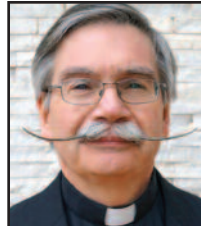




Support for Marriage
Diocesan Marriage Task Force chairs Phil and Mary Wrubleski are exploring innovative ways to support marriages.

MARRIAGE • Page 21



Vocations:
Two priestly ordinations will be celebrated in our diocese on June 29.

VOCATIONS • Page 21



Newsletter of the Diocese of Saskatoon

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• SPRING EDITION • MAY 2017

Meeting Pope Francis is highlight of Ad Limina

Saskatchewan bishops remain hopeful about TRC call for papal visit

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Although a papal visit to Canada is by no means certain, the Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan remain hopeful about a recent invitation asking Pope Francis to visit the province to meet with Indigenous leaders, elders and residential school survivors.

Canadian bishops were informed earlier this year that Pope Francis will not be visiting Canada in 2017, but may consider a visit in 2018 or 2019.

"Pope Francis receives many invitations, far more than he can accept," said Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina, "but we remain hopeful. Our Indigenous brothers and sisters have asked him to come to Canada, and we support them in this request." A papal visit and apology for Catholic participation in residential schools is one of 94 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action.

"It is our deepest hope and prayer that this will help to bring healing to some of the deepest wounds in the Canadian Church and society," said Bolen. "We want to be a part of the healing and reconciliation process."

• PAPAL VISIT • Page 2



Pope Francis greets Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee during the Ad Limina visit of Western Canadian Bishops to Rome this spring. "It was just a wonderful experience to be there and to be in the presence of Pope Francis," said McGee, who was able to spend a few personal moments with the pontiff, speaking briefly in Spanish about his recent visit to Argentina (Pope Francis' homeland).

- Photo by Servizio Fotografico de L'Osservatore Romano

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Participating in the Ad Limina visit of Western Canadian bishops to the Vatican March 27-April 2 was an unexpected blessing, says Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee.

It just happened that the visit coincided with McGee's term as Diocesan Administrator, while the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon awaits a bishop. "It was a very providential moment," says McGee. "I was privileged and blessed and honoured to attend with the bishops and archbishops of Western Canada."

An Ad Limina visit by a region's bishops includes a pilgrimage to the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul, information sessions with various Vatican departments (Dicastries), and a meeting with the pope.

"It introduced me to a level of participation in the church that I am not accustomed to," said McGee. Even the simple act of changing into a cassock for the papal audience marked the uniqueness of the experience.

"All of us sat down together in a large room where Pope Francis invited a very casual, informal conversation," McGee said. The 2.5-hour talk did have a moderator, however: the Holy Father asked McGee, as the youngest in the assembly, to take on that somewhat daunting role.

Bishops and archbishops would in turn raise issues of concern, asking Pope Francis for his insights. Topics discussed included youth disaffected with faith, the refugee crisis, and relationships with Indigenous People.

Pope Francis returned again and again to the theme of prayer being foundational, said McGee. "And there was an emphasis on listening, of not being afraid to get close to the needs of the people." Pope Francis also spoke of the importance of relationships, of community, in fully experiencing the fruits and gifts of the Spirit at work in us as Church," he said.

McGee said he was struck by Pope Francis' energy, his sense of joy and hospitality, and his attention. "There was not a moment when he was distracted or seemed like he needed to be somewhere else. He was fully, 100 per cent present with us. He is the real deal."

GSCS statement about court ruling denying funding for non-Catholic students attending Catholic schools

Diane Boyko, Chair of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools sent the following message to the GSCS community about the court ruling in the Theodore School case on April 26, 2017. (At the time of publication there was no official word of an Appeal)

On April 20, 2017, Justice Donald Layh ruled on a court case (commonly known as the Theodore case) that the Government of Saskatchewan could no longer fund non-Catholic students attending Catholic schools in Saskatchewan starting June 30, 2018. This has raised many questions and created some degree of uncertainty for many students, parents, staff and other members of our Catholic school community.

The two most common questions I hear are:

- What does this mean for me and my children? and
- What can I do?

Although there is no easy answer to the first question, I assure you that we remain a welcoming community, and our doors continue to be open to all families who choose a Catholic education for your children. The decision is about funding; it does not state non-Catholics cannot attend Catholic schools.

• DIANE BOYKO MESSAGE ON COURT RULING • Page 2



Holocaust survivor speaks at Cathedral of Holy Family

Students reach out to shake hands with Holocaust Survivor Bill Glied March 17 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. When young Bill Glied was taken with his family to Auschwitz, he was close in age to some 2,000 students from area schools who gathered at the Catholic cathedral for the Holocaust education program organized by Agudas Congregation Israel Synagogue. Describing his childhood growing up with a mom, a dad and a younger sister, Glied connected with his young audience, sharing heart-wrenching details of his life, including being taken with his family to the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. His mother and sister were murdered in the gas chambers, while he and his father were sent to Dachau as slave labourers. He was the only member of his family to survive, coming to Canada in 1947 as one of 1000 Holocaust orphans accepted into the country. Heather Fenyes of Congregation Agudas Israel (right) also spoke, noting that the Holocaust did not happen overnight. "It began with dangerous speech, and from small seeds it grew to a vast killing machine." Rabbi Claudio Jodorkovsky thanked the Catholic diocese and Holy Family pastor Fr. David Tumback for providing the facility for the education program for the second year. Tumback spoke on behalf of the Catholic community, expressing thanks to Glied for his message: "By retelling this story that Bill told us, we ensure that such a tragedy will never happen again." See the full article about Bill Glied's talk, posted at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Ministry and mission continue as diocese awaits a new bishop



With the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon still awaiting the appointment of a bishop, Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner graciously presided at the annual diocesan celebration of the Chrism Mass at the start of Holy Week, April 10, blessing the sacred oils – the oil of the sick, the oil of catechumens and the sacred chrism – which were taken back by parish representatives from across the diocese to be used in celebration of sacraments in the year ahead.
- Photo by Tim Yaworski

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Friends and colleagues from across the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon bid farewell to their seventh bishop Oct. 12, 2016 in a celebration that also marked Most Rev. Donald Bolen’s 25th anniversary of ordination. Two days later, Bolen was installed as Archbishop of Regina.

Shortly afterward, the diocesan consultors selected former Vicar General Fr. Kevin McGee to serve as Diocesan Administrator until a new bishop is appointed. As of press time for this spring edition of the Diocesan Newsletter, the diocese was still waiting for a bishop.

The proclamation of the gospel and the ministry and mission of the church across the diocese continues, but there is a longing for a shepherd, says McGee.

During a recent visit to Rome for the Ad Limina visit of Western Canadian bishops and archbishops, a Dicastery visit to the Congregation of Bishops stands out for McGee – partly because the prefect was McGee’s former seminary rector, Cardinal Marc Ouellet, but also because discussion about selecting a bishop resonates for someone from the diocese of Saskatoon.

“It gave me some insight into what that process is about, and really the seriousness – obviously – that is applied, and the discernment process of ultimately choosing the one who will be the bishop of a diocese, and hopefully, soon, a bishop of our diocese,” McGee says. “We heard how a diocese needs a bishop -- how a diocese without a bishop leaves the people somehow orphaned.”

That image resonated for McGee, who suggests this time of waiting helps us recognize the value and importance of having a bishop.

“We are a church that expresses itself through the leadership of a bishop, these shepherds that connect us to the universal church. So, not only from the bottom up do we feel orphaned, but from the top down we also lose that link,” he says.

“I think we are at the stage now, at six or seven months of not having a bishop, where that longing is beginning to express itself with a heightened sense of readiness – a deep readiness.”

McGee asked the faithful to continue to pray for the diocese and our future bishop.

Bishops reflect on invitation; acknowledge complexity of papal calendar

(Continued from Page 1)

The bishops of Saskatchewan stress that the principal vision for a visit by Pope Francis would be to meet with, listen to and address Indigenous people.

The decision to support a request for Pope Francis to come to Canada – and the idea that such a visit might be particularly appropriate in Saskatchewan – first arose out of conversations with Indigenous leaders in this province as church leaders listened to the TRC Calls to Action, and sought ways to join First Nations and Métis brothers and sisters in the work of healing, reconciliation and relationship-building.

The TRC Final Report released in June 2015 presented 94 Calls to Action, including #58, for a papal apology on Canadian soil for Catholic involvement in residential schools and the spiritual, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of Indigenous children that happened in Catholic-run residential schools. Catholic dioceses and religious orders operated some 60 per cent of the government-mandated schools that operated in Canada for over a century.

“We continue to grow in our awareness of more of the negative pieces of our colonial Canadian

history. We recognize more openly the good and the negative parts our Catholic Church has played in the historical encounter between the colonizers and those being colonized,” said Archbishop Murray Chatlain of the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas.

“Our fervent prayer is that a visit by Pope Francis could promote a mature, ongoing relationship. This visit may act as a catalyst to valuing the spiritual traditions and culture of our Indigenous people along with all the other cultural backgrounds that make up our Canadian Catholic population. We have things to learn from each other,” Chatlain said.

An encounter between Pope Francis and the Aboriginal and Métis people of Canada is of great importance to healing relationships that were damaged, said Bishop Albert Thériault of the diocese of Prince Albert.

“With good intentions, the Church joined the colonial power while serving the poor. Was this a contradiction? Many have suffered and were hurt. Traditions and belief were destroyed. The consequences are still visible today. Together we must put before us a plan of action and in dialogue with one another,” Thériault said.

Bishop Bryan Bayda of the

Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon expressed support for any efforts that will heal families.

The idea of a visit from Pope Francis is generating interest and excitement in the province.

“If it comes about, this would represent the first occasion that the province of Saskatchewan would enjoy a papal visit, and particularly from a pope who speaks in such profound ways to the needs of the marginalized of our society,” said Fr. Kevin McGee, Diocesan Administrator for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

“The bishops would welcome such a visit as an opportunity for Pope Francis to speak words of healing and reconciliation on behalf of the Catholic Church to our Indigenous brothers and sisters who have experienced deep wounds as a result of colonization as well as abuses that took place in residential schools that were under the direction of Catholic leadership,” he said.

“A papal visit would also be a celebration of our faith, affirming the various ways we are called to witness to a gospel of love and mercy in our families, society, environment and world,” McGee added.

The papal invitation must be kept in perspective, and is not a certainty, cautioned Bolen.

“The Holy Father is only able

to make a small number of international trips in any given year, and the world’s needs are many. Nonetheless, even the possibility of a papal visit necessitates a great deal of planning,” Bolen said.

Research into what is involved, and preliminary conversations with Indigenous leaders and with various levels of government and civic authorities have been initiated, said Don Gorsalitz of the Diocese of Saskatoon Catholic Foundation.

“Building the financial capacity to host a papal visit is also underway,” he said.

Wanuskewin Heritage Park near Saskatoon – a place that for the past 6,000 years has been rich in Indigenous culture, spirituality and history – has been identified and supported by the Indigenous

community as a desirable location for a papal apology, Gorsalitz added.

Beyond a possible papal visit, the Catholic dioceses and eparchy in Saskatchewan are continuing to build relationships and to seek ways to stand in solidarity with Indigenous people, added the archbishop of Regina.

“It is now an appropriate and critical time for renewed commitment for our Church to work alongside Indigenous Peoples in the pursuit of justice and well-being. For generations there have been those who have built bridges and strengthened relations, but the Truth and Reconciliation report rightly summons all of us to take responsibility for the past and to work towards a different and healthier future,” Bolen said.



History of the Archbishop’s ring

At the close of the historic Second Vatican Council, participating bishops were presented with a specially-commissioned pastoral ring featuring images of Peter and Paul and Jesus. One such Vatican II bishop’s ring was presented at that time to the Archbishop of Regina, Most Rev. Michael O’Neill – the ring was later worn by Archbishop Charles Halpin, and was on Archbishop Halpin’s hand when he ordained Donald Bolen to the priesthood on Oct. 12, 1991. Archbishop Halpin willed that after his death the ring should go to the next priest from the Archdiocese of Regina to be made a bishop – and so it came to Most Rev. James Weisgerber when he was ordained bishop of Saskatoon in 1996. The ring went with Weisgerber when he was named Archbishop of Winnipeg in 2000. Now retired and living again in Regina, Archbishop Emeritus James Weisgerber (left) presented the ring to newly-named Archbishop Donald Bolen, another former bishop of Saskatoon, on the evening that Bolen was installed as shepherd of the Archdiocese of Regina on Oct. 14, 2016. And so the historic Vatican II ring returned to an Archbishop of Regina, again worn by a priest raised and ordained in the prairie diocese.

- Photo by Kiply Lukan Yaworski

GSCS statement about court ruling on Catholic schools

(Continued from Page 1)

It is important to note that the decision does not refute the constitutional rights for separate schools. This court ruling will have no impact on our current plans to open six new schools in September 2017 (four in Saskatoon, one in Warman and one in Martensville).

The Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association (SCSBA) has indicated that they are reviewing the details of the ruling and are seriously considering an appeal. We hope to hear more on this soon.

On April 24, both Premier Brad Wall and Education Minister Don Morgan publically stated their concern over the ruling and their support of parental choice. They are considering their legal options that include an appeal and invoking the notwithstanding clause of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The government’s position is encouraging to say the least. And this brings us to my answer to “What can I do?”

I believe that it is time to help our community leaders understand how important Catholic education is and encourage their continued support. You can let your elected officials (your MLA, the Minister of Education Don Morgan, Premier Brad Wall, and Leader of the NDP Trent Wotherspoon) know you endorse the government’s position and that you want the government to pursue any measure necessary to continue funding all students who choose Catholic education (a list of MLAs is at www.legassembly.sk.ca/mlas).

You can write your own letter or email, or use a sample letter that we have drafted for your convenience (available at www.gscs.ca).

I thank you for your continued support of Catholic education and ask for your prayers through this difficult situation.

Sincerely,

Diane Boyko
Board of Education Chair
Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools

More information at: www.scsba.ca/theodore-case

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Work and ministry at the Catholic Pastoral Centre

BY BLAKE SITTLER

DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL SERVICES

(I have been told by some people that they cannot tell when I am joking in my writing so I will put any attempts at humour in brackets.)

When I first started working at St. Patrick's Parish in Saskatoon in 1996, my mom could not comprehend what I did as a lay person working in the church *(so to keep it simple, she told people I was a deacon.)* My mother's heresy aside, many people still wonder what our role is here at the Catholic Pastoral Centre. Here's how I describe our work and ministry:

The Catholic Pastoral Centre assists our bishop, *(when we have one)*, in offering services and ministries to support the needs of our urban and rural parishes.

Some of the offices are canonically mandated. This means that they are officially deemed necessary by the Code of Canon Law. These include the Office of the Bishop; the Vicar General, Fr. Kevin McGee; the Judicial Vicar, Fr. Marvin Lishchynsky; and the Marriage Tribunal, including our 40-year veteran, Donna Rogal; our diocesan ecumenical officer, Nicholas Jesson; the diocesan Chancellor, Fr. Clement Amofah; our archivist, Margaret Sanche; and finally, the finance department: Tanya Clarke, Kevin Bentler and Denesta Lambert. Together, these offices are often called the Chancery. They are the foundation of a diocesan office.

The ministry offices are called Pastoral Services. I manage them in my role as the Director.

These offices include those folks who deal directly with parish leadership like Michelle Sieben, Elan Ehresman, and Lynda Statchuk in Christian



Director's Cut
Blake Sittler

Initiation and Catechetics. Some of the offices are umbrella services that support and promote ministry that is happening in some parishes like Colm Leyne's work with the Youth Ministry and Vocations Office and Myron Rogal's work with Justice and Peace.

Michelle, Elan, Lynda, Colm and Myron offer assistance to all those who respond to the Lord's call to spread the Good News of the God who created us in love.

Some offices provide ministry on behalf of the parishes where no one parish could be expected to serve. These particular offices act as a doorway for parishes to participate in some of the most basic calls from Jesus.

Here I would highlight Dianne Anderson's work in prisons through the Restorative Ministry Office, Jackie Saretsky's work in hospital chaplaincy, and Christine Zyla's work with refugee sponsorship in the Office of Migration.

Dianne, Jackie and Christine do not simply do this work in the name of the diocese — they

invite us all to consider Christ's call for us to offer compassion and forgiveness to the prisoner, to visit the sick and to offer welcome to the stranger.

Some of our offices offer ongoing faith formation and education to parishes. Mona Goodman in Lay Formation and Kate O'Gorman in the Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation both create creative spaces where all of us can deepen our own faith and have perception-altering experiences *(insert your own soon-to-be-legalized marijuana joke here)*. Mona and Kate facilitate programs that are available to every individual in the diocese — and they are taking applications for next year's programs today!

Communication in any diocese is complicated — it involves advocacy, raising awareness, and media relations, as well as event promotion and coverage. Every week, there are dozens of events, meetings, or training nights going on, some organized by the parishes, some by the Knights of Columbus, CWL or other partner groups, and some by the diocese. Many wonderful events take place in small rural parishes that we never hear about, and other large diocesan events happen and people say: "I never even heard about it." Balancing this barrel of monkeys is Kiply Lukan Yaworski.

