

**Message from the Bishops:**  
Bishops' Pastoral Letter on the  
Christian response to suffering,  
in light of the legalization of  
Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia.

Page 11



Refugees welcomed Pages 14-16

**"Lord Jesus Christ... You are the visible face  
of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests  
his power above all by forgiveness and mercy:  
let the Church be your visible face in the world..."**

- excerpt from Pope Francis' prayer for the Year of Mercy.

More on the Jubilee of Mercy: Pages 8-9



# Newsletter of the Diocese of Saskatoon

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APRIL 2016

## Catholic groups respond to TRC Calls to Action

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Two documents released March 29, 2016 will not be the last of the Catholic Church's responses to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission or the TRC Calls to Action, says Bishop Donald Bolen of Saskatoon.

"The bishops certainly look at this as a long and an ongoing process. I think we see the TRC Calls to Action as an invitation to engagement, so we are not simply checking things off a list – we are looking for ways to be engaged," said Bolen, who helped prepare the documents in his role as chair of the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB).

The two documents were published in response to TRC Calls to Action #46, #48 and #49, which had a March 31, 2016 deadline. Leaders of four Canadian Catholic organizations, representing bishops, institutes of consecrated life, Catholic Indigenous people, and other laity signed the documents on the Feast of St. Joseph, the patron saint of Canada.

The Truth and Reconciliation process addressing the ongoing, damaging legacy of Residential Schools has invited a "deep awakening" from Catholics, and from all Canadians, Bolen said.

"Catholics have learned much more about our culpability in a very flawed Indian Residential School system," he said, noting that some 60 per cent of the government-mandated schools were run by Catholic organizations and entities.

"I am grateful that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission does not write the churches off. Instead they call us to integrity. They call us to own the sins and mistakes of our past and to conversion.... They call us to action, to stand in solidarity with Indigenous people, to address wrongs."

The first of the two Catholic texts **"repudiates illegitimate concepts and principles used by Europeans to justify the seizure of land previously held by Indigenous Peoples** and often identified by the terms 'Doctrine of Discovery' and 'terra nullius.'"

The document notes "that now is an appropriate time to issue a public statement in response to the errors and falsehoods perpetuated, often by Christians, during and following the so-called Age of Discovery," and rejects how these legal constructs have been used to disenfranchise Indigenous Peoples.

In the second document, the Catholic signatories **express their support for the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.** They affirm that "its spirit can point a way forward to reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada."

This is not the first time that the Vatican and the Catholic Church in various countries, including Canada, have responded positively to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, noted Bolen.

"Many of the rights identified in that very fine document find an echo in Catholic Social Teaching: these are rights that every human being, every cultural or linguistic group, every community should have."

RESPONSE to TRC/ Page 2



Doug Mills, Myriam Wiebe, Francine Audy and Fr. Mick Fleming CSsR (l-r) serve soup prepared by Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish to Way of the Cross participants who gathered at St. Paul Co-Cathedral hall after the event.  
- Photos by Kiply Yaworski

## Justice and peace issues highlighted in Way of Cross on downtown streets

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A diverse crowd sang and prayed through the streets of Saskatoon on Good Friday morning, continuing the annual tradition of an outdoor Way of the Cross connecting the passion, suffering and death of Jesus Christ to injustice and suffering in today's world.

The event began with a reflection on Jesus' agony in the garden, in light of the agony of refugees around the world who are forced to flee for their lives, displaced by violence or persecution. "They know what it is to pray for some other option, to have that cup removed; yet, no matter how difficult, these courageous people arise. They stand up, and like Jesus, face what lies ahead with steadfast courage and initiative," reflected Christine Zyla, coordinator of the diocesan Office of Migration in the diocese of Saskatoon.

Frances Stang, president of the diocesan council of the Catholic Women's League, led the reflection at the second station of Jesus' betrayal and arrest with a reflection about the looming legalization of Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia in Canada. "Today we are facing betrayal by



CWL members carry the cross on Good Friday in Saskatoon.

those whom we should trust: our lawmakers, health care professionals, family members, our own pride and arrogance," said Stang, praying along with other CWL members who accompanied the cross through the

streets. "We pray for true compassion for those who face this ultimate betrayal –that they have been deemed to be not as worthy of life as others. We pray for a change of heart for those who believe that it is their right to choose when to end a life."

Members of the Saskatoon L'Arche Community carried the cross to the third station, praying for welcoming and open communities that respect the dignity of all people.

Reflecting on Peter's denial of Jesus at the fourth station, Pastor George Hind, trustee of Saskatoon Native Ministry and a member of the Feast and Share Network, recalled others like Peter, who have "seen justice distorted and compassion extinguished." This includes our Indigenous Peoples, as revealed through the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). "Against this force of history, it is difficult and dangerous for First Nations people to speak. In the face of neglect, injustice and abuse they – like Peter – feel compelled to deny who they are, and what they value."

Members of The Micah Mission led at the fifth station, focusing on Jesus being judged by Pilate, and on the unhealthy thirst for vengeance in our society.

Applications now open for new JOY program: Justice & Outreach Year - Page 28

WAY of CROSS / Page 2

# Groups lead Way of Cross

(Continued from Page 1)

MaryAnne Morrison of the Diocesan Council for Truth and Reconciliation and Rev. Deb Walker of the River Bend Presbytery of the United Church of Canada led reflections and prayers about murdered and missing women in this country.

The need for palliative care and preserving the dignity of the vulnerable were themes of prayers at the seventh station. Then Friends of Loa in Saskatoon prayed at the entrance of city hall, reflecting on the call to solidarity in friendship with people around the world, including those affected by war, violence and drought in South Sudan.

Caring for the earth as our common home was the theme presented by Development and Peace.

Members of Sacred Heart Chaldean Catholic Church led prayers reflecting on persecution of Christians around the world.



MaryAnne Morrison (right) of the Diocesan Commission for Truth and Reconciliation presented a reflection on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women. All of the Way of the Cross reflections can be found online at: <https://ecumenism.net/good-friday-2016>

Exploitation of newcomers to Canada was the focus of a reflection by members of Couples for Christ Saskatoon, before the Hispanic Catholic community carried the cross to the thirteenth station.

Faith leaders of Saskatoon, including Bishop Don Bolen, led prayers at the final station on the steps of St. Paul Co-Cathedral. Soup and bannock prepared by Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish was served in the co-cathedral hall, with donations going to the Guadalupe emergency food pantry fund.

## TRC calls for visit and apology from Pope Francis: bishop is hopeful, says request has been submitted

One of the much-publicized Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action, #58, is to have Pope Francis come to Canada to meet with Indigenous people and to apologize in person for the “Church’s role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools.”

In conversation with Indigenous people, Bolen said he has come to a deeper understanding of this request.

“One Indigenous friend explained: ‘it’s not that we think the pope is personally responsible for everything that went wrong in residential schools, but we understand from our sense of family, that when one person in a family does something wrong, the whole family needs to be involved in reconciliation – and we understand Pope Francis to be the father of your family.’ I find that argument very powerful.”

Bolen said that Pope Francis has been informed of the TRC request. “I am sure that the Holy Father is going to take it very seriously. That being said, I am sure that he has received dozens if not hundreds of invitations, and every one of them has its own integrity. And so: we wait and see.”

Having the pope come to this land to apologize would have an effect that other apologies have not achieved, suggested Bolen. “There was a very important meeting that took place in 2009 in Rome, when Chief Phil Fontaine, Archbishop Wiesgerber and a delegation met with Pope Benedict, who expressed regret for the sexual abuse that took place in the Residential Schools. The TRC report talks about that meeting, and says it was very meaningful for those who were there, but most Indigenous people weren’t there, many didn’t know about it, and most weren’t touched by it. It also didn’t deal

# TRC Calls to Action invite conversion, transformation

(Continued from Page 1)

In addition to affirming the UN Declaration, the document signed by Catholic representatives also acknowledges the failures of the Church in respecting those rights.

The document states: “Although many priests, brothers, sisters, and laypeople served in the residential schools with generosity, faithfulness, care, and respect for their students, this was not always the case. The TRC Final Report rightly observes that when Christians, through the residential schools, belittled Indigenous students as ‘pagans’ or ‘demonized, punished, and terrorized them into accepting Christian beliefs,’ this was in fundamental contradiction to the core beliefs of Christianity. While Christians have at times

failed to live up to the standard to which they are called by God, the glaring failures to respect the identity and freedom of Indigenous children outlined in the TRC Final report are particularly saddening and must never be repeated.”

Challenges remain in living up to the Declaration, added Bolen.

“It is much easier to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples than it is to implement it, just as it is much easier to endorse in principle Catholic Social Teaching than it is to live it out. If the UN Declaration was taken seriously, we as a society would need to change our economic priorities; we would need to change the way we live in relation to the environment, we would be called to undergo a wholesale transformation. And the Church is now experiencing a call to be a part of that transformation.”

This can happen in some ways at the national level of the Canadian bishops’ conference, but much more needs to happen at the local level, Bolen said.

Since the TRC national event held in Saskatoon four years ago, the diocese has established a Diocesan Council for Truth and Reconciliation made up of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous representatives, who are discerning what issues need to be addressed and pursued together.

“For instance, we are supporting a Cree language program in one of our churches, (and) we are working with our Indigenous community in terms of integrating Indigenous spiritual practices and initiatives into celebrations and communities. We also worked with a number of Christian churches on an event about missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls,” he listed.

“What we need are many more such small steps which bridge our communities and show a real walking together in solidarity to build relationships, and to build a new future together.”

## Step by step we are walking together toward healing

### BISHOP DONALD BOLEN

As a boy growing up on a farm in Saskatchewan, my telling of the history of that place began with the arrival of my grandparents and great-grandparents. Last summer I learned that the oldest traces of settlement in the province, dating to about 8,500 years ago, were only a half hour from our farm. I had no idea of that larger history of Indigenous Peoples on the prairies.

Over the past seven years, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has challenged the often narrow or distorted ways in which we have told the story of our nation, and of European and immigrant settlement here.

After hearing from over 6,000 witnesses, the TRC process and its Final Report have given witness to a particularly painful part of our history: the waves of suffering that accompanied the Indian Act and the Residential Schools.

That hidden history continues to resonate in our Canadian present - in broken communities and struggling families, in high incarceration and suicide rates among our Indigenous population, and in a systemic racism embedded in societal structures and attitudes. The TRC process has taken Canadian citizens back to school, and its Final Report calls all of Canada to a profound examination of conscience.

The TRC process has brought about a painful awakening for many Catholics, whose Church was involved in running 60 per cent of the Indian Residential Schools. We heard how children were in many instances forcibly removed and taken great distances from their families, forbidden to speak their languages, and prevented from learning about their culture in a system expressly established for their assimilation. Many students suffered physical and emotional abuse, and there was a deeply

disturbing number of students who were sexually abused. Students grew up in an institutional environment where they learned little about normal family life or how to be a parent.

The primary interest of the TRC was to bring to light the residential school system’s legacy of hurt and alienation, by providing survivors with an opportunity to tell their stories in a non-adversarial context. Creating a space for telling those stories of suffering is indispensable to healing and reconciliation, and the Catholic Church, along with other Christian churches, has strongly supported the TRC process.

One of the challenges faced by Catholics has been how to come to terms with the history of our involvement in residential schools without adopting a defensive posture, but also without scapegoating or “throwing under the bus” the many priests, members of religious communities, and laypeople who served at the schools, or who worked with Canada’s Indigenous Peoples over the last four centuries. The fact that the residential school system was misguided and deeply flawed, and that some who worked at the schools committed terrible deeds, does not nullify the truth that others served there generously, with self-sacrifice and good intentions.

The TRC’s Final Report gives a telling account of the regional event in Victoria, where the Superior of a Catholic religious community gave an account of his experience of serving at a residential school, and was challenged by a student who attended the same school but had a very different (and negative) experience. The Report points to their “seemingly irreconcilable” accounts and experiences as “a stark reminder that there are no easy shortcuts to reconciliation” (Vol. 6, pp. 10-11).

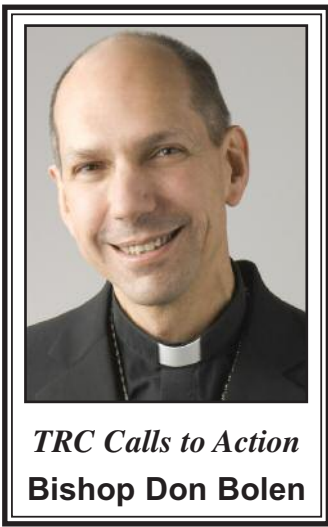
While visiting Saskatoon in 2014 for an event entitled

10,000 Healing Steps, TRC Commissioner Justice Murray Sinclair spoke of the experience of shame that many Canadians now feel regarding the residential school legacy, and stated: “you should not feel ashamed about this, you should feel committed to doing something about it. Shame will get us nowhere; guilt will get us nowhere.... We must commit to working together to fix this.”

The TRC’s Final Report and Calls to Action do not give up on the churches who were involved with the residential schools. Rather, they call us to integrity by owning past sins and mistakes, and to be actively engaged in the process of reconciliation and of building a better future. That approach is laudable and to be welcomed.

On March 29, 2016, Catholic responses were published, addressing two of the TRC’s Calls to Action: one responding to the invitation to repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, the other endorsing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

More responses will be forthcoming, not only in written form, but also through a deeper engagement with Indigenous people as we look to strengthen relationships, stand in solidarity in the pursuit of justice, and take other small steps on the long walk towards healing and reconciliation in our nation.



# Changing circumstances call for renewed vision – for our families, church or diocese

BY BLAKE SITTLER  
DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL SERVICES

I held every one of my three children while they were still fresh from the oven of my wife’s womb – hot, steaming batches of squawking, wriggling responsibility. And from the moment I wiped my tears off their wrinkled heads, I had a plan for their life.

The plan included who I would be as a dad and husband. The plan included what stories we would tell them and what traditions we would pass on. Our vision for their lives was clear and Brooke and I were dedicated to that plan.

That plan changed many times, though. It changed when we moved to Edmonton. It changed when they struggled in school. As my children grew, as we aged, as the world changed, so too did our plan evolve and shift to meet the new reality.

Our church and our diocese also need a plan. We need a plan because our world is changing. Some of the changes are scary: our children do not go to church and they are getting married outside our tradition and they do not see the church as relevant.

Many of the changes are good though: marriage is a much more egalitarian experience; our view of God is that of a Loving Father rather than a Harsh Judge; and the stories and experiences of a much broader group of people are being voiced and heard in the world.

If we as Christians are to remain not just relevant but faithful, if we want to spread the Good News to this ever-changing world, then we need to have a plan.

To state this even more clearly, the only way we can be faithful is to constantly discern how to be relevant to a world weary of our piety and tradition, and cynical of all

the times that our actions have not matched our words.

Every epoch of the world needs a new approach; every generation needs to hear Christ’s joyful message in words that make sense to them.

Our mission has not changed. The mission given to us by Christ in the Gospel of Mark to go into the world and to proclaim the good news remains the same (16:15). This mission is the North Star that guides our ship even as it is tossed in the middle of a sometimes turbulent ocean.

What needs to change from time to time is our vision. Our vision is what we see immediately in front of us. The vision of how we proclaim the gospel changes as the opportunities in front of us change. Whether we like what we see in front of us is irrelevant. We need to make a decision based on our vision.

The North Star of our mission will guide us to our ultimate destination but we need a vision to avoid the rocks that are immediately in front of us.

Our vision, by absolute necessity, changes as the cultural terrain changes.

In concrete terms, the question is, “How do we ‘be church’ to the world in a way that will best communicate God’s love for all people?”

To this end, the diocesan offices at the Catholic Pastoral Centre have been developing a strategic plan and vision that asks the questions about how we need to change in order to meet the needs and realities of the people we are called to serve.

For some who have worked on vision and mission statements, there is a bit of legitimate cynicism. Vision and mission

## The Director’s Cut Blake Sittler

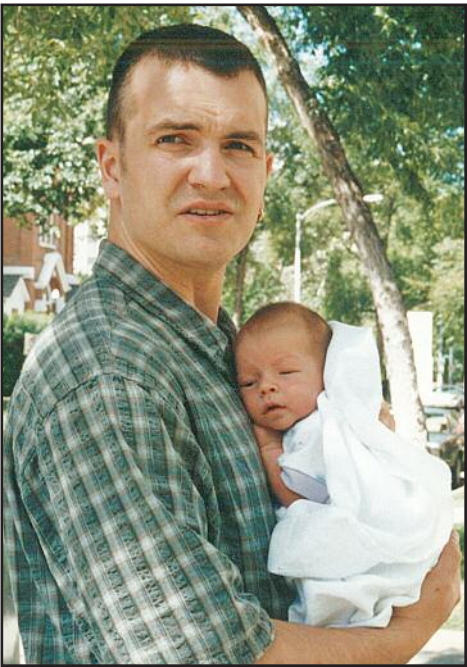
statements take time and resources to put together and all some organizations have to show for it is a gold plaque in their lobby with some words on it that everyone ignores.

That being said, we do need a vision. We need a vision because there are too many new realities in front of us to ignore.

The vision we need is not some lofty statement that is intended for only the leadership. We all need a vision. We all need a vision because we are all part of the mission. As popular catechetical guru, David Wells, once said: “There is no magic plan. *We* are the plan.”

As a diocese, we have already started down the path of visioning. We have formed a Diocesan Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, working with First Nations to heal generations of hurt and sin. We are developing a Justice and Outreach Year of Formation to help people make their way to “be with” the people on the margins of our society. Many more concrete steps will follow.

Every single day, each and every one of us has an opportunity — as we have promised through our baptism — to share the Good News. Our neighbour is getting divorced. A friend has lost their spouse to cancer. Our teenager is depressed and feels hopeless. An old man stands in the grocery aisle because he is lost. A new Canadian across the street is overwhelmed by their move to this wintery country. How can we be Christ’s good news to them?



The Sittler family plan has changed since Gabriel was born 19 years ago: our diocese must also update its vision.

Everyone we meet is in need of some good news. Christ wants to spread his joy and hope and yet many of us do not even know what our role is.

Once we are able to discern our vision, we begin to see more clearly our role in the mission.

The kind of change that we are trying to inspire is not like moving a couch; it is more like trying to move a mountain. But we have been inspired by Christ that if we have faith, even faith the size of a mustard seed, we can move mountains.

To this end, over the next year, I hope you will hear about on evaluation of the ministerial supports coming out of the Catholic Pastoral Centre. I invite your comments and feedback, both positive and negative. I hope that together we can navigate the uncharted waters together, with God as the North Star of our mission and lighthouse of our vision.

# Bishop’s Annual Appeal 2015 just shy of \$1.5 million goal

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The 2016 Bishop’s Annual Appeal has raised \$1,496,510 for diocesan ministries and outreach, reaching about 99.8 per cent of this year’s \$1.5 million goal.

Donations to the Appeal from Catholic parishioners across the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon support such ministries as Catholic hospital chaplaincy, the Lay Formation program, the Marriage and Family Life office, Aboriginal parish ministry, the Office of Justice and Peace, Catholic prison ministry, Youth Ministry, Christian Initiation and Catechetics, Vocations promotion and the education of priests and future priests.

Donors are reaching out in love and building up the church through their gifts to the Appeal, said Bishop Donald Bolen, expressing his deep appreciation to donors, volunteers and parish leaders.

Thanks to donors in parishes across the diocese, thousands of lives are touched each year, he said. “Because of our BAA donors, inmates have found faith and healing on their journey to leave prison and rebuild their lives and families; hospital chaplains have walked with families through birth, illness and death; and ministries for youth and families, vocations, catechetics and adult faith formation continue to engage

young and old – bringing them into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ, ensuring the future of our faith communities and equipping life-long disciples to go out into our world and make a difference.”

This year’s theme was based on the challenging scriptural verse from Matthew 25:40: “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and

sisters of mine, you did for me,” the bishop noted. “Jesus identifies himself with those in need, and we are challenged to respond.”

Parishes exceeding their BAA goal this year included St. Scholastica at Burr (which raised 274.6 per cent of its parish goal) and St. Theresa in Rosetown (which raised 218.4 per cent of its goal). Also exceeding their goal were parishes at Burstall, Denzil,

Eston, Fosston, Kerrobert, Kindersley, Landis, Macklin, Major, Marengo, Perigord, Prud’homme, St. Benedict, St. Denis, St. Donatus, Vanscoy and Young.

Saskatoon parishes exceeding their 2016 BAA goal were Holy Spirit, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Anne, St. Augustine, St. Francis Xavier, St. Joseph, St. Philip Neri, and Sts-Martyrs-Canadiens.

**The Bishop’s Dinner • Friday, May 13**

Join Bishop Donald Bolen for an evening of fun and fellowship at the Cathedral of the Holy Family

6:30 pm Cash Bar, 7:30 pm Dinner

Entertainment to follow

*Proceeds will support Justice and Community Outreach Ministries in the Diocese*

TICKETS: \$125 each

Contact Helen Zimmer at (306) 659-5850 or go to:

[www.dscatholicfoundation.ca](http://www.dscatholicfoundation.ca)



## Annual General Meeting

Financial Administrator Tanya Clarke presented the audited financial statement for the 2014-2015 ministry year in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon at an Annual General Meeting Jan. 16, 2016 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family. The meeting also included a report from Director of Pastoral Services Blake Sittler about ministry in the diocese, and comments from Bishop Donald Bolen, noting highlights of the year. The diocese’s Annual Report has been posted on the diocesan website at [www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/newsletters](http://www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/newsletters)

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

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# New coordinator of hospital chaplaincy provides pastoral care at city hospitals

By Blake Sittler

Jacqueline Saretsky is the new hospital chaplaincy coordinator for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. She replaces Céline Hudon, who retired in December.

Funded by the Bishop's Annual Appeal, the diocesan Hospital Chaplaincy program includes Saretsky as coordinator, working with Priest Chaplain Fr. Rhéal Bussi re and some 30 volunteers who provide Catholic spiritual care

and pastoral visits at Royal University and Saskatoon City Hospitals.

Saretsky grew up in Burr, south of Humboldt. She was born into a close German Catholic family of seven children. She has been involved in various types of hospital work and ministry for most of her life. Some of the roots of her calling were planted as a child: her mom was a nurse.

"My first memory of any type

of hospital is St. Elizabeth in Humboldt," she said. "What struck me was the mix of nuns and priests with nurses and doctors."

In those times, family did not stay and visit as often as they do today, "so the staff took care of you physically and spiritually."

Saretsky trained as a nurse at Kelsey Campus, now known as Saskatchewan Polytechnic. Her first placement was at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Humboldt.

Saretsky later went on to become an emergency medical technician. She believes that her early formation as a nurse and EMT, as well as experience and training as a therapeutic recreation technician, gives her an appreciation of the many sides of hospital work.

"I see chaplaincy as a reflective presence: I seek that now," she said. "Having been on the other side, I know what they are going through and understand the medical terminology... What draws me now is visiting with the patients."

Saretsky said that the encouragement she received from Tom Powell and Brian Walton, both teachers for the Clinical Pastoral Education program in Saskatoon, is part of the reason she responded to the call to hospital chaplaincy.

"I worked for a time primarily with people who were severely challenged, like those with Alzheimer's," she explained. "It was a lot of one-on-one ministry and I was drawn into that spiritual dimension of caring for patients."

Saretsky completed her first unit of Clinical Pastoral Education in 2002 and to date has completed three units. She started work at Saskatoon's St. Paul's Hospital in 2009.

"St. Paul's made space for me



to work on my CPE," she noted. "Connie (Lachapelle, Spiritual Care Manager at St. Paul's) was very good about supporting me while I was working."

"If I didn't have CPE I'd be floundering," she said with a laugh. "CPE isn't about hospital visiting, it is about self-formation so before you can sit at the bedside of a patient you have to know all the things about yourself, the good and those things that set us back, so you can better deal with patients."

She explained that the best spiritual care visitors are people who have been wounded and have healed.

Saretsky says she appreciates the direct contact with patients when working in hospital chaplaincy. "I like the time to sit at the bedside," she explained. "To take the time to hear their stories."

However, hospital chaplaincy – especially in the role of a diocesan coordinator – is about more than visiting patients. The role also includes advocating for patients, as well as recruiting, training and caring for volunteers, and expanding the ministry into parishes.

When with a patient, Saretsky says "you hear hurts and struggles, and if they have no family support, you have to take those concerns up the line to someone who can do something," Saretsky clarified. "This is difficult sometimes because it means going to a nurse or doctor and helping the patient to manage their own physical and medical condition."

"My own experience has been very positive in terms of how I get along with patient, family and staff," she continued. "I have found the chaplains are very much welcome."

She believes that chaplains are a resource that could be used more often as part of the medical team.

"I see myself being called more often when a patient is in crisis," she said. "When a patient is in the hospital there is a lot of emotion, and I'd like to see chaplains being accessed for those moments when nurses and doctors are busy with the more pressing physical needs."

