsequent Masses offered) were for vocations to religious life and, in particular, for the seminarians of the diocese of Saskatoon. In sharing the importance of prayers for vocations to the priesthood, Fr. Geoff thanked the parishioners for their past and ongoing support for those discerning. “Do not doubt that your prayers helped to foster and sustain the vocation of your priests standing here this night, and tonight we pray also for your future pastors,” he said. “We give thanks for the nearly 40 years of priestly service to our parishes of late Obit Fr. Jean-Marie Lacasse, and for the many religious sisters and priests who gave their lives here in our rural parishes. On this, the traditional end of the Christmas season, with the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, we rejoice in Christ the light of the world, the light of our lives!”

By Kiply Lekan Yavorski

A week of events organized for Catholic Students Week at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon wound up Feb. 8 with a celebration focused on vocations and the gift of consecrated life. Men and women religious from a number of religious orders and congregations joined students for celebration of the Eucharist, followed by a supper, with activities and table conversations focusing on consecrated life. Mass was consecrated by Fr. Mark Blom, OMI, vocation director for OMI Lacombe Canada (the Oblates of Mary Immaculate), and Fr. Ron Griffin, CSH, pastor at STM Chapel at the Catholic college on the University of Saskatchewan campus founded by the Basilians (Congregation of Saint Basil). “We have become a culture that is infected with a virus. And the virus is individualism,” Blom said in his homily. “And the idea of consecrated life, of giving your life to God through a particular religious community, through the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, doesn’t feel attractive in an individualistic culture.”

At the heart of individualism is the feeling “what about me?” noted Blom. He described a fever of ‘what about me?’ worries and preoccupations that accompany the affliction of individualism: worries about acceptance, about career, about the future. Even in vocation recruitment it is easy to fall into the subtle seduction of speaking about religious life as something that will fulfill “you.” Now as a vocation recruiter, he says things like: “I don’t care about your happiness. I care about God’s happiness more,” Blom said. “That’s the funny thing about happiness. It’s one of those things that when you are seeking it, you never find it. True happiness shows up when you are seeking something else. And the deepest and the most rewarding happiness that there is comes when you are willing to do what God asks of you in this life.”

“The religious life is based on the truth that you already have everything that you’re searching for, and the religious life is one way – it’s a very beautiful way – that you can acquire everything that you’ve been given in the spirit of God’s love. So when we are able to allow the love of God to touch us, the fever of ‘what about me?’ starts to subside, and we are able to find ourselves moving into service of others.”

The more we seek God and open ourselves to the love of the Father, the less we think and worry about our own life, he added. Other events on the university campus during Catholic Students Week included a Catholic Christian Outreach “Summit” featuring Eucharistic adoration with music, a Theology on Tap discussion evening about vocation with Fr. Daniel Yasinski as the guest speaker, viewing of a TED Talk video followed by discussion and a multi-faith chapel tour, said Michael MacLean of the campus ministry team.

Students gather with consecrated religious at St. Thomas More College

Ministry of Acolyte

During a celebration in Rome on March 19, 2015, Bishop Michael Campbell, OSA, of the Diocese of Lancaster, installed Edward Gibney (kneeling at right) into the Ministry of Acolyte for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. Gibney is studying for the priesthood at the Pontifical Beda College in Rome, along with Deacon Cosmas Epifano, OSB, standing here this night, and tonight we pray also for your future pastors,” he said. “We give thanks for the nearly 40 years of priestly service to our parishes of late Obit Fr. Jean-Marie Lacasse, and for the many religious sisters and priests who gave their lives here in our rural parishes. On this, the traditional end of the Christmas season, with the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph, we rejoice in Christ the light of the world, the light of our lives!”

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Prayer connects Ursulines with women in Malawi

BY KATE O’GORMAN

Mediator, yoga instructor and missionary, Elaine Zakreski of Saskatoon is passionate about sharing the peace of Christ with others.

As a student of the Living Meditator, a two-year course of study through Richard Rohr’s Center for Action and Contemplation in New Mexico, Zakreski is embarking on a project linking women in Saskatoon to women in Malawi, Africa through meditation and prayer.

Elaine and her husband, Jordan, are the founders of the Hope for Malawi Foundation Inc. Since 2006 the couple has been travelling between Canada and Malawi, getting to know the people in the community and offering assistance through the construction of a medical clinic, preschool and gathering place for the local community. Older women of the region have made a big impact on Elaine Zakreski.

“Through my yearly visits to Malawi, I have built trust relationships, and with the help of donors I have been able to assist the Go-Go Grandmas in Malawi with their material needs,” she said.

“They live is desperately difficult and heavily burdened. The AIDS epidemic has caused the death of their children and many are now raising their grandchildren. Worry and grief have resulted in high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes (among the grandmothers).”

With a desire to help the grandmothers physically and spiritually, Elaine is establishing meditation circles in Malawi and linking them with an already-established meditation circle of Ursuline Sisters here in Saskatoon.

Each week, Elaine visits St. Angela Merici Residence, a retirement residence in Saskatoon for the Ursulines of Preble religious community, to teach yoga and to lead the Sisters in prayer and meditation.

“For the last six months [the Ursuline Sisters] have been keeping the Go-Go Grandmas in their hearts and in their prayers,” explains Zakreski.

To assist the Go-Go Grandmas in Malawi in managing some of the stress they are experiencing raising their deceased children’s children and in helping them to cultivate a returned sense of peace, Zakreski will invite the elderly women to meet in small groups and lead them in practices of mindfulness, breath awareness and the technique of resting with their Creator – just as she does with the Ursuline Sisters in Saskatoon.

“I will share the stories of the Ursuline Sisters with the Go-Go Grandmas of Malawi [and vice versa]. I will share pictures of these women in Canada and explain how the Sisters are helping them in their loving thoughts and prayers.”

“We will be united in prayer and we are enabled to do this by the fact that we understand the communion of saints,” continues Zakreski.