Behind every good office is a cadre of administrative assistance. At the Catholic Centre this includes Brigitte Buehler and Vyenda McLean at reception, as well as support provided by Lois McKay, Sharon Leyne, Rita Taylor and, in the Bishop's Office, Colette Chantler.

We also have Christine Schurr coming in once a week — she used to come in as a student in a work program and we liked

her so much that when she graduated, we kept her on staff.

Nearly 25 years ago, in June 1992, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' penned, "From Pain to Hope" which was the report from the *ad hoc* committee on child sexual abuse.

That document recommended that all Catholic Bishops of Canada appoint someone to oversee accusations of sexual abuse and misconduct. For over two decades, that role was filled by the late Fr. Paul Donlevy. In the last five years, I have filled this role, which is now called Diocesan Coordinator of Care.

In this role, I am responsible for ensuring annual opportunities for education, speaking at parishes when invited, and taking the calls when they come. Over the next year, we will be renewing our call for fresh Criminal Record Checks and we will be offering new training for our local parish contacts.

One of the newest members of our team is Patrick Clarke in Human Resources (HR). Anyone who has ever worked in a company with an HR Manager, may think of this person as the individual who hires and fires people, but this is not the fullness of the role. Patrick sees his role as the development of practices that lead to a better work environment in both the parish and in our own offices.

This includes everything from hiring processes and ongoing evaluations to healthier ways of handling conflict in the workplace *(luckily, since there is never, ever any conflict in the church: Patrick often takes well-deserved naps in the afternoon)*. The practices that are coming from this growing field has challenged us as a church to be honest and fair and Christian in our dealings with each other.

At the Catholic Centre we also work closely with the staff of the Diocese of Saskatoon Catholic Foundation, the fund-raising and development arm of the diocese.

Don Gorsalitz is the director of the Catholic Foundation. Cathie Rogers and Cathy Gilje ensure that the Bishop's Annual Appeal and other fund-raising initiatives run smoothly. Jocelyne Hamoline in the Planned Giving Office, along with support person Helen Zimmer, works hard to ensure that our diocese and parishes develop a healthy spirit of stewardship, and they help us find the resources needed to continue our mission.

I also want to take time to mention Ashly and Gino Hanns who take care of our office space. *(If they ever invite you over to supper — go! Ashly's cooking is like a five-course tour through Mediterranean cuisine and, if you are lucky, maybe Gino will play you a tune on his guitar.)*

I have been to many other dioceses in Canada and visited several of their administrative offices. I feel very confident in stating that we have a very strong and capable staff in our diocesan office. I continue to invite anyone who is interested in the work that we are so blessed to do to call me with any questions or concerns that you may have regarding our mandate.

Our next bishop, whoever he is, is a very lucky man. He will be coming into a diocese that has strong leadership at both the parish and diocesan levels. He will be responsible for the care of a region filled with people like you, who consider their Catholic faith to be at the core of who we are and I look forward to working with him. Holy Spirit, we are ready!

Parishes called to form and equip intentional disciples of Jesus Christ

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Parishes are called to be places of lay formation, said Katherine Coolidge of the Catherine of Sienna Institute, at a diocesan Study Days session offering practical suggestions for how parishes can create intentional disciples.

The October 2016 session was "part two," following on Coolidge's presentation at the previous year's Study Days in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Based on two books written by Sherry Weddell — *Forming Intentional Disciples: the Path to Knowing and Following Jesus* and *Becoming a Parish of Intentional Disciples* — the presentations focused on providing insights into evangelization and practical suggestions for how parishes can encourage deep and authentic encounters with Jesus Christ, with the goal of forming missionary disciples who will, in turn, evangelize and nurture other disciples. Coolidge encouraged participants to wrestle with what the process might look like in their own parishes.

Creating a parish culture of discipleship is not a quick fix, but a process of conversion and transformation that can eventually build a faith community where



Diocesan Study Days facilitator Katherine Coolidge (left) with Rita Taylor, executive assistant to the pastoral director in the diocese of Saskatoon. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Christians are called and equipped to be intentional disciples, she said.

"We can't rely on our maintenance mode any more," she said. "We are now called to mission."

Building a parish as a place of trust, with a culture of spiritual accompaniment

and evangelization, becomes the basis for calling forth a deeper, life-changing commitment to living as a disciple of Jesus Christ, she said.

"Institutions do not make disciples. People make disciples."

Parishes should begin by making disciples of adults, who will then be key to making disciples of children and youth, she added.

At times, a parish's culture will unintentionally suppress spiritual growth and conversion, she pointed out. "We have too often come to accept religious identity without personal faith as normal," she said. The consequence is that the graces many Catholics have received may "bear little fruit" — it is as if we have received a gift that sits unopened, Coolidge described.

Using examples of personal conversion, parish transformation, and historical moments of renewal throughout her presentation, Coolidge shared stories and encouraged participants to visualize steps to be taken in their own particular ministry or parish.

Steps to becoming a parish of intentional disciples were presented, and included laying a foundation of organized

intercessory prayer in the parish, offering multiple opportunities to encounter Jesus in the midst of the church, and "breaking the silence" to encourage and equip Catholics to share both their personal faith story and the Jesus story with others.

Throughout the two days Coolidge challenged participants to come up with practical ideas for intercessory prayer, opportunities to encounter Jesus and ways of encouraging personal faith sharing.

She encouraged participants to identify concrete actions that would be within reach (but still a stretch) and sustainable for their own faith community — actions which would honour the parish's culture, gifts and traditions, while calling the community to mission.

Following Study Days Oct. 19-20, 2016, Coolidge also offered a Called and Gifted workshop in Saskatoon on Oct. 21, designed to help individuals discover God's call and to discern their charisms and gifts.

The theme continued in the diocese with a "Parishes of Discipleship" session Oct. 29, featuring several parish leaders sharing insights into various renewal programs and initiatives underway across the diocese.

Agnes Pelletier’s caring service highlighted

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Friends and colleagues gathered March 2 to honour Agnes Pelletier on her retirement after eight and a half years as the bishop’s assistant in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Since July 2008, Pelletier has served as executive assistant to two bishops and two diocesan administrators: Bishop Albert LeGatt, now Archbishop of St. Boniface; Diocesan Administrator Rev. Ron Beechinor, now retired; Bishop Donald Bolen, now Archbishop of Regina; and Rev. Kevin McGee, presently serving as Diocesan Administrator as the diocese again awaits appointment of a bishop.

Pelletier is known for her calm, gentle presence and spirit of hospitality, said Blake Sittler, Director of Pastoral Services during a brief program at the reception held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

Mona Goodman, coordinator of the diocesan Lay Formation program, spoke about Pelletier’s 10-plus years of volunteer service on the Lay Formation team, after her own graduation from the program in 1994. “We were very pleased and blessed to have Agnes as part of Lay Formation,” said Goodman, recalling how Agnes was often the one holding and rocking infants who accompanied parents to the program.

Dubbing her “Agnes of God,” McGee said there is no way to measure the many lives Pelletier has touched in her years of service.

In addition to expressing his own appreciation for the support Pelletier has provided to him during his time as chair of the



At a retirement celebration March 2, Diocesan Administrator Kevin McGee expressed thanks on behalf of the diocese of Saskatoon to Agnes Pelletier, who has served as executive assistant to the bishop since July 2008.

- Photo by Tim Yaworski

Council of Priests, as Vicar General and now as Diocesan Administrator, McGee also read messages from former Saskatoon bishops LeGatt and Bolen.

“Nine years ago you accepted to take on the many responsibilities of being my Executive Assistant. I am sure you didn’t quite know what that would all entail. However, you took on the challenge with openness and generosity, with professionalism, and especially with a smile,” wrote LeGatt.

“It was such a blessing for me to work together with you for the benefit of all in the diocese of Saskatoon,” said the Archbishop of St. Boniface.

“You taught me much and you encouraged me even more. Thank you from the bottom of my heart

for helping me to grow as a Shepherd for God’s people,” LeGatt said.

Bolen said that working with Pelletier for six and a half years – his entire time as bishop of Saskatoon – was a great privilege and a blessing. “Day in and day out, Agnes and I worked closely together in navigating the many challenges and tasks that came across my desk,” he said. “Agnes’ competence and conscientiousness was extraordinary, and the whole diocese benefited greatly from that, in countless ways.”

Bolen said that such impact is often hidden. “I think we underestimate just how much the health of the diocese is affected by the hidden work of the women and men who make the pastoral centre thrive, and the bishop’s

administrative assistant is at the hub of much of that activity – at the hub of almost everything that involves the bishop.”

Bolen cited Pelletier’s generous service – that so often went “above and beyond” – and her deep compassion and commitment as a Christian disciple.

“Agnes, thanks for being a great friend, a great companion in ministry, a great servant of God’s people,” Bolen wrote.

Garth Horn presented a poem written by Pelletier (while on a nine-day Ignatian retreat) that he put to music: “I felt the grace of God when I read it, and when I was inspired to put music to it,” said Horn of the song “Come Dance.”

“I am truly overwhelmed,” said Pelletier, expressing her



With Agnes Pelletier’s recent retirement, Colette Chantler has now been hired as executive assistant to the bishop. A member of St. Philip Neri parish in Saskatoon, a graduate of Lay Formation program, and an active member of the Lay Formation Alumni Association, Chantler has served as the executive assistant to the CEO of Genome Prairie in Saskatoon for the past eight years.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

gratitude at the conclusion of the program.

“Certainly my life has been a dance with God, and these last eight years with the diocese have been an incredible dance... it has been such grace and such blessing.”

Pelletier described the richness of encountering “the folks” across the diocese during her years of service.

“As Bishop Don and I travelled to confirmations and to rural parishes where I thought I wouldn’t know anyone, there was (often) a familiar face – someone from Lay Formation – and I just felt at home.”

With Pelletier’s retirement, Colette Chantler has been hired as executive assistant to the bishop, effective Feb. 1.

HR manager assists with employment matters across the diocese

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

“Here is the church, here is the steeple: open the door and see all the people.”

With that simple childhood finger play, Patrick J. Clarke summarizes why the church needs to address human resources issues – because the church involves people.

Wherever there are human beings serving as managers and employees, there will be a need to deal with conflict resolution, job descriptions and employment policies, as well as hiring, firing, and everything in between, says Clarke, who began working as the fulltime Human Resources (HR) Manager for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon in the fall of 2016.

“We may think that because we are a Church, and we are all about love, we don’t have these kinds of problems – but we do,” Clarke told a recent gathering of deanery and diocesan representatives on the former Diocesan Pastoral Council, which acts as a consultative body when there is a bishop in place. (The group has continued to meet with diocesan leadership pending the appointment of a new bishop.)

Clarke brings his training in business administration (BAC 2016) and his 22 years of experience in church ministry and



Patrick Clarke, Human Resources Manager, Diocese of Saskatoon

leadership to this new role of assisting the diocese with all matters relating to employment and employee management.

Employees of the diocese of Saskatoon include anyone hired in any of the diocese’s 95 parishes – Parish Life Directors (PLDs), pastoral associates, youth ministers, bookkeepers, secretaries and maintenance personnel – as well as those employed in the ministries and offices at the Chancery or Catholic Pastoral Centre. Priests are not considered employees as they are serving by virtue of a vocational call, but the diocesan HR Manager can provide assistance with issues affecting clergy as well, and support for

their role as managers of parish employees. The HR office can also assist with nurturing healthy relationships with church volunteers, notes Clarke.

He describes the HR dual role of either “helping” or “dealing” with relationships as being on a continuum.

The more time and energy that is proactively spent “helping” things go well in relationships, the less time will be spent “dealing” with things that go wrong – just as with any of our other relationships in life, Clarke says.

“When it comes to the employment relationship, beginning well is really the key,” he adds.

Clarifying job descriptions and finding ways to place “the right people in the right jobs doing the right things” is critical to avoid conflict down the line. A thorough orientation and “onboarding” period of enculturation and socialization for new employees is also important, as is ongoing training and development, and regular job reviews. Clear, consistent and effective policies and management practices also prevent problems.

“It is incumbent upon management to make this whole thing work. It’s too easy to blame the employees when it isn’t working,” Clarke says. “If you manage a staff, it is your job to

make this work. But the managers need help. All our clergy, our PLDs, all our managers need help – especially in navigating the people business.”

That’s precisely where Clarke provides assistance, both in addressing individual situations and working on diocesan policies.

When it comes to conflict resolution, Clarke will sit with the parties involved to try and hammer out an agreement or solution.

In situations of correction or discipline, Clarke works with the manager to ensure there is really a problem, whether the planned correction is appropriate and proportional, and how to craft the message that needs to be delivered to an employee – as well as coaching managers on how to manage the relationship after the fact.

As for job termination, there are steps Clarke takes to ensure termination is carried out legally, fairly and respectfully. “As the HR Manager, my role is an impartial role – I’m not on the side of management and I’m not on the side of the employee. So, I need to provide support to two individuals and to one group of people,” he says, listing the manager, the terminated employee and the surviving staff as those that “need a listening ear.”

With true pastoral spirit, Clarke is eager to focus on the “helping tools” he can offer when it comes to the selection and mentoring of employees across the diocese, and on minimizing and preventing conflict. This includes a Work Personality Index, the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Model, and an Arbinger Institute tool for moving people from an inward to an outward mindset.

Updating the diocese’s administration manual and various employment policies is another priority, along with fine-tuning the “onboarding” process for new employees, and continuing to work on orientation resources for new clergy coming to the diocese from other countries.

Director of Pastoral Services Blake Sittler says Clarke’s role is vital in the diocese. “I have seen so many good people leave work in the church with a black eye, and that’s unfortunate,” says Sittler, stressing good HR policies can help the church build and sustain healthy relationships.

“Some may fear that HR policies will create a corporate-like atmosphere,” Sittler says. “But in reality, the policies that Pat will be developing will lead to more fairness, more dialogue, more ongoing evaluation, and frankly, to better ministry,” Sittler said.

'My Catholic Story' video series launched during Lent

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A new video series in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon features ordinary Catholics sharing faith as inspiration and witness.

The first installment of the "My Catholic Story" video series was released to mark the beginning of Lent, reported Sharon Leyne, who worked with Fr. Darryl Millette to produce the videos.

"The Lenten season was a good time to reflect on our story, why am I Catholic? How did I get here and how can I share it with those I meet? It is in telling our story that we can step back and see how God has been working not just in our life but in the church as a whole," said Leyne.

"We are not meant to keep our journey to ourselves, as Christians we are called to share," she added.

"Sharon and I decided to do the series after our first diocesan Study Days with Katherine Coolidge of the Catherine of Sienna Institute," said Millette. "One thing Katherine Coolidge mentioned was the need to 'break the silence,' that is, to tell our stories of faith in order to give encouragement and to break the isolation that people often feel."

In 2015 and again in 2016, Coolidge spoke to diocesan leaders in Saskatoon about the importance of sharing personal faith stories to bring others closer to God (see article on Page 3).

"I have seen first-hand the power that a testimony can have on others," said Leyne. "We encounter people daily who may not be ready to hear about church teaching or theology, but the moment you begin to share your journey, your life experience; that is when ears open and hearts soften."

The first five-minute "My Catholic



Fr. Darryl Millette works with equipment during a recent taping of an interview for a new "My Catholic Story" video series in the diocese of Saskatoon. Millette is working with Sharon Leyne to produce the series, with the first video released in time for Lent.

- Photo by Sharon Leyne

Story" video features an interview with Heather Buchholz, whose experience attending World Youth Day in Brazil as a non-Catholic prompted a great hunger for the Eucharist – a longing that eventually led her to join the Catholic Church.

The video interview has been posted on the diocesan website and has been shared on YouTube and through social media.

Several more "My Catholic Story" videos are currently in production.

"We have an interview with a father of four, as well as a woman who has

"We encounter people daily who may not be ready to hear about church teaching or theology, but the moment you begin to share your journey, your life experience – that is when ears open and hearts soften." - Sharon Leyne

triumphed over unspeakable tragedy and has devoted her life to helping those in prison," said Leyne.

"Our hope right now is to release a video for each liturgical season in order to give people the opportunity to reflect on their story. I find that in each season, be it Lent, Advent, or Ordinary Time, we tend to view our story with that lens and perhaps tell it differently."

Leyne and Millette have personally felt the power of the faith stories that they are hearing as they interview, videotape and edit the series.

"The process of interviewing has been very uplifting to me, as I hear these stories from people. I feel very privileged to have been able to witness and record the three interviews we've done so far," said Millette.

"What started as a fun idea has become a form of deeper conversion for me," said Leyne. "I am left in awe and overwhelming admiration for the people we have interviewed so far. It is not easy to bare your heart in front of a camera, and these people have been so generous in doing so."

She added: "Each interview has changed the way I think, the way I feel, the way I act and speak, some in large ways and others in small important ways. Each person has also challenged me to judge less and to listen more to everyone I encounter. If we were all to take that to heart, how different would our community, our Church look?"