Saretsky has observed that some doctors are taking the best advantage of the chaplains' time and gifts in the hospital. "One doctor wrote in some patient care notes that the patient should receive regular chaplaincy visits," she smiled. "That was in the doctor's orders. That is the ideal model."

The specific role of hospital chaplaincy coordinator in the diocese of Saskatoon is focused around Saskatoon City Hospital and Royal University Hospital, but



Jacqueline Saretsky is diocesan coordinator of Hospital Chaplaincy.

in the upcoming year Saretsky hopes to start connecting more with parishes to invite more ministry to the hospital.

"I'd like to offer more education concerning patient experience in the hospital," she outlined. "We need a greater understanding of what we are going to see in the hospitals as the population is aging."

"I already see myself in relationships with lots of parishes," she noted. "We need pastors to support their parishioners in doing this ministry. We need to get across the importance of this ministry to pastors so they don't see this as an add-on but an essential ministry of the parish."

The aging population and increased pressure on hospitals is a common story in the media. Some see it as a crisis. Some see it as an area of growth. "There is going to be a greater need for parishioner involvement in the lives of these people who have nowhere to go," she said. "Our hospitals are full."

"We need the volunteers...the ones who have a heart for this ministry. You don't have to be perfect, you just need the heart and the willingness to use it. You learn as you volunteer and grow as you go along."

Saretsky also noted that with physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia becoming legal in Canada, the need to inform Catholics about the health care consequences is a new challenge.

"We need to inform people about compassionate terminal care and palliative care... what it means, what it entails," she said. "To me it is promotion and advocating for these things."

Saretsky said she would like to see the church generally promote visiting the sick more often, and giving people the tools to visit their loved ones courageously.

"Many are afraid to talk with their families about those critical conversations like end-of-life or death," she stated. But by not entering into the most important conversations, family and friends deny loved ones the opportunity to talk about it. "Don't be afraid to ask the big questions of the patient: the death questions, the end of life conversations," she urged. "The patients aren't afraid of those conversations, they want them."

"As a chaplain, death isn't a failure," she shared. "It is a success if you've helped them journey well."



Leah Perrault farewell

Leah Perrault and her husband Marc were special guests Nov. 30, 2015 at a diocesan farewell celebration at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, marking Leah's departure after eight years of service as Director of Pastoral Services for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. Perrault is now working for Emmanuel Care as Executive Lead of Governance Advancement, working with boards of Catholic health facilities operated by the provincial organization. At the farewell Eucharist and reception, Bishop Donald Bolen expressed appreciation for Perrault's many contributions to the diocese. Blake Sittler, who has served as Co-Director of Pastoral Services with Perrault since 2012, has been appointed as Director of Pastoral Services. Transition plans also call for the eventual hiring of a human resources coordinator for the diocese.

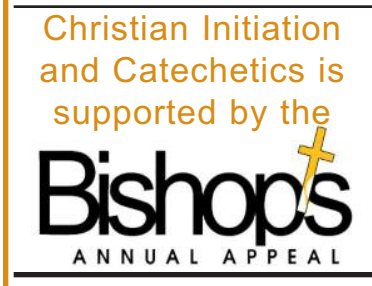
- Photo by Kiply Yaworski



Diocesan CIC team

Christian Initiation and Catechetics (CIC) in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon has seen a number of changes in recent years, including a name change from "Rural Catechetics" and a broader focus on Christian Initiation at every age and stage of life, with a focus on intentionally forming life-long disciples. In 2015, Mary Comeault (above left), retired from the team after more than 20 years of service. Team members Michelle Sieben of Denzil, Elan Ehresman of Richmond and Lynda Statchuk of Wadena (above, l-r) continue to provide outreach and support to parishes and catechists in preparing children and adults for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

- Photos by Kiply Yaworski



# Vocations combined with Youth Ministry office

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Among recent staff and office changes at the Catholic Pastoral Centre in the diocese of Saskatoon is the merger of Youth Ministry and Vocations into one office as of Jan. 1, 2016. Youth Ministry coordinator Colm Leyne has taken on the double portfolio, adding Vocations to his responsibilities.

Myron Rogal, who was coordinating Vocations part time, has now been appointed full time to the expanded Office of Justice and Peace.

“Youth Ministry and Vocations are a natural fit,” says Leyne, noting that he will be supported in the Vocations work by an active and engaged Vocations Commission, made up of volunteers from every vocational walk of life – single, married, religious and ordained.

As well, Fr. Daniel Yasinski and Fr. Colin Roy will continue to serve as Vocation Directors for men in the diocese who are discerning a call to the priesthood.

“I see myself as a coordinator and facilitator of efforts across our diocese to build a culture of vocations,” said Leyne. “That includes fostering an understanding



Coordinator of the Vocations and Youth Office, Colm Leyne (second from left) recently hosted a meeting of youth ministry leaders from parishes and organizations in the diocese to discuss plans and priorities. The part-time office of Vocations was recently combined with Youth Ministry, while Justice and Peace became a full-time office in the diocese. All three ministries – Youth Ministry, Vocations, and Justice and Peace – are funded by the Bishop’s Annual Appeal.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

of all vocations: marriage, single life, religious life and priesthood. I hope to engage others in promoting vocations in a creative and collaborative way.”

For more information about the Vocations and Youth Office in the diocese, contact Colm Leyne at the Catholic Pastoral Centre at (306) 659-5843 or by e-mail at

youthmin@saskatoonrccdiocese.com or vocations@saskatoonrccdiocese.com

MORE VOCATIONS NEWS SEE PAGE 25

# Rogal participates in Vatican conference marking 50th anniversary of Gaudium et Spes, a key Church document on justice and peace

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

One of the key documents of Vatican II spoke about the Church in the Modern World – a pastoral constitution known in Latin as *Gaudium et Spes* or “Joy and Hope.” It expresses the call and the desire of the Catholic Church to engage with the entire human family in understanding and addressing the needs of the world in our time.

Myron Rogal, coordinator of the Office of Justice and Peace in the diocese of Saskatoon, was selected as the Canadian delegate to a recent Vatican symposium held on the 50th anniversary of *Gaudium et Spes*.

“Young generations in the service of mankind” was the theme of the symposium Nov. 5-6, 2015 – reflecting words from Paragraph 31 of *Gaudium et Spes*: “Above all the education of youth from every social background has to be undertaken, so that there can be produced not only

men and women of refined talents, but those great-souled persons who are so desperately required by our times.”

Justice and peace workers from around the globe, along with representatives of ecclesial movements in the Church and from several Catholic academic institutions, gathered with cardinals and lay people for the opening, which served to show how *Gaudium et Spes* is truly a living document, describes Rogal.

“*Gaudium et Spes* is the pastoral constitution coming out of Vatican II that speaks to many of the Church’s positions on life, labour and justice issues,” Rogal noted.

“Coming out of that sphere, the opening was given by Cardinal Peter Turkson of Ghana, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace since 2009.”

Themes of the document and what has flowed from it in the life of the Church were also explored

by other speakers and in various sessions at the conference.

Rogal was one of two Canadians attending the symposium. The other was Fr. Bill Ryan, SJ, a former director of social affairs for the CCCB, who was representing the Jesuit Forum for Social Faith and Justice out of Toronto.

“I gained a greater realization of what the Church is doing internationally,” said Rogal. One profoundly moving highlight was celebration of Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica, and the procession afterwards by all the delegates to pray at the tomb of Pope John XXIII, he said.

“There was also a symbolic handover of the legacy of the pastoral constitution of *Gaudium et Spes*, when each representative from the local churches was invited to come up and receive a piece of parchment paper to bring back home. On that parchment paper there is a quote from



Myron Rogal, coordinator of the Office of Justice and Peace, was the Canadian delegate to a recent symposium on *Gaudium et Spes*.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

*Gaudium et Spes* and a flash drive is attached to it with a ribbon,” described Rogal.

“It is a reminder that we are part of a Church and a mission that has a past, a present and a future.”

Rogal will speak on *Gaudium et Spes* at a Foundations: Exploring Our Faith presentation 7 p.m. April 19 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

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**Protection of Archives**

Sr. Phyllis Kapuscinski, NDS, (left) and archivist Margaret Sanche transfer historical records of the Sisters of Sion to the diocesan archives. In addition to the records of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, the new climate-controlled archives facility at the Catholic Pastoral Centre provides care for the records of several congregations of women religious and the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (St. Mary’s Province).

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

**Connecting through technology**

Fr. Darryl Millette takes a look through the camera operated at Congress Day 2 by diocesan administrative assistant Sharon Leyne (right). Congress Day speakers in Saskatoon were viewed via video at satellite sites in Humboldt and in Kindersley during the Feb. 20 event. Earlier in February, a diocesan Christian Initiation and Catechetics (CIC) workshop offered in Saskatoon was also available by video broadcast to gatherings at Humboldt and Kindersley.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski



### Chrism Mass

At the 2016 Chrism Mass, Bishop Donald Bolen poured balsam fragrance into the oil before he and all the priests present prayed over it, blessing it as the Sacred Chrism to be used in confirmations, ordinations and blessings of altars and churches. The Oil of Catechumens and the Oil of the Sick were also blessed, and all three sacred oils were taken back to parishes by representatives from across the diocese who braved stormy weather to participate in the diocesan celebration. Priests from across the diocese also renewed their priestly commitment at the annual Holy Week celebration.

- Photo by Tim Yaworski

## Day of Prayer for Reconciliation and Healing introduced Oct. 21 in diocese and in Catholic schools

BY DERRICK KUNZ  
AND KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS), through the leadership of the Diocesan Council of Truth and Reconciliation, has introduced an annual Day of Prayer for Reconciliation and Healing.

The day of prayer was held for the first time on Oct. 21, 2015, on the third anniversary of the canonization of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the first North American Indigenous woman to be declared a saint by the Roman Catholic Church. The day of prayer was held in response to the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Students and staff at all 45 division schools located in Saskatoon, Humboldt and Biggar, as well as school division office staff, participated in the day of prayer. Pastors and parish and ministry leaders from across the diocese also participated in the day of prayer during a service held at the opening of diocesan Study Days at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon, with Bishop Donald Bolen presiding.

"The day of prayer complements our work and goals for First Nations and Métis initiatives and our kindergarten to Grade 8 treaty education," said Gordon Martell, superintendent of learning services at GSCS. "The generation of students in our schools today will be the ones to characterize what reconciliation and

healing looks like in the future. Having a prayerful focus gives hope."

Bishop Donald Bolen welcomed the suggestion for a Day of Prayer for Reconciliation and Healing. "It's beautiful! This is an initial step, and we will build from here," he said.

The suggestion for the Day of Prayer came from the Diocesan Council of Truth and Reconciliation (DCTR), a sharing and consultative circle of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people providing guidance to the diocese of Saskatoon. The DCTR was established as part of a promise made at the Saskatchewan Truth and Reconciliation Commission event held in Saskatoon during the summer of 2012, which heard about the ongoing impact of the Indian Residential School System.

Prayers of the faithful at the diocesan service Oct. 21 committed to journeying together in a spirit of reconciliation and healing. "We pray for all Canadians — may we be blessed with the strength to transform all that has been damaged by historic injustice to our First Nations brothers and sisters," the assembly prayed.

*(After the opening prayer service, diocesan Study Days continued Oct. 21-22 with facilitator Katherine Coolidge of the Catherine of Siena Institute presenting a vision for evangelization and faith outreach grounded in an encounter with Jesus Christ, and nurtured in community — with practical suggestions about forming "intentional disciples.")*

## Rabbi and bishop share insights into "hymns of Leonard Cohen"

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

It was standing-room only as Rabbi Claudio Jodorkovsky of Agudas Congregation Israel and Bishop Donald Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon shared insights and reflections on the music, poetry and prayers of Canadian icon Leonard Cohen Dec. 14 at the local synagogue.

Bolen described the origins of the evening as part of a life-long fascination with the Christian and Jewish imagery in Cohen's work. The artist's most recent recordings

include new pieces by Cohen that are extremely "psalm-like," the bishop noted.

"I had also heard over the years about the Jewish worship foundations of some of Leonard's songs, such as *Who By Fire*, and other songs with a strong connection to Judaism," Bolen added, describing a longing to discuss Cohen's lyrics with someone who knew the Jewish tradition. "When Claudio and I met, and became friends, the idea for the evening took root."

The two friends shared insights

into six of Cohen's songs — *Who By Fire* (1974), *If It Be Your Will* (1984), *Anthem* (1992), *Come Healing* (2012), *Born in Chains* (2014), and *Hallelujah* (1984) — as well as examining excerpts from Cohen's 1984 poetry collection *Book of Mercy*.

The presentation was videotaped and can be viewed on the diocese's YouTube channel, or the DVD can be borrowed from the Diocesan Resource Library. The complete news article about the event is also posted online at [www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news](http://www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news)



Congress participants from across the diocese gathered to discuss culture and communication Nov. 15 in Saskatoon represented many cultures — part of an increasingly diverse community.

- Photos by Kiply Yaworski

## Culture and communication focus of diocesan Congress

Whether you think about culture as an iceberg, an onion, or a pair of spectacles, its impact on human behaviour and human interactions is undeniable.

Understanding the impact of culture is an important part of communicating effectively in an increasingly diverse community, such as the Roman Catholic Church in Saskatchewan, participants in a Nov. 15 Congress Day in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon heard.

Miriam Sekandi and Isolde Schmid of Catholic Family Services in Edmonton shared insights into the challenges and impact of culture on world view, values, and communication styles in a lively and interactive session.

Finding communion and community across cultures is a matter of listening carefully and communicating clearly, said the two friends, who come from different cultures themselves. Unravelling cultural



Congress Day facilitators Miriam Sekandi and Isolde Schmid shared insights into unraveling cultural differences.

differences to find the connections we all share is key, said the presenters. - KLY



### Congress Day 2 in Humboldt

Parish representatives from the Humboldt area gathered at St. Augustine Hall for a video broadcast of Congress Day 2 presentations being held in Saskatoon Feb. 20. St. Joseph parish in Kindersley was also a video broadcast site for the diocesan meeting, which featured presentations on the new diocesan Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation (see article on Page 28), as well as sessions on strategic planning and parish audits.

- Photo by Myron Rogal



Bishop Donald Bolen and Rabbi Claudio Jodorkovsky (l-r) shared insights into the lyrics of Leonard Cohen with a packed synagogue of interested listeners Dec. 14 in Saskatoon.

- Photo by Tim Yaworski

# Prison outreach at Easter filled with joy for men and volunteers

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Easter joy rang through the chapel at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre as prisoners joined Bishop Donald Bolen to celebrate Mass on the afternoon of Easter Sunday, March 27.

Bolen's message comparing the vastness of God's love and mercy to the vastness of the ocean profoundly touched the men who heard it, said Dianne Anderson, coordinator of Restorative Ministry for the diocese of Saskatoon, who again organized the Catholic liturgies and Easter outreach with the help of volunteers. "You could see it in the faces of the men who heard his message. It was so meaningful for them. They were intent."

Anderson added that this year for the first time, volunteers were available to provide music ministry. "We had singing this year for Easter Sunday – and even for Good Friday – it was just so uplifting." The final Easter hymn and the greetings shared afterwards reflected a true resurrection joy, she said.

Also this year for the first time, Easter morning Mass was celebrated for men in the Urban Camp Program, who do not have access to the prison chapel. (Urban Camp is located in another section of the prison, outside of the perimeter of the main centre). Retired Oblate priest Fr. Louis Hoffart, OMI, came to celebrate at Urban Camp. "They were just so happy to have Mass," said Anderson.



Men at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre celebrated Easter Eucharist with Bishop Don Bolen, coordinator Dianne Anderson and volunteers. - Submitted photos

Other moments of the Triduum were also marked with men at the Correctional Centre, including Mass with the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday, and the Good Friday liturgy – both led by Fr. Mark Blom, OMI. On Good Friday, Blom read the Passion gospel with volunteers Dorothy and Michel Fortier of St. Anne parish, and the men all came forward to venerate the cross.

"The volunteers at all the celebrations were very moved by the experience, along with the men," Anderson described. "There is no fear in here," she says of the chapel.

Some 11 volunteers also helped with an outdoor Way of the Cross on Good Friday

March 25, with prayers at 14 stations along the prison fence, Anderson said.

Donations from parishes in the diocese again permitted Anderson to purchase chocolate Easter bunnies for every single man in the prison, regardless of their faith background, as well as Easter treats for the guards and nurses. This tradition brings a moment of joy to everyone, showing each man that he is not forgotten, said Anderson.

Delivery takes several hours, with a group of about eight volunteers assisting Anderson – this year without her bunny ears, which were packed away during a recent move. "The guards missed the ears!" she said with a laugh.

Restorative Ministry is supported by the



Good Friday veneration of the cross at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre.

## Persecuted Christians remembered

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

An evening of awareness and fundraising was held March 6 in support of persecuted Christians around the world.

Proceeds from the event went toward a newly-established start-up fund to assist parishes interested in sponsoring refugees. The Sponsorship Fund has been named in honour of Victor and Lucille Granger of St. Bruno parish in Bruno, who were also sponsors of the fund-raising dinner.

The Bruno couple took the initiative of sponsoring the new fund as a way to respond to the refugee crisis, in which millions are fleeing from violence and persecution – including religious persecution – around the world, explained Victor. "We decided this was a way we could help out, and

encourage parishes that can undertake sponsorships."

East-Indian cuisine, door prizes, displays, entertainment, children's activities, videos, and a program about the persecution and violence experienced by Christians in Pakistan were features of the third annual event, sponsored this year by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, Rock of Ages Lutheran Brethern Church, Knights of Columbus Council #8215, and Friends of Pakistan.

Nadeem Imtiaz Bhatti of Friends of Pakistan described life in Pakistan under Islamic blasphemy laws which permit widespread persecution of Christians and other religious minorities. Many Pakistani Christians have fled to other countries to escape persecution in their homeland, he said.

Justice and Peace is supported by the



Thousands have sought asylum in Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Thailand, and endure heart-breaking situations as refugees, Bhatti added.

"Many times they are not allowed to work or to attend school" or are kept in migration detention centres. "I plead with all churches," said Bhatti. "Please sponsor refugees from these countries. Your help will change people's lives."

He expressed hope that more persecuted Christians can find a safe haven in Canada. "Canadians



During a recent event highlighting the plight of persecuted Christians, Fr. Kevin McGee, vicar general for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon (centre), expressed appreciation to Victor and Lucille Granger of Bruno for establishment of a fund to assist parishes with some of the costs of undertaking refugee sponsorship. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

are the most generous people in the world."

Until the end of April, donations can be made to the Victor and Lucille Granger

Refugee Sponsorship Fund by contacting the Diocese of Saskatoon Catholic Foundation at the Catholic Pastoral Centre, 123 Nelson Road, Saskatoon.

## Vibrant liturgy through art and environment

BY JUDY GATIN

The Diocesan Commission for Liturgy in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon sponsored a workshop Jan. 30 at Holy Family Cathedral in Saskatoon. The topic was "Creating Vibrant Liturgy through Art and Environment" and featured presentations by Rosa Gebhardt.

Gebhardt is a fabric artist who has been involved in Art and Environment ministry for many decades in several parishes. She was part of the design committee for the Cathedral of the Holy Family and currently leads a team of volunteers there.

Quoting from the document *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, Gebhardt explained that: "Liturgy flourishes in a climate of hospitality. A simple

Liturgy Commission is supported by the



and attractive beauty in everything that is used or done in liturgy is the most effective invitation to this kind of experience. One should be able to sense something special in everything that is seen and heard, touched and smelled and tasted in liturgy."

She explained the four basic principles for art and environment in liturgical spaces – noble simplicity and beauty, quality and appropriateness, authenticity and use of the whole space.



Rosa Gebhardt led the Jan. 30 workshop. - Photo by K. Yaworski



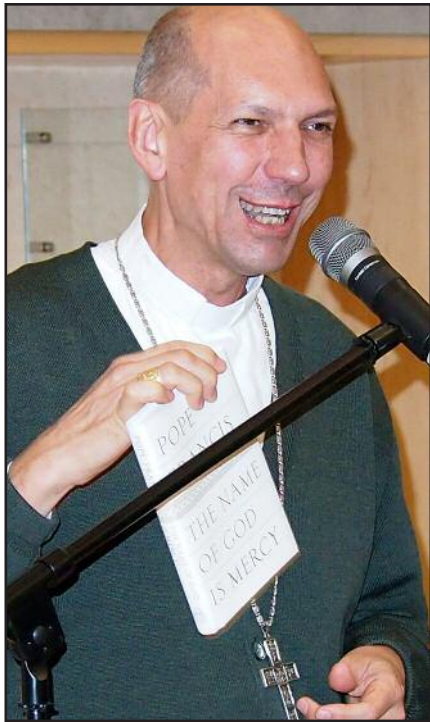
Beyond Smudging

The Western Conference on Liturgy held an annual meeting and workshop at Sts-Martyrs-Canadiens parish hall in Saskatoon Oct. 23-24, exploring the theme "Beyond Smudging and Sweetgrass: Understanding Indigenous Spirituality and Faith Traditions." Guest speakers included Sr. Eva Solomon, CSJ (above). Fr. Gary Kuntz of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Regina also spoke about his experiences of being immersed in the Anishinaabe culture to learn the language and participate in ceremonies. - Photo by K. Yaworski

# Speakers dive into themes of mercy in Lenten series

During this Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy declared by Pope Francis to run from the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on Dec. 8, 2015 to the Feast of Christ the King on Nov. 20, 2016, opportunities for reflecting upon the depths of God’s love and mercy have included a number of diocesan programs, resources and presentations.

An annual Lenten series organized by coordinator Sharon Powell of the diocesan Foundations: Exploring Our Faith Together office this year featured three popular local speakers delving into different aspects of the mercy of God: Bishop Donald Bolen, whose episcopal motto is “*Mercy within mercy within mercy*”; Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI, who chairs the diocese’s Holy Year of Mercy Committee; and Leah Perrault, a young mother, author and theologian known for reflecting on the experience of God in everyday life.



Bishop Donald Bolen

For full news reports on each presentation, see the diocesan news page on the website at [www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news](http://www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news) or borrow a video (on DVD) of each session from the Resource Library at the Catholic Pastoral Centre.

“The well that never exhausts is the well of mercy; it is mercy that is at the heart of things; mercy by which we live. The name of God is mercy within mercy within mercy.”

- Bishop Don Bolen

Bishop Donald Bolen opened the Lenten Series Feb. 21 with a talk entitled “Mercy All The Way Down.”

Weaving together poetry and story, philosophy and physics, personal experience and scripture, the bishop tackled questions of ultimate meaning. “What is at the foundation of things?” Bolen queried, before exploring scripture and experience to offer an answer – namely, the “inexhaustible well” of God’s mercy.

Bolen quoted Pope Francis, who writes in *The Name of God is Mercy*: “God does not want anyone to be lost. His mercy is infinitely greater than our sins, His medicine is infinitely greater than our illness that he has to heal.”

God manifests his power above all by showing mercy, said Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI, in his Feb. 28 presentation.

“Our call is to try and live out in our lives the mercy that God has shared with us,” Wiesner said. “We receive that mercy and we are called to pass it on.”

“We are ambassadors of reconciliation, ambassadors of mercy... We are loved by God so that we can reach out and love one another”

- Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI



Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI

A spirituality of mercy is the willingness to love one another in our brokenness, said Leah Perrault in the final session of the Lenten series.

It is precisely because we are the ones most in need of mercy that we are capable of offering it, Perrault insisted, pointing out that mercy does not come from a place of power or of condescension, but rather, from a shared brokenness.

“We worship a God who chose to be broken, to be human, to be crucified, so that he could relate to our brokenness, and so ultimately that we could receive that mercy from him because he was one of us.”

The self-righteous words “I told you so” do not speak mercy, Perrault pointed out. However, mercy does not stand in opposition to truth or to justice, she stressed, but rather is “the freedom to experience the consequences of our actions in the context of love.”

“Mercy is the simple willingness to love one another precisely in our brokenness .. the offering of love to the broken by the broken.”

- Leah Perrault



Leah Perrault

- Article and Photos by K. Yaworski



Fr. David Tumback and Bishop Don Bolen walk through the Holy Doors at the Cathedral of the Holy Family after a blessing Dec. 13, 2015. The bishop's motto “*mercy within mercy within mercy*” is overhead. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

## Holy Doors designated in diocese as part of the Jubilee of Mercy

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A Jubilee Year is a special year called by the Church for blessings and pardon from God, and the remission of sins.

Pope Francis has declared an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy from Dec. 8, 2015 to Advent 2016. The Year of Mercy is focussing the Church’s attention on the Mercy of God, and the call “*To Be Merciful Like the Father.*”

Pope Francis began this special Year of Mercy by opening ceremonial Holy Doors at St. Peter’s Basilica on Dec. 8. The next Sunday, dioceses throughout the world joined in solidarity with Rome, by opening their own Doors of Mercy, since the privilege of providing a Holy Door has been granted for the first time to Cathedrals and other specially-designated churches worldwide.