“We have an interconnection with each other’s bodies. Lilia Delio calls the cosmic entanglement… two particles can affect each other’s physics, no matter the distances between them, so too can we affect each other, no matter the distances between us.”

The Ursulines of Preble have been connected with the people of South Africa throughout their community’s missionary history, and as such, have found deep meaning in this unitive project of prayer with women of Malawi.

“For the last six months [the Ursuline Sisters] have been keeping the Go-Go Grandmas in their hearts and in their prayers,” explains Zakreski.

Year of Consecrated Life

When you write to us, you are serving the Ursuline sisters (of Prelate and of Bruno) in our diocese in many areas, especially in education.

Young women experience community, faith enrichment at Discernment House

BY KEVIN LUKAN YAWORSKI

Five young women living in community with the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary at Discernment House in Saskatoon recently reflected on the joys and challenges of the experience.

“Living in a house full of women has been both a challenge and a blessing,” says Jillian Ramsay, who is studying English at the University of Saskatchewan. “Counting living in a community always has its rough patches, but knowing that we all have Christ at the center of our relationships makes it easier to work through small discrepancies.”

Jillian appreciates the lasting friendships she has made with the other young women living at Discernment House. “The support we are able to give one another is very beautiful, and unequal to that found in other accommodations.”

Currently in the second year of her PhD program, Mary Deutscher was happy to spend the year at Discernment House.

“Living in community does take a lot of energy – especially for an introvert! – but it has given me so much back in return,” Mary says. “It has been such a joy being a part of a supportive environment and to be able to share my faith journey.”

First-year engineering student Jamie Johnson said that one of the biggest joys of living at Discernment House is the love and support community every night. “It feels so amazing to have a group of people so close to me that share my faith, my hopes and dreams, and most of all my need for late night kitchen socialization,” she says.

It was a challenge to learn to communicate, Jamie adds. “It took a good three months before we became attuned to each other’s ways of expressing themselves, and, though still not perfect, we’re learning to love each other through it.”

She adds: “I would have been a lot more lost if I didn’t have this group of loving people to give me a home to come back to.”

Nicole Mireau, who is studying hairdressing, says that her time at Discernment House has been a blessing.

“What a joy it is to live with such amazing people, with Jesus in your house and in a place that is nothing but a catalyst for spiritual growth,” she says. “It is amazing to think that such an amazing thing could happen this way.”

Juggling community with school and volunteering was sometimes a struggle, Nicole notes. “In the same breath, if it weren’t this community living that always brings me back to the main thing – loving Christ and others – I don’t think this year would have had all the blessings that came from it. God is so good and I love the Sisters of the Presentation and thank God for the gifts of their hearts and their boundaries.”

Second-year university student Monique Mireau says she would recommend Discernment House to any young woman desiring deeper intimacy with the Lord, and with sisters in faith.

“From the convenience of living within walking distance from the university to the beautiful friendships I have made and wonderful spiritual growth, God has gifted me in ways I had never expected,” says Monique.

“I have grown in love with the daily Mass and prayer, and have been so drawn into the spiritual journey that our Catholic faith leads us through every day. I feel that so much has been revealed to me through the Mass and brevity, and I have realized how closely we walk with Jesus in this practice.”

For more information about the Live-in Experience for young women at Discernment House in Saskatoon, contact St. Lucie Hamel at (306) 244-0720 or e-mail kckh02e@gmail.com.

Year of Consecrated Life

We recall with gratitude the service of the Ursuline sisters (of Prelate and of Bruno) in our diocese in many areas, especially in education.

Monument in Regina will commemorate contribution of sisters

SUBMITTED BY CATHOLIC CONNECTIONS

A sculpture commemorating pioneering women who introduced education and healthcare in Saskatchewan will be unveiled Thursday, Oct. 1, 2015 in Regina’s Wascana Centre, close to the Legation grounds.

The art installation will depict two Catholic Sisters representing religious orders that established needed health services and education to their local communities,” explained project lead, Sandra Kary.

“These sisters laid the foundation for modern day education and healthcare delivery in Saskatchewan and their legacy is worthy of this recognition,” said Kary.

The sculpture features two Catholic sisters cast in bronze, one representing a teacher, the other a nurse.

Saskatchewan Catholic Connections is the organization behind the project, and Prince Albert sculptor Jack Jensen has been commissioned to create the work. The project has been made possible thanks to the support of private donors, dioceses, men’s religious communities and leading Catholic organizations across Saskatchewan.

“So many, 5,500 Catholic Sisters have served and continue to serve in the province, totalling over 85,000 sister-years of ministry,” noted Paula Scott, chair of the committee overseeing the project. “The monument will be a lasting tribute to their selfless service to the people of Saskatchewan.”

A celebratory Mass, unveling and blessing of the monument is planned for Oct. 1. Provincial political leaders, the Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan and officials from Catholic health and education are expected to attend, including Catholic sisters from Saskatoon and across Canada, representing 59 religious orders.

Saskatchewan Catholic Connections is a coalition of leading Catholic organizations from across the province, including the Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association (SCSBA), Saskatchewan Catholic University Colleges, the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS), Catholic Health Ministry of Saskatchewan (CHMS), Saskatchewan Catholic Women’s League (CWL), Catholic Education Saskatchewan, the Saskatoon, and Roman Catholic dioceses of Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Regina, and Keewatin-Le Pas. saskcatholicconnections.com
**STM hosts “Dialogue and Diversity”**

**By Gertrude Rompré, STM, Director of Mission and Ministry**


Speaking from her experience of Hindu-Christian dialogue, Dr. Catherine Cornille from Boston College gave the opening address:

She described dialogue as an opportunity for mutual learning and outlined the challenge back to our wider faith communities. She called for a stance of humility and hospitality that allows us to learn from other traditions.

Dr. Eileen Schuller, from the Department of Religious Studies at McMaster University, is best known for her work with the Dead Sea Scrolls. On this occasion, however, she outlined how Jewish-Christian Dialogue has evolved in Canada since *Nostra Aetate.*

In particular, she shared her work with the Canadian Jewish-Christian Constitution, a uniquely Canadian approach to Jewish-Christian dialogue.