Leyne stressed the importance of building connections to nurture and affirm faith. "There is a need now more than ever for relationship, to feel connected. It is through feeling connected that we feel we belong somewhere. By being honest and opening ourselves up to others, sharing what we have been through – the good the bad and the ugly – not only can we transform those who can relate, but we transform ourselves too."

Choosing to share faith stories through video involved "two film and tech nerds seeing an opportunity to not only get these stories out there and change lives, and introduce people to our own church community, but also to play with some really cool gadgets," said Leyne, a mother of two who works part time at the Catholic Pastoral Centre in Saskatoon.

"Audio and video along with social media have been hobbies of mine for a while and so it seemed like a natural way to share stories from people," added Millette, a diocesan priest who currently serves as pastor of Holy Spirit in Saskatoon.

More interviews are being planned, he said. "If anyone would like to share their story of faith, they can feel free to contact us. I can be reached on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram – @frdarryl."

This series is not just about one person's story, it is an invitation for all to step out in courage to share faith, stressed Leyne.

"Your story may be the one someone needs to hear."

New Evangelization Summit video streamed at Bruno May 12-13

For the third consecutive year, a New Evangelization Summit live-streamed host site will be available in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

The 2017 host site is St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission in Bruno, SK., some 90 km east of Saskatoon, running from 7 p.m. Friday, May 12 until 4:30 p.m. Saturday, May 13, with an option to attend Saturday only.

The New Evangelization Summit is a conference hosted in Ottawa and live-streamed to some 40 host sites across North America, making available some of the most dynamic, inspirational speakers in the Catholic Church today.

Guest speakers this year include **Bishop Robert Barron**, Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles and founder of Word on Fire Ministries (which produced the popular Catholicism series); **Sr. Miriam James Heidland, SOLT**, author of *Loved As I Am*; **Peter Herbeck**, director of Missions for Renewal Ministries – and many others.

The vision of the New Evangelization Summit is that the whole Church would be united in the mission of evangelization, and trained to be able to fully live out their identity as "missionary disciples," in the words of Pope Francis.

The New Evangelization Summit offers inspiration to all the baptized, but will be of particular interest to anyone involved in pastoral work,



outreach, catechesis, teaching, or ministry; to priests and parish life directors; and to members of Parish Pastoral Councils.

Register for the Bruno live-stream event (cost is \$35) online: www.NewEvangelization.ca

For overnight accommodations call St. Therese directly at (306) 369-2555 to book a room/ breakfast for an additional \$35 or go to: www.St-T.ca/nas to book a room.

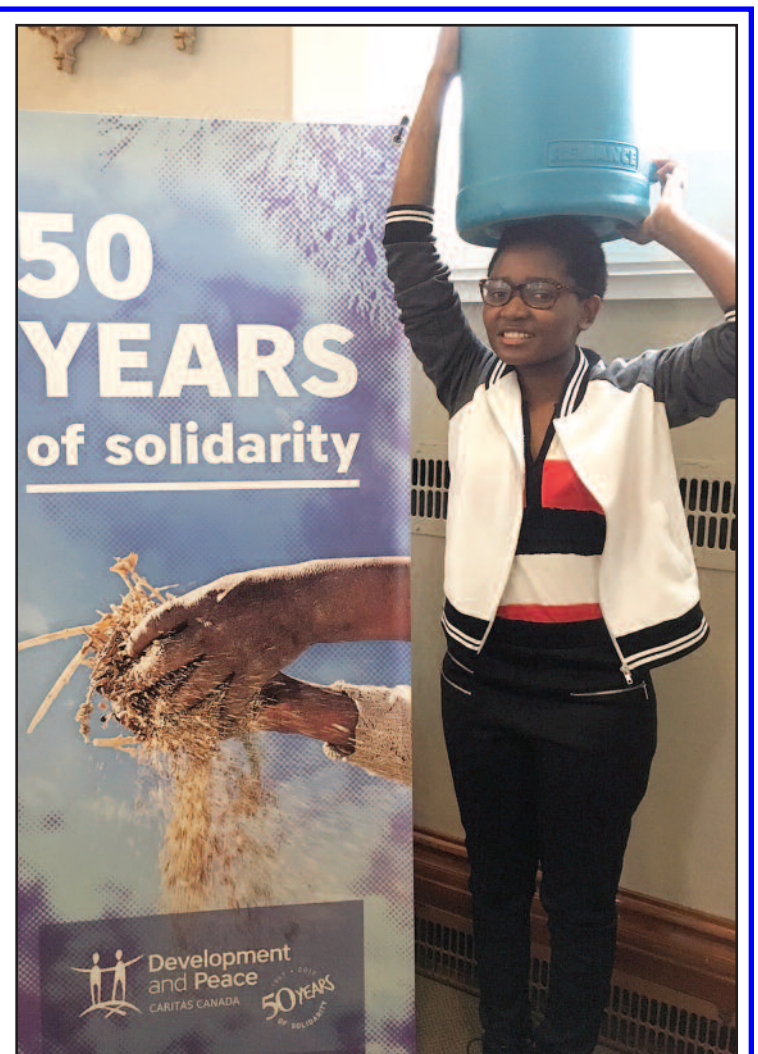
Those who can only attend the NES on Saturday are asked to also register online for the conference and then join the video streaming host event at St. Therese Institute in Bruno from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 13.



St. John Bosco CWL supports Habitat for Humanity

Members of the Catholic Women's League of St. John Bosco parish in Saskatoon put hammers and saws to work as part of their participation in a two-day Habitat for Humanity group build April 7-8, at triplexes currently under construction on Slimmon Road in Saskatoon. The local CWL Council decided to take on this project to expand the work and profile of the CWL in the parish and to respond to the St. John Bosco parish mission: "Love God, Love Our Neighbour, Make Disciples." In addition to participating in the build, funds were raised to donate to Habitat for Humanity through a steak supper, with CWL members donating desserts for a silent raffle. Women of the parish were recruited to work on the build and other members supported the cause by preparing and delivering lunch to the work site.

- Photo by Diane Cote



D & P focus at St. Mary's, Saskatoon

At St. Mary's parish in Saskatoon, Agatha Mutongolo, a Grade 11 student at E.D. Feenan high school in Saskatoon, recently gave witness to the support of Development and Peace/Caritas Canada in making water more accessible in her home country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A member of the Development and Peace team at St. Mary's, Agatha walked up the aisle with a water jug on her head at the start of Mass on the first Sunday of Lent, and briefly told her story about how she used to walk for miles to get water and sometimes had to wait until midnight to obtain water.

- Photo by Reanne Lajeunesse



Saint Kateri Tekakwitha procession

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Saskatoon held a neighbourhood procession of prayer and song with the statue of Saint Kateri Tekakwitha on April 17, marking her Canadian Feast Day (celebrated July 14 in the U.S.). After praying the rosary from Guadalupe House to St. Mary's Church and back, participants gathered for a supper of soup and bannock. Born in 1656 in what is now upstate New York, Saint Kateri Tekakwitha became a Christian in spite of hardship and persecution. She died at a Jesuit mission near what is now Montreal on April 17, 1680, recognized for her holiness and devotion to Jesus. She is the first Indigenous woman in North America to be named a saint of the Church.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski



Blankets for refugees at border

Saskatoon volunteers from many faith traditions gathered at Holy Family Cathedral (and five other Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith facilities in Saskatoon March 6-10) to create soft, warm fleece blankets for refugees coming to Manitoba across the Canada-United States border. Volunteers exceeded the goal of creating 50 blankets, said project leader Cecilia Rajanayagam of Emmanuel Baptist Church.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Foodgrains Bank learning tour to Lebanon highlights ways in which food assistance by small NGOs is helping to build peace

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

While on a recent Canadian Foodgrains Bank learning tour to Lebanon, Christine Zyla saw first-hand how relationships, community and peace are being strengthened through food assistance.

"Sometimes food assistance can be very messy – we've seen that with television coverage of trucks bringing in food, showing a demeaning scramble by desperate people. But it can also be very Eucharistic – becoming a source of community building and social cohesion," says Zyla.

"Food assistance can bring deep community connection, relationship-building, peace-building. That is what I saw in Lebanon – food assistance that goes way beyond food assistance."

Founded in 1983, Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 churches and church agencies working together to end global hunger. Food assistance accounts for 62 per cent of the organization's programs – last year Foodgrains provided \$26 million in food assistance in 24 countries, as well as \$14 million in agriculture and livelihood programs in 31 countries.

A member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank for some 10 years, Zyla also coordinates the



Participants in a Canadian Foodgrains Bank learning tour to Lebanon met with partners from Syria to discuss the need for food security in the region and the assistance that is being provided, often by small NGOs.

- Photo submitted by Christine Zyla

Office of Migration in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, which assists parishes, organizations and small groups who are involved in refugee sponsorship. In addition to providing information about food assistance programs, the March 8-20, 2017 Foodgrains learning tour to Lebanon brought Zyla new insight and understanding into the refugee situation in that country.

Lebanon is host to some 1.5 million refugees from the surrounding region – many from Syria, but also refugees from Palestine, some displaced for decades. "One in four people in Lebanon is a refugee," says Zyla. "They are dealing with a tremendous number of needy people, and the community is

trying to find ways to cope."

Even before the most recent influx of refugees from the conflict in Syria (which is entering its seventh year), Lebanon was already a complex mosaic, dealing with sectarian tensions. And Palestinian refugees who fled to Lebanon as refugees in 1948, are now hosting refugees from Syria."

"It is astounding that things have remained relatively stable – the work of NGOs (non-government organizations like those working with Canadian Foodgrains Bank) is a big reason for that stability," says Zyla.

For more about the Learning tour, see the full article online at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

St. Anne's parish in Saskatoon hosts treaty elder series, blesses treaty plaque

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A plaque acknowledging Treaty 6 territory and the importance of treaties to all Canadians was blessed Nov. 9, 2016 at St. Anne Roman Catholic Church in Saskatoon.

Marking the installation of the parish's Treaty 6 plaque, the evening celebration included a blessing by parish priest Fr. Matthew Ramsay, prayers in Cree by Elder Oliver Cameron, and a talk by Elder Ruth Cameron. (Editor's note: We are sad to report that Elder Oliver Cameron died a few months later, on March 29, 2017.)

Designed in consultation with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner, the treaty plaque is similar to one installed earlier this year at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon, featuring a replica of a medal presented to

participating First Nations chiefs in commemoration of a treaty signing. The plaque at St. Anne's also acknowledges Treaty 6, signed in 1876, which covers a territory of some 121,000 acres in Alberta and Saskatchewan, including Saskatoon.

"Treaties are mutually beneficial arrangements," states the plaque inscription. "New-comers to Canada built their society in this place where some were looking for political and religious freedoms. They and their descendants benefited from the wealth generated from this land. Today, there are misconceptions that only First Nations peoples are part of the treaties, but in reality, all of us are treaty people."

In her presentation earlier in the evening, Ruth Cameron described her childhood, which from the age of five involved attending the

Indian Residential School operated by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Grey Nuns at Lebret, SK. The experience left her angry and hurt, unable to understand why her mother left her at the residential school, separated from all but one of her brothers and sisters. Later, at the age of 14, she struggled to integrate into a public school, eventually finding acceptance through athletics.

Cameron said that over the years, she has come to understand how her experiences affected her – and how the residential school system and colonization itself has impacted lives and communities.

"Why are people in crisis?" Ruth Cameron asked, citing poverty and addiction as the fallout of a deeply flawed system. Lives and families were profoundly damaged by the schools that separated parents and children and

by a multi-generational colonization process of racism and assimilation that attempted to eliminate Indigenous languages, cultures, and sacred ceremonies.

In the struggle to understand and find healing, Ruth Cameron said she was greatly helped by her mother who told her to "be proud of who you are – hold your head up high, you have a lot to offer." A devout Catholic, her mother taught her the sacredness of being a young woman and a mother, the importance of respecting the earth, as well as the need to "get along with all kinds of people," Ruth Cameron added.

Learning more about history and its impact, and about her culture and spiritual traditions was vital to healing, said Cameron.

Traditional teachings have helped her rediscover the sacred in herself and in the world around her,



Elder Ruth Cameron

Ruth Cameron said. She has found much in common between First Nations spirituality and Christian faith. "We all have the same God. We are all God's children," she stressed, describing the beauty of diversity, of people of different colours, shapes and language.

Find the full story online at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

STM Indigenous Spirituality and Reconciliation Advisory Circle installs treaty plaque

By JACQUIE BERG

Representatives of The Advisory Circle, Chair in Indigenous Spirituality and Reconciliation hosted the formal installation of a treaty plaque Nov. 30 at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.

The plaque consists of an enlarged replica of the original medal that was presented to participating First Nations at the time of the Treaty 6 signing in 1876, along with an explanatory text acknowledging Treaty 6 territory and proclaiming the importance of treaties to all Canadians.

The event involved a smudging ceremony and a Liturgy of the Word that included words of reflection and hope as the medal was unveiled along with the explanatory plaque.

The STM Advisory Circle, Chair in Indigenous



A treaty plaque was formally installed Nov. 30 at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.

- Photo by Jacquie Berg

Spirituality and Reconciliation members include: Elder A.J. Felix, Sturgeon Lake First Nation; Elder Patricia

Felix, Sturgeon Lake First Nation; Harry Lafond, Executive Director, Office of the Treaty Commissioner (Co-Chair); Colleen M. Cameron; Gordon Martell, Superintendent of Education, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools; Candace Wasacase-Lafferty, Director of Aboriginal Initiatives, Gordon Oakes Red Bear Student Centre; Dr. Terrence Downey, President of St. Thomas More College (Co-Chair); Dr. Darrell McLaughlin, Associate Dean, STM; and Gertrude Rompre, STM Director of Mission and Ministry.

The installation was followed by a public address by Phil Fontaine, former National Chief, Assembly of First Nations, on "The Meaning of Reconciliation." (A report about Phil Fontaine's Nov. 30 talk on reconciliation can be found on Page 24.)

Our Lady of Fatima 100th anniversary celebrated May 13

BY JENNIFER NUNES

One hundred years ago, on May 13, 1917, while tending their flock of sheep in a small Portuguese village called Fatima, three young shepherd children – Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta – were startled by a flash of light from the heavens that they believed to be lightning coming from a beautiful clear sky.

Moments later their fears were subdued by the appearance of “a lady dressed all in white, more brilliant than the sun, shedding rays of light, clear and stronger than a crystal glass filled with the most sparkling water, pierced by the burning rays of the sun.”

Thus began the relationship between three small children and a beautiful lady from heaven, who had not yet revealed her identity. She would change the lives of not only these three children but the lives and hearts of millions upon millions including all of Portugal and the hearts and lives of non-believers and popes alike.

This beautiful and tender lady dressed in white appeared to the children for six continuous months – on the 13th day of each month (with the exception of August when she appeared on the 15th due to the imprisonment of these small children by authorities who wished to scare them into denying the visions they had seen).

Each time she came with a new message to share with Lucia Santos (the eldest) and her two younger cousins (Jacinta and Francisco Marto). During the last of the visits, on Oct. 13, 1917, a reported 80,000 to 100,000 pilgrims witnessed the miracle of the sun, sent so that all may believe what the children had seen and heard. During this last visit in

the Cova de Iria – the lady revealed herself as the Lady of the Most Holy Rosary.

Since the apparitions in Fatima, a basilica and chapel in honour of Our Lady have been built and millions of pilgrims from every corner of the globe visit the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima every year. With devoted hearts, with the faith in every prayer said, and with every sacrifice made by the pilgrims – time after time Our Lady has come to the aid of those who ask for her intercession.

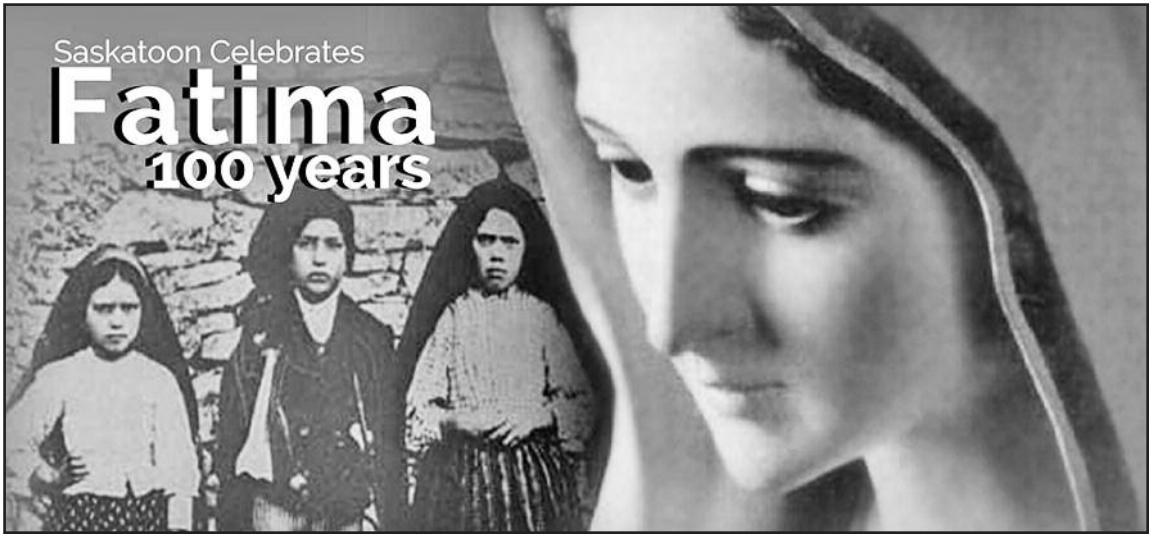
One of the most famous intercessions attributed to Our Lady of Fatima is the survival of St. Pope John Paul II after an assassination attempt on May 13, 1981 in St. Peter’s Square.