There is a special blessing (“plenary indulgence”) granted to those who pass through Holy Doors as a spiritual act, in conjunction with the celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation, the celebration of the Eucharist with a reflection on mercy, as well as praying for the Holy Father and his prayer intentions for the Church and the world.

Holy Doors have been designated by the bishop at both Holy Family Cathedral and St. Paul Co-Cathedral, with pilgrims able to walk through the doors whenever the buildings are open. In the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon a number of Holy Doors have also been designated, including at St. George Cathedral



Fr. Pius Schroh blessed the Holy Doors at St. Paul Co-Cathedral. - Photo by Francine Audy

and the Shrine of the Nun Martyrs Olympia and Laurentia.

A diocesan Holy Year of Mercy Committee is working to highlight the year in other ways as well.

A reflection entitled *God’s Message of Mercy* has been written by Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI, and is available online or from the Catholic Pastoral Centre in Saskatoon.

Other resources, including video clips and a collection of quotes about mercy, have also been posted on the diocesan website.

Parishes and organizations across the diocese are also being invited and encouraged to mark the year at a local level. In addition, the Holy Year of Mercy Committee hopes to organize celebrations in parishes and deaneries across the diocese: watch for details.

Year of Mercy

Ceremony with Pope Francis at the Vatican:

Saskatoon priest commissioned as Missionary of Mercy

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Fr. Marc Mireau of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon was recently commissioned by Pope Francis to serve as a Missionary of Mercy during this Jubilee Year.

In total, only about 1,100 priests worldwide have been designated for the special role during the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, declared from Dec. 8, 2015 to Nov. 20, 2016.

Priests designated as Missionaries of Mercy are called to be “a sign of the Church’s maternal solicitude for the people of God,” said Pope Francis in declaring the Jubilee Year. Granted the authority to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See, the Missionaries are asked to facilitate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a “truly human encounter, a source of liberation,” said the pontiff.

Mireau travelled to Rome in February, one of some 725 Missionaries of Mercy from around the world who met with Pope Francis, and celebrated Ash Wednesday Mass with him at St. Peter’s Basilica before being sent forth to be “persuasive preachers of mercy” with a special role as welcoming, loving and compassionate confessors.

Although retired from full-time ministry, Mireau still assists with ministry at the Trinity parishes of Vonda, St. Denis and Prud’homme, which are served by Parish Life Director Louise Bussi re and Priest Moderator Fr. Steve Morrissey, CSsR. Bishop Donald Bolen submitted Mireau’s name to the Vatican for the role of Missionary of Mercy in the Jubilee Year.

Mireau said that he hopes to provide a special focus on the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the diocese in the months ahead, and those who wish to contact him can email [abbemarc@gmail.com](mailto:abbemarc@gmail.com) or call (306) 258-4888.

The mercy of God and the



Fr. Jean-Marc Mireau of Vonda shows the certificate he received as part of being named a Missionary of Mercy by Pope Francis during a recent trip to Rome that included celebrating Ash Wednesday Mass with the Holy Father. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

graces of the Sacrament of Reconciliation are not only for the Lenten season, stressed Mireau.

“I’d like to say to everyone: ‘This is a Year of Mercy – why aren’t you going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation?’ It is a sacrament of joy. It is a sacrament that takes all the stuff that we have held in – and maybe didn’t ever think we could be forgiven for – and gives us forgiveness, and freedom and joy,” said Mireau.

“If only we trust in Jesus, we can have that joy,” he said, citing the Divine Mercy message of St. Faustina: “Jesus, I Trust in You.” Mireau also echoed Pope Francis’ observation that God never gets tired of forgiving – it is we who get tired of asking.

“When you are merciful to yourself, you can go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and receive the abundant grace of God’s mercy. Then it is your ministry to go out and be merciful to others,” said Mireau. “You can’t give what you have not experienced.”

Pope Francis spoke to the Missionaries of Mercy about their role as living signs of the Father’s mercy, Mireau said. “Pope Francis talked to us about mercy, expressed his appreciation to us, and told us how we must love the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and share that love and that mercy with the people.”

Being at the Vatican for the Missionaries of Mercy celebration

“God’s mercy is forever; it never ends, it never runs out, it never gives up when faced with closed doors, and it never tires.... Let us ask for the grace to never grow tired of drawing from the well of the Father’s mercy and bringing it to the world.”

- Pope Francis, Homily on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 3, 2016

was a spiritual highlight for Mireau, far beyond other trips to Rome. “It was like nothing in my life – it really was a highlight of my 46 years as a priest.”

Mireau described the powerful experience of processing from Castel Sant’Angelo to St. Peter’s Basilica with more than 700 priests and bishops from around the globe, and of being in the presence of the incorrupt body of St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (1887-1968) and relics of St. Leopold Mandic (1866-1942) – two Capuchin friars who were both known as saintly confessors.

Another blessing was the opportunity to spend time with priests and bishops from around the world – including some who attended the Second Vatican Council.

He also shared conversations with some Missionaries of Mercy who are facing hardships and persecution in their home countries – but who nevertheless remain filled with peace and joy, he said.

Given permission to travel by his doctors, Mireau said that he thankfully experienced no difficulties on the journey or during the various celebrations and gatherings in Rome.

He described vesting for Ash Wednesday Mass on steps that “go on and on and on.” During that celebration with Pope Francis he was handed a chalice, and asked to assist in distribution of communion.

In spite of his initial concerns about his mobility, “everything was perfect – there was no pain, no problem,” said Mireau.

During his years of ministry in the diocese of Saskatoon, Mireau served in a number of parishes, as a chaplain to several Catholic high schools and with Catholic Christian Outreach on the University of Saskatchewan campus.

Mireau also served as vocation director in the diocese for a number of years, taking an active role in walking with those discerning a vocation to the priesthood. That is a ministry that is still dear to his heart – Mireau plans to return to Rome in June to attend the ordination of diocesan seminarian Ed Gibney to the transitional diaconate (a step on the path to priesthood).

Mireau noted that the experience of God’s mercy is closely connected to vocational discernment. Some of those who are discerning a call to the priesthood feel they are not worthy, others are unsure about their call, Mireau described. “It involves a lot of trust, and of opening themselves to God’s mercy.”

The joy of journeying with the people of God – whether in vocation discernment or through the Sacrament of Reconciliation – has blessed his priesthood, said Mireau.

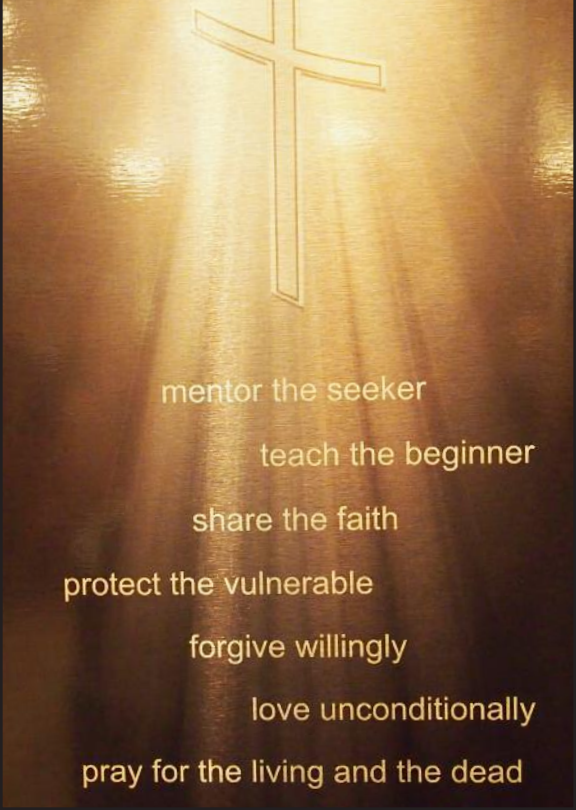
“In spite of who I am, God is working, the Spirit is working. There is a lot of joy.”



“God’s mercy transforms human hearts; it enables us, through the experience of a faithful love, to become merciful in turn. In an ever new miracle, divine mercy shines forth in our lives, inspiring each of us to love our neighbour and to devote ourselves to what the Church’s tradition calls the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. These works remind us that faith finds expression in concrete everyday actions meant to help our neighbours in body and spirit: by feeding, visiting, comforting and instructing them. On such things will we be judged.”

- Message of Pope Francis, Lent, 2016

Images (to the right and left) feature the Corporal and Spiritual Acts of Mercy as they are posted on Holy Doors at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.



# Legalizing assisted suicide creates a dangerous divide

BY MARY DEUTSCHER  
(COURTESY OF PRAIRIE MESSENGER)

What would you do if someone you love told you they were considering suicide?

This is a very broad question, but the way we answer it tells us a lot about the value we place on human life. The Christian response to suicidal thoughts is to try to find out why the request is being made and to help the person find hope and meaning in their life. Until recently, I would have said that this was “the Canadian response” as well, but following the release of the report of our parliament’s Special Joint Committee on Physician-Assisted Dying, it would seem that Canada has decided to take a considerably different approach.

In one of many far-reaching statements, the parliamentary Committee recommends: “that individuals not be excluded from eligibility for medical assistance in dying based on the fact that they have a psychiatric condition.”

The wording of this recommendation gets right to the heart of how proponents of euthanasia and assisted suicide view these practices. This recommendation is not talking about suicide as something to be avoided, or about hastening death as a rare, unwelcome, but necessary event that we begrudgingly accept. Rather, the parliamentary committee is upholding suicide as “a good” and hiding behind the phrase “medical assistance in dying” so it can pretend that euthanasia and assisted suicide are a way to help people. In reality these practices are only a way to abandon

people when they are most in need of affirmation.

Supporters of euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide are typically keen to point out that there is a difference between impulsively choosing suicide in a moment of despair and rationally choosing it after considering your options. However, even if we assume there is a difference between irrational suicide and rational suicide in theory, are we really able to distinguish between the two in practice?

It may be helpful to consider an example. Imagine a teenager, your son or daughter perhaps, has come to you to say they have been thinking about suicide. How would you respond? I’m sure that most of us would be shocked, appalled even, but I would hope that we would reign in our emotions and bring our focus back to the person in front of us.

Anyone who has received suicide prevention training would know that now is the time to fully acknowledge what the person has said. We don’t want to minimize their experience by telling them they are wrong or pretending they didn’t say anything noteworthy. We would likely want to dig a little deeper, to hear why these feelings are surfacing, and to try to find ways to bring meaning back to this young person’s life. I do not believe there would ever come a moment where we would decide that they really HAD thought the situation through, and that we should give into their requests for help in killing themselves.

Now let’s extend this example. How would you respond if instead of being a



teenager, the person coming to you for guidance were middle aged? What if they had a disability? What if they have received a cancer diagnosis? What if they had lived their whole life under the burden of a mental illness? Our Christian faith tells us that each of these people is equally valuable and that they each deserve the same response from us. They each deserve our empathy and our support as they struggle to overcome their feelings of despair.

A number of psychiatrists told the parliamentary committee that psychiatric illnesses are often very complicated and discouraged allowing physician-assisted dying for people who could easily be coerced into choosing to end their lives. Unlike the parliamentary committee, these psychiatrists seemed to be aware that it is impossible to judge when “the moment is right” for suicide.

How can we decide when to stop trying

to help someone? What is the magical moment when we can say that it is okay to give in to despair? Is there ever a good time to say, “Yes, I understand; I wouldn’t want to live if I were you either”? Perhaps most importantly, if suicide is a right, why would we try to talk people out of exercising their right?

Canada is setting down a dangerous path, and the most frustrating part is that we don’t even have the intellectual honesty to try to answer these questions. Instead, we are throwing the burden onto our healthcare providers, demanding that they sort out the mess that we cannot figure out ourselves.

There is, however, comfort in knowing that our Christian mission has remained unchanged: we must continue to strive to find meaning in suffering and to bring hope to persons who are burdened by despair. We must continue to shine as a light in the darkness, and to remind people that suicide is a problem, not a solution.

## From hand-wringing to speaking out: A call to action

BY THERESE JELINSKI

It will soon become legal in Canada to hasten your death, either by having a doctor give you a lethal injection (euthanasia) or by taking a lethal dose of prescribed medication (assisted suicide). Parliament has until mid-June to come up with a law to allow one or the other – or both – and to decide the parameters.

Many of us could never have imagined this happening. There is growing unease about the numerous implications of making it legal to kill someone or to aid in their suicide. In the face of such a complex issue, we might feel helpless, discouraged, and at a loss as to what we can do.

But there *is* much we can do to help make Canada a country where no one feels that accelerating their death is their best or only option.

- **Begin by informing yourself about the issues and what’s at stake.** This is not just a religious issue. Pay attention to the many voices raising alarm bells about the risks to individuals and to society:

Psychiatrists fear participating in euthanasia or assisted suicide – becoming “suicide enablers” – when there is a chance for treatment. Anesthesiologists fear what could go wrong when administering assisted suicide;

**All Canadian Members of Parliament are listed at:**  
<http://www.parl.gc.ca/Parliamentarians/en/constituencies>  
NOTE: Mail may be sent postage-free to any MP at  
House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A 0A6

**The Hon. Jody Wilson-Raybould**  
Federal Minister of Justice  
House of Commons, Ottawa, K1A 0A6

**The Hon. Jane Philpott**  
Federal Minister of Health  
House of Commons, Ottawa K1A 0A6

**Prime Minister Justin Trudeau**, 80 Wellington Street,  
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A2; E-mail: [Justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca)

**All Saskatchewan Members of Legislative Assembly are listed at:**  
<http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/mlas/>

**Saskatchewan Minister of Justice**  
Room 355, Legislative Building  
2405 Legislative Drive, Regina, S4S 0B3

they warn that hastened death may not always result in a peaceful exit. Some question whether any doctor should be involved at all, recommending that the job be left to “euthanists” or some other group instead.

Many physicians and other health care staff want nothing to do with hastening the death of their patients. They want the right to conscientiously object to being involved or to being forced to make a referral to someone else. Palliative care physicians are

among the most vocally disapproving of a new law.

Theo Boer, a former member of a Dutch euthanasia review committee, now admits he was “terribly wrong” to believe that regulated euthanasia would work. He says euthanasia was meant as a last resort but is increasingly being seen as a preferred way to die.

People with disabilities, mental illness, or terminal illness – and their families – worry that allowing assisted suicide and euthanasia entrenches the idea that

some lives are not worth living.

Newspaper editors and columnists have voiced concerns ranging from the impact on the public’s trust in doctors to the erosion of safeguards in countries that have legalized euthanasia. Andrew Coyne, *National Post* columnist, states, “We are asserting that helping people in pain to end their lives – killing them, to be more direct – is a positive good, which it is the state’s obligation not merely to tolerate, but to facilitate.” (Dec. 8, 2014)

- **Critically examine your own attitudes about illness, disability, aging, and dying.** Aim to be more compassionate and truly present to people who feel isolated or lonely, or who feel they are a burden to others. Do we really believe that all human beings have an inherent dignity that is not lost when they become frail or dependent on others?
- **Talk to your kids about the implications of legalizing assisted suicide and euthanasia.** This is the new world they are inheriting.
- **Complete or update your advance care directive, and talk to your family and physician about your wishes.** Have those important conversations about death and dying with your family and friends.

- **Write a letter to the editor objecting to euthanasia and assisted suicide and supporting improvements to palliative care.** Your letter would represent many other people who share the same concerns.
- **Write or speak to your MP, MLA, or the federal and provincial Ministers of Justice about your concerns.** Ask for the new laws to be as restrictive as possible. Push for safeguards to address risks and procedures for assessing requests for euthanasia or assisted suicide, and to protect freedom of conscience. Express support for a national oversight body to help ensure accountability and a way of tracking the practice. Advocate for a national strategy on palliative and end-of-life care, and for the provision of palliative care education for all health care providers.
- **Pray for wisdom and discernment.** Too many people have a fear of dying alone and unloved. As ethicist Margaret Somerville puts it, “Is euthanasia the outcome of our failure to be able to love those who are dying?”

When good palliative and end-of-life care becomes more accessible, people facing serious illness and death won’t have to consider the speeding up of their death as their only “choice.”

## Assisted Suicide / Euthanasia - Response

## Holy Week 2016 Letter from Saskatchewan Bishops:

## “What is the Christian response to suffering?”

**“My soul is sorrowful even to death.  
Remain here and keep watch with me.”**  
- Matthew 26: 38

Knowing that his death was near, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane and entered into a night of emotional suffering and agony. He prayed, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet, not my will but yours be done.”

The request to take this cup away from us is a human response, that many of us have felt in our hearts during our times of deepest trial. We can find comfort knowing that our Lord shares in our moments of despair. But what happens when we hear these words from our brothers and sisters facing serious trials? Their request for release demands a response from us. **What is the Christian response to suffering?**

We find ourselves in very troubling times, as the Supreme Court of Canada has opened the door to a devastating response to the suffering of others. In their Carter decision, the Supreme Court judges make clear that they believe it is acceptable and even morally necessary to kill the person who is experiencing suffering and asks for it to be brought to an end. But this is not a Christian response. Would any one of us, upon hearing our Lord ask for the cup of his suffering to pass from him, respond by ending his life?

In our Holy Week liturgies, we hear Jesus’ request to his disciples to “Remain here and keep watch with me.” In this simple phrase, we find a Christian response to suffering: to bring compassion into a world that is overburdened by loneliness and despair. In the paschal mystery, we hear the Good News that God in Jesus embraces suffering in order to embrace us; and to allow us to live, even in the midst of great suffering, with a hope which abides. Faced with the suffering of others, what the Lord asks of us is to be there, with care, love and hope.

Compassion, which literally means “to suffer with,” calls us to so much more than



The bishops of Saskatchewan reflect on how we journey with each other through moments of suffering.  
- Photo courtesy of Roger Lemoyne, Living Lesson Photos

feeling sorry for someone. True compassion is journeying with others, sharing in their pain, and standing by them in love and faithfulness, even when we know there is nothing else we can do.

A beautiful image of compassion is the love displayed by Our Blessed Mother Mary and John the Beloved Disciple at the foot of the cross: standing in love and sorrow in the face of Christ’s suffering, even though they cannot begin to understand its full meaning until Resurrection morning.

True, empathetic compassion calls each of us to see Christ in our brothers and sisters as they carry their burdens. In doing so, we also share the boundless hope we have in Jesus Christ, trusting that even in suffering, God is pouring out grace, revealing his love, forming disciples, and redeeming the world.

We continue to encourage the Catholic faithful and all Canadians to respond courageously to the challenges posed by the Supreme Court’s ruling, asking all to raise their voices in defense of the life and the human dignity of all persons, especially the most vulnerable. Eliminating a life is

never an appropriate response to suffering.

The Lord calls out to us, “Be not afraid!” Empowered by his Spirit, let us encourage our government **to provide universal access to and funding for quality palliative and end-of life care** for every Canadian – care that provides adequate pain relief, and walks lovingly with those who are suffering and dying, neither hastening nor prolonging death, helping each precious person to live until they die.

Let us also **stand united in solidarity and support for all who serve in health care**, calling for the conscience rights of individual healthcare workers and healthcare institutions to be protected. As legislation is being drafted and discussed, we pray that our Catholic health facilities might be able to continue to serve people, especially those in greatest need.

Finally, let us make an intentional effort ourselves **to reach out faithfully** to those who are sick or suffering, dealing with mental illness, or with a terminal condition or disability – all those feeling isolated, marginalized and forgotten. We humbly ask each one of you to embrace the Gospel call of mercy, and to lovingly and clearly communicate in concrete action that no human being is a burden, that all are precious children of God, all are loved, all are cared for.

None of this is easy. Suffering is not easy. Illness, death, and despair are harsh realities. The pain we encounter in those journeying through suffering is not

**“The passion of Jesus  
is a sea of sorrows,  
but it is also an ocean  
of love. Ask the Lord  
to teach you to fish  
in this ocean. Dive  
into its depths.  
No matter how  
deep you go, you  
will never reach  
the bottom.”**

- St. Paul of the Cross

answerable with glib platitudes or easy answers. But living this response of love and compassionate care is living the paschal mystery. It is entering into pain and darkness with hearts of love, and clinging to the hope that we have in Jesus Christ who gave himself fully that we might have life, the hope grounded in the mercy of a Father who never abandons us.

As we reflect upon the dying and rising of Jesus, let us renew our commitment to journeying with each other through our moments of suffering.

St. Paul of the Cross writes: **“The passion of Jesus is a sea of sorrows, but it is also an ocean of love. Ask the Lord to teach you to fish in this ocean. Dive into its depths. No matter how deep you go, you will never reach the bottom.”** As we enter the tomb of the Lord’s and each other’s suffering, let us ever hold fast to the boundless love of God and the Resurrection he promises.

*Yours in Christ,*

**Very Rev. Lorne D. Crozon**  
Diocesan Administrator, Regina

**Most Rev. Albert Thévenot**  
Bishop of Prince Albert

**Most Rev. Donald Bolen**  
Bishop of Saskatoon

**Most Rev. Bryan Bayda**  
Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon

**Most Rev. Murray Chatlain**  
Archbishop of Keewatin-Le Pas

“Illness and suffering have always been among the gravest problems confronted in human life. In illness, [people experience their powerlessness, their limitations, their finitude]. Every illness can make us glimpse death. Illness can lead to anguish, self-absorption, sometimes even despair and revolt against God. It can also make a person more mature, helping him discern in his life what is not essential so that he can turn toward that which is. Very often illness provokes a search for God and a return to him.” - *Catechism of the Catholic Church #1500-1501*

## What others are saying about the legalization of Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia:

**“The debate about physician-assisted death is intense because actively ending a life crosses a boundary.** Canadians abolished the death penalty not only on moral grounds, but also because of the irretrievable consequences of a mistake... We have no moral alternative but to proceed deliberately, cautiously, gradually and with scrupulous oversight.” - Harvey Schipper and Trudo Lemmens, University of Toronto professors, “Why we must move cautiously on doctor-assisted dying,” *Globe and Mail*, Jan. 11, 2016.

**“What happens when those we trust most with human life are suddenly in charge of death? ... How can the public have complete faith and trust in doctors when death, all of a sudden, is a viable option?... Palliative care professionals, whom we might logically assume to be likely administrators of such assistance, are among the most vocally disappointed by and disapproving of the new law.”** - *Edmonton Journal*, March 2015.

**“A lot of people feel uneasy with the entire concept of this. This is not what we intended when we became anesthesiologists.”** - Dr. Susan O’Leary, president of the Canadian Anesthesiologists’ Society, quoted in “Uneasy feeling on euthanasia” by Sharon Kirkey, *National Post*, Jan. 20, 2016.

**“Once we have embraced the idea of suicide, not as a tragedy we should seek to prevent, but a right we are obliged to uphold; once the taking of life has been converted from a crime into a service – ‘physician-assisted death’ – to be performed at public expense; once we have crossed these sorts of philosophical and legal divides, how is it to be imagined that we could stop there?”** - Andrew Coyne, *National Post*, Feb. 7, 2015

**“But death (through physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia) does not always come easily.** Patients have regurgitated the lethal drugs, or ‘re-awakened’ after swallowing them. In some cases, the time between ‘ingestion’ and ‘expiry’ has taken far longer than anticipated.” - Sharon Kirkey, “What is the most humane way to end a life?” *National Post*, April 11, 2015.

**“They are calling euthanasia ‘death with dignity.’ The moment we label suicide an act of dignity, it implies that people like me are undignified for not ending our lives.** Or worse, are a costly burden for society.” - Liz, a young Oregon mother living with advanced kidney cancer. (YouTube video “Dying with Dignity” - link available on diocesan website.)

**“The big fear for psychiatrists is that they may be participating in physician-assisted death, when there is a chance for treatment.”** -Dr. Padraic Carr, Canadian Psychiatric Association, quoted in Sharon Kirkey, “Psychiatrists fear role as ‘suicide enablers’,” *National Post*, Sept. 14, 2015.

**“We’ve got to take the white coat off euthanasia.** It should not be something that medical professionals are involved with. Most physicians do not regard inflicting death as medical treatment.” - Margaret Somerville, ethicist, speaking at St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon, Nov. 4, 2014.

**“Once you open the door and you think you are going to control euthanasia or assisted suicide, it’s an illusion ...** People say that euthanasia is the best way to die. The media say, look, he is having a glass of champagne with his children, and then the doctor arrives and kills him. It is the trivialization that is very dangerous.” - Carine Brochier, European Institute for Bioethics (Brussels), quoted in Graeme Hamilton, “Doctor could face charges for role in euthanasia,” *National Post*, Oct. 30, 2015.