**Bishop Donald Bolen moderated the closing panel discussion with Drs. Cornille and Schuller.**

Exploring dialogue and diversity from a more experiential starting point, each of the three presenters shared his or her own best moments in dialogue and reflected on the similarities and differences between ecumenical and interreligious encounters.

Other conference presenters included Dr. Brenda Andersen (Luther College, University of Regina), Hector Acero Ferrer (Institute of Christian Studies, Toronto), Julian Hammond (Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton), Dr. Graham McDonough (University of Victoria), Dr. Alisha Pomazon (St. Thomas More College), and Dr. Scott Sharman (All Saints Cathedral College, Edmonton).

The Dialogue and Diversity Conference was sponsored in part by the Dubé Chair for Catholic Studies at St. Thomas More College.

**Cudworth parish celebrates 90th anniversary**

**By Bernice Jungwirth**

St. Michael parish in Cudworth recently marked its 90th anniversary. The parish was first established in September 1924, with Fr. Casimir Cunowowski, OSB, as the first resident pastor.

Information about the history of the parish is recorded in the book *Walk of Faith,* compiled and was recently compiled by Maureen Lefebvre. Beginning in 1912, Mass was conducted monthly in the village of Cudworth’s public school, and in 1920, the first St. Michael church was built as a mission in 1920, blessed by Bishop Michael O. Clohessy, OSB, of St. Peter’s Abbey. With the official establishment of the parish in 1924, a parish house was built, and the church building was enlarged and renovated in 1930.

Another major renovation occurred under the direction of Fr. Edward Benning in 1952. The interior was completely renovated and the basement was enlarged. One addition to St. Michael’s church at that time was a seven-foot hand-carved wood corpus from Oberammergau, Germany, which was donated by Dr. J. Schropp.

The original St. Michael Church was demolished in 1968 to make room for the present church building. The church was completed by September 1969, and weekly Masses have continued for the past 45 years in the same building. The original parish house was moved in June 1973 to make room for the present rectory and assembly room.

The present St. Michael church was entirely new when it opened in 1969, save for one piece of art: the hand carved corpus from the former church. The new cross itself was designed and fashioned out of walnut brought from Iowa by Donald Lefebvre.

The furnishing of the church became a community effort. The altar was constructed by John Saczegor and carved by Dr. Zygmunt Saxinger, and carved by the Catholic Women’s League (CWL) donated the gold drapery, the pews were acquired with funds bequeathed by John Noll, and Herman Hendricks planted the trees on the grounds. The church was dedicated and blessed by Abbot Jerome Weber, OSB, on June 27, 1971.

Built in 1981, the present bell tower houses the two original bells from the first church, which were originally acquired in 1929. The bells were given saint names by St. Michael and St. Marie and the larger bell is inscribed “Post of St. Peter’s Colony.”

**Natural Family Planning: Serena marks 60th anniversary**

**By Annette Bentler**

“We are too often afraid of the sacrifices we might have to make. But where there is love, there is always sacrifice.” - Mother Teresa

Serena Saskatchewan hosted Serena Canada’s annual general meeting Feb. 6-8. Delegates from across the country gathered at Queen’s House in Saskatoon to talk business but also to re-ignite the fire that began in 1955. To celebrate the milestone, Serena invited the public to celebrate the 60th anniversary – Ukrainian style. The caterer provided authentic Ukrainian dishes and the gathering was treated to three dances from Yevshan Ukrainian Folk Ballet Ensemble.

Serena PresidentCouplidge, Don and Deb Larmore, presented a toast. Medical advisor Dr. Suzanne Parenteau-Carreau reflected on how marriage and families are hurting.

Natural family planning is not a bandaid, but a cure for this pandemic collapse.

Serena is all about health – healthy bodies and healthy relationships, which do not set up an artificial or mask fertility but work with it to ensure that couples can plan their families in order to be responsible parents.

Contact: sask@serena.ca or call (306) 934-8223 for more information or find Serena Saskatchewan on Facebook.

**Jewish-Christian relations**

**Sir. Kay MacDonald, NDS, (right) of the Diocesan Interfaith Committee, introduced Dr. Ethian Schmidt, OSl, who was speaking March 1 about Jewish-Christian relations 50 years after Nostra Aetate. The diocesan event was held in conjunction with a Dialogue and Diversity conference at St. Thomas More College.**

*BY G E RTR U D E R O M P R É , STM , F R E D O R O F M I S S I O N A N D M I N I S T R Y*

*Serena Saskatchewan board members-hosted Serena Canada’s AGM in Saskatoon this February, marking the organization’s 60th anniversary.*

*By Mari Korte*

Latin Mass community celebrates 25 years

Latin Mass community celebrates 25 years

**Latin Mass community celebrates 25 years**

**Serena Saskatchewan celebrates its 60th anniversary**

Serena celebrates its 60th anniversary – a milestone in the life of the community.

The Latin mass has been celebrated every Sunday in Saskatoon since April 1, 1990. It was first celebrated at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and moved to Our Lady of Czestochowa in 1996.

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI, in the encyclical *Summorum Pontificum,* declared that the Latin Mass had never been abrogated. He established the traditional Latin Mass as an “extraordinary form of the Liturgy of the Church” and extended the use of the Roman Missal of 1962 to all priests.

Father Andrew Wychucki is the current celebrant for Sacred Heart of Jesus Latin Parish.

Our Lady of Czestochowa parish at 301 Ave Y South. For information and weekday Mass times: www.saskatoonlatinmass.com.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Latin Mass community will celebrate its 25th anniversary on Sunday, May 3. The celebration begins at 4:30 p.m. and will include the crowning of the statue of Our Lady, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, rosary, the Litany of Loreto, and benediction.