St. Pope John Paul II believed the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima saved his life on the day of the shooting — which was also the anniversary of her first apparition in Fatima.

The bullet that struck St. Pope John Paul II was later given to the sanctuary in Fatima, where it now permanently resides within the crown of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima.

From a very young age, my grandmother would repeatedly tell me the story of Our Lady of Fatima. Her devotion and love for Our Lady of Fatima – along with her strong faith that through the intercession of Mary we would be cared for by her Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ – always beamed from the core of her being and was easily contagious. I fell in love with Our Lady of Fatima thanks to my grandmother’s faith and devotion.

While on pilgrimage to Fatima, Portugal in 1987 my dear grandmother, Maria Silvina



A young Jennifer Nunes stands with the statue purchased by her grandmother Maria Silvina Silveira. It eventually found a home at St. Mary's Parish in Saskatoon, where a Mass and procession will be held May 13 to mark the 100th anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima's first appearance to three shepherd children in Portugal. - Submitted photo

Silveira, completed a promise she had made to Our Lady, purchasing and donating an identical replica of the Fatima statue to a parish here in Saskatoon.

Eventually the statue found a permanent home at St. Mary's Parish in Saskatoon. Over the years the local Portuguese community in Saskatoon has organized a Mass and procession in Honour of Our Lady of Fatima every May and often in October

as well, joining the growing devotion of others across the globe.

The entire diocese of Saskatoon is now invited to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady of Fatima. Her messages and promises are just as important and significant today as they were 100 years ago. Our Lady's plea to pray the rosary daily as a weapon against evil and to make sacrifices

for those in most need has only increased in urgency throughout the years.

A number of Saskatoon events are planned leading up to the big feast on May 13, 2017 (above).

All are invited to attend and to pray together in celebration of this incredible anniversary.

Volunteers are also needed: contact (306) 202-9469 or e-mail nunesjennifer@hotmail.com Our Lady of Fatima, pray for us!

100th Anniversary of Appearance of Our Lady of Fatima *Schedule of Events in Saskatoon*

100 years ago Our Lady of Fatima appeared to three shepherd children in Portugal, asking them to pray the rosary in devotion to her Immaculate Heart, in reparation for sin, for world peace and the salvation of souls. Events to mark this 100th anniversary are underway in Saskatoon.

Thursday, May 11, 7:00 p.m. – Family Holy Hour with Eucharistic adoration and the sung rosary by “The Little Flowers” at St. Philip Neri parish, 1904 Munroe Avenue, Saskatoon.

Friday, May 12, 7:00 p.m. – The Story of Fatima evening of prayer, rosary and a candlelight procession at Cathedral of the Holy Family, 123 Nelson Road, Saskatoon.

Saturday, May 13, 1:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. – Living Fatima Retreat at St. Paul's Co-Cathedral, 720 Spadina Cr., Saskatoon, with speaker Mark Mallett; \$15 registration includes catered supper following 5 p.m. Mass. Call (306) 652-0033 to register before May 10.

Saturday, May 13, 2:00 p.m. – A family-friendly event, including Mass with Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee at St. Mary's Parish, 211 Avenue O South, Saskatoon, in honour of the anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady in Fatima 100 years ago. Includes Children's Liturgy during Mass, followed by an outdoor procession, and a gathering in St. Mary's Hall for refreshments and entertainment. (Please bring a favourite snack to share: drop off at St. Mary's Hall before 2 p.m. Mass.)



Jacinta Leyne dressed as her namesake, Blessed Jacinta Marto: devotion to Our Lady of Fatima continues in another generation.
- Photo by Sharon Leyne

Shepherd children continue to lead others to faith by their example, courage and humility

BY SHARON LEYNE

Growing up Portuguese I always had a fascination and love for the story of Fatima. I grew up surrounded by the famous Fatima images and statues, and I walked in a Winnipeg procession to honour Our Lady. My childhood was steeped in these traditions.

Quite often I found myself dressed as a saint for Halloween while all my other friends got to be ninja turtles – however, I didn't mind so much when I got to dress as one of the three young shepherds of Fatima.

Fast forward many years later: I finally had the chance to visit the apparition site at Fatima, Portugal, where the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared six times in 1917 to the three children – Lucia Santos, Francisco Marto, and Jacinta Marto.

I was so overwhelmed to be walking in the footsteps of these three young children, praying in their church, and feeling the peace that surrounded the square.

It was on this trip that my husband Colm

Two of the young Fatima visionaries – Francisco and Jacinta Marto – will be canonized by Pope Francis on May 13, 2017 at a Mass in Fatima. Francisco died in April 1919 at the age of 10 and Jacinta died in February 1920 at the age of 9 years. At their beatification celebration in 2000, St. Pope John Paul II recounted the children's heroic virtue in the face of suffering, and said: “A woman who gave hospitality to Jacinta in Lisbon, on hearing the very beautiful and wise advice that the little girl gave, asked who taught it to her. ‘It was Our Lady,’ she replied. Devoting themselves with total generosity to the direction of such a good teacher, Jacinta and Francisco soon reached the heights of perfection.”

and I discovered we were expecting our first child, and after learning more about the incredible faith demonstrated through the suffering of the youngest of the shepherds, we named our daughter Jacinta.

After reading more about these three children in Lucia's own words, I found that everyone could learn from them. Yes, Fatima was a miracle, and the words Our Lady spoke were profound and world-changing, but it was through the faith,

devotion, courage, and humility of these shepherds that people began to believe. It has been through them that I have come to love Our Lady even more.

I am so excited to celebrate 100 years since Mary first began to appear to the three little shepherds. My hope is that many will take part in the local events being organized in our community to mark the centennial, and will grow in appreciation and love for Our Lady of Fatima, and these children.



Wadena Deanery gathering

The diocesan CIC team (Christian Initiation and Catechetics) hosted a “Parishes of Discipleship” Wadena Deanery gathering Nov. 15 at St. Mary parish in Wadena, drawing on diocesan Study Days presentations on Forming Intentional Disciples. Turnout included 38 people from across the deanery, representing parishes at Foam Lake, Wynyard, Archerwill, Perigord, Nobleville, Kelvington, Lintlaw, Naicam, and Wadena. A number of questions were explored by participants, including: Where is your parish going? Who are parish leaders? What steps can you take to bring more life to your parish? There will be follow-up with the parishes regarding needs, questions, and steps to help achieve some of the identified goals in their parishes.

- Photo by Lynda Statchuk



Inmates at the correctional centre assist at Christmas Mass, celebrated by Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee and Fr. Graham Hill, CSsR.

- Photo by Dianne Anderson

Restorative Ministry outreach at Saskatoon Correctional Centre

A team of volunteers coordinated by Dianne Anderson of the diocesan Restorative Ministry Office provide outreach, prayer, and programs as part of prison outreach at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre.

Highlights of the liturgical year, such as Christmas and the Easter Triduum, are celebrated at the prison with the help of local priests and volunteers.

With the help of parishioner donations in the diocese, small gifts are given to all the men on the holy days of Christmas and Easter as a way to share the joy of

Prison outreach is supported by the

Bishops

ANNUAL APPEAL

the Good News of Jesus Christ, and to let the men know they are not forgotten. The outreach has an impact on the men, and for some, is part of a healing journey to turn their lives around, says Anderson.

For more information about Restorative Ministry or prison outreach contact (306) 659-5845.

Diocesan financial statements presented at AGM

An Annual General Meeting for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon was held Feb. 11, 2017 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

Financial Administrator Tanya Clarke presented audited financial statements to those assembled for the AGM, which took place during a gathering of deanery and diocesan representatives who served on the former Diocesan Pastoral Council, which acts as a consultative body when there is a bishop in place. (The group has continued to meet with diocesan leadership pending the appointment of a new bishop.)

Total support and revenue in the diocese for the fiscal year July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 totalled \$4,461,129, while total expenses were \$4,397,850, for a bottom line of \$63,279 of revenue over expenses. She also presented information about the Diocese of Saskatoon Catholic Foundation, which in 2015-16 disbursed \$1,442,385 in donations to the diocese of Saskatoon (including funds raised through the Bishop’s Annual Appeal)

The audited financial statement summary is included in an Annual Report published online at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/newsletters or contact Tanya Clarke at the Catholic Pastoral Centre for more information: (306) 242-1500.



Volunteers visit men at the Correctional Centre at Christmas and Easter and assist with prison outreach throughout the year: “...I was in prison, and you visited me...” - Matthew 25:36.

- Photo by Dianne Anderson

Bishop’s Annual Appeal Allocations in 2016

Note: Each year, BAA funds are allocated over two Catholic Pastoral Centre budget years. The difference between the total collected and last year’s allocation is split, 50 per cent to the 2015-2016 year, and 50 per cent to the 2016-2017 Budget Year.

Aboriginal Parish Ministry	\$ 77,700
Catholic Family Services	50,000
Christian Initiation and Catechetics	113,400
Communications	92,800
Deaf Ministry	6,500
Ecumenical Commission	8,900
Education of Laity for Ministry	9,500
Education of Priests & Future Priests	97,000
Foundations: Exploring Our Faith / general ministry support	56,700
Friendship Inn	5,000
Hospital Chaplaincy	92,800
Interfaith Commission	150
Lay Formation /Aboriginal Lay Formation	181,200
Liturgy Commission	4,200
Marriage & Family Life and Ministry Development	13,500
Office for Justice and Peace	55,700
Prairie Centre for Ecumenism	20,000
Resource Library	7,050
Restorative Ministry (Prison Outreach)	58,900
Vocations	3,400
Youth Ministry	66,100
Parish Sharing Incentive	228,070
BAA administration	224,236
TOTAL ALLOCATIONS	\$ 1,472,806

Thank You!

Your gift to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal is making a difference in the lives of those struggling in difficult circumstances, those seeking faith, those searching for “The Face of Mercy”...

Thanks to the support of donors & volunteers, the 2016 Bishop’s Annual Appeal raised \$1,468,836.36, coming within about \$31,165 of the \$1.5 million goal.

The Bishop’s Annual Appeal permits our diocesan church to reach out in love and to build up the church. Thanks to your gifts, our diocesan family is working to address the needs of families, to support evangelization initiatives, to engage youth and young adults, and to bring hope to those who are despairing. As Church, we come together in gratitude for all we have, giving our gifts knowing we are transforming lives – walking with those who are grieving, supporting those who are in hospitals, and loving and caring for those who are the marginalized.

For more information, or to donate, see the website: www.dscatholicfoundation.ca/bishops-annual-appeal or contact Cathy Gilje at cgilje@dscatholicfoundation.ca or (306) 659-5851.

2016 BAA Allocations by Type of Ministry:

		2016 total/percentages	
Building up the Church...	Education & Formation	\$ 457,800	31%
	Pastoral Life	\$ 73,700	5%
	Communications	\$ 99,850	7%
Reaching out in Love...	Spiritual Care	\$ 106,300	7%
	Outreach	\$ 253,800	17%
	Unity	\$ 29,050	2%
Administration		\$ 224,236	15%
Parish Sharing incentive		\$ 228,070	15%
TOTAL		\$ 1,472,806	

Emerge summer camp introduced in diocese

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A week-long summer camp to help youth going into Grade 8 or Grade 9 grow as disciples of Christ will be offered this summer in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Emerge will be held Aug. 21-25 at the Blackstrap Youth Camp facility south of Saskatoon.

“Emerge will invite youth into a deeper personal relationship with Christ, and give them experiences of church community at an important time in their lives, when they are seeking who they are, who they are in Christ, and what they want to do with their lives,” says Colm Leyne, coordinator of Youth Ministry in the diocese of Saskatoon.

The scripture theme chosen for EmERGE, from 1 Peter 2:9, reflects that vision: “For you are a chosen generation.... of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.”

A team of older youth are preparing to lead the EmERGE camp, already gathering regularly for enrichment, training and planning.

“These young leaders are also deepening their relationship with Christ and the Church. They are deepening their confidence as leaders and are being equipped as the next generation of disciples, as world changers who will encounter Christ, grow in Christ, and bring Christ to the world.”

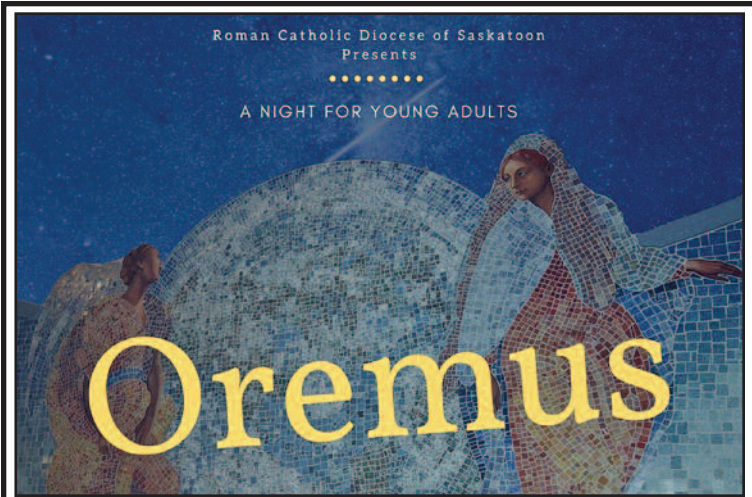
The vision for EmERGE is to have youth register and attend in groups from parishes across the diocese, enrolling at the camp along with a local youth leader or adult volunteer who will attend as a chaperone.

By registering for EmERGE in groups with local chaperones, parish leaders, volunteers or parents have an opportunity to be energized and to deepen their faith walk as well, notes Leyne. It will also strengthen parish connections and local youth ministry.

“If even two or three youth from a small parish get together and enroll with a willing parent volunteer as chaperone, they will now have others to share this experience with, building connections in their own local



Leaders for the new diocesan EmERGE camp gathered recently for a training session at the cathedral. The EmERGE summer camp for students going into Grade 8 or Grade 9 will be held Aug. 21-25. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski



Oremus: “Let Us Pray...”

Oremus for young adults (over 19 years) is held 7-11 p.m. on the fourth Friday of every month at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, 123 Nelson Road, Saskatoon (in Queen of Peace Chapel). This is a time to be still, pray and intercede for the needs of each other, our community and the world. Includes testimonies and some table sharing, followed by social time of beer, wine, refreshments, cards, board games, etc. The next Oremus will be held Friday, May 26. For more info, contact Colm Leyne at youthmin@saskatoonrcdiocese.com or (306) 659-5843.

faith community around an unforgettable experience.”

Emerge will be an opportunity for youth and their leaders to have fun and to experience God and God’s creation in a safe, sacred and very incarnational way, stresses Leyne.

“The church is not called to stay in the basement, but to go out and evangelize all corners of the earth... including on the beach, in the forest, or under our prairie sky.”