**“Kill the pain and suffering, but not the person with the pain and suffering.”** - Margaret Somerville, ethicist, speaking at St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon, Nov. 4, 2014.

# Doctor calls for more palliative care instead of physician-hastened death

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Physician-assisted death is coming to Canada but universally available palliative care services are not – and that should be causing anger and concern, says a Saskatchewan palliative care physician.

“One is being legally mandated, and the other is not,” said Dr. Vivian Walker, co-director of palliative care at St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon. “The seismic shift in our culture toward physician-hastened or physician-assisted death is big... Especially in the context of what we know to be poorly-accessible palliative care services nationwide.”

Walker spoke at a public presentation March 8 at St. Paul’s Hospital, reviewing the recent history of the legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia in Europe, in some U.S. states, and in Canada, raising concerns about “assisted death,” and expressing strong support for palliative care.

There is an urgent need to expand quality palliative care across the country, which right now is available to only some 30 percent of those who need it, she said.



Dr. Vivian Walker  
Co-director of Palliative Care  
St. Paul’s Hospital

- Photo by K. Yaworski

**A Feb. 6, 2015 Supreme Court ruling struck down the ban on physician-assisted death** for “a competent adult person who (1) clearly consents to the termination of life and (2) has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition.”

### Need for Palliative Care stressed by External Panel

In consultations after the decision, an External Panel on

*“Why is ‘Medical Aid In Dying’ to be nationally available and mandatory, but not palliative care, or excellent psychiatric care, or chronic pain services?”*

- Dr. Vivian Walker

Options for a Legislative Response to Carter vs. Canada was one of the committees and groups that have stressed the need for palliative care, reported Walker.

“The panel heard on many occasions that a request for physician-assisted death cannot be truly voluntary if the option of proper palliative care is not available to alleviate a person’s suffering,” she said, quoting the Panel’s executive summary.

“Why is Medical Aid In Dying to be nationally available and mandatory, but not palliative care, or excellent psychiatric care, or chronic pain services?” she queried.

“Every single study says that people should have access to palliative care. Why should we have this legislation for physician-hastened death, and nothing for palliative care? ‘Medical Aid In Dying’ will be nationally available. It will be publicly funded. What about palliative care?”

Right now in Saskatchewan there are only 2.7 palliative care doctors, she said. “There are not enough of us to do the job that needs to be done, (or) to teach the students how to do good pain management,” she said.

### Palliative Care doctors oppose assisted death

A survey of the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians in January 2015 showed that a majority of palliative care doctors are opposed to the legalization of euthanasia or assisted suicide. Some 74 percent believe that if assisted death is legalized it should not be provided by palliative care services or palliative care physicians, Walker said.

She expressed her own hope



- Photo courtesy of Roger Lemoyne, Living Lesson Photos

that physician hastened death can be kept separate from palliative care. “You know, a guy that I cared for recently said: ‘I was so afraid to come in here, but these days have been some of the best days of my life.’ He was so afraid to come into palliative care ... well, if we are doing euthanasia alongside of palliative care, what do you think that’s going to do for his fear?”

Walker reviewed a range of practices in other jurisdictions – in some places assisted suicide is accomplished by a doctor providing a prescription that is self administered, in others, euthanasia is accomplished by an injection administered by medical personnel. In Switzerland, for instance, assisted death happens outside of medical institutions in stand-alone facilities.

She noted that Canadians are confused about end of life issues, about the meaning, differences and implications of such things as euthanasia, assisted suicide, “do not resuscitate” orders, palliative sedation, the right to refuse treatment, the right to refuse hydration, etc., and tend to lump everything together, rather than recognizing their many important distinctions.

### Philosophy of Palliative Care

Walker described the history and the philosophy of palliative care, quoting Dr. Cicely Saunders, pioneer of the modern hospice movement: “We will help you live until you die.”

The World Health Organization definition of palliative care says that it is “an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problems associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification, impeccable assessment, and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual.”

“Palliative care doesn’t

prolong or hasten death,” said Walker, noting that we live in a death-denying culture, which has created issues that surround the dying process.

“We spend a lot of money denying death, denying that we are sick, or that we are even palliatively ill. Patients who are palliative often don’t like the word palliative,” she said. “We want to bring good, symptom-managed care, comfort, family-centred care – but we can’t do that if we are not allowed in because the word palliative is offensive, or because all we will talk about is cure.”

By taking every treatment to “buy more time,” sometimes all that patients are getting is more sick time, she said, calling for a clear and compassionate look at end-of-life issues, and the right to refuse burdensome treatments. “We need to get ready for our own dying journeys and not be so fearful about what they are going to look like. We need to be a society that makes dying filled with kindness and compassion.”

Walker shared images and stories demonstrating the beauty of the dying process when patients and families are fully supported and cared for – for instance by a palliative care team.

Responding to pain requires a holistic approach, she said. It involves “responding to ‘total pain’ – to pain coming from our social relationships, our physical condition, our psychological vantage point, and yes, even our spiritual point of view.”

There is also pain for family members who accompany someone through the dying process – at times, more pain than there is for the patient, she observed.

“Sometimes the requests to hurry things up come from kids who are having a lot of pain at the bedside of watching their loved ones die.”

However Walker noted that pain is not always the reason for physician-hastened death.

Continued on next page

## A sacred and a brave response to suffering

By Sandra Kary, Executive Director  
Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan

How do we carry the weight of suffering? We feel it all around us, and it is heavy. We are ill, and old, despairing and alone. We revel in the days and moments that we can claim as pain-free, illusory as they may be.

From our insular lives, we clamour relentlessly for that which will provide numbness or distraction, and when faced with unbearable pain, we look to our family, friends, and leaders and ask - *why are we still suffering?*

Like the well-intentioned friends of Job, we rally to each other with a myriad of answers and solutions. And to its fatal end, the latest solution of physician-assisted suicide lends a fellow-lemming’s hand... off the edge of the cliff.

On the other hand, the brilliance of quality palliative care is that it isn’t so much a solution, but a solemn and spacious response. It allows for the unanswerable questions of suffering to be buoyed by a community that is ready to carry the weight of it. It is a brave and sacred response that says, “God only knows.”

Indeed, we need to insist that more quality palliative care be made available, but it would be idealistic to think we could place palliative care structures at the edge of every cliff.

We need to see palliative care as a beacon, and not expect it to become a franchisable solution. As it stands, it is only designed to catch those whose physical suffering is acute.

What is needed now, more than ever, is for the Church to understand that *they* are the community that must stand together at the edge of the cliff, ready to catch a fellow-lemming’s hand... and hold tight.

A beacon of hope is erected when two or three gather together, buoying the weight of another’s suffering, whispering together the brave and sacred response of “God only knows.”

This is the healing (and relentless) ministry of Christ, the *franchising* of Catholic health care.

### Resources and Advocacy:

- Declaration Against Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide: [www.euthanasiadeclaration.ca/declaration](http://www.euthanasiadeclaration.ca/declaration)
- Protection of Conscience: [www.canadiansforconscience.ca](http://www.canadiansforconscience.ca)
- Vulnerable Persons Standard: [www.vps-npv.ca](http://www.vps-npv.ca)
- Euthanasia Prevention Coalition: [www.epcc.ca](http://www.epcc.ca)
- Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF): [www.lifegivinglove.com](http://www.lifegivinglove.com)
- Diocesan Website: <http://saskatoonrcdiocese.com/office-justice-and-peace/euthanasia-and-assisted-suicide>

## Palliative Care

### “Angels sang her home” — a reflection on the loving ministry of the Ukrainian Sisters of Saint Joseph

BY DEBORAH LARMOUR  
OFFICE OF LIFE AND FAMILY  
UKRAINIAN CATHOLIC EPARCHY

My mother went home to heaven in 1999. We were close. I could not really imagine life without my mom. She had ovarian cancer 20 years before, but with prayer and treatment she recovered. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer that had metastasized into her bones, treatment was an option but she declined. She had been through so much already after a mastectomy and her previous chemotherapy; further treatment was more than she could take.

My dad had a lot of health problems and when in the summer of 1998 we received my mom’s terminal diagnosis it was very clear my dad could not, even with family and home care support, care for our mother’s needs as well as his own.

We approached the Ukrainian Sisters of Saint Joseph about a place for both of them at their care home at 33 Valens Drive in Saskatoon, so that they could be together during our mother’s last days. Little did we know that dad would have such difficulty coping with the certain loss of our mom that his own health would rapidly deteriorate and he would die before she did.

Throughout the year that my mom was a resident at Saint Joseph’s Home there were ups and downs. There was the difficult adjustment to the loss of independence that she and my dad had previously enjoyed. Then, my dad, who had suffered for years with emphysema and asthma,

contracted pneumonia and died rather suddenly. They were together for over 50 years of joys and sorrows, and this was an incredible loss.

Among the “ups,” Mom was able to hold her last grandchild, my son John, in her weakened arms and attend his baptism, which was a great grace.

Mom received incredible love, support and care from the staff and Sisters of Saint Joseph. She called them her ‘angels’. As my mom grew weaker, on one of my many visits, a Sister pulled me aside and said, “Your mom is hanging on because she thinks you need her, maybe it is time to tell her that you will be okay and she is free to go to God.” I was shocked at this. How could I do that? I didn’t want her to go.

As mom grew weaker still, I began to see that Sister was correct. I still struggled. Then one afternoon as spring was turning into summer – as I held my baby — and looked at my mom’s suffering I was able to say the words. “Mom, when you leave me... when you leave us... we will miss you more than words can say but we will be okay. We will be alright.” Her response was a simple “I know.” I was still not ready to say that final goodbye.

Short weeks later the dreaded call came: “Your mom is not going to be with us much longer, you should come.” When I arrived, my sister was already there. But to my surprise so were several of the Sisters of St. Joseph. They were singing, the Jesus Prayer in Ukrainian. “Jesus, Lord Jesus, Son of the Living



The Ukrainian Sisters of Saint Joseph are among those in our community caring for the elderly, the sick and the dying with compassion and love.  
- Submitted photo

### Dr. Walker reflects on reasons patients request assisted death

*Continued from previous page*

In Oregon, top reasons for physician-assisted suicide requests include a fear of losing autonomy (93 per cent), and the fear of being a burden on family and friends (49 per cent). The fear of pain or other symptoms is stated as the reason for the request only about 28 per cent of the time.

Autonomy and dignity are the two big words that underscore physician-hastened death, Walker said. “But are you undignified if you have an illness that takes you to a vulnerable place?” she asked.

“Somehow dignity has come to mean that I am under my own control... but the ‘quality of being excellent, worthy or honorable’ is actually the definition of dignity, and it has nothing to do with function.”

Dying doesn’t make patients unlovable, she stressed, rather, in their vulnerability, they attract care and compassion.

“But people are very worried that they are just going to be a nuisance, that they are going to be a burden. They don’t feel that they are lovable, that they are worth the care,” she said. As an aside, Walker urged her listeners to go home and reach out to the elderly and others who “don’t know that their lives count any more.”

Although euthanasia is strongly advocated to relieve pain and suffering, doctors have increasingly “good recipes” to treat physical pain, she said. “But what do we do with other pain and suffering as a society? With voiced hopelessness? With loneliness?”

Walker pointed to vulnerable groups who are profoundly concerned about the legalization of physician-assisted death. “The Saskatchewan Association and Canadian Association for Community Living are worried about what this law will speak to

God, have mercy, have mercy on us.”

These were the women who cared for my parents’ physical needs in their last days, and they did it extremely well. But they also cared deeply for their spiritual needs.

They were our mother’s ‘earthly angels’ who sang her into the presence of the heavenly host. Momentarily, all of us in that room touched eternity as my mom took her last breath. If I ever doubted it, I knew heaven was ‘for real’ — my mom and dad were together. All I could do was pray with all my heart that someday our whole family could be united

with them in the ocean of God’s love and mercy.

Years later, when I heard Sister Theodosia (former director of the home, now deceased) speak about the tragedy of so many of our people dying without someone to pray with and for them, her words pierced my heart.

What if there were no heroic women who were willing to give their lives in the service of God and His people? What if there were no places like Saint Joseph’s Home to care for the whole person — body and soul — as they prepare to enter eternity? I could not fathom it.

Yet as I tearfully recall these

events (even all these years later), I know we face a situation today where faith-based institutions such as the one offered by the Sisters of Saint Joseph are at profound risk in the face of the legalization of assisted suicide and euthanasia.

These facilities work in the service of love and life. Would anyone want institutions with this level of care for body and soul to face extinction because they follow their conscience? Rather I would hope that in the face of an aging population more such institutions were available to usher us from life to life eternal, with the best of holistic care.

**“Why are there only three, or perhaps four, if I include myself, full-time qualified palliative care physicians in this province? Why are there only nine acute palliative care beds and 10 hospice beds in Regina, and just 14 palliative care beds and no hospice beds in Saskatoon?”**

*Dr. Lawrence J. Clein, member of the Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians, Letter to the Editor, Saskatoon StarPhoenix, Jan. 11, 2016*

the disabled in our society. What is their life worth? Or what of the freshly injured spinal cord patient — who almost universally wants you to pull the plug, (who) wants you not to treat them? And yet they go on to be absolute heroes to our society. What do we speak to them?”

There are also a lot of unanswered questions about how physician-assisted death will change palliative care, change perceptions of dying, or change grieving processes, she added.

“Will it change palliative care? I don’t know. Our living and dying? I don’t know. Will it become an expected norm for those who are aging and feeling hurt?”

Walker also raised the question of “Medical Aid In

Dying” being promoted as a cost-saving measure. She encouraged those with concerns about any aspect of the issue to speak up and to get involved. “I would suggest that you let your government reps know — let the legislative persons know what you think. And if you have concerns, let them know.”

Conscience protection is also vital, she said. “We need to figure out how we respectfully allow physicians to be who they are. I would hope that we would not insist that a physician step over their conscience in providing this. We haven’t done that in other issues that are controversial, and I hope that we would have the same respect now.”

Walker added: “The Supreme Court did say ‘willing patient, willing doctor.’ But some of these

committees are now saying ‘no, that’s not adequate’, and they are defining what effective referral looks like. What about conscientious objection? Choice is everywhere in the media. Well what choice will docs have? What choice will I have in whether I want to participate?”

This will be the law in Canada whether we approve of it or not, she said. “But I still want to be able to live with myself at the end of each day, and live according to whatever I feel is my rightful conscience, my conscientious duty.... I hope we can find our way in a system that will respect both.”

And then she added again: “But shame on us if we think that 30 per cent palliative care access in Canada is acceptable.”



Drummers presented a victory song, and provided the drum for a Round Dance that was part of the Feb. 24 welcome for newcomers from Syria and elsewhere, held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

- Photos by Kiply Yaworski

## Indigenous leaders welcome refugees during gathering at Saskatoon cathedral

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

First Nations and Indigenous representatives have extended a warm welcome to refugees who recently arrived in Saskatoon. The afternoon program Feb. 24 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family included messages of solidarity and welcome, a round dance, refreshments and information about treaties and the history of Indigenous peoples.

“Just like your people, mine have faced many injustices throughout history,” said speaker Janelle Pewapsconias, an entrepreneur, a student and a mother from Little Pine First Nation.

Speaking to the refugees from Syria, she added: “I don’t understand your language, but I am looking forward to hearing your stories. You and I, and all of us, we are strong people. We have more in common than you know.”

The Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISA), Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, The Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Saskatchewan (AFCS), and partners from BRIDGES (Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement) joined together to organize the event to welcome refugees who have arrived in the community since November.

Master of Ceremonies Brad Bird of AFCS introduced special guests, elders and elected representatives, including Mayor Don Atchison, while Abeer Younis translated each speaker’s words into Arabic.

More than 400 refugees who



Abeer Younis translated presentations at the event into Arabic, including greetings from Eugene Arcand of Muskeg Lake First Nation.

have fled war and persecution in Syria have arrived in Saskatoon so far, part of the Canadian commitment to respond to the international crisis, said Ali Abukar, executive director of the Saskatoon Open Door Society. Refugees from other countries have also arrived in Saskatchewan since November.

As part of the welcoming event, Elder Maria Linklater offered prayers in her language. Traditional drummers and singers presented a victory song. Eugene Arcand of Muskeg Lake First Nation explained to the recently-arrived refugees that it was “a victory song for you – for getting here safe.”

Arcand welcomed the newcomers to Treaty 6 territory. “There are 10 numbered treaties which are very sacred to the First Nations and the Indigenous Peoples of this land. I encourage you while you are here to learn more about Treaty 6 and the other treaties, which you are going to be



Janelle Pewapsconias of Little Pine First Nation spoke.

a part of, because we are all treaty people.”

He told newcomers that they will observe poverty among First Nations people, and urged them to learn more about the history and issues behind that reality. “There are reasons for that poverty, and for some of the bad things that are happening to Indigenous people in this city, and in this province and in this country,” he said. “We ask you to find out what those reasons are – including the residential school era.”

Arcand encouraged the newcomers in their struggle with learning a new language, advising them to also work to maintain their original languages for their children and grandchildren. “We have lost many of our languages on our own lands.”

Pewapsconias echoed Arcand’s emphasis on the importance of language and culture. She also described the “sad story” of policies over the past 130 years that have created situations of injustice and suffering for First



Newcomers and those welcoming them joined hands for a Round Dance.



Recently-arrived refugees from Syria were among those who gathered for the welcome event at the Cathedral of the Holy Family Feb. 24.



Bannock and pita bread were served during a welcome for Syrian refugees by Indigenous leaders, at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.



### Syrian refugees welcomed at airport

Community members and government officials were on hand Dec. 19 at the Saskatoon airport to welcome government-sponsored Syrian refugees, among some 480 who have come to Saskatoon as part of the Canadian government’s commitment to bring in 25,000 people fleeing war, violence and persecution in Syria.

- Photo by Tim Yaworski

Nations and Indigenous people.

“It is incredible to think about my people’s strength and resilience: what it took to be here today, and how much it took to survive, to be able to laugh again, to be able to love again, and to feel connection,” Pewapsconias said, encouraging the newcomers in their struggles.

“I see your survival and it gives me hope. You are now part of this land’s history. I welcome you to share it with us,” she said. “You have the opportunity to help this nation become a greater place. You have the opportunity to shape a place that honours its roots, and eliminates oppression across the world.”

Raed Aljamous, who has been in Canada for just over a month, expressed thanks on behalf of the Syrian refugees. “Once we landed in Canada, we found the

hospitality – we found the warm welcoming as the Open Door Society says it: welcoming, belonging and connecting.”

He noted the similarities between cultures, pointing to the common experience of drums, song and dance shared that afternoon.

“I think the things that are common among us and the First Nations and Canadians are bigger than the differences between us,” he said.

“We believe in the idea that from adversity, we can also reach victory and we can reach prosperity. So we are getting to Canada to secure – for my family and my kids – to secure for them education and health. So from the bottom of my heart, I thank the Canadian and First Nations and Indigenous people – thank you very much.”

# Twinning relationship launched with diocese in South Sudan

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon in Canada has a new “twin” – the Catholic Diocese of Torit in South Sudan.

With the support of bishops from both dioceses, the concept of twinning and a range of ideas for nurturing this new relationship are now being explored by parishioners on both sides of the world.

In recent weeks, gatherings in Humboldt, Eaton and Saskatoon have heard more about South Sudan, the history of connections between the two dioceses, and possible ways to grow in understanding and friendship through the twinning process.

For years the Saskatoon-based organization Friends of Loa has nurtured a connection with a community in South Sudan, which has included getting to know Fr. Martin Vuni Asida and raising funds for school projects in the Loa region. The relationship deepened when Fr. Martin Vuni came to Canada and served for a time in the diocese of Saskatoon.

“With the support of the bishop of the diocese of Torit and Fr. Martin Vuni, who has returned to that diocese, the groundwork has been laid for inter-parish relationships based on reciprocity and solidarity,” says Bishop Don Bolen of the twinning initiative. “Such a relationship would begin through praying for one another, (and) learning the joys and struggles each faces.”

Fundraising for development projects is not part of the twinning relationship at the moment: rather, the goal is “for people to come to know their neighbours better even when they live on another continent,” said Bolen.



Participants at an information meeting Feb. 22 in Saskatoon shared information about South Sudan, and ways to deepen relationships by twinning with the diocese of Torit.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Twinning is based on friendship, stressed Myron Rogal of the diocesan Justice and Peace Office. “We can grow in understanding, and build a relationship, even when we have not met face to face,” he said. Technology also permits a greater connection than ever before, he noted.

At an information night Feb. 22 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, Yusif Geri of the Friends of Loa in Saskatoon described his home country, sharing the troubled history of the world’s newest nation, born after a long civil war, and recently plagued by civil war and drought.

Friends of Loa members Anita and Kevin Gooding also shared what they have learned about South Sudan, and the history of the connection between Saskatoon and Loa, including some of the projects supported by the grassroots Saskatoon group.

“We are not a big group, we are a small group, we’ve got about 10 board members, half of us were born and raised here, and half of us are South Sudanese nationals – but what we have in common is the passion we developed for this small little area of Africa,” said Kevin.

“We think we have a lot in common with each other, and we think we can help them and they can help us through a process of twinning.”

Samuel Keilo, a Grade 2 student from Delisle, spoke about his friendship with Fr. Martin Vuni and all he has learned about South Sudan. He and his young cousin Keanna Keilo have shared what they learned with friends, family and neighbours, as they have raised money to help a nursery school in Fr. Martin’s home diocese. “So far with all the donations we have collected, they have been able to build three buildings,” Samuel said. “I help because I can.”

A number of parishes in the diocese of Torit are eager to be matched with parishes in the diocese of Saskatoon, reported Rogal. “If two or three parishes in our diocese were to come forward and establish a relationship, we can then share what they are doing, and hopefully this will bring further growth and enrichment.”

For more information about twinning or how to get involved, contact Myron Rogal at (306) 659-5843 or e-mail: justpeace@saskatoonrccdioocese.com

## Catholic school will sponsor refugee family from Burundi

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A Catholic elementary school in Saskatoon has taken on the challenge of sponsoring a French-speaking refugee family from Burundi, a small African country wracked by civil war.

Students of École St. Matthew School cheered and waved Canadian flags Feb. 4 at the launch of their campaign to raise \$30,000 in support of the private refugee sponsorship of the family – a mother, father and four young children who have fled Burundi and are now living as refugees in Rwanda.

The refugee sponsorship was initiated after a parent at École St. Matthew School heard about the 1000 Schools Challenge issued by a school in Toronto, encouraging schools to sponsor refugees.

“Danielle Schock, one of our parents, heard about the 1000 Schools Challenge from a friend in Alberta, and there was immediate interest and support from our whole school community—staff, students and parents,” said François Rivard, principal at St. Matthew. “It was pretty unanimous that this would be a great way to put our faith into action, a tangible way to share God’s blessings and demonstrate compassion and service to others.”

School representatives approached Christine Zyla, coordinator of the Office of Migration at the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, with the idea. As a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), the diocese has signed an agreement with the federal government that permits it to work with parishes and other groups in the community to privately sponsor refugees.

“At first I was hesitant about it, knowing that school councils and priorities can change from year to year,” Zyla said, noting that sponsorship is a big commitment that can take years to



Principal François Rivard addresses students at École St. Matthew School in Saskatoon during a fundraising launch for the Catholic elementary school’s sponsorship of a refugee family from Burundi.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

complete. “But when I spoke to them, I saw that the parents and the staff here clearly understood the reality of sponsorship: they realize this is not just a one-year project or a six-month project. They have a vision and a plan for how this will unfold as the children grow over time.”

A refugee sponsorship committee—consisting of students, school staff, parents and members of the Catholic School Community Council—was established to oversee planning.

“We expect it will take about 18 to 24 months of fundraising before we can welcome a family into our community,” said Krista Schreiter, chair of the committee. “Our involvement won’t stop there. The family will need support to get used to their new home for about a year after they arrive. We’ll be here to support them every step of the way.”

Zyla is enthusiastic about the commitment being undertaken by

the school, and the awareness and involvement already evident among the students. “This is what Catholic education is about. This is faith in action. This is everything we are called to,” she said. “I just keep thinking: ‘and the little children shall lead them.’”

During the school assembly to launch the fund-raising campaign, students answered questions about the difference between immigrants and refugees (refugees have no choice about leaving their homes, but are fleeing for their lives) and listed some of the circumstances that lead millions around the world to be displaced, such as war and persecution.

Farrukh Syeer of the Saskatoon Open Door Society, a local helping agency which welcomes and assists newcomers in becoming part of Canadian society, spoke to students about refugees and the challenges they face.

“First they suffer in their home country, then they suffer during their journey, then they suffer after their journey,” he said, describing how those fleeing their home and travelling to other countries might be confined to refugee camps, or forced to live illegally, without an identity or rights. “Then, even if they are settled in a place where they are safer, it is not so easy to make a life in a new place that they don’t know much about.”