There will be a potluck supper in the church hall to complete the evening. Bishop Donald Bolen will be in attendance. All are welcome to attend.

**Bishop Donald Bolen visited St. Michael parish recently, celebrating Mass with Fr. Eugene Nwachukwu (right).**

*Photo by Bernice Jungwirth*
**Time Out For Moms provides enrichment and friendship**

**BY ERIN HICKEY**

Time Out for Moms (TOFM), a Catholic enrichment program at the 18th year of ministry this fall, TOFM meets at Holy Family Catholic School Wednesday mornings to offer women the opportunity to grow in their faith in God and understanding of Catholic teaching. It also offers women support in their family life, and a chance to meet other moms from the Catholic community.

Most mornings include prayer, a speaker, discussion of the topic of the day, prayer therapy for moms, sacred music, and a question and answer period with Father Colin Roy. What is it that has drawn (and continues to draw) women to TOFM for the past 17 years?

Shawna Kuntz, graphic designer and mom to two children has been attending faithfully for 12 years. For Shawna, TOFM offers the “whole package.”

“The speakers are very honest and thought provoking, and there’s always time for wonderful ladies who look after and love my kids, and who have literally watched them grow up. But for me the most important reason I keep coming back is the fellowship,” said Kuntz.

“I think of all the wonderful friends who have come and gone through those doors. I have shared so many struggles, tears, joys and laughter with so many faith-filled women. They are always supportive of each other through so many stages of raising children. It’s so special to be able to come together with like-minded friends and share our lives together, to be able to be completely vulnerable, knowing you will be welcomed, supported, not judged.”

Carmona Kolla, who had her first child this year, appreciates the warm and inviting community she encounters at TOFM. “I really enjoy being around other moms who not only know what it is like to be a new mom, but who are there to help each other grow stronger in their faith. The talks have been inspirational and helpful. I enjoy getting to know them better and looking forward to coming to TOFM every week.”

There were 65 other women like Shawna and Carmen who attended the program this year who see the benefit of a ministry of this kind.

The support that TOFM has received from the Catholic community is an affirmation of the importance of a ministry for mothers as part of the domestic Church. Healthy moms are important for healthy and happy families and TOFM is a great source of support for them.

For more information about this program, or if you would like to volunteer as a caregiver for the children, contact Heather Hickey at registrar@tofmsaskatoon.com.

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**Goals and initiatives outlined at Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools annual meeting**

**BY KIPLY LYSAN YAWORSKI**

The Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) annual meeting of electors was held Feb. 2, providing an overview of the 2013-14 school year for board trustees.

With some 16,000 students and 2,080 staff, GSCS operates 45 schools, serving the communities of Saskatoon, Biggar, Humboldt, Martensville and Warman, as well as several rural subdivisions southeast of Saskatoon. GSCS also jointly governs Humboldt Collegiate Institute with Horizon School Division.

“Our schools are welcoming community centers where we nurture faith, encourage excellence in learning and inspire students to make a difference in the world. We love because He first loved us,” Boryko added. (“John 4:19),” said GSCS Board Chair Diane Boyko, who presented a report on behalf of the board of education.

Other trustees are Debbie Berchtold, Tom Fortosky, Tim Jelinski, Alice Rising, Ron Bocchel, Jim Carriere, Todd Hawkins, Linda Lee and Alana St. Germain.

Boryko outlined the Catholic school division’s priorities in a number of key areas, including continuing and promoting Catholic education, improving student learning and achievements, building relationships and partnerships, and promoting stewardship.

She described the work of the “Together in Faith and Action Committee” to connect with families and parishes, to develop guidelines for school liturgies and Messes and to support the faith formation of staff.

When it comes to building partnerships, GSCS has close ties with the diocese of Saskatoon and the Ukrainian Catholic eparchy, and with local school community councils, Boryko described.

For GSCS also works in partnership with the Saskatoon Tribal Council and the Central Urban Métis Association. “Improving academic outcomes of First Nations and Métis students has been a key goal of our division, and has now become a primary goal of Saskatchewan’s ministry of education.”

Stewardship – including the planning, building and renovating of facilities – is another board priority, Boryko said. “As board members we have been entrusted with gifts of people, finances, facilities and environment.”

During the last school year, renovation work continued at Holy Cross High School, Ecole St Matthew and at Georges Vanier Catholic Fine Arts School. Construction also continued on Holy Family Catholic School in Saskatoon’s Willowgrove neighbourhood.

“Although there are no shovels in the ground, our division has contributed significant time and energy to the P5 planning process for the new schools that are scheduled to be built throughout the province,” Boyko added. The P5 model establishes government and business partnerships to build schools.

GSCS has been given the go-ahead for the construction of six new elementary schools: four to be built in Saskatoon (in Evergreen, Hampton Village, Rosewood and Stonebridge), one to be constructed in Martensville and one in Warman.

“It was in 2010 that we amalgamated with the newly-formed Catholic school board in Martensville and we were pleased to have a similar opportunity in 2014, with the Catholic school board that was formed in Warman,” said Boyko.

Greg Chatlain, GSCS Director of Education, highlighted a number of educational priorities and achievements in 2013-14, the 102nd year of operation for the Saskatoon Catholic school division.

“In presenting a summary like this, there are always the tendency or the danger that we lose sight of the fact of each child or young person that we serve, and the staff who serve them each day – but it is because of their journey, their growth and their service that we exist,” he said.

It was another year of growth in the school division. “In 2013-2014 we served 16,380 pre-kindergarten to Grade 12 students, an increase of some 300 students from the previous year. Within that number there were roughly six percent, or 930 students who had some degree of intensive learning need,” Chatlain reported.

An increasingly diverse community means that more students are receiving extra support in English as an Additional Language, he noted.

In addition, almost 17 percent of GSCS students access second language programs such as French immersion, Ukrainian bilingual and Cree bilingual programs.

“Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools believes our role is to support families as primary educators of their children, and develop – to their full potential – the God-given talents of each and every child,” Chatlain said. “We seek to help develop all facets of the human person: intellectual, emotional, social and physical.