Registration material has been sent to parishes, or for more info contact (306) 659-5843 or e-mail youthmin@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Youth Ministry is supported by the



Momentum – a youth rally for Grades 6-8 – will be held 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, May 27, presented at E.D. Feehan High School in Saskatoon by the diocesan Youth Ministry Office in collaboration with FacetoFace Ministries and Pure Witness Ministries. Includes talks, drama, epic games, as well as celebration of Mass at 5 p.m., followed by a family supper and family dance. Cost: \$35 (with t-shirt if before May 10); \$75 for three or more siblings. Please register with your school or parish youth leader. For more information contact Colm Leyne at (306) 659-5843 or by e-mail youthmin@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Upcoming FacetoFace Retreat
in partnership with the Diocese of Saskatoon and Holy Family Cathedral
Weekend Youth Retreat (Grades 8-12) with an Adult Track
June 3 - June 4
Holy Family Cathedral, 123 Nelson Rd, Saskatoon, SK
Tentative Schedule: Saturday 1 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., Sunday 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Cost: \$25; Register by contacting Amanda at (306) 659-5804; amanda@holyfamilycathedral.ca

Young disciples deepen relationship with Jesus Christ at Search

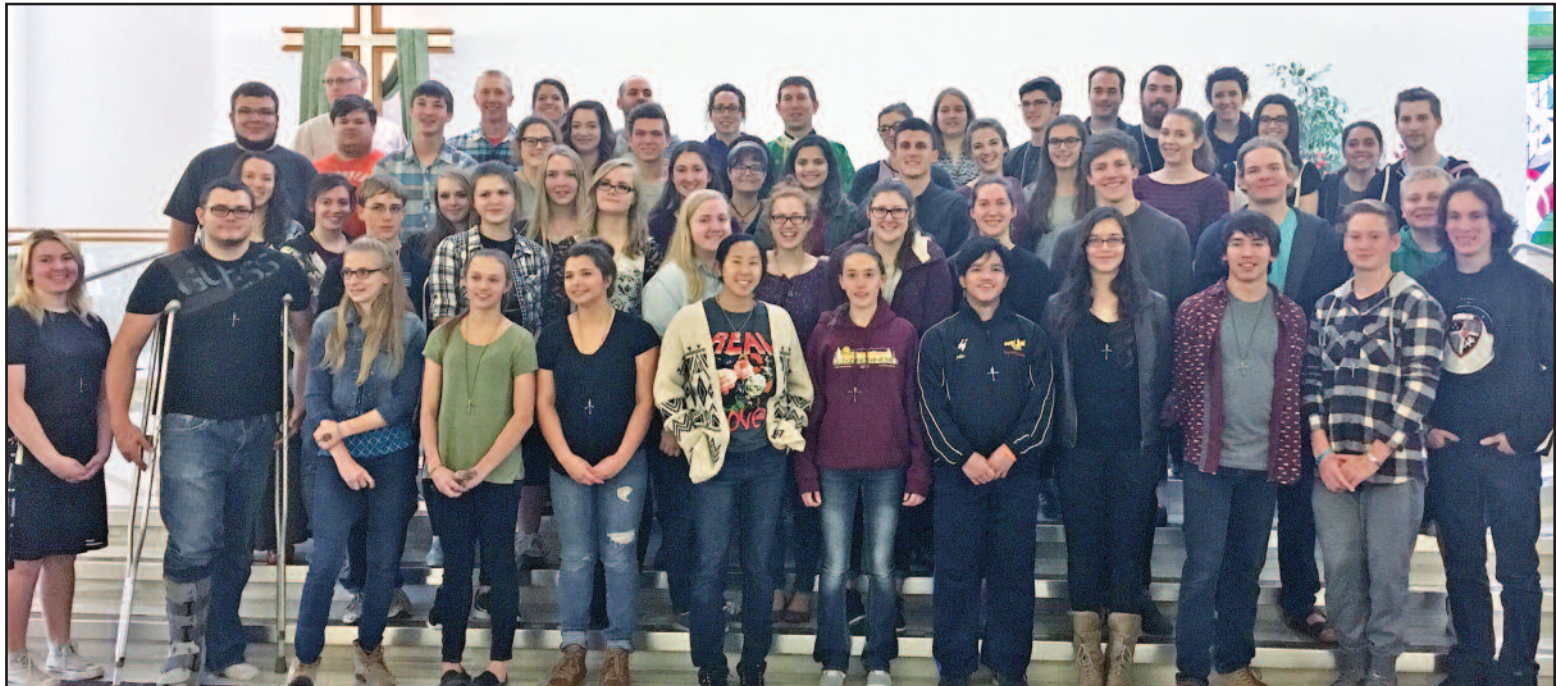
By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Search weekends continue to be offered to youth ages 15 to 18 years in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, coordinated through the Youth Ministry Office. The next Search will be offered in the fall of 2017.

An intense weekend of spiritual growth that was revived in the diocese two years ago, Search challenges high-school-aged youth to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and to make a conscious, adult commitment to their Catholic faith, explains diocesan youth ministry coordinator Colm Leyne,

Consisting of talks, music, prayer, spiritual direction, fellowship, and sacraments, the live-in weekend encourages youth to “Search for Christian maturity.” Searchers come to know themselves, others, and God in a more loving and personal way, he says.

Follow-up is important, he



Search participants and team members at the October 2016 weekend held at Bishop James Mahoney high school/ St. Anne’s parish: the weekend experience is open to youth ages 15 to 18 from across the diocese. Watch for more information about the next Search in the fall. - Photo by Sharon Leyne

adds, saying that team members stay connected with the Search participants. “This is a mountain-

top experience, but we’re not just going to just say ‘go back to the valley’,” he said. “There’ll be

opportunities to connect, and to follow up – and also to serve as disciples, in parishes or beyond.”

For more information about Search see the website at: www.saskatoonsearch.ca

JOY participants listen to experience of refugees

BY KATE O'GORMAN

For some newcomers to our increasingly multi-cultural community, their story begins with being forced to leave their country of origin. Participants in the diocese of Saskatoon's Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation immersed themselves in the refugee story Oct. 15, 2016, spending the day at the Saskatoon Open Door Society.

Dana Krushel, Migration and Resettlement Coordinator at the Mennonite Central Committee, led an activity that brought into focus what being a displaced person is like. Participants were asked to visit simulation stations, such as border crossings, where they were presented with the sorts of decisions that many face during times of conflict and migration. Difficult decisions challenged participants with how to maintain resources such as food, money and health while attempting to



JOY Formation
Kate O'Gorman

secure safe passage. This simulation offered a glimpse into life as a refugee and set the foundation for the rest of the day.

Through the Office of Migration, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon operates as a refugee sponsorship agreement holder, working with parishes and

other groups to assist refugees seeking safety in our community. Many dedicated volunteers at the parish level offer their time and talent to undertake and to assist with refugee sponsorships.

Volunteer Sheila Flory, co-chair of the Refugee Committee at St. Philip Neri Parish in Saskatoon, facilitated a session for JOY participants, sharing numerous accounts of the partnerships that occur between parishioners and refugee families. "I find working with the refugee committee very fulfilling work," said Flory. "We are so blessed, living in Canada, and I love giving other people a chance to start a new life in this wonderful country."

Learning how to live, settle and thrive in a new home country is what all newcomers experience once they arrive. The mission of Saskatoon's Open Door Society is to "assist newcomers to Canada to



JOY participants Murray Wood, Lori Ethier, Mike Broda, Bonnie Roberts and Marie-Jean Will (in a circle from the left) gather for reflection during an October session focused on the refugee experience. - Photo by Kate O'Gorman

become participating members of an inclusive and diverse community and country."

Cultural Bridging Facilitators Roberta Desnomie and Farrukh Syer of the Open Door Society described various ways people from differing countries of origin may communicate (or miscommunicate) given their cultural and behavioural norms. Inclusivity and integration are a large part of the newcomer story, participants learned.

Sharing his own experience as a refugee from Syria, sponsored through the diocese of Saskatoon and settling into life as a newcomer, Jad Rehan gave JOY participants the gift of his story as the day's final presenter.

Rehan showed pictures of his hometown in Syria, before and after the bombing which forced him and his family to flee. He graciously shared what it was like for him to be uprooted, displaced and in need of a safe place to live.

Having arrived only eight months ago, this faith-filled and optimistic young man now leads a full life as a student, employee and community volunteer. Rehan's older brother and sister-in-law have also been sponsored through the diocese and he is anxiously awaiting their arrival.

With hearts and minds moved by the refugee story as it is experienced from various vantage points, JOY participants concluded the day with celebration of the Eucharist and a community supper at St. Paul's parish, recognizing that "our common story is that we are all loved by God, we are all deserving of safety and there is room at the table for all of us."

Applications are now being taken for JOY starting in September 2017. See the website: www.joyformationprogram.com or call Kate O'Gorman at (306) 659-5847.

The Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation offers experiential learning grounded in Catholic Social Teaching, connecting with community groups and

walking with those they serve. Themes include:

- Human Dignity • Refugees •
- Indigenous Experience • Anti-Poverty •
- International Development, Justice, Peace •
- Health and Elder Care • Hunger and Food •
- Restorative Justice • Youth and Family • Care of the Earth •

The diocesan program is presented over 10 weekends, from September to June.

Applications are now being taken for September 2017!

Find more information at: www.joyformationprogram.com or contact Kate O'Gorman at (306) 659-5847.

Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation raises challenges

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Participants in a diocesan Justice and Outreach Year explored the issue of health and elder care during their monthly gathering in February 2017, centred on a visit to Samaritan Place, a Catholic long-term care facility in Saskatoon's Stonebridge neighbourhood.

The visit to Samaritan Place brought forth a range of insights, challenges and reactions from the 15 program participants, reports Kate O'Gorman, coordinator of the Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation program.

"One of the principles and strengths of the JOY program is that we, as a community of people with a deep desire to be of service, avail ourselves of the possibility of being stretched," she says, noting that participants often have different experiences when exploring the various social justice themes that are part of the 10-month diocesan program.

"Some issues sit more comfortably for one person, while that same topic may prove to be a challenge for someone else. There is a fluidity to this tension; it rises and falls for each of us on any given weekend and to varying degrees," O'Gorman describes. "As a lay community committed to being formed as servant leaders, we support and carry one another through these growing pains."

Some JOY participants were familiar with long-term care facilities such as Samaritan Place, whether through a JOY community placement (a feature of the formation program) or other volunteer experiences, or because they have personally journeyed with a loved one through long-term care.

"Some of us were quite comfortable



JOY participants Sr. Marie-Noelle Rondot, SMS, and Denise DeBrou meet with residents at Samaritan Place in February 2017. - Photo by Kate O'Gorman

working and visiting with people who wrestle with dementia, limited mobility and declining health. Others felt the tension of being confronted with infirmity and with what may be considered a loss of control," notes O'Gorman.

"It was in this very human response of conflicting emotions that we were greeted by members of Samaritan's Leadership Team and invited to enter an initial process of prayer and reflection," she says.

"We were gracefully directed through an exploration of the parable of the Good Samaritan in a way that oriented our minds and spirits to consider who our neighbour might be and how we might be called to respond to need with compassion."

This is the philosophy and vision that

Samaritan Place operates from – that each resident is an individual of value and dignity, worthy of a home where they can receive compassionate assistance and friendship in maintaining a full and abundant life, adds O'Gorman. "As participants of the JOY program, as followers of Christ, and as members of this humanity, we explored how we are called to participate in that offering of friendship."

JOY participants were invited to meet and sit with residents of Samaritan Place.

"We had lively conversations with people who were curious about who we were and we sat with those who preferred to be in silence. Some residents enjoyed a good laugh with us while others were having a difficult morning and preferred

not to entertain company that day," says O'Gorman.

"We encountered people who were struggling with confusion and anxiety and we witnessed the tenderness of staff who patiently answered repeat questions and gently tried to assuage any fear. We discovered what it was like to extend friendship to someone who perhaps couldn't reciprocate in any obvious way and we were invited to search for the beauty and meaning in simply being present without expectation or validation."

The temptation of any service-focused initiative is to busy ourselves with the work of "doing," notes O'Gorman. "We tend to 'default' into helping others by tidying things up, organizing schedules, performing tasks that might otherwise go undone – and while this is certainly a necessary aspect of service to some degree, the more challenging and often the most needed element is to simply be present," she says.

A recognition that authentic service requires an acknowledgment of one's own limitations is unfolding as participants continue to journey through the JOY program, says O'Gorman.

"It is much more comfortable to ignore the elderly and infirm because it permits us to ignore our own fragility," she says. "To be of service is to set aside our own defensive sense of separateness and open ourselves to the healing gift of friendship. We are being stretched, indeed."

O'Gorman added: "And yet, we carry and support one another through this ongoing process of outreach growth and justice formation. We continue to learn and be moulded by the Potter into the servant-leaders we are called to be."

JOY Formation program offers discoveries, insights, surprises

BY KATE O'GORMAN

The Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation program continues to awaken and surprise.

The program offers 10 weekends to learn about and explore various social justice issues. Participants are offered the opportunity to consider how Catholic Social Teaching and our baptismal call to discipleship are connected to each issue.

There is also an invitation to discern how we are all individually called by God to respond to the needs of others.

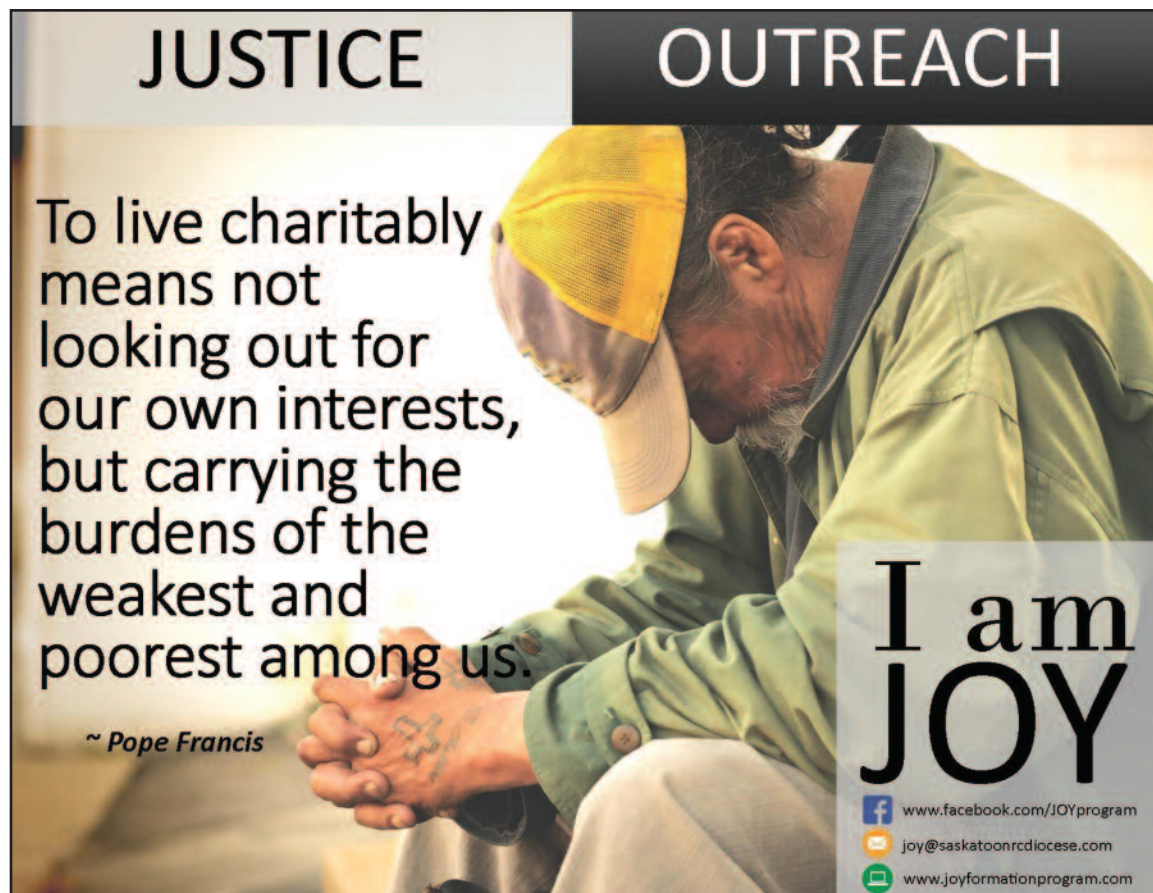
Each participant enters the weekend with an open heart and a deep desire to be of service. Often, through these encounters, we find ourselves humbled, our perspectives and worldviews broadened and our hearts broken open just a little bit wider. This was the case in December when we focused our attention on the issues of poverty in our city.

There is something about poverty that can cast a shadow of trepidation and an element of fear when it is examined up close. Learning about poverty, listening to facts and statistics across a boardroom table, while a necessary and important part of the dialogue, can restrict understanding to a sanitized and one-dimensional tableau.

It is far riskier to come face-to-face with the people who live and wrestle with the effects of poverty on a day-to-day basis. Seeing, hearing, smelling and touching poverty begs a vulnerability that most of us tend to shy away from, myself included. And yet, it is here, within this place of discomfort and vulnerability, that Jesus calls to us.

The JOY program was designed to invite us precisely into this space of discomfort so that we could push past our well-developed biases and begin to see brokenness with resurrection eyes.

Nevertheless, it was with nervous apprehension that our JOY community went to visit The Lighthouse, a non-profit organization that offers



emergency shelter, supportive living and affordable housing for men, women and families in Saskatoon.

We had each driven by this agency numerous times before – maybe we'd hurried past as we went to catch a movie at the theatre on the opposite corner or edged by it on our way to dinner somewhere downtown.

We all had a peripheral awareness of the former hotel that now played host to many of Saskatoon's marginalized, but few of us had ever been inside. Perhaps, like me, some of us had made a deliberate detour to avoid the man huddled in the corner to keep warm or avoided eye-contact with the panhandler asking for spare change.

By walking directly into The Lighthouse, we were being asked to confront those times when we had participated in the denial of "the least of these" – don't look and it's not there, don't engage and they don't exist.

Entering the foyer, we huddled together unsure of our surroundings – eyes wide, senses

pricked to the sounds, smells and sights around us – waiting for instruction.

Our main job that afternoon was to trim the main hall with Christmas decorations. Eager to keep busy, we dutifully got started. We hauled large containers of garland and ornaments into the main gathering areas and began to set up trees in and amongst the crowd of people who called The Lighthouse home.