Syeer encouraged the students to offer friendship to newcomers. “Just treat them as equal and make them feel at home, make them feel at ease and be friends with them.”

Students interviewed about the project were enthusiastic. “I think it’s a good idea,” Grade 8 student Ethan McCulloch said.

“It gives families who are running away for their lives right now a good opportunity of a better home. I know if I were in

their shoes, I’d want help from someone.”

Grade 6 student Tauren Taylor was looking forward to how the school’s sponsorship will unfold. “We have to fundraise, and maybe soon we can communicate with the family – that would be great.”

Grade 8 students Andrea Lau and Matthew Johner noted that they have been learning more about the realities facing refugees as the school launches the sponsorship. “We have been studying a lot about refugees and internally displaced people,” Johner said. “We have got such a great country, and we need to share it with people who don’t.”

Another member of the Grade 8 class, Summer Baier also said she is really excited about the whole idea. “We’ve never done anything this big, and I think it’s really good for us to learn about,” she said. “It might take awhile, but it’s happening.” She added that even though the Grade 8s will be leaving the school in a few months to go on to high school, “the Grade 7s are going to be great next year, and they’re going to carry it on.”

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools board chair Diane Boyko pointed to the good work that the teachers are doing to ensure that students understand the refugee situation, and how the school’s staff, parents and students are committed to helping those in dire need.

“These students are living their faith,” said Boyko, pointing out that Mary, Joseph and Jesus were refugees, forced to flee into Egypt. Our teachers are giving them examples and are asking them to participate... They are going into this with their hearts open.”

“This is one more example of Catholic schools reaching out to others and putting faith into action,” agreed trustee Tim Jelinski.

## Office of Migration:

## Churches respond to refugee crisis by undertaking private sponsorships

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Parishes in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon and other area churches are among those responding to the refugee crisis.

In September 2015, St. Philip Neri parish in Saskatoon welcomed the first Syrian refugee family sponsored through the diocese, and Holy Spirit parish has also enthusiastically embraced sponsorship of another Syrian family (a mother, father and two daughters) who arrived Dec. 10.

In addition, Saints Peter and Paul and Dormition of our Mother of God Ukrainian Catholic parishes welcomed a young man from Maa'loula, Syria at the end of February 2016. His brother and his brother's wife are expected to arrive soon as part of the same sponsorship.

## Diocesan role as SAH

These are only three of the recent cases of private sponsorship of refugees from Syria – as well as from other countries in crisis – that have involved the Office of Migration in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, which is a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) through an arrangement with the federal government.

With funding from Holy Spirit Parish in Saskatoon, the diocesan Office of Migration continues to operate at the Catholic Pastoral Centre.

Coordinator Christine Zyla oversees the diocese's role as a SAH, working with parishes, organizations and family members who wish to privately sponsor refugees from Syria and elsewhere – a commitment that includes covering costs associated with resettlement, and providing a



**Christine Zyla is coordinator of the Office of Migration in the diocese of Saskatoon.** - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

welcoming community of support for the newcomers.

Besides permitting such private sponsorships through SAHs, Canada also welcomes government-sponsored refugees – including those who have been brought in recently as part of a government promise to welcome some 25,000 fleeing violence and persecution in Syria.

About 480 of those government-sponsored refugees from Syria have come to Saskatoon. They are being assisted by a variety of helping agencies, with funding by the federal government, rather than by private sponsors, such as parishes and community groups.

## Sponsoring churches

Local churches currently undertaking private refugee sponsorship (under the diocese's role as SAH) include Holy Spirit, St. Philip Neri, Our Lady of Lourdes, St. Augustine, St. Francis, St. Patrick and Holy Family, as well as Holy

Resurrection Orthodox, Holy Trinity Ukrainian Orthodox, St. Vincent of Lerins Orthodox, and Sts. Peter and Paul and Dormition Ukrainian Catholic churches.

St. Thomas More College is also involved in a new sponsorship this year.

St. Anne parish, Sts-Martyrs-Canadiens Francophone parish, and Resurrection Lutheran Church are working ecumenically on a sponsorship through the diocesan SAH. As well, three downtown churches – St. Andrew's Presbyterian, Third Avenue United and Knox United – are joining together to sponsor a family from Syria.

Another ecumenical sponsorship involves St. Philip Neri Catholic Parish, McClure United Church, Nutana Park Mennonite Church, and People of Praise joining together to sponsor a family of six that has fled from Iraq.

The need is great and the stories can be heartbreaking, says Zyla.

## Families stuck in Iraq

"Right now, two other Syrian families (that are designated for private sponsorship in the diocese) are hunkered down in Northern Iraq," she said. The situation there is dire.

"We are worried about them; family members are worried about them. We are just trying to keep in touch," Zyla expressed appreciation for the support and communication coming from government officials at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada in recent weeks.

One of the two families trapped in Northern Iraq started out as a family-linked sponsorship



## Our Lady of Lourdes refugee event

**Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Saskatoon held a chili supper in January to raise funds for the parish refugee committee. The evening included a chili cook off, draws, prizes, entertainment and information about sponsorship and the situation facing refugees. Speakers included parishioners Mesmer Mesmer, and Kiyara and Henok Tesfamikael (left to right), who all came to Canada as refugees from Eritrea, where government persecution is rampant.**

- Photo by Kiply Lukan Yaworski

shared by Our Lady of Lourdes and a family member in Saskatoon. The family member had to move from Saskatoon, turning what was planned as a co-sponsored, shared-cost type of sponsorship into a full parish sponsorship for this family of six.

"Since Our Lady of Lourdes parish already has several other sponsorships pending, it was felt that finding a different parish to sponsor the large family would be prudent," said Zyla.

"Thankfully, Holy Family parish embraced the opportunity and is now preparing to welcome the family once the application process and all necessary screenings have been completed."

The other Syrian family waiting in Northern Iraq is being co-sponsored by Holy Spirit and a childhood friend of the family who now lives here.

"That friend who is working with Holy Spirit in co-sponsoring this young couple has in the meantime been very active in helping the parish with translation, and with helping other new families get settled in," noted Zyla.

"This is what happens – this is the beauty of private sponsor-

ship – the relationships that develop."

St. Philip Neri parish also recently welcomed a long-awaited family of seven from Eritrea, coming by way of Sudan, co-sponsored with a family member, Zyla reported, noting the application was first initiated in 2011.

At times, such long delays mean that a sponsorship falls through. However, there are also other "miracle stories" of sponsorships working out in the face of seemingly impossible circumstances. (*see related article, below*).

Zyla marvels at the dedication and generosity of people who want to make a difference in the lives of suffering people around the world. She noted that among those coming forward to ask about sponsorship are some individuals and groups without any affiliation to a parish, or church.

**For more information about refugee sponsorship,** contact Christine Zyla at the diocesan Office of Migration at the Catholic Pastoral Centre in Saskatoon or e-mail her at: [migration@saskatoonrcdiocese.com](mailto:migration@saskatoonrcdiocese.com)

## Syrian refugees connect with diocesan office – sponsorships unfold

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

In a few, rare cases, refugee sponsorship by church groups in Saskatoon have unfolded over many months after an initial, exploratory e-mail from desperate refugees.

One Syrian refugee who had fled with family members to Lebanon found the diocesan Office of Migration online, and with a good command of English, was able to describe his situation in an exploratory email to office coordinator Christine Zyla.

"He explained that he and his family were from Maa'loula, which is the southwest corner of Syria, and they had fled because ISIS had come in and destroyed their farm," Zyla related. "He didn't know if we would be able to help; he was just taking a leap of faith."

Zyla sent a message expressing regret for all the family had suffered, and relief that they were living safely in Lebanon. She explained that she did not know if her office could help them, but would see what she could do.

"He was so happy that I even replied," she said. "He e-mailed me some pictures of what Maa'loula looked like, and pictures of their daily life before it was all destroyed. I come from a farming background: when he

said it was a farm, and he said that the farm had been destroyed, it really tugged at me and who I am."

In the months that followed, they continued to stay in touch via e-mail. "I tried to encourage them," Zyla said, noting the high interest in sponsorship right now, and how new people and groups have been coming forward in recent months to help.

After hearing an interview on CBC radio with an Anglican priest who had been born in Syria and served in Maa'loula, and learning more about the disappearing Aramaic dialect in the area – a dialect that Jesus himself spoke – their email conversations deepened, and Zyla learned more about the family and their faith.

"He told me they are Melkite Christians (a Byzantine rite of the Catholic Church). Just as I was beginning to clue into this connection, one of the parishioners of Dormition Ukrainian Catholic parish (Byzantine rite) in Saskatoon came in to my office and said, 'I really feel our parish should be doing something about refugees: I really feel that we should be sponsoring a Syrian family.'"

Zyla pulled out the file of the family living in Lebanon. As a result, Dormition

parish is now partnering with Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic parish in Saskatoon to sponsor one of the older brothers and his wife, and a younger 18-year-old brother. The younger brother arrived in Saskatoon at the end of February 2016, and the couple is expected soon.

The brother who initiated the e-mail correspondence won't be part of this sponsorship – he is scheduled for mandatory military service, and the family together decided it was best if the two other brothers came to Canada.

"But it all started with a leap of faith on this young man's part, as he sent that e-mail," said Zyla. "I'm flabbergasted by what God can do if we just make the smallest room."

Another e-mail connection with a Syrian family that fled to Saudi Arabia – a father, mother and two young boys – has led to a sponsorship in Saskatoon by three Christian churches that approached the diocese seeking the support of a local SAH.

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Third Avenue United Church, and Knox United Church are together going to sponsor the family, whose circumstances have been steadily deteriorating since the

family first made contact with the diocesan Office of Migration through another random e-mail. "I just felt like I needed to keep the conversation going, that God had a plan," said Zyla.

"I could see how things were slowly getting worse for this family. Their resources were dwindling. The two little boys were no longer allowed to attend school. The wife couldn't work or even go outside the home unaccompanied by a man under Saudi law," she described, adding that their permission to stay in Saudi Arabia was coming up for review in March and there was a real fear that the family would have had to leave Saudi Arabia, with no idea where they could go.

With the three Saskatoon churches willing to take on this private sponsorship, however, the forms have been filled out in record time, and the family has been issued a file number, and can safely stay in Saudi Arabia until the process of getting to Canada is complete.

"I know we can't help the millions, but who only knows how many lives will be impacted by this family, because they have been given a chance?" said Zyla.

"That ripple effect is God's work, and we have a tiny part in it."

## Prayers held for La Loche in wake of tragedy

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A Saskatoon prayer service Feb. 2, 2016 at St. John Anglican Cathedral brought together representatives of different faiths and backgrounds seeking peace and healing for the community in the wake of a shooting in La Loche, Saskatchewan that left four dead and seven injured.

The grandmother of one of those wounded in the Jan. 22 shooting was in attendance at the city prayer service for the people of La Loche. She spoke about her granddaughter, who is still in hospital, reporting that her condition is gradually improving, and that she opened her eyes for the first time that day.

“All the people praying and supporting us and loving us – we return all of that to you,” she said, adding that in spite of what has happened in her community, she will always be a proud Dene woman.

Many – including her own family – have been hurt by trauma and violence over the years, she added. “We haven’t broken down... because of prayers and the good Lord standing by us and watching over us.”

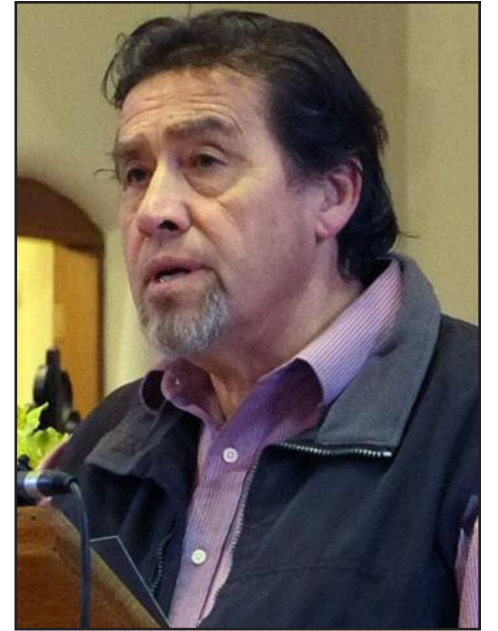
Rev. Scott Pittendrigh, dean and rector of St. John’s Cathedral, said that the events in La Loche “have shaken us all,” explaining that the prayer service was being held to honour those who died and to offer support and prayers for healing and strength to those who survived.

“We are also gathered to pray for the whole community of La Loche and for Indigenous communities across Canada, and for all communities where poverty and the lack of opportunity have such devastating consequences in people’s lives,” added Pittendrigh.

“Separately we received the news of these events and separately the victims



Saskatoon residents gathered at St. John Anglican Cathedral to pray after a shooting in the northern community of La Loche.  
- Photos by Kiply Yaworski



Harry Lafond, Executive Director, Office of the Treaty Commissioner

fell.” Pittendrigh said. “Together we will give voice to our lament – for silence will not heal us, nor will our silence lead to a renewed community. Together now we are taking a step to heal and give testimony to our desire for a healed community and a better world.”

Harry Lafond, executive director of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, stressed that the need for healing goes beyond the community of La Loche. “We can’t allow La Loche to become a memory only in La Loche – it is our memory, it is a part of our own story. As we go forward, and as healing takes hold, it is not only La Loche that needs to heal, but all of us, because we are intended to be one large community.”

Events such as the 1906 agreement between the Dene people and the Crown to enter into a unique relationship under Treaty 10 “demonstrate our oneness and

our desire to be together,” Lafond noted. “But even in 1906 there was a sense that things could go wrong.”

The recent recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) offer a way to move forward, Lafond pointed out. “It offers a toolkit so that we can begin to initiate change in our own hearts, because that’s where it all has to begin – and from there, to our families and our communities, to Saskatchewan and Canada.”

Violence – such as that experienced in La Loche – demonstrates that change is absolutely necessary, he stressed.

“We can’t continue to live the way we are living. The status quo is not satisfactory. Reconciliation points us to a place where we need to look more closely. We need to look at our assumptions and our attitudes toward each other,” Lafond said.

“We have lots to reflect on, we have

much to change. That change won’t happen unless we allow it to emerge from our hearts, and to open our eyes, and see each other for what we are: people intended to live together in harmony.”

Lafond concluded: “Let’s walk away from this time together and ensure that La Loche is as much our story as it is for the people of that community. It is our story; allow that story to plant a seed of change in our hearts.”

The service continued with readings from sacred texts, hymns and prayers, and the lighting of tapers in the darkened cathedral. Prayers were led by Dr. Mateen Raazi of the Islamic Association of Saskatchewan and Rev. Amanda Currie of St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church. “Song of Mourn” and “The Rising Song” were presented by drummer and singer Bluejay Linklater. A collection was taken for La Loche Community School.

## Micah on Campus participates in outreach at Regional Psychiatric Centre

By LISA MERCIER

Restorative justice aids in the overall well-being and emotional development of both program recipients and volunteers. This semester, students from various departments and disciplines of the University of Saskatchewan campus will have the opportunity to interact with residents at the Regional Psychiatric Centre in Saskatoon.

With groups such as Micah on Campus, and Mennonite Central Committee Saskatchewan on Campus, students from the university community will be coming together and participating in outreach to the Regional Psychiatric Centre. At a planned coffee house, they will be sharing talents and engaging in conversation with the RPC residents.



Students involved in Micah on Campus.  
- Photo by Lisa Mercier

Community involvement is important for students; it allows them to explore the city beyond the confines of the university campus, while gaining new skills and taking part in an event that depends on their involvement. Such involvement allows students to find new passions and interests

that extend into the “real world.”

Students feel good about participating in their community, and also gain a new understanding of themselves.

If Saskatoon is to be a more egalitarian, open and respectful city moving forward, it will be the responsibility of today’s students

to lead the charge toward such a reality. Events such as the coffee house help to create this sense of responsibility.

Students can get caught up in the busy exam season that comes along every April. The planned coffee house was scheduled within the exam season, but this was a deliberate choice. The hope is that it will allow students to take a break from studying to take part in a rewarding experience that provides inspiration, positive influence, and laughter to the residents at the RPC.

One of the most important aspects of the planned outreach to the RPC is that it promotes active community involvement among students.

The Micah Mission is one of many restorative justice groups located in the greater Saskatoon

area.

The Micah Mission unites people, creating a safe environment where they can come together and find healing, enjoy themselves, and hopefully learn something new in the process. The group hosts a variety of events and offers many opportunities throughout the year for people to engage with men and women living at the RPC and those served by Micah Mission elsewhere in the city.

In conjunction with similar events in the winter and summer, the planned coffee house allows students to build strong relationships and friendships among themselves as well as with RPC residents.

For more information, please follow “Micah on Campus” on Facebook.



Armella Sonntag, provincial animator for Development and Peace, with solidarity visitor Yuli Kusworo, an architect from Indonesia. Kusworo spoke March 3 at Holy Spirit parish in Saskatoon – the first stop on a speaking tour organized during Lent by Development and Peace.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

## Building community as well as housing

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Development and Peace partner organization Arkomjogja builds housing for the urban poor in disaster-prone areas of the world in a grassroots way that also builds a spirit of community.

Coordinator and award-winning architect Yuli Kusworo of Indonesia was in Saskatchewan recently, describing the work of Arkomjogja, and how it is addressing issues of poverty, inequality and climate change.

The Development and Peace solidarity visitor spoke in several locations across Saskatchewan from March 3-13, including Holy Spirit and St. Mary parishes in Saskatoon and St. Peter’s Abbey in Muenster, with presentations also held in Yorkton, Regina and Swift Current, Kindersley,

North Battleford and Rosthern.

In responding to housing needs in the wake of disaster or in the midst of poverty, the Arkomjogja team works closely with the people they are serving, involving them in all stages in a process of consultation and empowerment.

“We are not only building physical things,” Kusworo said, but are also building community, social cohesion, and a self-help spirit.

The team uses local knowledge and materials, and a cooperative and consultative process of community mapping, community planning and community implementation. “Houses are built by the community together,” said Kusworo. This is more cost effective as well as building community spirit and self-reliance.

# Saskatoon parish benefits from SES energy conservation audit

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

When it comes to energy conservation and cost savings, churches in the Saskatoon area can benefit from a program available to non-profit organizations through the Saskatchewan Environmental Society.

Through the program sponsored by Affinity Credit Union, non-profit organizations can get control of their energy costs – including electricity, gas, and water — and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing their energy consumption.

The SES “Energy Conservation for Non-Profits Program” includes a building assessment, and a close look at energy and water use, says Angie Bugg, SES Energy Conservation Coordinator.

The Parish Pastoral Council of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Saskatoon recently applied for the program. “It was well worth it,” said council chair Jim Moorhead. Several initiatives recommended in the report have already been implemented and others, including the

replacement of three inefficient 1960s furnaces with high efficient furnaces next month, are expected to realize significant savings to the parish, he said.

“Basically, we do a ‘walk through’ assessment,” Bugg said of the process. Data from utility bills, showing use and patterns, is examined carefully. “After going through that data, we will take a walk through the whole building, looking at windows, furnaces, water heaters.”

St. Francis was an interesting building because the space includes a number of areas, each used differently – there is the sanctuary that has intermittent use, an office space that has regular hours, as well as an attached residence, Bugg noted.

Taking even such simple steps as using programmable thermostats, caulking windows, and updating weather-stripping can have a significant impact on energy use.

Since the program started some 16 years ago, assessments have been conducted on some 59 buildings, identifying savings “averaging \$6,000/year per building, for a



Members of the Parish Pastoral Council in the sanctuary at St. Francis Xavier in Saskatoon. - Photo by Tim Yaworski

total potential greenhouse gas saving of almost three million kg CO2/year,” reports the SES website. Affinity Credit Union sponsors the program for non-profit groups as a way to support community development – but there is a waiting list for those interested in applying, notes Bugg.

Congregations can also do their own analysis of energy use, she said. The website at <http://greeningsacredspaces.net> has a resource for conducting an energy audit.

Ideas for cutting energy and water use are also highlighted on the SES website at: <http://environmentalsociety.ca>

Common sense is also part of good stewardship, with a basic recommendation being: “When you buy something, try and buy the most energy-efficient one you can find – and when you are not using it, turn it off,” summarized Bugg, adding: “Any congregation can go hunting for things and start asking questions.”

## STM conference reflects on Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment



Dr. Michael Duggan  
- Photo by G. Rompré

By GERTRUDE ROMPRÉ  
DIRECTOR OF MISSION AND  
MINISTRY, STM COLLEGE

How do we transform our consciousness to care for our common home?

Dr. Michael Duggan explored this question at the *Beyond Silos: Prairie Views on Caring for our Common Home* conference held March 11-12 at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.

Duggan is a professor of Religious Studies and holds the CWL Chair for Catholic Studies at St. Mary’s University in Calgary. He is also a proud STM alumnus.

The *Beyond Silos* conference

was designed to bring together speakers from diverse backgrounds to reflect on Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment: *Laudato Si’*.

Three themes from the encyclical were discussed: 1) Can technology save us? 2) How do we educate to care for our common home? 3) What does an ecology of daily life look like?

Speakers from different academic, cultural and religious perspectives modeled the type of dialogue called for by Pope Francis. Profound insights emerged in the process.

Dr. Philip Loring, from the U

of S School of Environment and Sustainability, for example, reminded participants that technology alone is not adequate to respond to the needs of the planet. He further agreed with Pope Francis’ assessment that environmental problems are intimately linked with social inequality and injustice.

Activist Erica Lee made the link between the environmental crisis and colonial violence, which continues today.

Dr. Michael Poellet drew parallels between *Laudato Si’* and the thought of Naomi Klein, while Dr. MJ Barrett challenged listeners

to question those discourses that keep us from connecting to the earth.

Dr. Nettie Wiebe wove together insights from her identity as woman, farmer, Mennonite and ethicist, and challenged listeners to recognize the regenerative force of women.

Other speakers throughout the weekend included Dr. Chris Hrynkow, Janelle Delorme, Dr. Neil Alexander, Michael Carten and Sr. Judy Schachtel, SMS.

The *Beyond Silos* conference was sponsored by the Dubé Chair for Catholic Studies at St. Thomas More College.

## Ecumenical workshop considers how to change to “Care for Our Common Home”

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

An ecumenical workshop held Oct. 23-24, 2015 in Saskatoon opened with a public lecture providing an overview of Pope Francis’ encyclical on care of the earth (*Laudato Si’*) and a look at Saskatchewan’s role in global climate change.

Entitled “*Changing to Care*

for Our Common Home,” the workshop held at St. Thomas More College and at Queen’s House, offered “a look at the practical, scientific, and theological callings of *Laudato Si’* for all people,” said organizer Myron Rogal of the diocese’s Justice and Peace Office.

The event was also supported

by Churches for Environmental Action, St. Thomas More College, Development and Peace, Queen’s House, and Knights of Columbus Council 10580.

Speakers at the opening lecture were Bishop Donald Bolen and Peter Prebble, director of environmental policy for Saskatchewan Environmental Society.

Reflecting on Pope Francis’ message in *Laudato Si’*, Bolen summarized that what is needed is a universal solidarity, recognizing our shared responsibility for others and for the world: “This includes a responsibility towards future generations, as the environment ‘is on loan to each generation, which must then hand it on to the next’ (*Laudato Si’* 159).”

“Do we love our children and grandchildren, and their descendants, enough to value their future over our dysfunctional global systems and current ways of relating with the environment?”

Caring for God’s creation is a key aspect of Christian faith, added Bolen.

“The God revealed in Jesus Christ also speaks to us through the natural world. Furthermore, written into creation and the created order is the challenge to live meaningfully together on this planet; God has given us this challenge,” he said, before again quoting *Laudato Si’*: “Everything is interconnected, and... genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others.”

In his lecture, Prebble provided an overview of global climate change, using *Laudato Si’* as the framework for walking through a litany of research, statistics and scientific reports

Justice & Peace  
is supported by



showing the severity of the problem and the need for urgent action, as well as examining Saskatchewan’s role in the issue.

“I think that we need to begin to say as a community that we are prepared to make some sacrifice while protecting those that are low income in our province, and that we are prepared to make this transition knowing at the end of the day there will be significant economic growth to come once the transition period is done,” Prebble said. “I don’t think the transition period will be easy in Saskatchewan. But I think that the transition period is a moral imperative.”

The workshop continued the next day at Queen’s House, with presentations by Dr. Cristina Vanin of St. Jerome’s College; by Hugh Wood, a University of Saskatchewan Physicist; and by Armella Sonntag, provincial animator of Development and Peace.

Find the full news article about the Oct. 23 lecture online: [www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news](http://www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news)



Climate concern

Hundreds of people of all ages walked, cycled and pushed baby strollers in a Saskatoon demonstration Nov. 29, one of many public events around the world calling for action on the environment on the eve of an international gathering on climate change being held Nov. 30-Dec. 11 in France. The 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change involved leaders from around the world discussing an international agreement on climate change, with a goal to keep global warming below two degrees centigrade by limiting greenhouse gas emissions. The Saskatoon march from Kiwanis Park across the Broadway Bridge to Oskayak high school concluded with presentations by a number of speakers representing a range of concerned environmental, justice, and faith groups.