Chatlain highlighted areas of focus in the Catholic school division, including working on the reading skills that enable students to move from “learning to read” to “reading to learn,” literacy intervention, a web-based “Mathways” program that reinforces math concepts taught in class, math coaching initiatives, and changes to the Grade 11 (20 level) science curriculum.

“We are proud of the work that our staff has done to meet the ever-changing needs of our students,” he said.

To conclude the meeting, Superintendent of Administrative Services Joel Lloyd presented the financial statement and treasurer’s report for 2013-14.
Diocese of Saskatoon legacy project: renovated Community Centre meets diverse needs

INTRODUCTION
BY SR. CLAIRE NOVECOSKY, OSU
Bishop Don Bolen visited the Brazil mission in February 2014, a few months before we found ourselves in the process of returning to Saskatchewan in July. During his visit, the bishop announced that special legacy projects would be undertaken in the two parishes where the Ursulines and the Sisters of Mission Service were working and that the Saskatoon diocese would “foot the bill” with resources from the Brazil Mission Fund.

We two Ursulines (Sr. Louise Hinz and Sr. Claire Novecosky) spoke with the pastor of St. Peter the Fisherman parish and, after some discussion, we agreed on a plan to renovate the Community Centre (in the village of St. Rita where we lived), as it badly needed a repair job, and the expense of renovations would be beyond the possibility of the community there. The project was accepted and pastor Frei Everaldo, OCD, oversaw the entire process with great responsibility. I asked him to give us a picture of what all happened after the construction was completed and how the Centre is being used today. The following is his report.

"The Flame of Gratitude will Remain, Illuminating Your Dear Presence Among Us..."

BY FREI EVERALDO PONTES, OCD, Pastor, São Pedro Pescador, Maceió (St. Peter the Fisherman) parish

TRANSLATION FROM THE PORTUGUESE
BY SR. CLAIRE NOVECOSKY, OSU

It was with great joy and in a spirit of prayer and gratitude that we accompanied the October 2014 celebration in Saskatoon of 50 years of missionary work by the Saskatoon diocese in the land of Brazil. The only words that arose from our hearts were: “May God reward the wonderful work of evangelization that was carried out by the missionaries.”

During the visit of Bishop Donald Bolen to our parish of St. Peter the Fisherman in February 2014, he proposed the creation of a special project to symbolize the work and presence of missionaries from the diocese of Saskatoon with the people of God in the state of Alagoas, Brazil over the past 50 years.

Such a project would serve as a remembrance of the past and a legacy for the future—a small and humble tribute to the many “adventurers of Christ,” who for decades had spread the “good aroma of Christ” (2 Cor 2:15) in this northeastern region of Brazil.

After prayer and reflection with the Ursuline sisters, it was agreed that an appropriate location for this project of the Saskatoon diocese would be the St. Rita village Community Centre which was much in need of repair and thus had not been in use for several years. We concluded that a renovation of that space could be well-used by the community for its day-to-day needs, and thus was born the idea of the Centro Missionario Irmao Ursulinas (Ursuline Sisters Missionary Centre).

Since the completion of the renovations, little by little, various activities related to the deepening of the Christian faith—human, professional and intellectual formation for children and young people—have taken shape in the centre.

It also provides space for artisans and for meetings of local community leaders, with the aim of improving health, education and the infrastructure of the village.

According to the coordinator of the Centre, the renovations, carried out with the financial assistance of the diocese of Saskatoon, have given the community a beautiful place of support for the entire village and for meeting the diverse needs of our people. It also provides space for a large number of people to gather for celebration of the greater liturgical feasts, since the chapel is small.

An explanation of the logo of the Centro Missionario Irmao Ursulinas / Ursuline Sisters Missionary Centre is as follows: At the center is the cross, the sign of a Christian. Through it we understand the love of God and the mission of the Christian: Then Jesus said to his disciples: “If anyone wants to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mt. 16: 24). The cross is the companion of the missionaries who left their land to bring the greatest of treasures—the Risen Lord. With Him our suffering people were strengthened during the 50 years of the presence of the missionaries who came from the Saskatoon diocese and planted seeds of hope, faith and charity in search for better days.

Under the cross in the logo is the image of a heart, a reminder of the heart’s role in the vital organ which circulates the life blood in the body. This symbol demonstrates the most beautiful sentiments of the human person. The heart includes the colours of the flags of Canada and Brazilian, expressing clearly the deep sentiments that developed between the two peoples through the Canadian missionaries whose love entered into the hearts of the Brazilian people. Their friendship enlightened and strengthened many people of the Archdiocese of Maceió.

As one young participant of the Centre said, “The Centro Missionario Irmao Ursulinas recalls the witness of life and active participation in the lives of our people, for the missionaries greatly contributed to the Christian and social development of the community.”

She also spoke of the saudade (nostalgia) she experienced with the return of Sisters Claire and Louise to Canada.

In the logo, the name Centro Missionario Irmao Ursulinas encircles the heart, thus presenting the idea that whoever experiences the love of God “in the heart” will give of themselves to the community, to the Church and to society. That is the proposal of the Reign of God, to give life to others.

Sister Claire, knowing the reality of the Church and of the Brazilian people, wrote a letter which was read to the community during the inauguration of the Missionary Centre on Oct. 12, the feast of Nossa Senhora Aparecida (Our Lady who Appeared), patroness of Brazil.

Sr. Claire wrote: “I am absolutely sure that our beloved Lady of Aparecida is very happy and will say to you, ‘Do whatever He tells you’. I believe that everything the Missionary Centre will offer will help you to understand these words of Mary and give you the strength and the joy to put into practice anything that Jesus asks of you.”

The cross in the center of the logo’s heart is brown in colour to signify the Carmelites. This mission region, which has long been served by missionaries from the diocese of Saskatoon, has now passed into the pastoral care of the Carmelites. Father Peter the Fisherman with the intention of continuing the work of evangelization, making Jesus known to the many hearts thirsting to know Him.