The Lighthouse clientele is diverse: men and women of varying ages, races and abilities lounged and visited with one another, sharing a laugh or two while we skirted around them trying to make ourselves useful. The first half hour was an awkward dance of us versus them as we considered each other with tentative smiles, keeping an acceptable distance.

This could have been the extent of our involvement – a safe and non-threatening experience that demanded nothing of us except our time. But it wasn't.

One-by-one, in a brave

offering of friendship, some of Lighthouse residents began to initiate conversation.

Many shared their story with us; we learned of one man's interest in music and his ability to play the piano, another told us about how he had struggled with his health – showing us the surgical marks left on his body. One woman told us about how much she loved the community at the Lighthouse – it was her extended family, while a young man talked about how he had become homeless in his early teens and had not been able to undo the ramifications of that.

Some of us were given a lesson in Tai Chi as someone else

confided that this would be the first time they had ever decorated a Christmas tree.

We found ourselves entering easy conversation and being invited into relationship. We were offered the gift of vulnerability and were asked, in turn, to see these men and women as friends who had a story to tell.

As part of our visit we received a tour, heard the mission of the Lighthouse and learned about the issue of poverty as it is experienced by so many in Saskatoon – but, as always, it was the interaction with people that became the true gift of that day.

Biases began to be revealed for what they were, assumptions were called into question, perspectives were invited to be changed and hearts were unavoidably opened.

Because of our experience through the JOY program, we were awakened to the unmistakable fingerprint of friendship, love and humanity present in the people who utilize the resources at The Lighthouse.

We discovered that the divide between us and those who suffer poverty is much less wide than we would like to think and, thus our service became one of mutuality – recognizing and affirming the dignity of one another and walking together in our vulnerability and brokenness without averting our eyes.

Find more information about the diocesan Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation at: www.joyformationprogram.com or for more information about applying for next year's JOY program, call Kate O'Gorman at (306) 659-5847.

Friendship Inn volunteers reflect on their experience

BY HEATHER MACDONALD

Extremely humbling is how Carleen Frey and Leslie Doka describe volunteering at the Saskatoon Friendship Inn.

"I think it puts your life into perspective," says Frey of the lunch shifts filled by 60 Wright Construction employees in teams of five or six. "We need to be grateful for what we have. I can afford to eat, have housing."

"All parents found it very hard to see the children there. It was a cold day," says Doka, adding "my kids have grown up entitled."

Both describe volunteering to serve lunch to hungry people at the Friendship Inn as a worthwhile experience for them and their co-workers.

They're wondering "why didn't we do this sooner," given Wright's role in building the Inn's present home and the positive impact on the employees who participated.

"I haven't heard one employee who wouldn't do it again," says Frey, the company's Human Resources Generalist, who organized the opportunity with Doka, the Wright's Director of Construction.

To enhance the team building aspect they put together groups of employees who don't normally work together to volunteer at the Friendship Inn.

"We're very proud of our culture and the way we function as a team," says Doka, who sees inviting 110 employees to volunteer or donate food as opening their eyes to how easy it is to give back to the community.

The positive response has the two planning to make volunteering at the Friendship Inn an annual event.

The Inn's Executive Director Sandra Stack is grateful for their enthusiastic assistance.

"Every day, hungry children, youth, adults, seniors and families eat as many as 1,000 meals at the Friendship Inn, thanks to the contributions of eager volunteers and generous donors," says Stack. Knowing their need has no season, the Inn is now inviting donors to give as little \$10 monthly to feed a family, she says.

For more information about donating or volunteering see the website: www.friendshipinn.ca or call (306) 242-5122



Denzil parish marks 50th anniversary of Development and Peace

Development and Peace representative for Kerrobert deanery Zena Deibert, parish priest Rev. Binu Rathappillil, VC, and Sacred Heart parish Development and Peace representative Marlene Dewald (l-r) stand before a bulletin board at Sacred Heart parish in Denzil, SK., highlighting the mission of Development and Peace and a 50-year timeline of activities and outreach. Parishioners were also invited to become members of Development and Peace (Caritas Canada), the official international development organization of the Catholic Church in Canada. A prayer intention for Development and Peace was part of Sunday Mass, and there was also a presentation about the Catholic organization.

-Photo submitted by Zena Deibert

Hundreds attend five sessions of a Christian introduction to Islam

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

A concluding reflection on Christian-Islamic relations by Rev. Bernard de Margerie was presented Nov. 15, 2016 at the final session of a five-part series entitled Christian Study of Islam: An Introduction at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

The last session of the five-week diocesan Foundations: *Exploring Our Faith Together* program also included insights from three panelists: Sarah Donnelly, retired Lutheran Bishop Allan Grundahl and Elaine Zakreski.

Earlier sessions had included presentations at the Catholic cathedral by Imam Sheikh Ilyas Sidyot; by Dr. Joel

Foundations
is supported by the



Schindel, MD, a Muslim chaplain at the University of Saskatchewan; by scholar, author and Lutheran minister Dr. Roland E. Miller; and by Dr. Brenda Anderson of Luther College, Regina. The series also included a guided visit to the Islamic Association of Saskatchewan mosque in Saskatoon.

"I want to remind us of a pathway for Christians to approach our Muslim brothers and sisters and Islam in a way blessed by God," said de Margerie, reviewing the goals for the well-attended Christian Study of Islam series. "In mulling this over, praying this over, we also listened to adherents of Islamic faith and we learned a lot – but all of this was introduction."

He acknowledged that not everyone's questions about Islam were answered by the series, saying: "That is the shortcoming of trying to do too much in five evenings."

Reflecting on the purpose of inter-faith dialogue, de Margerie said that the first call offered to Christians is to seize their own faith and live their commitment to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in a deeper way.

"The main reason for Christians to get to know and approach people of other religions is to give greater glory to God," he stressed. "We give greater glory to God when we become aware of – and grateful for – the grace and good he accomplishes also in people of other religions."

Find complete coverage of the series on the diocesan news page online at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news



Lenten series

Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI, is pictured with Rita Taylor, coordinator of the diocesan Foundations: Exploring Our Faith Together program, which hosted a two-part Lenten series featuring Wiesner speaking on God's mercy and forgiveness. Find more about the Foundations series on the diocesan news page at www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

- Photo by Rita Taylor.



A guided visit to the Islamic Association of Saskatchewan mosque located on Copland Crescent in Saskatoon was part of a diocesan series entitled a Christian Study of Islam: an Introduction. During the evening, leaders at the mosque expressed appreciation to the organizers (l-r): Fr. Bernard de Margerie, Mohamed Hajinoor, Sr. Phyllis Kapuscinski, NDS, Rev. Colin Clay, Khalil Rehman and Imam Sheikh Ilyas Sidyot.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski



Vigil held in Saskatoon after shooting at Quebec mosque

Hundreds gathered Jan. 31 for an outdoor vigil at Saskatoon City Hall in support of those killed in a mosque shooting in Quebec, and those affected by a U.S. travel ban on travel from several Muslim countries. The Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan were among leaders in the community to respond to the shooting at the mosque, sending a message to the Muslim community Jan. 30 expressing sorrow and solidarity. For more coverage of the vigil see the web news page: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Living simply proposed as a way to take environmental action

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The local Saskatoon group Churches for Environmental Action hosted a workshop March 4 at Mayfair United Church, entitled "Drowning? Ways to Live Simply."

Christopher Hrynkow of St. Thomas More College opened the afternoon event reflecting on Christian ecological ethics and the call to battle our "addiction to stuff" as a way to care for the earth and to live justly with those in poverty and on the margins.

"There are alternatives on

Justice and Peace
is supported by the



offer for Christians who struggle to put their heads above the torrent of excess consumption that seeks to drown them, even if it is just long enough to hear the voice of the prophets calling us back to more nourishing relationships with God, our self, our neighbour and the rest of creation."

Hrynkow noted that the market model of endless consumption is neither sustainable nor fulfilling. "We suffocate ourselves in the service of broken story; we drown in the stuff we own and hoard."

A vision of something better than what the advertising industry offers will drive transformative action, Hrynkow suggested, saying that such a vision could embrace the virtues of hospitality, co-living, respect, tolerance and communality, and bring "the joy and health benefits that come from simple living."

Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* firmly connects the vision of simple, responsible living to peace. As Pope Francis writes: "Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack. This implies avoiding the dynamic of dominion and the mere accumulation of pleasures." (*Laudato Si'* #222.)

In another session, Saskatoon City Councillor Mairin Loewen spoke about city of Saskatoon initiatives and challenges related to environmental action. Four

practical workshops were also offered on community gardens, green kitchens, organizing an environmental block party, and handling household waste.

Myron Rogal of the Justice and Peace Office for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon spoke about the Citizens for Public Justice initiative "Give it up for the Earth!" The campaign is

centred on a postcard that includes a pledge to individual climate action, and a call for more far-reaching national climate policy. The aims are to raise awareness about climate change, and collect signatures as a demonstration of support for increased federal government action.

Find more on this event online at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news



Christian imperative for peace

Moderator Rev. Colin Clay and panelists Dr. Walter Klaassen, Ruth Klaassen, and Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina (l-r) participated in a discussion about why Christians should talk about war and peace Jan. 20 and 27 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. The teachings of Jesus Christ require Christians to pursue peace and non-violence, said the panelists, stressing the need for dialogue. Find more news coverage of the event at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski



Life Chain in October, March for Life in May

Life Chain 2016 was held Oct. 2 in Saskatoon at the busy corner of Idylwyld and 22nd Street, with participants holding up pro-life messages and praying for an end to abortion. The annual Saskatchewan March for Life will be held May 11, 2017 with Mass at 12:30 p.m. at Christ the King Parish, 3239 Garnet Street, Regina, followed by registration at the Legislative Grounds from 1 to 3 p.m. with a program at 2 p.m., followed by witness on Albert Street, Regina from 3 to 4 p.m. Knights of Columbus bus contact is Gerald Wiegers (306) 342-0033 or Louis Roth (306) 249-2764. - Photo by Tim Yaworski

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish hosts story-telling workshop



During a three-day conference hosted by Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Saskatoon, storyteller and theologian Megan McKenna led sessions on the crucial art of storytelling for passing on tradition and faith. Parish leaders were among those gathered for the opening session March 31 (left to right): Parish Life Director Debbie Ledoux, facilitator Megan McKenna, Rev. Graham Hill, CSsR, Parish Elder Gayle Weenie, and Deacon Paul Labelle.



Good Friday Way of the Cross

Wyndham Thiessen of L'Arche carries the cross through the rain on Good Friday, during the annual outdoor Way of the Cross in Saskatoon. Some 200 turned out to sing, pray and reflect on the suffering and death of Jesus Christ. Representatives of various community groups connected each of 14 stations to suffering and need in our world today. Themes included the plight of refugees, human trafficking, care of the sick and dying, the need for clean water, the need for foster parents, respect for life, religious persecution, war/famine in South Sudan, and reaching out to Indigenous people. Find more coverage of this Justice and Peace event at www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news - Photo by Tim Yaworski

Stories help communities survive and thrive - McKenna

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

"Handing on Tradition, Sharing Faith" was the theme of a weekend facilitated in Saskatoon by story-telling theologian and scripture scholar Megan McKenna March 31 to April 2.

Presented by Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish – which serves First Nations, Métis, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods – the three-day focus on storytelling included an Elders' storytelling circle, a session on handing on traditions to the young, a session for the young on "creating your own story," as well as an introduction to the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the message contained in her miraculous image that appeared on the tilma of the Indigenous man, St. Juan Diego.

"For Indigenous peoples, cultural identity is the foundation of who we are," said promotional material prepared by Our Lady of Guadalupe parish about the storytelling workshop. "For years the Canadian government has tried to separate our people from our heritage, to separate us from our customs and languages. The end result has been a generation separated from our culture and from our beliefs, both traditional and Christian."

Rediscovering the power of

story to renew and transform communities was the theme of McKenna's introductory evening of storytelling March 31 at St. Mary's Parish Hall. With flair and humour, weaving ancient Indigenous stories with discussion and with scripture, McKenna explored how stories tell us who we are and what life means, imparting truths, information and values from generation to generation.

"Every group passes on what is most crucial through storytelling," said McKenna. "That is true all over the world." However, in modern western societies, many have lost the ability to share through the tradition of oral storytelling, she added.

Stories cross borders and languages much easier than people do, and all stories create communities, McKenna said.

"Families have stories, religious communities have stories, parishes have stories, nations have stories," she said. "You are known by the stories you tell."

"For people who believe in Jesus, who are Catholics, we are supposed to be telling stories of resurrection, stories of hope, stories of life that's stronger than death, stories of forgiveness and reconciliation."

Although some are no longer telling stories, we still find stories

all around us, including in our liturgy, noted McKenna. "Most of liturgy, the first half, is story telling, and then the second half is acting out the story of the Last Supper," she said.

Stories remind us of our greatest strengths and weaknesses and our greatest gifts, and have the power to bring healing, formation and transformation. "If you lose your stories, you have lost something core and crucial to who you are."

Beginning with a First Nations tale about a storytelling stone and the creation of a storyteller who helps his community survive and thrive, McKenna summarized: "you must tell the stories, they are as important as food."

Stories are also a gift, and for many cultures were the usual way of passing on crucial

information for survival, she added.

Oral storytelling traditions bring a person into community and connection, as opposed to the use of technology, which tends to isolate, McKenna suggested. Telling a story to a group of more than one person means the story takes on a life of its own in the life of that community.

"Stories are the heart of people. It's the glue that holds a community together," she said, urging her listeners to go and look for the stories of their community, research the tales, record the stories of elders, make them your own and share them with others. "This is a way to reclaim culture... the stories are never gone."

McKenna continued sharing stories with the group, inviting reaction and discussion –

including the story of Christ's baptism in the Jordan, breaking open its imagery and its message – "you are my child, you are my servant, you are my beloved... and I take great delight in you."

"All good stories are told to change us, to transform us, to change things," she said, stressing that the richness of the Indigenous stories and world view are desperately needed in the world today.

"We need stories that tell the truth; stories that tell us how to stay alive – how to stop the destruction."

McKenna also presented a parish mission March 25-29 at St. Mary's Parish in Saskatoon, exploring three Lenten gospels from the gospel of John: the woman at the well, the man born blind and the raising of Lazarus.

Parishes getting to know each other

By TERESA HIEBERT

Recently, St. George's Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral and Our Lady of Guadalupe Roman Catholic Parish have begun exploring a relationship together and are getting to know each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish serves First Nations, Métis, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parishioners in the heart of Saskatoon, based at Guadalupe House, 426 Avenue J South, celebrating Mass at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Parish on Avenue O and 20th Street.

The Guadalupe parish community gathered Dec. 11 to celebrate the Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe (Dec. 12) at St. Mary's, beginning with smudging by community Elders. Fr. Kevin McGee, Diocesan Administrator, presided at Mass, concelebrating with Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR (Eparchy of Saskatoon) and Fr. Graham Hill, CSsR, assisted by Deacon Paul Labelle.

In his homily, McGee thoughtfully and vibrantly shared the Guadalupe story with the parish

community and many visitors in the faith celebration that blended tradition and culture. After Mass, Elders, clergy, parishioners and visitors shared a traditional feast.

Later on that same day, the Hispanic community of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Parish also held their Guadalupe Feast Day celebration.

Several pilgrims from Saskatchewan made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Guadalupe Basilica Shrine in Mexico City in February 2017, organized by Bishop Bryan Bayda, Marlene Bodnar, and Teresa Hiebert. A fourth annual pilgrimage is also tentatively planned for February 2018.



Farewell to Leonard Cohen

Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina (left) returned to Saskatoon Feb. 13 for a public conversation with Jewish Rabbi Claudio Jodorkovsky of Congregation Agudas Israel about the poetry of the late singer-songwriter Leonard Cohen, who died Nov. 7, 2016. It was the second time that the two friends had shared thoughts and insights into the Christian and Jewish imagery in Cohen's work. For news coverage of the session entitled A Broken and a Holy Hallelujah see the diocesan website at www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news or find the video on the diocese channel at: www.youtube.com/user/saskatoondiocese

- Photo by Tim Yaworski



Rite of Election 2017

Michelle Sieben of the diocesan Christian Initiation and Catechetics Office (right) looks on as catechumens from across the diocese sign their names in the Book of the Elect as part of the 2017 Rite of Election held the first Sunday of Lent at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon with Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee presiding. Journeying through RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), the Elect were preparing to be baptized, confirmed and welcomed to the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

On Living Through Our Dying

A Pastoral Letter from the Catholic Bishops of Saskatchewan

Introduction – “Dying is a part of life”

Just as the sun makes its way toward the western horizon every evening and sets into night, every human life makes its way from birth to death. It can be difficult to think about our own dying. Perhaps it is even more challenging to contemplate the death of those we love. While it can be tempting to distance ourselves from death, Pope John Paul II reminds us that “dying is also a part of life.” (*Saint Pope John Paul II, Address at the Rennweg Hospice in Vienna, June 21, 1998.*)

In Canada today, we have become distanced from dying. Life expectancy is considerably longer than it has been at other times in human history, and even in other parts of the world today; we often take health and longevity for granted. Advances in medical knowledge and technology mean that we often live long enough that our children and grandchildren have long since established their own lives when we begin to face our own death. While people used to die at home, primarily cared for by extended family, death is now more commonly experienced in a hospital or other health care setting.