- Photo by Tim Yaworski

# L'Arche Saskatoon opens second home; expands workshop program

By DARLENE POLACHIC

Eight years after its first home opened in Saskatoon, L'Arche Saskatoon is preparing to welcome residents to its second home.

L'Arche serves individuals with high-needs disabilities, says director Wyndham Thiessen. "Each home has four residents plus four live-in assistants. Our homes follow the model of the L'Arche communities first established in France by Jean Vanier where assistants live in the same house as the individuals they assist."

Live-in assistants are often international visitors. L'Arche Saskatoon presently has salaried assistants from Jamaica, Korea, Germany, Estonia, France, and Canada.

The multi-bedroom dwelling L'Arche Saskatoon recently acquired is on Christopher Lane, a block away from the first house.

Some renovations still need to be done, including converting the double attached front garage into two accessible bedrooms and a bathroom. "We have two future residents who are in wheelchairs."

The house is part of a province-wide initiative to provide new homes for individuals currently living in the Valley View institution near Moose Jaw. Thiessen notes that

"180 people with disabilities live there, and it is a priority of the government to relocate them all. Two of the people coming to our second L'Arche house are coming from Valley View."

Providing quality activities for L'Arche residents is an on-going priority. A recent innovation is the establishment of a workshop program that enables group members to be involved with healthy, productive activities. The program is partly social, but also aims to fulfil the motto of "Making art, making friends, making peace."

Thanks to funding from the Ministry of Social Services, the program has moved from part-time to full-time status, and a grant from the Kinsmen Foundation helped further by providing for the purchase of a wheelchair accessible van.

The home base for the workshop program is Zion Lutheran Church. Thiessen says group members go out in the morning, do something fun in the city – "maybe go for coffee, or go for a walk" – then return to the church for lunch and some creative activity.

Volunteers assist with the activities. One is a weaver who taught the group to make bookmarks and Christmas cards. They've also done some pottery

and cardmaking.

"We've started selling the crafted items," Thiessen says. "The goal is to slowly grow the workshop program over time and possibly turn it into a paying industry."

"The workshop project seems to work well for our people. Some of them have tried other work placements, but prefer this. It's more relaxed and they're involved in meaningful activities. It's also an opportunity to be with other people and build relationships."

The workshop program runs Monday to Friday. L'Arche is always looking for volunteers to help, or to give instruction in a particular activity or craft.

"Variety is very important for our people," Thiessen says. "Doing different things prevents boredom. They have a range of abilities and skills. A couple are able to take the bus to the workshop program. Others have higher needs. It's a challenge to figure out ways everyone can participate and be involved."

The L'Arche community includes a group called Friends of L'Arche which meets the third Wednesday of every month in Grace-Westminster Hall. Some 50-60 people share pizza and salads and enjoy an activity of some sort from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.

"We meet, eat, play drama



Joshua Smith (left) and Cody Stack do some baking at L'Arche Saskatoon, which is preparing to welcome residents to a second home in the city.

- Photo submitted by L'Arche Saskatoon.

games or bingo, or enjoy guest performers or musicians," Thiessen says. "It's a social time and a support system for like-minded people. . . . I know parents who have built strong friendships there. And we've seen people who were terribly shy in the beginning now comfortable coming to a microphone and sharing what's going on in their life."

L'Arche also holds a Prayer Night at Christopher House, 503 Christopher Lane, Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. Thiessen says everyone is welcome. Prayer Night includes a time of prayer, then tea and cookies.

For information about L'Arche Saskatoon call (306) 262-7243 or e-mail Thiessen at: wthiessen@larchesaskatoon.org

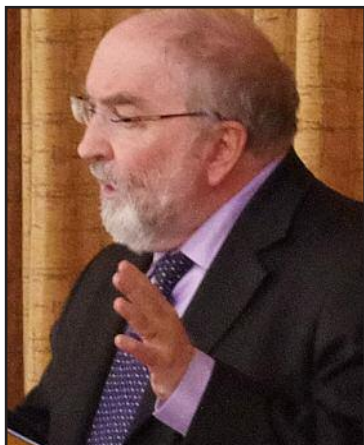
## STM lecture explores friendship between Jean Vanier, Nouwen

By JACQUIE BERG, STM

"Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen: the great friendship" was presented March 10 by guest lecturer Dr. Michael Higgins at St. Thomas More College (STM) in Saskatoon.

"The friendship of Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen is one of the key spiritual friendships of the last century. The philosopher and the psychologist had much in common; they shared a ministry of tenderness with the disabled; they advocated relentlessly for the curative and transformative power of genuine community; they stood for the perduring witness of Christian humanism," said Higgins.

Higgins shared with the STM audience an exploration of this friendship and how, through L'Arche relationships, the two discovered an enlightening path to holiness.



Dr. Michael Higgins spoke March 10 at St. Thomas More College about Jean Vanier and Henri Nouwen.

- Photo by Jacquie Berg

Higgins is an author from Toronto, a Vatican affairs specialist for the Globe and Mail and CTV Network, Catholic educator, CBC radio documentarian, scholar, and administrator.



### Trinity Manor dedication

Bishops Albert Thévenot, Donald Bolen and Gerald Wiesner, OMI, (l-r) anoint the altar during a blessing and dedication for the chapel at Trinity Manor at Stonebridge, a faith-based retirement and assisted living residence in southeast Saskatoon. Built by Emmanuel Care – formerly known as Catholic Health Ministry of Saskatchewan – Trinity Manor offers an "aging in place" model of care, permitting residents to transition from independent living to assisted care as their needs change. It is adjacent to Samaritan Place, a long-term health care facility also administered by Emmanuel Care on behalf of Saskatchewan's bishops. During the Nov. 20 chapel dedication, Bolen also blessed stained glass artworks by Canadian artist Sarah Hall placed at the entrance of both the Trinity Manor and Samaritan Place chapels in memory of brothers Urban and Rod Donlevy, in recognition of their contributions to Catholic health care.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

## Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide talk May 25

"It's Time to Talk... Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide," with facilitator Mary Deutscher, will be held 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, May 25 at Forest Grove Community Church, 502 Webster Street, Saskatoon.

Everyone is welcome to this free public session, sponsored by the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS).

The Christian teachings on euthanasia are clear - we are not to kill -- but it is complicated to argue against euthanasia in a secular society.

This presentation will explore the danger euthanasia and assisted suicide pose to all Canadians, providing participants with the necessary tools to engage in this discussion. Deepen your understanding of the political situation in Canada,

share your stories and questions, and learn more about how you can approach suffering with the compassion of Christ.

Guest speaker Mary Deutscher is a member of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon's Justice and Peace Commission, and is a board member for CHAS. She holds an M.A. in Public Ethics (St. Paul University, Ottawa), a BA in Philosophy (St. Thomas More College, U of S), a BSc in Biology (U of S), and is currently pursuing her PhD in Public Policy at the University of Saskatchewan. Mary has served as a Roman Catholic Chaplain at Pasqua Hospital in Regina (2010-2013). She also writes a monthly column for *Prairie Messenger* entitled "Building a Culture of Life."

## March For Life Saskatoon (Mother's Day Walk)

Sunday, May 8, 2:30-3:30 p.m.

Takes place along College Drive in Saskatoon  
Signs are provided; Held rain or shine

2:30 p.m. Gathering along College Drive with opening song  
2:35 p.m. Focus talk - Why are we here? (Pure Witness Ministry)  
2:45 p.m. March/Walk along College Drive  
3:15 p.m. Closing talk - Where are we with Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia in Canada and what can/should we do?  
3:30 p.m. Socialization and refreshments.

For more information, contact Denise at 306-249-2764.

# St. Peter's at Muenster ready for next century

BY FR. PAUL PAPROSKI, OSB

The guest book at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, Muenster, is filled with litanies of praise, ranging from "beautiful" and "gorgeous" to "breathtaking." The worship space will be expressing the majesty of God for many years to come, thanks to renovations that came to a completion in October 2015.

Restoration of the church began in 2008 to commemorate its centennial in 2010.

The work, covering seven years and costing \$300,000, was meaningful for many families who sponsored stained-glass windows. Twenty-eight new stained-glass windows now edify the church.

St. Peter's parish is home to 160 families and is a designated historical site.

The church is often referred to as a cathedral because it was the ceremonial church of the abbot in the former St. Peter's Abbey. The abbacy has its origins in St. Peter's Colony, settled in 1903 by Benedictines and second-generation German-Catholics. The colony was given the status of an Abbey in 1921, in which the abbot of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster, was designated as the area's spiritual leader. In 1998, the Abbey was absorbed into the diocese of Saskatoon.

St. Peter's Church was constructed in 1910 of a Romanesque design and seats 480. It announces its presence with two 70-foot towers which rise above a building measuring 120 feet long, 56.5 feet wide and 35 feet high. The inside sanctuary is covered in 80 life-sized frescos, completed in 1919 by Count Berthold Von Imhoff, a German artist who wanted to bring a touch of Europe to the heart of Saskatchewan.

The paintings are edified by stained-glass windows and beautiful statuary.

The altar sits on a raised fir hardwood floor in the apse which encircles it with the scene of a "heavenly court" above and congregations of saints below.

The aisle leading to the front is framed by pillars which support Romanesque arches. The two side aisles are overshadowed by large, impressive Stations of the Cross. A protruding balcony at the back provides a bird's-eye view of the worship space below. New burgundy carpet in the sanctuary blends with the dark brown pews and wood finishing.

Renovations were carried out to both improve the building and ensure that it continues to serve families in the next



Ralph Britz was the project supervisor for the renovation at St. Peter's Cathedral in Muenster. - Photo by Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB

century, according to Ralph Britz, 82, of Muenster. The restoration involved strengthening the building foundation, upgrading the exterior, refurbishing the interior ceilings and walls and installing four new furnaces, said Britz, project supervisor.

The reconstruction got underway in 2008 with improvements to the exterior foundation that was originally rock and limestone. Loose mortar and rocks were removed and replaced with mortar, and the remaining stones were coated with cement.

In the spring of 2009, new windows, doors and outside siding were installed, as well as new outside steps. Five windows that had leakage problems were removed from each of the church towers and sealed in. Some improvements were made to the roof to correct water seepage. The exterior is now maintenance free, Britz remarked.

Work resumed on the church sanctuary in the fall of 2009 and it continued from October to May, each year, until 2012.

The renovations affected every inch of space.

"We did many, many feet of taping and crack filling; removing old plaster and filling in with gyproc and plaster. The ceilings and walls were taped and cracks were filled in to look like heavy populated road maps," he said. Previous to beginning

the repairs, the (parchment) frescos were removed from the walls and ceiling. Lines were traced behind the frescos to mark their exact location.

One of the challenges of the renovations was working on scaffolding which rose from 20 feet in the side aisles to 35 feet in the nave.

"Climbing up the scaffolding was not too bad. We all started out with the two side aisles. The scaffolding in the aisles got us used to the feeling of movements and some height. The work in the aisles prepared us for the higher areas in the middle of the sanctuary. The higher the scaffolding the more sensitive you are to movement and you actually felt yourself moving with the scaffolding, but your arms and head stayed quite still for the detailed work. In time we were used to it," he remarked.

A major impetus behind the success of Britz's leadership is his background in painting and floor installation, and his previous role in upgrading St. Peter's Church. He was the supervisor of restoration projects at the parish on two previous occasions.

The first restoration took place in 1971 and was extensive, he remarked. It took about six months to complete. All the loose plaster in the sanctuary was removed and replaced with about 1,200 lbs. of plaster.

The canvass paintings were cleaned and varnished to make it possible to wash them in the future. The inside of the sanctuary was re-painted using more than 30 varieties of paint colors, he remarked.

The second refurbishing took place in 1984, following a windstorm that caused damage to the outside building and inside sanctuary from water leakage.

The walls were stripped of plaster and covered with one-half inch gyproc and then painted. New R24 insulation replaced the original lathe shaving and wool filling.

Five painters were involved in the restoration that took about six months, he said. Leakage continued to be a problem on the roof, however, and in 1993-94, the asphalt shingles were replaced with green metal sheeting.

The final restoration, this year, had a unique challenge, remembers Britz, since it was the first to involve tradesmen who did not speak English. Two carpenters from Quebec installed the outside siding and they spoke only French. Britz had to be creative to communicate with them.

"The first thing they said was, 'Speak no English.' I tried to explain what to do using a pencil and paper along with my arm motion. ... Things went better as time went on. At the end we had no more problems," he said.

"During the renovations some real good ladies would bring them meals and lunch. One day my wife made a roast beef with mashed potatoes, gravy and fixing. I gave them each a big spoonful of hot horseradish I made. The next day I asked how it was. Well, in French motions they started to spit and say, 'Hot, hot, hot.' They showed motions for scraping it out of the mouth and onto the ground. They also had a dog that tasted the stuff and it sneezed and snorted its nose in the ground, (and was) drinking water for two hours. They said this all while laughing with a smile on their faces. They were really nice guys and even with the language barrier I had a good time with them."

Britz said he is very grateful to everyone who supported the renovations. He expressed thanks to the people who helped him paint the sanctuary: Roger Hofmann, Ralph Hofmann and Glenda Rueve. The fundraising committee did such a good job in raising funds that the parish did not have to borrow any money, he remarked.

## Stained-glass windows honour pioneers

BY PAUL PAPROSKI, OSB

St. Peter's Parish, Muenster has an addition that gives the parish a sense of completion. Twenty-eight new stained glass windows have been added to the church, which commemorate pioneer families and the religious who once served them.

The windows were installed during the renovations of the church, Christy Waldner said Nov. 22 at the St. Peter's Parish celebration in recognition of the completion of renovations and installation of the stained-glass windows.

The church is an historical building that was built in 1910 and it is famous for its 80 life-sized frescos, painted in 1919 by Count Berthold Von Imhoff, an artist originally from Germany. The sanctuary honours the saints, and now they are joined by the pioneers and the Ursulines, Franciscans (Elizabethans) and Benedictines, said Waldner, a member of the St. Peter's Parish Fundraising Committee.

The large stained-glass windows in the lower sanctuary incorporate a

landscape theme which complements the rural district. The theme was chosen after consultation with Elaina Adams of Prairie Glass, Humboldt who designed the windows and installed them.

"Elaina once mentioned to us that she thought her strong point was choosing glass for the windows. I would agree with her. Look closely at the windows and the colours and textures and swirls of the glass, and the detail the glass itself lends to the image or shape it is representing," Waldner remarked.

Families were given the opportunity to choose religious symbols and customize their windows with natural landscapes familiar to them. Window designs incorporate local history, which gives a glimpse into the past and offers thanks for God's abundant blessings.

The two choir loft windows – The Good Shepherd and Our Lady of Guadalupe – emphasize themes of colour, she said.

The upper windows, in the main body of the church, have symbols that are meaningful to their sponsors. The semi-circle window above the back door of the church displays the keys of St. Peter. The four windows in the sacristy incorporate four seasons. A Bible verse is displayed on the bottom of each.

The project at St. Peter's Parish was successful because of the tremendous support of the parishioners who gave generously of their time and money, said Ralph Britz, project supervisor.

Among some 150 attending the celebration Nov. 22 were: Elaina Adams, Fr. Daniel Muyres, OSB, pastor during the renovations; Louise Sarauer of Saskatoon (an original member of the funding-raising committee) and two other committee members, Glenda Rueve and Teresa Wassermann.

The evening concluded with the blessing of the windows, tours of the parish, dessert and fellowship.

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**ST. PAUL'S  
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A Revive retreat March 12 was the first event to be held in new worship space under construction at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Martensville.  
- Photos by Kiply Yaworski



Fr. Patrick Ampani beamed with joy as he welcomed Revive retreat participants into the newly-constructed sanctuary of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Martensville March 12.

## Revive retreat held as Martensville parish continues mission to provide a prayerful and personal encounter with Jesus Christ

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

“Encounter, Empower, Evangelize” is the new mission statement being lived out at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Martensville.

The three words echo through life in the suburban Catholic parish these days.

Presently in the process of completing a major renovation and expansion of its church building, the IHMP community recently held its first event in the new space: “Revive,” a retreat focused on getting to know God in a deeper, more personal way.

The one-day Lenten Revive retreat is only the latest undertaking in a parish revitalization that includes a range of initiatives and new directives sparked after several parishioners and pastor Fr. Patrick Ampani attended an Amazing Parish conference in Denver, Colorado in the summer of 2015.

“Upon our return from the conference, we felt convicted to really put all our efforts into making our parish an evangelistic hub, a place where people would feel drawn to come to know Christ in a deeper way,” explained parishioner Christy Dupuis.

“We drafted a mission statement: *Encounter, Empower, Evangelize*. Our hope is that all who attend our parish would encounter Jesus, be empowered to be disciples of Jesus, and go forth to evangelize everyone they meet.”

Retreat organizers strived to make the day as accessible as possible, with childcare provided and a children’s retreat running in conjunction with the adult event.

“The response was amazing,”

reported Dupuis. “Our men’s breakfast, which ran from 8 to 10 a.m., saw 45 men attend, mostly from our parish. Our retreat, which started at 1 p.m. and went until 8:30 p.m. had 165 adult participants, 75 children between kindergarten and Grade 6, 20 children three years and under in childcare, and about 15 teenage volunteers.”

The parish’s recently-hired part-time youth minister Amanda Gaudet facilitated the children’s retreat with the help of four youth ministry colleagues and the group of senior youth volunteers in a program that garnered high praise in online evaluations.

The Revive retreat itself included several inspirational reflections by guest speaker Brett Powell (*see related article*), a long-time Catholic Christian Outreach (CCO) missionary born and raised in Saskatchewan, who presently serves as director of development for the Archdiocese of Vancouver.

Five priests were also on hand to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the day. “In total they heard confessions for four hours with constant line-ups,” said Dupuis, describing the positive response.

In addition, prayer teams offered to pray individually with anyone desiring prayer for any personal request. “It seemed as though all who took part in the prayer ministry came away with a very positive, supported experience,” noted Dupuis. “Many commented: ‘Why don’t we do this more... really pray for each other?’”

Written testimonies from retreat participants reveal the day’s impact.

“Today touched me deeply,” wrote one participant. “I felt the real presence of God, so much so it made me weak in the knees.”

Another wrote: “I was reminded that I need to invite Jesus in to restore me when I feel inadequate or the pressure is too high. I learned from Brett’s stories that God didn’t come to take away my suffering but to fill it and be present in it.”

Other comments included:

- “I felt strength renewed in me to serve the Lord however He wants me to and in whatever He calls me to.”
- “I had never heard the Prodigal Son explained that way. Brett

really opened my eyes to understand the scriptures in new and challenging ways”

- “No matter where you are at in your faith you could meet God here today in a gentle way. Brett really led all of us to confession and to a desire to receive prayer ministry.”

“We were thrilled to be able to offer an event that seemed to appeal to so many people who had never been to a retreat before. Our hope at IHMP is to continue to offer programming, events, formation, (and) community experiences that seek to help people encounter God in ever new and deeper ways.”

### Getting to know the truth of God’s love

A gentle, but challenging message about responding to the love of God was at the heart of a Revive retreat held March 12 in Martensville.

Exploring scripture and sharing personal experience, retreat leader Brett Powell brought insights into the profound love of God, and the urgent need to really get to know God, and what he wants for us.

“There is a big difference between knowing about something, and experiencing something,” Powell pointed out. “So it is with our faith. There is a difference between knowing about God and having a profound personal encounter with the living Lord.”

God is “not playing hide and seek,” Powell stressed.

“God is the protagonist in the relationship. He is the one seeking us. He is looking for us. We have a seeking father, a seeking Saviour.”

Part of our difficulty in responding is that the



Brett Powell

image we have of God is often wrong, he said. “If the ideas we have of God are wrong and deficient, our relationship will lack much of the depth and the intimacy that we so desperately need, and that God wants.”

Powell walked through scripture stories and parables, shining new light on who God really is – a welcoming and loving father, and not a wrathful, angry judge.

“Jesus is the one and only Word of God, he is the fullness of the revelation of the Father... he is God in the Flesh and he wants a relationship, he wants to come in,” Powell added.

He stressed that “we are not designed to live on borrowed faith,” and encouraged his listeners to follow the Apostle Thomas in asking Christ to reveal himself. “I think that’s a prayer that Jesus loves to answer.”

Powell pointed to Jesus’ parable of the prodigal son, which reveals the merciful father – an image of God’s faithful, searching, endless love that we can trust is also there for us. “It is precisely my sin which attracts his merciful heart,” said Powell.

“God is holding nothing back and we know this because Jesus went to the Cross – he gave everything... to convince us that God’s heart is good.”

- KLY



### Guadalupe Gospelfest

Our Lady of Guadalupe parish choir was one of the groups singing at the second annual Guadalupe Gospelfest held Nov. 28 at St. Mary's Parish Hall in Saskatoon. Singers from Saskatoon, Canoe Lake, Ille a la Crosse, and Deschambeault Lake participated in this year's Gospelfest, which ran from noon to 10 p.m. Admission was free and two meals were served during the grassroots community event.

- Photo by Deacon Paul Labelle

## CWL Clothing Depot marks 50 years

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The CWL Clothing Depot recently celebrated 50 years of caring outreach.

Located in the heart of Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods, the CWL Clothing Depot provides clothing and household goods at low prices, thanks to donations from the community and the work of volunteers and staff in serving those most in need. It is operated as a joint project of Catholic Women's League councils in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Volunteers from across the city and beyond sort donations and serve customers, with assistance and continuity of employees under the direction of manager Bea Megyesi. Funds raised by the non-profit CWL Clothing Depot are donated to a number of charities each year.

The location of the CWL Clothing Depot at 619-20th Street South – in a renovated facility on the lower floor of Saskatoon Friendship Inn – is important in providing the outreach exactly where it is most needed, says Mary Jacobi, who has served as chair of the CWL Clothing Depot for the past two years.

In addition to helping those in the neighbourhood with low-priced clothing and household goods, since the non-profit Depot opened 50 years ago, more than \$500,000 has been raised for charity, Jacobi reports.

Ways to help the CWL Clothing Depot in their ministry include donating used items,



Members of the Catholic Women's League celebrated the 50th anniversary of the CWL Clothing Depot in Saskatoon with cake, a fashion show and a potluck meal held Oct. 27, 2015 at St. Mary's parish hall. The non-profit Clothing Depot is located at 619-20th Street, and is always seeking donations and also welcomes volunteers.

- Photo by K. Yaworski

organizing donation drives in parishes, or volunteering. "Each month it takes approximately 140 volunteers to run the Depot... Sorting and cleaning and stacking," she says.

"Even if you can only volunteer once a month that's a huge benefit to the Clothing Depot." It is not necessary to be a CWL member to volunteer: men help regularly, as do students fulfilling Christian service requirements.

The CWL Clothing Depot is open Tuesday to Friday from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Donations are accepted at the Depot Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., or pick-up of donations can also be arranged.

Donations are carefully sorted, and any material that is not suitable for resale is set aside for "pack out," and is sold in bulk at a low rate to customers to repair, refurbish or reuse in other ways, points out Elizabeth Kokotailo

who has been volunteering at the CWL Clothing Depot for some 45 years.

"I think one of the most amazing things about this place is the gift of time," says board member Lynette Cyrenne. "So many people give time. People take the time to donate, to bring the donation in, or take it to their church. People take the time to work here as volunteers."

There is a joy in volunteering at the CWL Clothing Depot says Alice Risling, found in knowing that you are making a difference – "and you build a wonderful rapport with the people who come in to shop."

"The main thing to remember about the Clothing Depot is that we are here as a service for the poor," says longtime volunteer Yvonne Colleaux.

"We are not here to make money, we are here to serve. And whatever extra money there is, that's what goes to charity, and usually, local charities."

## Two Foam Lake Catholic churches to co-own building

BY NEVIN HALYK

Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church and Christ the King Roman Catholic Church have signed an historic agreement to enter into co-ownership of the Holy Eucharist building on Cameron Street in Foam Lake, SK. Since Jan. 1, 2016, the two Catholic Churches in Foam Lake have shared the same building.

The co-ownership agreement is the result of several years of discernment and planning.

Bernie Schultz, Parish Council Chairperson for Christ the King, stated that the growth of the Roman Catholic parish and the aging condition of the church on Broadway street were strong reasons to explore a partnership with Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church.

"Our church has been renovated several times, but remained too small to host large events that would occur several times each year such as weddings and funerals. In addition, the original church building is over 70 years old and required very significant capital expenditure to maintain. Our parish has experienced steady growth in the past several years, and we were feeling the pressure to act."