The Carmelites are immensely grateful to the diocese of Saskatoon for the cultivation of the many good seeds planted in this parish.

We firmly believe that the seeds planted over these 50 years will now receive a new nourishment through all that is and will be offered in the Missionary Centre. So, in this way, the diocese of Saskatoon will continue to care for the many who have come to know the person of Jesus Christ through the work of the missionaries.

On the day of the Inauguration of the Centre, we installed a plaque and a lamp with an eternal flame, both of which will remain permanently on the wall.

Thus the light of the witness of the missionaries and the entire diocese of Saskatoon over these many years will always be in our midst.

As well, this light will symbolize our gratitude for the missionaries’ friendship and for the ways they have helped us to understand the greatest of all goodness—the living Jesus in our midst.

Year of Consecrated Life
We recall with gratitude our Brazilian missionaries from religious orders:
Franciscan Sisters of St. Elizabeth (OSE)
Sisters of St. Rose of Lima (BDA)
Sisters of the Neumann Family (OSB)
Sisters of Sion (NDS)
Sisters of Mission Service (SMS)
Sisters of St. Matthias (OBM)
Sisters of St. Benedict (OSB)
Sisters of St. Benedict (OCD)
Sisters of St. Mary Magdalene (OSM)
Sisters of Mission (OSM)
Sisters of the Sacred Heart (OSB)
Sisters of the Holy Cross (OSB)
Sisters of St. Francis de Sales (OSF)
Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul (OSV)
Sisters of St. Joseph (OSB)
Sisters of the Sacred Heart (OSB)
Sisters of St. Mary Magdalene (OSM)
Sisters of Mission (OSM)
Sisters of the Sacred Heart (OSB)
Sisters of St. Francis de Sales (OSF)
Sisters of St. Joseph (OSB)
Sisters of Mission (OSM)
Sisters of the Sacred Heart (OSB)
Sisters of St. Francis de Sales (OSF)
Sisters of St. Joseph (OSB)
Sisters of Mission (OSM)

Sr. Claire Novecosky, OSU, Frei Everaldo Pontes, OCD, and Sr. Louise Hinz, OSU (l-r): the legacy of the Ursuline Sisters in the diocesan Brazil Mission continues in the cultivation of the many good seeds planted in the parish of São Pedro Pescador, Maceió.
Reflections on the diocesan mission in Brazil after 2014

Diocesan Brazil Fund grew and adapted over the years: now used for projects, retirement support for missionaries

BY MARGARET SANCHEZ

BRAZIL MISSION AWARD COMMITTEE

With the winding down of the Saskatoon Diocesan Mission in Brazil and the return home to Saskatchewan of the last four missionaries - Ursulines of Bruno of Sr. Claire, Sr. Louise Hinz, and Sisters of Missionary Service Sr. Jeannine Rondot and Sr. Marie-Noëlle Rondot, it is an appropriate time to present an update about the Brazil Mission Fund.

The Brazil Mission Fund was established as soon as plans for a diocesan mission in Brazil were set in place in 1964. From that time on, the people of the diocese, who had embraced this new missionary endeavour with open hearts, began to raise funds to support the work and ministry of the mission team in the archdiocese of Maceió in northeastern Brazil.

With funds accumulated over the years, the money raised went directly to the support of the mission team and, for a number of years, enough to cover the expenses. As the years went on, the people of the diocese of Saskatoon (and St. Peter’s abbacy, Muenster, prior to 1998) continued to offer an annual collection through fundraising events (prior to 1998) continued to offer financial support to the mission(s) – through fundraising events sponsored by parishes, schools and Catholic organizations. Nor were there any direct individual contributions through the Brazil Mission Fund collection taken up in the parishes each Advent and, for long-term ongoing support down the road, estate bequests in wills.

For a number of reasons, including the increasing ability of the Brazilian people of the area to raise the funds needed by their parishes, with less reliance on resources from Canada, and the gradual growth of the Brazil Mission Fund during the period of higher interest rates, the financial resources of the Brazil Mission Fund increased beyond what was needed or could be used for the mission.

During a 2005 Mission Discernment Process undertaken throughout the Saskatoon diocese, there arose some questions about the possibility of using some of the Brazil Mission Fund’s resources for other worthy missionary projects, but, after much discernment, consultation and prayer, Bishop Albert LeFevre affirmed that the funds which had been contributed as charitable donations to the Brazil Mission Fund must continue to be used for works and ministry in the Brazil Mission.

In the subsequent years, in addition to the ongoing support of the remaining missionaries and their pastoral and charitable works, the Brazil Mission Fund has been used for the travel of missionaries and for some of the work of the Brazil Mission Awareness Committee, and for special projects in Brazil which were in keeping with the mandate of the diocesan mission and in solidarity with the poor of that area in the spirit of the Gospel.

One such project was Project Beem Vindo Bebé, undertaken by the archdiocese of Maceió with a large financial contribution from the Brazil Mission Fund of the diocese of Saskatoon, to assist pregnant women and their babies after the devastating floods in the mission area in 2011.

At the present time, with the completion of the diocese’s involvement in Brazil and the return home of the missionaries in July 2014, the remaining monies in the Brazil Mission Fund will be used for legacy projects in the mission areas and for retirement/medical support for the returned missionaries and their religious congregations.

Some of the funds were recently used for the Brazil Mission 50th Anniversary Celebration at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in October 2014 and the production of the one-hour documentary film about the mission, produced by Tim Yaworski, entitled Walking Together in God’s Mercy: The Joy and Suffering of the Brazil Mission.

Although the diocese of Saskatoon has not actively requested contributions to the Brazil Mission Fund for the past ten years or so, and the special diocesan Advent collection has been directed to the Diocesan Mission Works Office since 2005, there are still a number of generous people in the Saskatoon diocese who have the Brazil Mission listed as a beneficiary in their wills.