While we are grateful to live longer and healthier lives, we are all still going to die. The experience of dying is often a harsh and overwhelming experience. Our fear of death at times leads us to resist or ignore what this fundamental human experience might have to teach us, about God and about ourselves. Saint Francis, in his *Canticle of the Creatures*, dares to call death a sister, part of the human condition which God has authored and through which God speaks to us.

The recent legalization of euthanasia and physician assisted suicide in Canada adds to our sense that we can control the circumstances of our dying in the same way that we try to control other aspects of living. It is in this context that we feel called to reflect on human dignity in the face of human mortality. Our faith invites us to live and die with trust in the God who gave us breath. We mourn any time a person seeks to end their own life. Our calling at this time and in this place is to form ourselves well in a Christian understanding of living and dying, so that we can witness to the world that there is another way.

1. To Hear the Good News

As Christians, we believe that life, despite its limits and struggles, is a gift of God to us. It is this very life that Jesus himself enters, promising: “I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly” (*John 10:10*). In living and dying among us, he showed us how to live and how



Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee, Bishop Bryan Bayda, Archbishop Murray Chatlain, Bishop Albert Thévenot and Archbishop Donald Bolen (l-r) released three documents on Feb. 11, 2017, World Day of the Sick. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

to die; and his resurrection gives us the hope that in our living and our dying, we are ever in the hands of the living God, who came among us to wipe away our tears. Even where life is difficult, He is with us, inviting us to receive and live the gift that we have received.

Dying, in the light of God’s gift of life, is a part of our living. Living through death is both our final responsibility and the last gift we can make of our lives. It is something to be experienced and endured, learned from, and ultimately offered back to God. St. Paul writes that “If we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him” (*Romans 6:8*). We believe that in living through our dying, we share an experience with Jesus, who turned his suffering and death into self-offering which brings redemption. To have faith in Christ is to face death as a part of the great mystery of the gift of living, and to participate in God’s redemptive work in this world and the next.

Ecclesiastes offers this advice: “Whatever you do, do well” (*Ecclesiastes 9:10*). It is worth reflecting that it is possible for us to die well. God does not force us to do anything; rather, death offers us a final *invitation to surrender* all that we are, to the very last breath, into the hands of the one who gave us life and promises us eternal life.



Photo by Roger Lamoyne, Living Lessons

2. Living Through Our Suffering and Dying

Jesus was not a stranger to the brutal physical pain and intense spiritual suffering that accompanies some human dying. We, too, are called to be mindful of just how hard the work of dying can be. Sometimes, chronic illness means that our dying is stretched over months or years, a steady decline of health and ability that is challenging for both the person and their family, friends, and caregivers. In other cases, dying happens too quickly, resulting in a different kind of suffering and grief. The journey towards death can be a struggle towards some form of acceptance and trust. Jesus himself struggled to make peace with his own impending death. The path is difficult and we have a responsibility to accompany people through it. And it can be even more painful for family and caregivers to witness the suffering of their loved one than it is for the dying person. Violence, uncontrolled pain, unforgiveness, lack of access to necessary supports, fear, and any number of other circumstances can make the work of dying feel completely overwhelming.

As Christians, we believe that our freedom, and ultimately our salvation, is linked to God’s loving presence and our response to it in the midst of every reality. It is not always easy to believe this or to feel it, but it is our call, our invitation to seek Him in all things, even, and maybe especially when we are at the end of our own capacity. Death confronts our deepest sense of who we are and what we hope for, and it is the final opportunity for us to embrace the reality that lies before us.

The response to God’s invitation is at once both deeply personal and profoundly communal. No one can force another person to embrace, accept or make peace with reality. To impose meaning on another person, to not hear another’s pain with empathy, to trivialize or ignore another’s grief: such actions damage our relationships with each other, distance us from loving like God loves, and violate the freedom God gives to each person. At the same time, the end of life decisions of one individual have great impact on that person’s community. When we suffer with resentment, blame, anger, and despair, we plant those seeds in the lives and experiences of others.

Excerpts from the Introduction to the Saskatchewan Catholic Bishops’ response to Physician Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia Released on the World Day of the Sick, February 11, 2017

At this critical time of implementation of PAS in our health system, we have felt it appropriate to publish three new texts, each with a different purpose and audience.

First, we have written a Pastoral Letter on ‘Living Through Our Dying’ (*printed on Page 14-15 of this Diocesan Newsletter*), addressed to our brothers and sisters in faith and all people who have the gift of life. Our aim with this letter was to initiate a dialogue with our culture, recognizing that many struggle to see our opposition to PAS as an expression of compassion. We wanted to articulate what we stand for (more than what we oppose), to recognize the challenge of placing our trust in God, and to extend the invitation to hope that our faith offers.

Secondly, we have written a Pastoral Reflection on ‘Jesus: The Word Who is Life’ (*Page 15*), which situates the Paschal Mystery as the foundation of our understanding of the meaning of human dying. It is intended to be formative catechesis primarily for our own faithful, but it may well be of use to our Christian brothers and sisters as well.

Finally, we have written Pastoral Guidelines, addressed to priests, deacons and the Catholic faithful (*Page 16*), intended to give support and guidance to those ministering to people facing the end of their lives. It was our hope to write guidelines which would equip those in ministry to follow Jesus faithfully, while extending his invitation of faith and life to those tempted to choose the circumstances of their own death.

Archbishop Donald J. Bolen, Archdiocese of Regina

Bishop Bryan Bayda, Eparchy of Saskatoon

Diocesan Administrator Kevin McGee, Diocese of Saskatoon

Archbishop Murray Chatlain Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas

Bishop Albert Thévenot Diocese of Prince Albert

Jesus: The Word Who is Life

A Pastoral Reflection from the Catholic Bishops of Saskatchewan

At each moment, the Word of God sent forth from the Father speaks to every human heart. This Word is Jesus Christ whose life and suffering, death and resurrection, reveal the pattern of our own journey back to the Father. The Father invites us to listen to this Word, the Beloved (*see Luke 9:35; Mark 9:7*), and to follow him.

The clamour of life filled with its many demands and distractions often prevents us from hearing the voice of the Son. Illness, profound suffering and the fear of death are also moments that make it difficult to attend to the voice of Jesus.

The recent legalization in Canada of euthanasia and physician assisted suicide has introduced intense division and debate that can be unsettling and cause some to feel confused or uncertain of what voices to trust. We place our trust in the constant teaching of the Church, beginning with God alone being the author of life and death.

Beneath the din and noise of life, beneath its waves of chaos and conflict, Jesus Christ remains the Word of God spoken into the depths of each heart. By taking on human flesh, Jesus joined us in our living, suffering and dying, and beyond the door of death will ultimately share his own glorified and risen life with us. Jesus is the Word in whom we are also named the beloved of God, a daughter or son of the Father called to proclaim a word of hope in our day.

Jesus in our living

We are surrounded by messages that tell us our personal value and worth comes from outward appearances and achievements. We risk feeling inadequate and becoming discouraged if we sense we fall short of what others consider attractive, successful and healthy. This may lead some to conclude that their lives have no meaning or worth. In the Gospel of John, however, Jesus proclaims that he is our life (*see John 14:6*) and has come that we might have life and have it abundantly (*see John 10:10*). To know Jesus is to know the infinite worth of our life!

Life is God's first and foundational gift to us; indeed, the story of salvation history is the telling of God's unrelenting pursuit to share life with us. It began with the creation story in Genesis when God created humankind in God's own image and likeness and called it very good (*Genesis 1:27*), and reached its climax when God sent his son, as we hear in the Gospel of John, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son" (*John 3:16*).



Even where our life journey is difficult, the Lord is with us, inviting us to give him our struggles, pains and sufferings and to receive from him in return a share in the gentle yoke of his mercy and love (*see Matthew 11:30*).

Jesus in our dying

From the cross, Jesus teaches us that death is not an ultimate escape or a release from unbearable pain, nor is it the last gasp of our human existence. Instead he reveals it as a moment of profound surrender to the Father and as an entry into eternal life. For this reason, the priest proclaims at the Mass of Christian Burial, "Indeed, for your faithful, Lord, life is changed not ended" (*Preface I for the Dead, Roman Missal*).

We acknowledge that pain and intolerable suffering is a part of life and will often accompany the dying process. Jesus is no stranger to the brutal physical pain and intense spiritual suffering that can accompany dying. As

Christians, we believe Jesus, who pitched his tent among us (*John 1:14*), accompanies us at each moment of our living and dying. The writer to the Hebrews says that Jesus tasted death for everyone (*see Hebrews 2:9*). In Jesus we encounter God's faithfulness, love and grace that can give us hope and courage to endure to the end.

As we follow Jesus in our own dying we believe that he will ultimately lead us through the valley of suffering and death and carry us home into the bosom of the Father to share in the eternal love of their Holy Spirit.

Jesus in our rising

Jesus is our resurrection! While we look forward to the day when we will participate in the Lord's resurrection, we believe that we already meet the Risen Lord in our daily life. We encounter him within the community, in our family, friends, other pilgrims of faith and those we meet in our daily journey. Jesus invites us to recognize his presence in a special way in those who are homeless, poor, imprisoned, wounded, afflicted or infirm (*see Matthew 25:36-40*).

Our loving relationships with one another affirm that our life is a journey of growing in intimacy with God and one another. These relationships blossom when at each moment we speak our 'yes' to God's will for us, both in times of joy and also in times of great struggle and eventually in the acceptance of our own dying.

When our capacity to trust and surrender to God is tested by the many challenges we encounter in life, the belief that we will one day share in the resurrection of Jesus gives us strength to endure. All the while, our Risen Lord walks with us and goes before us; our very weakness, poverty and misery draw down God's mercy and tenderness to comfort and support us.

Conclusion

May Jesus, in whose death and resurrection we encounter the merciful face of the Father, grant us the strength of the Holy Spirit to live our lives with courage and to face the journey into our own death with eyes of faith set on the resurrection. May Mary, our Blessed Mother, through whom the Word of Life came into our world, keep us close to her Son so that with Jesus and in him, we also may be a word of hope in our world today.

- Bishops of Saskatchewan, Feb. 11, 2017

Living Through Our Dying pastoral letter – continued from previous page

(Continued from Page 14)

We can also strive to let those dark and difficult feelings be transformed into acknowledgement, service, humility, and hope. The choice to end one's life (with or without the assistance of others), while intended to end certain kinds of suffering, is not without consequences for those left behind. In accompanying the dying, we do not get to choose how they will face their own suffering. Still, we can choose how we will respond to them. God invites us to choose selflessness, generosity, kindness, peace, and love in even the most trying circumstances, and offers us his presence, grace, and strength, which we so profoundly need.

As we face our own mortality, we are invited to do the spiritual work of living through our dying. Such work is what makes dying well possible. And we are not called to do it alone. As people of faith, we can offer the gift of accompanying and supporting people through the spiritual work of dying, beginning wherever they are.

Living through our dying invites three key spiritual works: forgiveness, love, and surrender. Facing death can strip away our self-justification, self-righteousness, arrogance, pride, and excuses. We long to be reconciled, to ask for forgiveness and to be forgiven. Dying invites us to do the hard work of asking for and receiving forgiveness. In dealing with our need for forgiveness, we are freed to express love with a depth and finality that is often difficult in everyday life. Death presents

the possibility that we have nothing left to lose in trying to express our love, however imperfectly. Finally, our dying invites us to complete the spiritual work of surrender, as age, illness, decreased ability, and dying gradually increase our dependency. Aging often pushes us to let go of the things we once worked so hard to develop and strengthen: our homes, our ease of movement, our hearing. At the end, we will be asked to surrender to God our very lives.

The world is in desperate need of our witness of living through our dying. So many have forgotten, or never knew, that death could be gift. With God's grace, and the prayers and support of others, we can live through this dying as a gift even as we face difficulties we would never have chosen. And God, who knows the pain and struggle of death (*cf. Heb. 5:8*), will use our courage to witness to the value of this work to the people and the world we leave behind.

3. To Care for the Dying

As people face the end of their lives, they become increasingly reliant on the living. They may feel like a burden. While this is normal, sometimes we are meant to be in need, on the receiving end, calling forth the gifts of our family and those around us. There is a beauty in this interdependence. In receiving the gift of being cared for, the dying also give the gift of allowing others to care. The relationship of care, while imbued with deep meaning and the potential for profound moments of connection, joy and growth, can also be

tremendously mundane, labour intensive, or wearisome. But the suffering of one is alleviated when we carry it together (*cf. Gal. 6:2*). And it is our privilege to care for one another, even and perhaps especially when this is difficult.

Caring for the dying also means caring for the caregivers. None of us are incapable of or exempt from offering this care in some way. We can provide food or other necessities, volunteer, advocate for, visit with, listen to, and pray for the dying and their caregivers in many and various ways. And if, in so doing, we live generously and faithfully now, we will have practiced living the way we hope to live through dying.

At the end, our responsibility moves from caring for the dying to accompanying those who grieve, and lifting the one who has died into the tender hands of God, who in Jesus has revealed to us the power and desire to transform darkness into light and death into life. As community and as individuals, we strive to live this well by attending to the rituals and rites of death and grief with faithfulness and hope; by praying for those who are meeting God; and by receiving the healing of grieving well those we have loved. This life is a gift that none of us keeps forever, but its end does not make it less a gift.

Conclusion

We do not know the day or the hour (*cf. Matt. 24:36*), but we are always preparing for our dying by the way that we live. Love well and deeply. Choose a life of service. Rely on God always, and

especially when you reach the limits of what you can do on your own. Trust with an open heart that God can bring meaning out of the suffering you face, and look for God's goodness and new life in every situation.

As salt for the earth and light for the world, we can transform personal and public conversations about death and dying. By sharing our perspectives, beliefs and actions, we can become authentic witnesses to the gift of living through dying in a world that is often afraid of death and desperate to control it. God has called us to walk through this life together, and this includes journeying with people to the end of their days on earth. Now more than ever, our world needs to know that we will not leave them to face their dying alone.

May the God who came to earth and showed us how to live and die draw near to us as we walk faithfully in a culture that has forgotten how to die well. May we receive the courage and strength of the Spirit that we need to be witnesses to the gift of living through dying. And may our hearts be fixed on Jesus, who has walked this path before us to show us the way.

Archbishop Donald J. Bolen

Archdiocese of Regina

Bishop Bryan Bayda

Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon

Diocesan Administrator Kevin McGee,

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

Archbishop Murray Chatlain

Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas

Bishop Albert Thévenot

Roman Catholic Diocese of Prince Albert

Feb. 11, 2017

Care for the Dying: Pastoral Guidelines from the Catholic Bishops of Saskatchewan

Dear brother priests, deacons, and Catholic faithful of Saskatchewan,

We have arrived, with sadness and mourning, at a time in our history and our country where physician assisted suicide and euthanasia are legal and available through our health system. For those among us who minister to people facing chronic and terminal illness, this new context is deeply troubling, and made even more painful because as a society we have not prioritized access to palliative care with effective pain management for all our people. Our Catholic faith is unwavering in its respect for and protection of human life from conception to natural death. **We cannot and will not participate in or support euthanasia or physician assisted suicide, to which we are morally opposed** (cf. Ex. 20:13).

At the heart of our Christian faith is the conviction that God's love is revealed most profoundly in the dying and rising of Jesus, and that in our living and dying, we are drawn into this paschal mystery, which opens onto eternal life. We believe that there is a great dignity in being human, and that God, who has authored human life, speaks to us and draws us into communion with Himself through our living and through our dying. As St. Paul says, "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord" (*Romans 14:8*). In our Christian lives, we are invited to learn to live for others and for God, dying to self (cf. *Romans 12:1*); dying, as a stage of living, is always in the context of the redemptive work of God. This more than anything else shapes our approach to the end of life.

Trusting that God is present to and at work in every human life, we are called to minister generously to all who call on us, regardless of their faith, with a bias toward life and our understanding of it as God's



Photo by Roger Lamoyne, Living Lessons

beautiful gift. We offer these guidelines to help our parishes to cultivate a healthy and positive attitude towards life, even amidst trials, and to assist our pastoral ministers and care givers in walking compassionately and faithfully amidst painful and complex end of life situations. Our ministry as Christians is twofold: first, to proclaim the good news and form people in it, and second, to be with God's people wherever life leads them, especially when they invite us into their journeys.

1. To proclaim the good news and form people in it.

In light of our Christian hope, we are asking you to join us in doing formative work in your parishes and communities to change the conversation about dying so that fewer people will feel that ending their lives is an appropriate option. All Christians need to be able to speak about and witness authentically to the spiritual work of living through the painful mystery of dying, for our own sake and for the sake of the world. That witness is especially needed in a context where many have lost sight of the dignity of human life even amidst suffering and dying.