In addition, Schultz cited the cost of building a new structure as an obstacle. "In 2014 the cost per square foot for new construction that would suit our needs seemed prohibitive, so we began looking at all sorts of options as a parish for affordable and appropriate worship space." According to Schultz, approaching the Ukrainian Catholic parish seemed to be a natural next step. "We know that the sharing of churches is getting more common, and our closest possible fit is another Catholic church, that being Holy Eucharist."

The churches are identical in belief; the differences between them are in the type of liturgy used by each, and in regional church hierarchy. "We have different bishops, but the same pope and the same beliefs, so it seemed natural for us to approach Holy Eucharist with the idea of co-owning the church."

In fact, the two churches have been partners informally or formally at different times in their history together in Foam Lake.

Bohdan Popowych, Chairman of Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church, indicated that a desire to efficiently use resources and space factored into the co-ownership negotiations. "We have two Catholic parishes in town, both spending on infrastructure improvements, maintenance and utilities. The opportunity to use our resources more effectively is an important factor. As Christian communities, it makes sense to use our financial resources for evangelization and growth rather

than wasteful double management. This agreement is also about proper stewardship of our gifts."

During the exploration phase, parishioners were able to voice concerns and ask questions. Each parish had a series of meetings where options were explored.

Schultz spoke of Christ the King's discussion: "We costed out different possibilities – building new, renovating, co-ownership – we presented each scenario to our parishioners and had open discussions. Once everyone had a chance to be heard, we had a parish vote." Each parish had a vote by membership, and in each case a clear majority was in favour of pursuing co-ownership.

Once these processes were complete, the Roman Catholic Diocese and the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy got involved to help construct a legal agreement for sale and management that was put in place by Jan. 1, 2016.

Since mid-January, both parishes have been using their shared facility. Christ the King has moved several items over for use in their new home, and Holy Eucharist parishioners have been clearing up and making room for their partners.

A joint committee made of parishioners from each parish meets frequently to manage concerns regarding joint use, expenditures and the like. Otherwise, each parish operates as a separate entity within the building. Masses are scheduled to not conflict, and the calendar is filling up quickly with the activities of both parishes.

"Our two parishes together make for a busy building", says Popowych. "This is what a church should be – very much alive! It will mean creative solutions for each parish to avoid conflicts, but we can already see that the 'new normal' is pretty exciting."

Over the course of the next several months, important parts of the Christ the King identity will become part of Holy Eucharist Church, including the church bell and the stained glass windows.

Eventually, Christ the King Parish will disperse unnecessary items from their building and prepare it for sale.

Plans are in the works for a joint celebration in the next few months. Parishes are hoping for a "large and joyful" celebration in the summer that would see both bishops and large numbers of local people affirming this historic agreement.

In summary, both parish chairpersons agree that the process has been stressful and exciting, and ultimately very rewarding. Says Bernie Schultz: "It's going to result in growth for each parish. It's a great witness to the greater community of what God can accomplish when we are open to listening and working together."



### Knights of Columbus Celebrity Dinner

Some \$65,000 was raised for the Children's Hospital Foundation of Saskatchewan at the second annual Knights of Columbus Celebrity Dinner, held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. Local philanthropists, celebrity sports guests, families of children with ongoing medical needs, parishioners, and community members gathered for the Oct. 16 event organized by Knights of Columbus Council 8215. Guest speakers included Les and Irene Dubé, CFL player John Chick, and former player Michael "Pinball" Clemens, now the vice-chair of the Toronto Argonauts. Find more coverage of this event in the news article posted online at: [www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news](http://www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news)

- Photo by Angie Klassen

# Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: nurturing a relationship with Jesus in the hearts of young children

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A group of parents and ministry leaders recently attended a training session for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a program that nurtures young children's love for Jesus.

Hands-on and grounded in a Montessori understanding of the developmental needs of children, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd recognizes the great spiritual capacity of even the youngest children to form a meaningful relationship with God, as well as to understand, participate in and respond to scripture and liturgy, and express their deep faith.

Two representatives of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Association of Canada, Dr. Deborah Zeni and Carolyne-Marie Petch of Ontario, facilitated the first part of a Level One training course Jan. 25-30 in Saskatoon, hosted by Saint Vincent of Lerins Orthodox Church. The Saskatoon course continues in May.

Under the leadership of Fr. Bernard Nectarios Funk and his



Dr. Deborah Zeni and Carolyne-Marie Petch led the training session. - Photos by K. Yaworski

wife Linda, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) program has been introduced at Saint Vincent of Lerins Church, which has established a CGS atrium a sacred space of prayer especially prepared for children, filled with simple and beautiful materials that help them to get close to God.

Linda Funk began her training in 2010. The CGS atrium she has established at the west-side

Orthodox church for children ages 3-6 is the first one in the province. The focal point is a model of the sheepfold, with figures of Christ the Good Shepherd and the sheep – which can be set up next to a model of an altar surrounded by the people of God – all used in presenting the parable of the Good Shepherd and the meaning of Eucharist. Centres throughout the atrium permit children to become fully and prayerfully engaged in scripture and the liturgical year, through hands-on activity and reflective experience.

These CGS materials are not purchased “ready made” but are developed by the adult leaders, who themselves undertake a spiritual journey of deepening and expressing faith as part of preparing to offer the program. “It really is a grassroots program: it requires a community,” said Linda.

In CGS, the catechist is not considered a teacher – “remembering that the only teacher is Christ” – but rather is seen as one who journeys and celebrates with the children in respect and humility, grounded in the Word of God, the liturgical year, and the sacramental life of the Church, explained organizers.

Founded in Rome by scripture scholar Sofia Cavaletti with the help of Montessori collaborator Gianna Gobbi some 60 years ago, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was introduced to Canada by Patricia Coulter of Toronto, related Zeni. “Patricia went over there and spent two years in Rome with Sofia,” she said, describing the support of clergy in the Archdiocese of Toronto in introducing the program in the 1980s.

Gradually interest grew, with more people asking for the course in Canada, and in 2005 the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Association of Canada was formed as a registered charitable organization ([www.cgsac.ca](http://www.cgsac.ca)). “The prime reason to have an association, was to be able to offer to adults training in CGS,” said



Linda Funk of Saint Vincent of Lerins Church with some of the hands-on faith materials in the church's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd atrium.

Zeni. “We need an association, because we can't do it alone. The community works because of the participation of every member.”

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd introduces children to scripture, invites them into a relationship with Jesus the Good Shepherd, and brings forth a deep, spiritual response, described Zeni, a physician with a family practice in Georgetown, Ontario, who serves as a catechist in her local parish.

Zeni cited the words of one small child after a liturgical experience modeled during the Saskatoon training session: “She said: ‘the Holy Spirit came into my heart’ – it was truly an encounter with Christ.”

The program's distinct approach helps children to build deep, lifelong relationships with Christ and his Church, Zeni said. “This is holy space and holy time that we offer our children when we do the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. It is gift. It is gift to every family involved, and it is a gift to witness the transformation of the children, it is a gift to every child, and it is gift to the Church.”

Zeni added: “As someone who does pediatrics, I can see that this is all grounded in their development, with tremendous respect for the child, and for the child's needs and abilities.”

Participants were enthusiastic about CGS and the training provided at the recent Saskatoon training session. “I'm so glad I came, I'm going to change my direction in so many ways,” said one participant.

Lisette Fontaine of the Trinity pastoral region in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon first heard about the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd at a presentation to the Time Out For Moms group in Saskatoon, and has been eager to take the training. “Once there are more atriums established, more people will understand it, and get involved,” she predicted.

“You have to understand that this is establishing a relationship with God – the children are establishing a relationship with God,” Fontaine stressed. “It is all-encompassing in how it is working with the child where they are in all of their development: physical, mental, social, emotional, spiritual,” she said. “This is how to keep people in the Church.”

If young children experience the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, they will then go into sacramental preparation already understanding the paschal mystery deeply in their hearts, said Fontaine.

She hopes to introduce CGS to the Trinity parishes at St. Denis, Prud'homme and Vonda, convinced that when the program is seen and experienced, parents and ministry leaders will see that it is worth the effort. “I'd so love to see atriums all over: across our diocese, across our province.”

Participant Cynthia Foster also hopes to set up a CGS atrium in her home parish of St. Francis Xavier in Saskatoon. “I would hope that children can come to experience this, and that we will all be guided by the Holy Spirit.”



## Catechist School

Nick Wagner (centre) and Mary Birmingham (right) of TeamRCIA facilitated a two-day Catechist School in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon Feb. 5-6, speaking at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon, with live-streaming to satellite sites at St. Augustine Parish in Humboldt and St. Joseph Parish in Kindersley. - Photo by Tim Yaworski

## Queen's House of Retreat and Renewal

• 601 Taylor Street West, Saskatoon • Registration or more information: (306) 242-1916 or visit the website at: [www.queenshouse.org](http://www.queenshouse.org)

*Queen's House is a gathering place and oasis in an ever changing world, nestled in a quiet corner of Saskatoon on the bank of the river.*

**A DAY AWAY** - Facilitator: Gisele Bauche. **Wednesday, May 11** from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Cost \$25 with lunch. Come spend “time away” in quiet reflection, input, sharing, prayer, scripture study and contemplation.

**THE BOOK OF EXODUS** - Facilitator: Fr. Paul Fachel, OMI, 10 a.m. to noon, **May 4, June 1**. Cost: \$15. An exploration of Holy Scripture with a dynamic and seasoned instructor. Come for one or all sessions.

**ICONOGRAPHY RETREAT** with Anna Mycyk & Gisele Bauche **May 23-27**.

**TAIZE PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY** - 8-9 p.m. **May 10, June 14**.

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BROTHERS' KEEPERS BREAKFASTS** - Second Tuesday morning of each month beginning at 7 a.m. with breakfast at 8 a.m. **May 10, June 7**. Suggested donation of \$10.

**CENTERING PRAYER** - 7 pm Mondays (holidays excepted).

**HOLY YOGA RETREAT** - Mindfulness and Mercy, facilitated by Elaine Zakreski and Diane Waldbillig 8:30 am to 5 p.m. **Saturday, May 7**. Cost: \$100 (includes lunch).

**EXHALE...LIFE BEYOND CANCER**: A retreat for women touched by cancer 7 p.m. **Friday, May 20 until Sunday, May 22** at 1 pm. Cost: \$325 if registering before early bird deadline of May 6 (includes room, meals and retreat.)

**SUMMER STILLNESS** with Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, begins **Monday July 11** at 5:30 p.m. with supper, until after lunch **Thursday, July 14**. Cost: Live-in \$400, less for commuters. Monday evening presentation “Moral Loneliness - The Congenital Ache of a Soulmate,” Tuesday to Thursday presentation “Celebrating the Year of Mercy - from Paranoia to Metanoia”.



## Rite of Election

At the diocesan Rite of Election on the first Sunday of Lent, catechumens from a number of parishes came forward for a blessing from the bishop, as they prepared to enter a final phase of preparation before baptism, celebrated by most of them at this Easter Vigil, March 26. After Easter the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) continues with a period of Mystagogy, entering deeper into the mysteries of God on a path of life-long discipleship.

- Photo by Tim Yaworski

# Holy Family mission team will serve in Peru this year

BY AMANDA HERTZ, YOUTH MINISTER, CATHEDRAL OF THE HOLY FAMILY

The Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon is sending a Missionary Team of ten teenage participants and five adult chaperones to the city of Lima, Peru for two weeks, from August 4-15, to volunteer with Misma Luna.

This is the fourth year that the Cathedral of the Holy Family will be sending a missionary team to serve in impoverished areas.

Misma Luna is a Peruvian non-profit that strives to aid and educate the women, children, and families of Lima so that they may improve lives for themselves and their communities.

The Holy Family Mission Team will assist Misma Luna with building projects in the developing communities of Lima as well as providing medical care of the disadvantaged / disabled. The Mission Team will also be spending time serving and praying with the Missionaries of Charity in Lima.

The Mission Projects at the Cathedral of the Holy Family have given many parishioners opportunities to live out the shared parish vision statements of “passionately growing the next generation” and “passionately making a difference in our world.”

Erin Meier, a parishioner of Holy Family and a member of this year’s Mission Team, said that her experiences of mission have helped her faith to grow. “Over the



Erin Meier of Holy Family parish, with one of the children of an orphanage in Belize that she assisted in spring 2016. - Submitted photo

past three years I have felt a strong calling from God that working for the greater good of others is what He wants me doing with my life. Instead of quoting the words of great Christians before me, I aim to model their actions and continue their work... I am thrilled that I have been given this opportunity and can’t wait to see what God has in store for me as I carry on with mission work.”

For more information on the 2016 Mission Project at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, see the parish website.



**Church of Ireland Bishop presents De Margerie Lecture**  
Dr. Terry Downey, president of St. Thomas More College (STM); Fr. Bernard de Margerie of Saskatoon; Anglican Bishop Kenneth Kearon of Ireland; and Bishop Donald Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon (left to right) share a moment of conversation after Bishop Kearon's public lecture on “Building an Ecumenical Barn” held Jan. 21, 2016 at STM, part of the annual De Margerie Series on Christian Reconciliation and Unity. Kearon also led workshops, and delivered the homily at the closing celebration for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The series is named for Fr. Bernard De Margerie, an ecumenical pioneer who helped to establish the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism. Find articles on the 2016 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at [www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news](http://www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news) - Photo by K. Yaworski

## Support for Kenyan orphanage continues

BY MICHELLE PETERS

“Kenya Mission: Jesus Leads Us” has had much gracious support since the last Diocesan Newsletter.

The sisters have continued to develop a garden and farm for the boarding school/orphanage. They have cattle, chickens, vegetables and fruit trees that the orphans and school children help to maintain.

Sr. Louise, who coordinates the mission, says: “You can’t imagine their excitement whenever the children come to work in the

garden. It gives them a sense of belonging and ownership. In fact, they want to come to the garden every day but we can’t allow them because their program in the school is quite tight.”

A recent \$12,000 donation to the mission (which equals about 890,000 Kenya shillings) will go towards building a kitchen for Anchilla Boarding/Day academy, that will also help to feed the orphans.

For more information call (306) 682-0775 or see: [www.jesusleadus.com](http://www.jesusleadus.com)

# One visitor’s experience of Catholic celebrations in Saskatoon

BY BLAKE SITTLER

Harry Strauss spent his time going to church this past summer. This is not too surprising because Harry is a pastor. What is unique is that Harry is an Evangelical pastor who spent this past year attending Roman Catholic Masses around the city of Saskatoon.

Strauss is a pastor at Forest Grove Church in Saskatoon. He has served as co-chair of the local Evangelical-Catholic dialogue over the last five years.

“I had a couple of months off and I didn’t really plan to attend all the Catholic churches, it just kind of evolved,” said Strauss.

He presented his observations to the staff of the Catholic Pastoral Centre in February.

“I wanted to get a sense of Catholic witness and reflect back to my Evangelical brothers and sisters what we share in a positive way,” shared Strauss.

Over the summer and fall of 2015, Strauss attended 20 Sunday celebrations at Catholic parishes in Saskatoon, sometimes up to three times on a given Sunday.

Strauss attended so often that

he was able to very quickly and accurately outline the components of a Catholic liturgy. He was initially taken by the Penitential Rite. “Our Evangelical circles have opportunities to confess their sins but not with the same intentionality,” he noted.

Strauss was impressed by the number and the variety of scriptures heard in a Catholic Mass, and was aware of the three-year rotating canon of readings.

As a pastor, he found it enlightening to experience how after hearing the readings a second and even a third time, he would still have trouble remembering what he heard at an earlier celebration – and also how he was hearing new messages with each new proclamation.

“Sometimes it took until the second or third liturgy until I remembered the readings,” he admitted. “This was an important lesson for me as a preacher – to appreciate how difficult it is to just be present to the readings.”

He pointed to the helpful practice of Fr. Nestor Gregoire, OMI, who offered a brief



Evangelical Pastor Harry Strauss attended 20 Catholic celebrations in Saskatoon. - Photo by Blake Sittler

precursor to the readings, in which he asked the congregation to listen for certain phrases, themes or characters in the readings they were about to hear.

Strauss said that he appreciated the lay involvement in ministries during the liturgy, including the prayers of the faithful and the sign of peace.

“The whole idea of sharing the peace of Christ is a good practice for a group of Christians,” he said.

Strauss noted that many people think that one of the main areas of difference between Catholics and Evangelicals is in the area of preaching, but he did not agree.

“These messages that I heard in the Catholic settings could have easily been preached in an Evangelical church and been well received,” he said. “The only exception would have been the Sunday when the readings were from John and the homilies were about transubstantiation.”

Homilies ranged from five to 17 minutes, he said. In Evangelical

communities, most sermons range closer to 30 minutes.

“I was very much engaged by the messages, even the one Sunday when I attended the Chaldean church and the priest preached in Aramaic,” he said with a smile.

Strauss noted the diversity of ordained leadership ranging from African, Vietnamese, Columbian, Iraqi, Irish, Filipino, Polish and Canadian-born priests as well as of the gathered faithful. “This brings a richness to you as a diocese,” he said. “I saw beaded First Nations presider garments and lots of communities of people from various nations of the world.”

Strauss was pleasantly surprised at the large number of Chaldean Catholics at Sacred Heart Church. “I thought there would be 80 or so, but there was more like 350,” he said. “These are a biblical people, Syrian, Iraqi.”

He also picked up bulletins at each parish and what he noticed right away was how busy Catholic priests are.

“They do masses daily, reconciliation, pastoral duties, counseling, visiting, funerals, and sometimes (for) more than one parish,” he commiserated. “There is a lot of good ministry going on in your churches”.

Strauss also noted some architectural features of the many church in Saskatoon: from the earth tones of St. Francis Xavier Parish to the dramatic sloped roof of St. Philip Neri Church and the stained glass windows of the Cathedral of the Holy Family.

He noticed one other thing. “No screens... no PowerPoint,” he smiled.

“We live in an age when we are so focused on the image, and for you as Catholics, art and image and statues and Stations of the Cross, images are all over but none of you are taking advantage of [new technology].”

Strauss agreed that there may be some good reasons to not project images or scripture passages but he shared how, when done well, these forms of technology can add to a liturgy a different level of dynamism and interaction.

One of the insights that those who attended Strauss’ presentation found comforting was his sense that Mass attendance was strong in all parishes no matter the time.

“In the Evangelical mind, the sacred time is between 9 a.m. and 12 noon, so to see a Mass at noon that is basically full was surprising,” he said.

Strauss ended with a prayer.

“May the Catholic witness in the city of Saskatoon flourish. May your emphasis on the new evangelization bring much fruit in your community as you bear witness to Christ... to him be glory in the church and the world throughout all generations,” he concluded.

Lois McKay, who works at the Catholic Pastoral Centre, welcomed Strauss’ message. “What you said is so positive and practical...there is always room for improvement, but we are doing some things well. We need to hear that sometimes.”



**What Catholics can learn from Evangelicals**  
Respondents Nicholas Jesson, ecumenical officer for the Catholic diocese of Saskatoon and Jeromey Martini, President of Horizon Bible College, with guest speaker Dr. Robert Stackpole (l-r) at a presentation entitled “What Catholics can learn from Evangelicals” held Feb. 4 -- a companion piece to an event in April 2015 entitled “What Evangelicals can learn from Catholics.” See: [www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news](http://www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news) for more coverage of this event. - Photo by K. Yaworski

# Legacy of sisters and priests honoured at GSCS event

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

An “Honour the Legacy” celebration recognizing the contributions of those in Consecrated Life and priesthood was held Jan. 29 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

Organized by the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) Together in Faith and Action Committee, the appreciation event was held as the Year of Consecrated Life drew to a close. Declared by Pope Francis, the year officially ended a few days later, on the Feast of the Presentation, Feb. 2, which is also the World Day of Consecrated Life.

“We are celebrating the key role that sisters, priests and bishops have played in Catholic education since the district began,” said Fr. Kevin McGee, vicar general for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon and pastoral associate for GSCS. He added that the event echoed Pope Francis’ call to express to those in consecrated life “the affection and the warmth that the entire Christian people feel toward them.”

In his homily at the Eucharistic celebration opening the event, Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon personally expressed his appreciation to his Grade One teacher, Sr. Agnes McGrath of the Sisters of the Child Jesus.

Now living in British Columbia, the retired teacher was in attendance, and Bayda called her up to the pulpit. Together they looked at a photo of the bishop’s first grade class at Bishop Murray School in Saskatoon, and Bayda reminded her which student he was in the 1967 picture: “I’m standing right next to you!”

He thanked her – and all teachers – for sharing their lives, their skills and most especially their presence.



Sr. Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, presented Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) vice-chair Wayne Stus with a directory of sisters and priests who served in the Catholic school system, which she researched for the Honour the Legacy event Jan. 29, 2016.

- Photos by Kiply Yaworski

“Thank you for witnessing to our children, to other teachers, and your principals; to parents; and to the world,” Bayda said, before giving McGrath an apple.

During the banquet and program that followed Mass, the names of religious women and priests who have served in Catholic schools in GSCS communities – including Saskatoon, Biggar and Humboldt – were on display and projected onto an overhead screen.

The list of sisters and priests who have served in the Catholic school district was researched and compiled by Sr. Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, and a directory of the names was presented to board vice-chair Wayne Stus during the program.

Also on display was an image of a pitcher, a wash basin and a towel, formed from hundreds of tiny photographs of sisters and priests who have served in the area.

Another display featured a large quilt map of Saskatchewan created by Sylvia Ogrigewitsch, NDS, during the province’s

centennial year, showing where 61 different orders of religious women served across the province since 1860. “We know that their lives were all about Jesus, their loving Lord,” said Kambeitz. “Their loving service was to continue his mission of teaching and healing in Saskatchewan.”

All those in attendance were presented with a commemorative piece of art – a limited edition print by GSCS teacher and artist Monique Martin, who delivered a video message explaining the images she used in the artwork. Fr. Ron Griffin, CSB, of St. Thomas More College came forward to assist in cutting up the block that produced the print, ensuring the uniqueness as a limited edition.

Catholic schools began in Saskatoon in 1911, when three Sisters of the Presentation of Mary were asked by Fr. Vachon, OMI, and Bishop Paschal to staff Saskatoon’s first Catholic separate school, which opened in the basement of St. Paul’s Cathedral, said GSCS Director of Education Greg Chatlain.

“The Sisters of Our Lady of Sion arrived in 1917, establishing Sion Academy in 1919, Meanwhile in the Humboldt area, which is now part of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, the Ursuline Sisters were invited by the Benedictines to staff schools in that area,” he added.

In total, some 17 religious communities of sisters have served in the GSCS system, along with diocesan and eparchial



Fr. Mick Fleming, CSsR, and Sr. Juliana Heisler, NDS, provided closing remarks and words of thanks after an Honour the Legacy celebration organized by Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools to mark the Year of Consecrated Life and the role of sisters, priests and bishops in the Catholic school system over the past century.



Socializing and words of appreciation were part of the Honour the Legacy event organized by Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools in appreciation for the contributions of sisters, priests, and bishops to Catholic education.

priests, as well as priests from the Basilian, Benedictine, Dominican, Redemptorist and Oblates of Mary Immaculate religious orders, he said.

“We would not be here today were it not for the dedicated service of all these folks,” Chatlain said, noting that today, GSCS serves some 17,000 students in 45 schools, with six new schools under construction.

History and milestones were further explored in a dialogue between Fr. Kevin McGee and Sr. Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, with information presented in the form of a quiz.

Closing remarks and thanks

were presented by Sr. Juliana Heisler, NDS, a retired teacher, principal and Parish Life Director; and by Fr. Mick Fleming, CSsR, Priest Moderator of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish and a member of the Redemptorist community at St. Mary’s in Saskatoon.

“What a beautiful evening, what a beautiful presence to the power of God’s love and God’s Spirit among us tonight,” said Fleming.

“Let us constantly set out anew with trust in the Lord always.”

The celebration concluded with a prayer and the singing of Holy God, We Praise Thy Name.



## Seminarian in Rome

At a celebration at the Pontifical Beda College in Rome Nov. 17, diocesan seminarian Edward Gibney (left) was enrolled as a candidate for Holy Orders with ten other candidates, one more step on his discernment of the priesthood. Bishop Donald Bolen of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, was in Rome at the time working on an ecumenical dialogue, and was able to attend the celebration. Potentially, Gibney could be ordained to the transitional diaconate this June, at another celebration in Rome. Among the diocese of Saskatoon’s other seminarians, Michael Yaremko is serving a pastoral internship year at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, while Andrew Young is doing the same at St. Peter the Apostle Parish in Saskatoon. Yaremko could also potentially be ordained to the transitional diaconate this year.