It would be helpful and a matter of great stewardship if such indications in individuals’ wills could now be updated and the bequests redirected to other works in the diocese.

For more information about donations or bequests, please contact Major and Planned Giving Officer Jocelyne Hamoline at the Diocese of Saskatoon Catholic Foundation at 306-589-1349 or at jhamoline@diocesanfoundation.ca
CHAS has developed a Faith-Based Advance Health Care Directive booklet and form.

Submitted by Pure Witness

Pure Witness Ministries is moving into its fifth year of evangelization and service within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon and across Western Canada. Each year Pure Witness Ministries recruits missionaries, 18 and older, who wish to serve and deepen their personal relationship with God. Outreach is the call of every Christian, no matter your vocations: career, job or educational circumstance. This preparation helps to equip missionaries to be part of new evangelization in their day-to-day lives, even after their time of missionary service with Pure Witness Ministries.

Pope Francis has made a particular appeal to youth to take up this work of the New Evangelization, notes Rice. "In his words: ‘The best instrument of evangelization in our day is the young people.'"

"We are seeking those with gifts in music, public speaking, drama and youth ministry, who have solid knowledge of the Catholic faith, and who demonstrate a firm Christian moral foundation in how they live," she says. "Not every missionary need possess all these gifts as personal strengths, (but) rather a willingness to develop their talents for building the Kingdom, after all, God does not call the equipped... He equips the called.'"

For more information about serving as a missionary, please contact CHAS to request an advance care directive form included in the booklet detaches and, once completed, it's your wish. Copies of your articulated wishes, in the event that you find yourself unable to make health care decisions for yourself.

There will be a continuation of some co-cursory, or pre-registration is required.

Enriching travel experiences offered in upcoming pilgrim journeys

Ministry to Tourism’s most recent winter 2015 program started from Miami, touched on Cuba, then led on to Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia before concluding in Lima. Ministry to Tourism’s second pilgrimage to Peru, which most land touring time was spent, illustrated this point, he said.

There were many generous people donating towards the recovery of the school bus that burned in an electrical fire last year. Two large donations were also received: one of $20,000 towards the construction and another of $25,000 towards housing/care/schooling of the orphans.

Fr. Modestus Njwpu accepted an invitation to visit the mission in December. This was no easy task for him. His cousin, Sr. Augustine

Ngwu, the missionary who bought the land and began the school. She died in a car accident in 2011.

Fr. Modestus was welcomed by the children and sisters, and came back with many interesting stories and reports of the school and orphanage, including the detailed way in which the school is handcrafted.

Parishes or others who are interested in a weekend presentation or anyone seeking more information, can contact Michelle Peters at (306) 682-0775, peters.michelle@jesusleadsus.com.

‘A call to serve with Pure Witness’ is a call to experience a transformational year of radical, counter-cultural living, embracing the three-fold mission of evangelization, formation and outreach,” says Laura Rice of the Pure Witness Ministries team.

"We are lively in community with other like-minded young adults missionaries grow personally and bear fruit in the countries visited. There were signs of this new found freedom and independence now taking root and bearing fruit in the countries visited. Peru, where most land touring time was spent, illustrated this point, he said.

Kleiter pointed out that Peru is becoming a destination of choice for people wanting a rich and varied experience beyond staying in hotels that some tourism offers often. Although Peru has had an agonizing history, it has moved a long way in fusing different cultures and faiths which are now leading and bearing fruit in the countries visited.

Kleiter said that it is hoped that this exposure to other areas in the “global village” will be another opportunity to observe fusions between cultures and faiths.

For more information on this January 2016 program contact Fr. Ralph Kleiter at (306) 244-3747 or e-mail kefter@shaw.ca or visit Ministry to Tourism’s website at www.pilgrimagejourneys.ca.

There will be a continuation of some exploration in South America in January when the Ministry to Tourism’s program will touch briefly in South America at Santiago, Chile. From there the group will sail to Robinson Crusoe Island, Pitcairn Islands, and the mysterious Easter Island, as well as French Polynesia.

Kleiter said it is hoped that this exposure to other areas in the “global village” will be another opportunity to observe fusions between cultures and faiths.

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Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

WCC 2015 - Rites of the RCIA

Presented by Team RCIA

June 5-6, 2015

The Western Conference of the Catechumenate presents “Rites of the RCIA,” June 5–6 at Holy Spirit Parish in Saskatoon. Speakers are Nick Wagner and Diana MacIntall of Team RCIA.

To mark the 25th anniversary of the WCC, the 2015 conference is being offered at a special rate of $99.

Join us in celebrating 25 years of forming the RCIA ministry in Western Canada!

• Learn more about:
  • How to prepare the assembly for full, conscious, and active participation in the rites
  • How to apply the 12 liturgical principles and the four elements every liturgy requires
  • How to catechize directly from the rites
  • When to adapt the rites and when to follow the book

Schedule:
- 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., Friday, June 5 (includes a wine and cheese social)
- 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturday, June 6 (includes a business meeting over lunch)

Registration:
Register online at: http://western-catechumenate.blogspot.ca or Contact Michelle at (306) 358-2057, cnic.michael@allsaskoordo.com

Spiritual Direction Formation Program

Deadline - Please request an application immediately. The program will run from June 30, 2015 for this program to run from January 2016 to May 2016. This program is open to Catholic women and men interested in the ministry of spiritual direction and accompanying candidates and tality in parishes and congregations, vocation and ministry. Co-directors are Bishop Emeritus Jerry Wiesner, OMI, Grace Bauche and Dianne Mantry. For more information, contact Fr. Dennis Motherwell at (306) 242-2691, or Dianne Mantry at (306) 507-1182 or e-mail dimantry@allsaskoordo.net

GSCS Foundation “Swing into Spring” Fashion Show and Dinner in celebration of Catholic education, Thursday, April 16 at 7 p.m. in Saskatoon. Tickets: (306) 556-7003.

Purity Kids’ Furry Raity
Saturday, May 2, for parents and children up to 10 years old, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 2 at Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Saskatoon, at a cost of $20 per family to register. Pre-registration is required at www.purewitnes.com

Rory Allen: Tribute to the King on Saturday, May 9, at 7 p.m. in Fox Valley Community Hall: pub night, auction, silent auction. Tickets are $35. Please contact (306) 659-4449 or Mary Ellen 306 666-4610. This event is hosted by the Holy Spirit Parish, Fox Valley. All money raised will go to the St. Mary’s Parish Sidewalk Fund.

A Trinity of Sound – celebrating the music and traditions of the Chaldean, Ukrainian and Latin churches will be held at 2 p.m., Sunday, May 3 at Holy Family Catholic Church in Priddis. A choir from each of three rites of the Catholic Church will join a choir from the Church with a custom song and a contemporary song from their particular tradition. Everyone is invited to stay for refreshments after the performance. Food from Iraq, Ukraine and Italy will be served after the performance. Tickets are $35. Please contact Sharon (306) 658-5831 for information and registration form.

Queens of House of Retreat and Renewal Centre

601 Taylor Street West, Saskatoon; (306) 242-1916; www.queenshouse.org

The book of Exodus with Fr. Paul Fachet, OMI, at 10 a.m. first Wednesday of the month May 6, June 3; Cost: $15/basision.

Centering Prayer 7 p.m. Monday evenings, except on statutory holidays, September to June. Cost: by donation.

Taizé Prayer for Christian Unity - 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. second Tuesday of the month May 12, June 9; Cost by donation.

A Day Away - Facilitator Gisele Bauche 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. May 20. Cost: $15. must be under 18.

Women’s spiritual question and Its Relevance For Today with Facilitator Marie-Louise Ternier-Gommers 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. May 24. Cost: $35 with lunch; bring your own lunch

Shamelessness of Women's Voice and the Sacraments With Facilitator Rev. Dr. Viola Castor. 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. May 20.

Summer Stillness 2015: Spirituality and the Seasons of Our Lives with Fr. Ron Rotheiser, OMI at 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Thursday, June 4. Cost: $60/week. Call (306) 653-1633 for more information.

Blackstrap Youth Camp offers weekly camps for youth ages 8-13, beginning July 5 - 10 and running each week from August 2 - 7, including canoeing, tenting, arts and crafts, praise and worship, swimming, camp out, variety night, mud pit and dance. Apply for Blackstrap Camp online at www.blackstrapyouthcamp.org or call (306) 334-1838.

Helping kids to attend camp - Blackstrap Youth Camp is building a fund to help underprivileged youth to attend camp. Tax-receipted donations can be made on the website at: www.blackstrapyouthcamp.org or check out and share the Blackstrap Camp’s “crowdfunding campaign” at www.indiegogo.com/projects/summ- er-camp-for-underprivileged-youth
Changes this year, but Bishop's Dinner continues to support diocesan priorities

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

For nine years, the Bishop's Dinner has brought members of the Catholic community together for a memorable evening of fine dining and entertainment in the company of friends and colleagues, while raising funds for the highest priorities of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Those same features will again be hallmarks of the ninth annual Bishop's Dinner on Friday, May 8 at TCU Place, says Jacquie Ackerman, chair of the organizing committee.

The proceeds this year will go toward the diocese’s Catholic Hospital Chaplaincy office, which provides pastoral care and ministry to patients at Royal University Hospital and Saskatoon City Hospital.

In recent years, the Bishop's Dinner has raised funds for prison ministry and for refugee outreach in the diocese, after originally being launched to help build a new Cathedral and Catholic Pastoral Centre.

One change to the Bishop's Dinner in 2015 is a reduced ticket price; it has dropped from $350 to $150 per person. (A partial tax receipt will continue to be issued to those purchasing a ticket.)

"It was time to make a change, and, in consultation with the bishop, we decided to reduce the price of the ticket and make a few other adjustments," Ackerman said, noting the change is an effort to make the evening more accessible, without sacrificing the style and the camaraderie that the evening is known for.

The hope is that some who could not attend in the past will be able to make 2015 the year they will join Bishop Don Bolen for an enchanting evening of fun and fellowship, Ackerman said.

"The dinner itself will be as spectacular as ever, and there will be complimentary wine on the tables.

However, this year, patrons will be asked to pay for their drinks. The committee is also taking a more hands-on approach with the décor, which will be created by volunteers.

As usual, high-quality entertainment will be part of the Bishop's Dinner, with dinner serenaded throughout the evening, as well as a dance, featuring the music of Special Event Band.

"Really, the entire event is all about community," stressed Ackerman. "It's a night of socializing – meeting old friends and new is the highlight.

"When I first got involved, I thought I might not know anybody. I was amazed to find that there were so many people there that I knew. It really is an evening to come and visit, while contributing to a good cause."

The Catholic Hospital Chaplaincy office is coordinated by Céline Hudon, who works with a team of some 25-30 volunteers, as well as full-time chaplain Fr. Rhéal Bussière, and five parish priests who cover calls on weekends.

The goal of the diocesan chaplaincy office is to provide loving spiritual and pastoral care to Roman Catholic patients at Royal University Hospital and Saskatoon City Hospital. Spiritual care has always been part of the Catholic ministry of St. Paul's Hospital, but the diocese office provides this care at the other two hospitals, under a memorandum of agreement between the bishop and the Saskatoon Health Region.

Tickets for the Bishop's Dinner can be purchased by contacting Cathy Gilje at (306) 659-5851 or cgilje@dscatholicfoundation.ca.

St. Michael Anniversary

The 60th anniversary of St. Michael's parish in Saskatoon was marked March 15, 2015. The 60th anniversary celebration began with Bishop Donald Bolen and parish priest Fr. Iheanyi Enwerem, OP, presiding at celebration of the Eucharist, followed by a potluck brunch. In attendance were Clara Zakreski, one of the original members of the congregation, and several other past parishioners, including all five of Clara's children.

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