- Photo by Lynda Putzlocher



## 200th anniversary of Oblates of Mary Immaculate

During the Chrism Mass banquet March 21 in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate were recognized for their contributions and their service during this 200th anniversary of the founding of the missionary order by St. Eugene De Mazenod. A mosaic of small images of Oblate priests, brothers and missions adjusted to create a large picture of the Oblate cross was unveiled, and the Missionary Oblates in attendance came forward to a standing ovation: (left to right:) Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, Fr. Nestor Gregoire, Fr. Bill Stang, Fr. Mark Blom, Fr. Michael Dechant, Brother Walter DeMong, Fr. Richard Doll, Fr. Paul Fachel and Fr. Nestor Silva.

- Photo by Tim Yaworski

# St. Therese Institute – ‘Keeping the Main Thing the Main Thing’

BY VICKY SERBLOWSKI,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Businessman and author Stephen Covey once wrote: “the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing.”

Recently at St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission, with so many wonderful projects and ideas that have developed over the last nine years, it was necessary for the leadership to take a step back and re-align our focus as a post-secondary school that combines all aspects of learning, loving and living out the Christian faith, while encouraging young adults to become Disciples of Christ.

St. Therese Institute is centering our focus on the “main thing”: the ongoing growth and development of the Nine Month Faith Formation Program.

Already, this re-focusing has facilitated conversations regarding academic arrangements with other universities and seminaries.

The 37 students enrolled at St. Therese Institute in our Nine Month Faith Formation Program now have more academic options available to them than ever before. Holy Apostles College and

Seminary in Cromwell, Connecticut, USA, is the latest university to provide graduates of St. Therese with 30 transferable credit hours per year of study. Simply put, this means that for every year of study at St. Therese Institute, a student will receive credits for a full year of university at Holy Apostles College and Seminary. This international arrangement is based upon other similar agreements with Canadian universities.

As part of this shift, our triumph: Freedom Through Healing program has become its own independent entity; it is now based out of Saskatoon, under the leadership of Jerry and Donna Kristian who helped create and lead the program while here at St. Therese. (A first session of triumph: Freedom Through Healing will be offered at Queen’s House of Retreats in Saskatoon from July 29 to August 7, 2016 with further sessions to follow.)

Moving forward in this Year of Mercy, board and staff at St. Therese Institute are excited and enthusiastic about the progressive changes made at St. Therese Institute. With joyful servants’



## Lenten Conference

Dr. Scott Powell of Colorado spoke on the multi-layered social and historical context of the Gospel of Mark Feb. 12-14 at the Eighth Annual Lenten Conference at St. Therese Institute in Bruno. Powell teaches at the Augustin Institute, and is director of the Aquinas Institute for Catholic Thought, Chris O’Hara of St. Therese gave the opening and closing talks for the conference, attended by 122 participants. Four priests were also in attendance for Mass and Reconciliation. - Photo by James Riley

hearts, we eagerly anticipate the future and all that God has planned. In other words from Stephen Covey: “Our most important work is always ahead, never behind.”

## Year of Mercy and care of creation are focus of travel

Pilgrim Journeys offered during the remaining months of 2016 “will inspire participants to reflect on the theme of the Jubilee Holy Year of Mercy,” said Fr. Ralph Kleiter of Ministry to Tourism.

Programs and destinations “will open hearts to the action of our merciful Creator, who reigns beyond all human accomplishments and failures,” he said.

A type of “Retreat at Sea” will focus on the grandeur of Alaska and our “Care of Creation” in advance of the annual Sept 1 World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, he said. Fr. Michael O’Brien from Holy Family Retreat Centre in Harrow Ontario will support the reflection. The “Care of Creation” cruise runs Aug. 6-16, 2016; Vancouver to Anchorage with optional 3- to 4-day post-cruise visits to historic Denali National Park.

To explore the Iberian Peninsula (Spain and Portugal) there is a choice of three programs, each accompanied by reflections on the blessings and evils that have befallen the



Henry and Dorothea Feldkamp of Holy Spirit Parish, Saskatoon celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with some fellow travellers during Ministry to Tourism’s January cruise (Santiago Chile to Easter Island, Tahiti and French Polynesia). Pictured are (left to right): Fr. Denis Phaneuf, Msgr. Ray Senger, Maryann Rosher, Dorothea and Henry Feldkamp, Yvonne Wiesner, Fr. Greg Blonde (of London, ON.), and Fr. Ralph Kleiter. One highlight of the cruise was reading and discussing Pope Francis’ “*Laudato Si*” encyclical on care for our common home – a focus that will continue during other Pilgrim Journeys in 2016. - Submitted photo

Hispanic World, said Kleiter. Highlights include Santiago de Compostela (Holy Door), Douro River seven-day cruise and Coimbra/Fatima. Limited space on the river cruise is still available from Oct. 30 to Nov. 10, 2016.

Further options include a pre-river cruise, from Madrid, Northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela and Oporto, Portugal, Oct. 20-31, as well as a post-river cruise from Oporto, Fatima, Lisbon (Cascais), to Southern Portugal and Spain / Madrid Nov. 8-23, 2016.

Note that Ministry to Tourism’s “Pilgrim Journey to

Biblical Lands and Beyond” has been rescheduled to depart Easter Monday, April 17, 2017. It will focus on “once in a lifetime” destinations, all offering comprehensive presentations of our Judeo-Christian roots and a chance to walk in the footsteps of the Hebrew prophets, Jesus of Nazareth, and the Apostles, said Kleiter. “We will never be the same.”

Contact Fr. Ralph Kleiter for details about these offerings at: (306) 244-3747 or by e-mail: kleiter@shaw.ca or see the website: www.pilgrimjourneys.ca



## FacetoFace United Conference

Some 330 attended the United Conference presented by FacetoFace Ministries Nov. 21-22 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon, with a youth track and an adult track exploring the theme of mercy through talks, music, prayer and worship. - Photo by FacetoFace Ministry

## Announcements & Upcoming Events

**Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Foundation 16th annual ‘Swing into Spring’ Fashion Show & Dinner** will be held Thursday, April 28 at Prairieland Park. Tickets are \$70, Call: (306) 659-7003 or visit the Foundation website: catholicschoolsfoundation@gscs.sk.ca Help us put faith in education.

**A Film Unlike Any Other - Full of Grace** tells the story of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as she nears the end of her earthly life. Holy Family Parish, 123 Nelson Road, Saskatoon presents a free evening of reflection in the cathedral hall **Friday, May 6**, starting at 7:15 p.m. A free-will offering will be taken. All are welcome; (note: the movie is not targeted to children).

**St. Paul’s Hospital Gift Shop Is In Need of Volunteers:** for four-hour shifts, open Monday to Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Proceeds support patient care items and services at St. Paul’s Hospital. The Gift Shop is managed by the SPH Foundation and supported by a volunteer staff, including members of the SPH Nurses Alumni. Contact Kathi Lewis, Volunteer Workforce at (306) 655-5823. No experience is required – just a caring and compassionate attitude and the desire to support patients and staff at St. Paul’s Hospital.

**Springtime of Faith April 3 - May 13** is a series of 11 different week-long conferences on a variety of subjects held at St. Therese Institute in Bruno. Join the St. Therese students for one (or more) of these 5-6 day conferences. Register for two or more conferences and save 10 per cent (use code 10-SOTF during registration). More information and registration found at www.St-T.ca/SotF or call (306) 369-2555.

**Theology of the Body with Christopher West** at St. Therese Institute in Bruno, SK., **May 1-4** with a group rate for groups of two-or-more (attention married/engaged couples!) Embark on a life-changing four-day journey through Blessed John Paul II’s Theology of the Body. More info and registration at www.St-T.ca/tob or call (306) 369-2555.

**Development & Peace 2016 Regional Assembly** “Create a Climate of Change” **Friday, April 29 to Sunday, May 1** at St. Thomas More College 1437 College Drive, Saskatoon. Registration required. For more information contact Christine Zyla (306) 659-5842 or Armella Sonntag (306) 937-7675.

**Holy Spirit Parish 50th anniversary** - Parishioners and former parishioners and pastors are invited to celebrate, 114 Kingsmere Pl., Saskatoon. A Jubilee Mass will be celebrated with Bishop Don Bolen at 12 noon, **Sunday, May 1**, followed by a luncheon/reception. There will be a display showcasing the 50-year history of the parish. Also, mark your calendar — the Jubilee Fall Supper is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 23. Share your memories and anecdotes of Holy Spirit parish life; send submissions to: info@holyspiritsaskatoon.ca

**The triumph (Freedom Through Healing) program**, facilitated by Jerry and Donna Kristian, will hold its first session at Queen’s House, 601 Taylor Street West, Saskatoon from **July 29 to August 7, 2016** – further sessions to follow. To register or for more information call Queen’s House (306) 242-1916.

**Blackstrap Catholic Youth Camp** is held throughout the summer in week-long sessions for youth from ages 8 to 13 years, giving youth the opportunity to experience God through nature and fellowship with other young people. Summer 2016 sessions run **July 3-8; July 10-15; July 17-22, July 24-29, and July 31-Aug. 5**, with indoor and outdoor activities, including canoeing, swimming, hiking and tenting. The camp is sponsored by the Saskatoon Knights of Columbus. For more info see <http://blackstrapyouthcamp.org> or call (306) 492-4813.

**Saint John Bosco Wilderness Camp** – at Zeden Lake located in the Narrow Hills Provincial Park. St. John Bosco Wilderness Camp is a summer camp for youth ages 8 to 17 years, held in northern Saskatchewan. The focus at camp is having fun learning and living in the outdoors. Youth and teens enjoy activities such as canoeing, swimming, archery, wide-games, hiking, orienteering, nature-lore, and liturgy. Campers have the opportunity to experience wilderness travel and camping making lifelong friends and developing a new appreciation for God and nature. Various programs are offered, including hiking and canoeing overnight camping trips. For more information visit the website at: [www.johnboscocamp.com](http://www.johnboscocamp.com) or call 1-844-752-6726.

**Faith-based community experience for 19-35 year old single Catholic women** - If you looking for “affordable rent” and more, Discernment House may be the place for you. The Sisters of the Presentation offer young women a home away from home as they work or study. This is an opportunity to live a community experience and to grow in your personal faith through prayer, reflection, spiritual direction and service. Discernment House is located at 851 University Drive, Saskatoon, a 15-minute walk from the University of Saskatchewan, close to downtown. Discernment House is now taking registrations for September 2016. For more information contact: Sr. Lucie or Sr. Viviane at (306) 244-0726 or e-mail: [sk.dhouse@gmail.com](mailto:sk.dhouse@gmail.com) Website: [www.presentationofmary.ca](http://www.presentationofmary.ca)

**Rachel’s Vineyard Healing Retreat - Are you hurting because of an abortion?** Rachel’s Vineyard is a safe place to renew, rebuild and redeem hearts broken by abortion. Weekend retreats offer a supportive, confidential and non-judgmental environment where women and men can express, release and reconcile painful post-abortion emotions to begin the process of restoration, renewal and healing. The next retreat in Saskatchewan will be held in mid-October. To register, or for more information, contact Elaine at 306-480-8911 or [r.vineyardsk@sasktel.net](mailto:r.vineyardsk@sasktel.net)

## Rock the Mount 2016

“PUTTING ON THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD  
- A MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL OF FAITH”  
10 am to 9:30 pm Saturday, July 23

Held at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Shrine, Carmel, SK, about 55 minutes east of Saskatoon

Rock the Mount 2016 will feature medieval games, drama presentations, 5 p.m. Mass with Bishop Don Bolen

Bring lawn chairs, sunscreen and umbrellas. There is a food booth on site, or bring a picnic.

Guest speaker is Matt Nelson, and musical guests are “The Trudels” and “Brad Johner and the Johner Boys”

For information contact Emily Hill at (306) 231-6011 or see the website at: [www.rockthemount.com](http://www.rockthemount.com)

# Evert delivers chastity message to Saskatchewan crowds

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Jason Evert of the Chastity Project spoke with passion, energy and humour about sex, the virtue of chastity and a range of related issues to thousands of youth and adults in Saskatchewan Feb. 24-26 at a series of events organized by One More Soul Canada.

Based in Denver, Colorado, Evert and his wife Crystalina operate the Chastity Project ministry, which offers seminars, distributes free or low-cost resources, and uses social media platforms to “promote the virtue of chastity so that individuals can see God, and be free to love (*Matthew 5:8*).”

Some 4,000 youth and adults in Regina and Saskatoon heard Evert’s message, reported Mary Riendeau and Marcy Millette of One More Soul.

“Jason’s topic of chastity as a virtue was relevant to all over the age of 12 years. The importance of modesty and abstinence for happy marriages and lower divorce rates underscored his presentations,” said Riendeau.

Evert spoke at Resurrection parish in Regina Feb. 24 in a presentation entitled “The Truth,” as well as speaking at two Catholic high schools in Regina. Hundreds more attended Evert’s Chastity Project presentation Feb. 25 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. He also spoke the next day at Bethlehem Catholic High School and twice at Holy Cross Catholic High School.

“It was amazing to have so many local organizations partner to help put this on,” said Colm Leyne, coordinator of youth ministry for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, citing the collaboration of One More Soul with groups such as Pure Witness Ministries and TeenAid, as well as the diocesan youth office.



Jason Evert of the Chastity Project spoke at Holy Cross High School Feb. 26 in Saskatoon – and at several other venues across the province – during a tour organized by One More Soul Canada. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Many participants lined up for confession and participated in Eucharistic adoration held in conjunction with the event at the Saskatoon cathedral, Leyne said, noting the spiritual impact of the event.

“I was so encouraged seeing parents and teens flock to the free resource table picking up reading material, CDs and more, to continue their formation,” Leyne said. “I have no doubt lives were changed.”

One More Soul organizers agreed. “Audiences were held captive with Jason’s stories and truth – both straight-forward and entertaining,” said Riendeau.

“He touched on all aspects of human sexuality, including damage done by pornography, damage done to women’s health through use of hormonal contraceptives such as the pill and Depovera. He explained the extensive side effects such as weakening bones, lowered libido, increased risks of breast cancer as cited by WHO and Mayo Clinic,” she said.

In addition, Evert provided information about Sexually Transmitted Diseases, including Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which is now the most common STD across North America.

At a high-energy presentation to students at Holy Cross Catholic High School in Saskatoon Feb. 26, Evert challenged messages bombarding youth about sexuality in our culture. He encouraged youth to recognize the difference between lust and love, and offered examples and options for choosing a healthier, more virtuous path.

“Today, relationships we all know are in an absolute mess. We all want love, we just don’t know where to find it. But God offers it,” said Evert. Real love is sacrificial and puts the good of the beloved above all else – just as Christ did on the cross, he said.

“Guys, that begins by not sacrificing girls for the sake of ourselves,” Evert said, tackling the issue of pornography. While acknowledging that women also look at pornography, Evert stressed the overwhelming impact

of easily-available Internet porn on male sexuality.

“Porn is the best way for a guy to shoot his future marriage in the head, teaching you that girls are to be used for your kicks,” he told the crowd. “When you look at porn you are not looking at someone’s naked body, you are looking at somebody’s daughter, who was probably sexually abused as a little girl... and we laugh it off.”

He noted that some of the women featured in widely-circulated pornography are no longer alive, lost to drug overdoses, suicide or violence. “How sad it is: how many guys are still lusting after pictures of these girls on the Internet without even knowing or caring whether they are dead or alive. The sickness of lusting after a woman who could be dead right now should make any guy who looks at porn step back and say, ‘Man, who have women become to me? Who have I become to women?’” said Evert.

“If I train myself my whole life to lust, lust, lust, and then a day comes when I actually love a woman – you can’t fake it... all you want to do is take on pleasure,” he said. “Guys, if you trash the porn tonight, you are being faithful to your bride-to-be before you ever lay eyes on her. What are we training ourselves for?”

Evert said research that shows that sexual activity is going down among high school students, with many choosing not to have sex or choosing to start over. “Two out of three high school students who have had sex privately admit they wished that they had waited,” he told the crowd.

He pointed to pressures of the culture that says the worth of a woman is in how she looks and that she only has value if she is desired by a man. “A girl convinces herself that the priceless gift of her body is not a big deal, and something starts to die inside,” he said. “She’s so afraid of being alone, she settles for less (than real love): hooking up,

having friends with benefits ... and something dies in her.”

There is a longing in every heart for real connection, for true love, that respects the beautiful dignity of a person, he stressed. “Love can’t wait to give, but lust can’t wait to get,” Evert said, pointing to the signs of an authentically loving relationship, grounded in respect and chastity, rather than one of exploitation, use and abuse.

“Real love will bring you closer to everyone who loves you.... Drop the counterfeit for the real thing.”

Evert also addressed those experiencing same-sex attractions, stressing “your identity is not your sexual desire.” Each and every person’s true identity is that they are a beloved child of God, he said. “What does that mean on a daily basis? Living out chastity, which applies to all of us,” he said, pointing to testimonies from friends who are struggling with homosexuality, who have found “amazing peace and joy” in choosing a life of chastity and holiness.

Evert encouraged all of his listeners to pursue virtue, to take advantage of the sacrament of reconciliation and turn to scripture such as Psalm 51 to start anew. “The point is that the redemption of the human heart is possible,” he said, urging youth to draw on the strength of Mass and devotion to Mary as part of an effort to live a life of virtue.

“Your life is going to go way, far beyond the four walls of school,” he added, urging youth to reject the high school pressures to “have a girlfriend, have a boyfriend.”

“Take your time, find yourself. Love will find you,” he said.

Evert concluded his talk by assuring students of the deep and never-ending love that God has for them.

“It doesn’t matter how far away you think God is, he is always there, ready to welcome you home.”

## “Birds and Bees” theme of Serena social

BY ANNETTE BENTLER

Since 2006, Serena Saskatchewan has hosted a social for its teacher couples, user couples, and supporters. The theme for the 2016 event was “Birds and Bees” – reflected in the décor, menu (chicken), door prizes and even in the name of guest speaker Shawna Sparrow, provincial coordinator for Teen Aid. Sparrow, author of *My Adventures as a Chastity Educator*, spoke on how to approach the topic of sexuality with children.

Response to her message was positive. “One idea that stuck with me was that our children see as much of the world as we allow them to see or show them. A good reminder to guard the innocence of these little ones and for us too,” said Jackie Couture.

“Her wisdom about seeking out the age appropriate time to talk about sexual matters is important, and to do it at a level that the child will understand. Also to answer what the child is inquiring about at the time instead of divulging too much before the child is ready for the knowledge,” added Jim McLane.

“It was educational and encouraging. I’m glad to know that our children can be supported in the school system to choose to respect their bodies and the bodies of those around them,” shared Simone Mann.

Danielle Mase was not the only guest to be pleasantly surprised that about 80 per cent of the students in the Catholic high schools are not sexually active. When she was involved in youth



A banquet and guest speaker Shawna Sparrow were part of the annual Serena Saskatchewan social Feb. 6 in Saskatoon. - Photo by Jim McLane

ministry and holding chastity commitment celebrations, parents thought she was unrealistic to think teens could make it through high school without having sex. She replied, “You must think your child a very weak-willed individual if you wouldn’t give them the encouragement to make a prayerful decision and follow through with it in spite of the temptations of life...the more you expect of your child, the more they have the chance to confirm your belief in them. They might actually prove to you that they are fully capable of being responsible mature young adults.”

For more information about Serena Natural Family Planning, visit [www.saskserena.ca](http://www.saskserena.ca) or email: [sask@serena.ca](mailto:sask@serena.ca) or call/text (306) 934-8223.



### Celebrating St. John Paul II

Papal Day was marked Oct. 11, 2015 by the local chapter of the John Paul II Foundation at Our Lady of Czestochowa, the Polish parish in Saskatoon. Fr. Andrzej Wychucki celebrated Mass with prayers exactly as they were also being prayed in the Polish homeland. A painting of the canonization image of St. John Paul II was presented during the celebration by donors Andrzej and Liliana Klebek of the Foundation’s Kindersley Chapter. A program was also presented exploring the theme “Saint John Paul II – Patron of Families.” - Photo by Michel Kilanowski

# Justice and Outreach Year of Formation (JOY) launched: accepting applications for September

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A hands-on formation program grounded in Catholic social teaching will begin this September in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Recruitment for the Justice and Outreach Year of Formation (JOY) was launched Feb. 20 at a diocesan Congress Day presented in Saskatoon with a simultaneous broadcast to Humboldt and Kindersley.

To be held over 10 weekends once a month from September to June, JOY will cover a multitude of social justice themes, said JOY coordinator Kate O’Gorman, who is also serving as one of the coordinators of the diocesan Lay Formation program.

Learning and prayer will be part of the JOY process, but the main emphasis will be on practical experience and hands-on service, concretely linking Catholic social teaching with the real-life challenges experienced by people living on the margins.

In starting to coordinate the program and planning sessions, O’Gorman says she has already deepened her own understanding of the struggles and issues being faced by so many who are suffering in different ways in our community.

Helping JOY participants authentically encounter those situations, hearing those stories, reaching out to others – and then helping them “wrestle through” the experience is key to the program, she explained, describing how there will always be an attempt to discern: “Where is Jesus in those moments?”

As part of the commitment to the program, participants will be asked to undertake a field placement in an area of service or outreach that they feel called to – an estimated commitment of about two hours a week, in addition to the JOY program gatherings that will take place monthly on a Friday evening and all day Saturday.



Bishop Donald Bolen and JOY program coordinator Kate O’Gorman presented details about a new diocesan program focused on justice and service to Diocesan Pastoral Council in January (above), as well as at a Diocesan Congress Day in Saskatoon in February (the Congress Day presentation was also broadcast to gatherings in Humboldt and Kindersley.) The new Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) program will explore Catholic social teaching in a range of settings, with a view to practical, hands-on engagement, grounded in faith. Open to all, the JOY program will also serve as a preparatory year for any men who are discerning a call to the permanent diaconate in the diocese.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

The Friday evening will be a time to gather as a community, spend some time in theological reflection, talking about the experience of field placement, and “re-rooting ourselves in the gospel, in why we’re doing this program and why we are giving service,” said O’Gorman. The Saturday sessions will involve going out into the world to learn and to experience life and service at different locations in the community, related to each month’s social justice theme.

A range of themes will be addressed over the 10 weekends, with Saturday visits to various helping agencies and organizations to hear from those “on the ground” and the people they are

serving, she explained. Planned themes for the JOY program include international development and peace, economic injustice, refugees, Indigenous and Métis experience, poverty, human dignity, health and seniors’ care, hunger and food, care of the earth, and restorative justice.

O’Gorman described the JOY program as an introduction that will hopefully lead participants to discern where they are being called to explore justice teachings and issues more deeply, and to offer their service in response to those issues.

During the Congress Day presentation, two speakers came forward to give a sample of themes participants will explore in the JOY program.

In engaging and well-received presentations, Armella Sonntag, provincial animator for the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace spoke about international development and justice advocacy, and Lyndon Linklater of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner spoke about the meaning and the importance of treaties.

Representatives of parishes across the diocese, both in Saskatoon and at the satellite sites of Humboldt and Kindersley, discussed a range of topics related to the new JOY program, including what might be a reasonable fee, and how to involve rural participants.

There were also questions about how the program will

connect to the formation for permanent deacons.

Bishop Donald Bolen explained that the JOY program is open to everyone, but that in the diocese of Saskatoon it will also serve as a “propaedeutic” year of preparation and discernment for men who are experiencing a call to the permanent diaconate.

“We are setting up a model of diaconate formation that builds on the JOY formation,” he explained. Bishop Bolen reviewed the history of the diocesan discernment about ordaining permanent deacons, and the decision to strongly focus on a model of the diaconate as a ministry of service and outreach to those in need.

The bishop stressed that the diocese is working to avoid creating two tiers of the JOY program with a separate group of potential deacons. “They are just going to launch into it with everybody else.”

In February 2017, those men journeying through the JOY program who are interested in discerning the permanent diaconate would then begin to meet with a director to discuss possible future steps, suggested the bishop, describing how formation for deacons in the diocese will be undertaken on an individual basis, tailored to the education and experience of each candidate.

Bolen expressed appreciation for the vision of the JOY program. “I think it is going to be exciting. It very much resonates with Pope



- Photo courtesy of L’Osservatore Romano

“Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. The Lord gets involved and he involves his own, as he kneels to wash their feet. He tells his disciples: ‘You will be blessed if you do this.’”

Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 24

## JOY at a Glance:

**Purpose:** To facilitate growth in Christian service and discipleship through integrative and experiential learning.

**Content:** 10 weekends covering a multitude of social justice themes. Includes community time, theological reflection, education sessions and local agency experience.

**Schedule:** Friday 7 pm to 9:30 pm and Saturday 9 am to 4:15 pm followed by Mass and supper.

**Field Placement:** Each participant commits to a field placement for the duration of the program.

## You are invited to attend the Saskatoon Lay Formation Missioning Celebration

Diocesan and Aboriginal Catholic Streams



2:30 pm Sunday, June 5  
Cathedral of the Holy Family  
Reception to Follow

For more information about the JOY program:  
[www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/joy](http://www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/joy) or call (306) 659-5847