2. To be with God's people wherever life leads them.

We are called into ministry with people as they are, not as we would hope them to be. This has always and ever been the case. In inviting us to share in his mission, the Risen Lord sends us to love His people in the messy and difficult circumstances of human life. We are privileged to be invited into people's lives; this is holy ground and God precedes us there.

Within the church and outside of it, some people will consider and are considering physician assisted suicide. For any of us who might accompany one of these people, with respect for the roles and respective accountabilities we have as family members, caregivers, spiritual care providers, or pastors, there are five considerations which we would ask you to keep at the forefront of your ministry of care.

i) The generous and unconditional love of God. Our ministry is a participation in God's love for His people. We are called to act as witnesses to and bearers of God's generous love. God is the author of life and we are its stewards. Our bias is toward abundant life, and we offer sacraments, prayer, visiting, accompaniment in palliative care where possible, and many other kinds of support in the service of loving people as God loves them. Where people are contemplating decisions we disagree with, depending on your role, you may be able to assist in their discernment, gently and appropriately offering another way of seeing, with hope and trust in God.

ii) The call to walk with the dying. A normal reaction for caregivers as we witness the pain and suffering of others is our tendency to try to 'do' something to fix it, to make it better. But that is not always helpful. Often, the most important thing we can offer is to 'be' present and accompany them in their darkest hour of their fears, uncertainties, questions, and pain. Serious illness can be excruciating, and dying can be a prolonged agony. For some, the darkest moments may lead them to contemplate physician assisted suicide as an option. As people of faith and hope, this is not something we can support nor is it something we can participate in. What we can offer as Church is our promise to be there; to remain engaged and in relationship; to help create a space where hope can make a home amid lingering fears; and to pray constantly for the conversion of heart, which we earnestly desire and believe possible to the very end. Our role is as one who keeps vigil alongside others in times of joy or sorrow, and stands with

humble trust between what is known and the mystery of the unknown.

iii) The freedom and conscience of the person who is dying. Each of God's people has been given the gift of freedom, and even while we hope that everyone chooses God freely, we must never infringe on another's freedom. In the very rare circumstances where a sacrament or funeral is denied, it is because that rite would be a violation of that person's free decision to reject in some measure God's grace, and therefore would not be an honest expression of the Church's faith. Even in these instances, the Church never abandons people. Non-sacramental rituals can and should be offered with reverence for freedom and integrity. Ministry also must be offered generously to those who surround the person making the decision: friends and family, caregivers, and healthcare professionals.

iv) Your action on behalf of the whole Church. To be a Christian is to belong to the body of Christ, one part among many members. When we act, we necessarily impact our brothers and sisters. We encourage our priests and those working for the Church in pastoral care who face difficult pastoral decisions to please contact your bishop for designated resource persons to support your discernment around the pastoral approach to those who have raised the possibility of physician assisted suicide, or regarding funeral requests for those who have died in this way. You are on the front lines of the Church's pastoral outreach, and we trust that you will strive to respond to situations which may be very complex with a deep pastoral engagement and a desire to show the face of God's mercy. We cannot anticipate all of the circumstances you might face, but we can ensure that you do not face them alone. We urge you not to make decisions on these situations without consulting those experts in ethics, theology, canon law, and pastoral practice who can help you to make decisions in keeping with your conscience and the wisdom of the broader Church.

v) Your own well-being and conscience. These situations may well push us as individuals to the edges of our own comfort and/or capacity. Amidst circumstances that are ethically challenging and potentially compromising, you also have a duty to yourself: to violate your own conscience would be both damaging and sinful. For whatever reason, if you are not able to enter into a situation, there is no shame in asking for assistance; indeed it is your responsibility to do so.

In this, as in all things, we bring each and every person we serve to the Lord in prayer.

We mourn every time a person contemplates or chooses to end his or her own life. We acknowledge and are deeply saddened by the burden placed on those asked to collaborate in ending a life. We place ourselves and our circumstances humbly in God's hands; we commit ourselves to working faithfully to the best of our ability to be artisans of Christ's healing and agents of the hope and love He came to bring. As we do so, we ask the intercession of Mary, Mother of Jesus, who points us to her son, and shows us how to accompany others by the way she was receptive to Jesus in his living and kept vigil with him in his dying.



Finding the Gifts:

Susan was able to "live a good death" thanks to quality palliative care. Her husband Gordon describes their journey in the first in a series of "Finding the Gifts" videos.

Palliative Care, Suicide Prevention, Care for the Elderly and the L'Arche community are highlighted in videos now available at www.findingthegifts.ca

Produced by the Saskatchewan Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee on the Issue of Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide, with funding from the Knights of Columbus Charitable Foundation.

For more information contact the diocesan Communications Office at (306) 659-5844 or communications@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Provincial workshop addresses issues

Fr. Mark Miller, CSsR, a well-known ethicist, and Bishop Noël Simard, a member of the Pontifical Academy for Life, were guest speakers at a workshop organized by the bishops of Saskatchewan Dec. 1, 2016: "Pastoral Care in an Era of Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia."



Bishop Noël Simard

"We have to rediscover the moral wisdom of the Church's teaching. We have to build up the community and the common good. And we have to base our action on three calls: the call to respect the dignity of human person and the sanctity of life, the call to foster trust and compassion, and the call to promote social justice and good care for all."

- Bishop Noël Simard



Fr. Mark Miller, CSsR

"We need to stand up for what we believe in; we need to support our Catholic facilities in looking after patients.... There are two principles that we operate from. One is that we don't kill people, but the other one is that we don't abandon people."

- Fr. Mark Miller, CSsR

News coverage of the Dec. 1 presentations by Fr. Mark Miller and Bishop Noël Simard can be found on the diocesan news page at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news



It was a full house at St. Philip Neri March 16 as parish nurses hosted an evening of discussion focused around the documentary *The Euthanasia Deception*. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

St. Philip Neri Parish presents film tackling myths about euthanasia

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The harms and dangers of euthanasia and assisted suicide were explored March 16 at St. Philip Neri parish in Saskatoon.

The event organized by St. Philip parish nurses began with the screening of *The Euthanasia Deception*, an hour-long documentary produced by the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, examining how euthanasia has gone wrong in Belgium, and how legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide threatens vulnerable people.

Those in attendance then spent time in small group discussion about issues raised in the documentary film.

Through interviews with physicians, health care providers, legal experts, family members and disability advocates, the film examines three misconceptions around physician assisted dying: that euthanasia and assisted suicide are compassionate, that euthanasia and assisted suicide affect only the individual, and that government safeguards will protect the vulnerable.

Stories and examples throughout the film brought home how euthanasia offers a false compassion. "She and all the others deserve more," said one man whose mother chose to die by euthanasia, leaving behind a divided family wrestling with the pain of her decision. There are other ways to relieve pain – and to address the other fears that so often prompt a request for assisted death, said several of those interviewed for the film.

The film pointed out that palliative care helps people to live their death, without hastening or prolonging the process. "We don't help people to die by killing them," asserted one palliative care advocate.

The threat to those living with disabilities was demonstrated in the story shared by a Belgian father of a disabled child, approached by strangers and asked why he didn't euthanize her.

Amy Hasbrouck, who lives with blindness, said every disabled person hears

at one time or another "I'd rather be dead than be like you." She stressed that anyone can join the ranks of the vulnerable disabled at any time.

Mark Pickup, diagnosed in the prime of life with Multiple Sclerosis, said that "quality of life is a moving target". His future brought joys and fulfillment that he could not perceive in the grief and suffering he felt at the time of his diagnosis, he stressed.

Pickup also pointed to the discrimination that those with disabilities face with the legalization of assisted suicide: "Which citizens get suicide prevention and which get assisted suicide? I can tell you who it is: people like me get assisted suicide; my healthy neighbour gets suicide prevention. Where is the equality in that?"

Contrary to the message in the media and among euthanasia advocates, physician assisted death affects other people, not just the individual who requests it. Far from being an autonomous decision, euthanasia impacts family members, care-givers, physicians and others, the film revealed in story after story.

Finally, evidence was presented showing that safeguards do not work and, once legalized, the eligibility for euthanasia and assisted suicide continues to expand. In Belgium, physicians self-report, and studies have shown that people are being euthanized without their consent. Those with psychological suffering or depression are among those now being euthanized. Over the years, doctor assisted death has become a norm of medical treatment in Belgium, and patients can feel a pressure to "not be a burden" and that they have a "duty to die."

Economic factors also come into play, with a push for euthanasia because it is deemed to be cheaper than care.

Powerful statements concluded the film, including: "Do I love you enough to care for you?"



Hospice fundraiser

St. Philip Neri parish in Saskatoon held a steak night and silent auction fundraiser Oct. 25 in support of a planned residential hospice, raising some \$10,000 that was presented to St. Paul's Hospital Foundation CEO Bruce Acton (right) by parish council chair Art Evoy (left) and parish nurse Ethna Martin. Still in the planning stages, the scope, vision and opening date for the hospice have not yet been finalized. It would be the first residential hospice in the city of Saskatoon. St. Paul's Hospital manages palliative care across the Saskatoon Health Region, and is home to a 12-bed palliative care unit – donations to SPH Palliative Care and Hospice Services through SPH Foundation support accessibility to palliative care.

- Photo submitted by St. Philip Neri parish

Provincial funding for spiritual care in hospitals and care homes eliminated

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The elimination of provincially-funded spiritual care services in hospitals and care homes across Saskatchewan will seriously affect patient care and health outcomes, predicts Simon Lasair of the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care.

As part of the 2017 provincial budget announced March 22 by Finance Minister Kevin Doherty, "pastoral care services" were eliminated from provincial health care funding, amounting to some \$1.5 million annually.

The cuts affect spiritual care departments and personnel funded through the provincial health care system. However, since announcing the cuts, the provincial government has recently reinstated funding for spiritual care in faith-based long-term care facilities (affiliates). The effect of the cuts varies by institution, as some faith-based facilities also use

funding from foundations or endowments to fund spiritual and pastoral care beyond what the province has supported. The pastoral care provided by clergy, staff and volunteers from faith communities is not funded by the province. The cuts affect the professional spiritual care providers and spiritual care departments in hospitals and some care homes.

The decision does not take into account the invaluable and unique skills that spiritual care providers bring to a health care team, says Lasair.

Stress, fear, and loss are commonly experienced by patients, families and staff in health care and long-term settings. Spiritual care providers address the spiritual dimensions of these difficult or life-altering situations, says Lasair.

In addition, many don't understand the distinction between pastoral care and spiritual care, Lasair points out. Pastoral care

consists of religious support and denominational care – often involving clergy or faith communities. "Spiritual care, on the other hand, is more generalized ... providing emotional and spiritual support for health care clients and their families," he describes. Lasair emphasizes the unique, specialized training that professional spiritual care providers bring to the health care team.

Cutting professional spiritual care in hospital and long-term care settings will also affect the partnership and support that spiritual care departments routinely provide to clergy and faith communities offering pastoral care to members in hospital or care homes, points out Lasair. "Without spiritual care departments to oversee the dissemination of information, we are not entirely sure how community clergy are even going to know if their people are in hospital."

It will also leave many without any form of spiritual care at all. "The majority of

clients that we see in the health care system are people who have no religious background whatsoever – and although they may not understand what spiritual care is all about, these people have spiritual needs as well," Lasair says.

"There is an increasing body of research evidence that having some sort of professional spiritual care as part of the delivery of overall medical care actually improves medical outcomes... one of the implications of this decision is that there is actually going to be a greater burden of care upon the system, because there are not professionals there to provide the emotional and spiritual support needed."

Various groups have been in dialogue with government representatives about the issue, working to get the funding restored, notes Blake Sittler, Director of Pastoral Services. "That includes the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon," Sittler said.

Sacred Reflections ecumenical service offers place of comfort and healing for all whose lives have been touched by cancer

BY DARLENE POLACHIC

There are many cancer-based initiatives, but Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Parish and McClure United Church in Saskatoon offer something unique. Sacred Reflections is a special service of prayer for all those affected by cancer.

The service is organized by Charlene Nijhawan and Kelly Wormsbecker, pastoral assistants in Ministry of Care at Holy Spirit Parish, and Carol Claypool, the McClure United Church coordinator for Sacred Reflections.

“In Ministry of Care, we deal with people all the time who are ill with cancer,” Wormsbecker says. “We are very much in the front lines and see the need for an event like this.”

The first Sacred Reflections was held in 2010 as a joint effort of the two churches in response to the covenant partnership they share. It was so well-received, it has become an annual event that alternates between the two locations. In October 2016, the service was held at Holy Spirit.

“Sacred Reflections is an ecumenical evening spent in quiet reflection, prayer, and the sharing of people’s testimonies and stories of their journey with cancer,” Nijhawan says.

“It’s a place where patients,



Charlene Nijhawan and Kelly Wormsbecker (l-r), pastoral assistants in Ministry of Care at Holy Spirit Catholic Parish in Saskatoon, work with Carol Claypool, McClure United Church coordinator, to organize an annual Sacred Reflections prayer evening for all those affected by cancer.

- Photo by Darlene Polachic

caregivers, survivors, friends and family can come together in a sacred space and let go of some of the burdens they’re carrying. It is for all people affected by cancer, and all kinds of people come for a variety of reasons. Each year different people attend because of their own particular needs.”

The format of the service features sacred reflections on four main themes: courage, hope, healing and remembrance.

It integrates Taizé Prayer with meditation, periods of silence and scripture readings. There is no preaching.

“Taizé Prayer involves repetitive singing in a meditative spirit,” Wormsbecker says. “It is meant to show unity, because we’re all singing and repeating the same phrase over and over. ‘Hear our prayer, Lord, hear our prayer,’ for instance. It is very unitive, no text is needed, and we can sing in unison or in harmony.”

“Votive candles create subtle lighting and offer an atmosphere for the Taizé Prayer. It is very comforting.”

During the service, intercessory prayer is offered for patients, caregivers, medical

professionals, and for the people touched by cancer who have gone before.

“In the weeks leading up to the service, we encourage people in both churches to put the names of people they wish to be prayed for in a basket,” Nijhawan says. “During the intercessory prayer time, we will hold those people up in prayer.”

The reflection part of the service involves people sharing stories of cancer. Sometimes it will be Nijhawan or Wormsbecker reading a story on someone else’s behalf; other times it will be the people themselves.

“The stories are always a great encouragement to those attending,” Wormsbecker says. “The most common response is ‘So it’s not just me feeling that.’ People appreciate hearing from others who have survived cancer and can tell them what’s ahead and how they’ve gotten through with faith, their faith community, the Word of God, and friends.

The service is also an opportunity to give thanks for good medical assistance and the medical community. “That’s why we say this service is not just for patients or people with cancer,” she says. “It’s for everyone who has someone in their extended family or relationships with cancer, and that’s pretty far-

reaching. Nearly everyone today knows someone who is dealing with cancer. This service is an opportunity to support one another in the larger community.”

Nijhawan says the hospitality time held afterwards is an opportunity for people to make connections with one another or with the pastoral associates in the Ministry of Care.

“Not everyone wants to do that. Some guard their privacy closely and the dimly lit space during the service makes that possible,” she adds.

“Many people who attend for the first time tell us they didn’t know what to expect, but they cried the whole time, and they really needed to do that. Men, who are less likely to talk about their emotions, find the service to have a very comforting atmosphere. They say, ‘I had no intention of crying, but in the moment, the tears just came.’ It is very private, very healing.”

Service attendance has grown each year, and generally reaches several hundred.

“There are many cancer initiatives,” Nijhawan says, “but this addresses the spiritual aspect and we want people to have that available. It’s a bit of a touchstone in different stages in the journey with cancer.”

Catholic parish in Wynyard hosts ecumenical event

BY LINDA YASKOWICH

World Day of Prayer 2017, with materials written by the women of the Philippines, was hosted in Wynyard by St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church.

The World Day of Prayer is an interdenominational service organized by the Women’s Inter-Church Council of Canada and is held on the first Friday of March.

This year’s service was written by the women of the Philippines, and because St. Mary’s has a large membership of Filipino Catholics, hosting this year’s service was a perfect fit for the Wynyard parish. There was a

large participation by the Filipino members of the congregation, as well as by other parishioners and members of other Wynyard churches.

Highlights of the service included three local Filipino women telling their stories and describing how they came to be living in Canada, the national dress of the Filipinos worn by many to the service, the choir singing the Our Father (Ama Namin) in their own language, and an array of Filipino foods to choose from after the service.

It was heartening to see a large number of people come out to



A choir of Filipino parishioners participated in the World Day of Prayer service hosted March 3, 2017 at St. Mary’s Catholic Parish in Wynyard, SK.

- Photo by Brenda Ackerman

World Day of Prayer this year. The 2018 service will be hosted by Wynyard Gospel Church.

The World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women focused on

prayer and action for peace and justice. More info can be found at: www.worlddayofprayer.net

Program in Ecumenical Studies and Formation will be offered June 20-23

BY DR. DARREN DAHL,
PRAIRIE CENTRE FOR ECUMENISM

The Program in Ecumenical Studies and Formation is a three-year accredited program developed by the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism in Saskatoon.

Offered annually during the third week of June, the 2017 program will be held June 20-23 at Redeemer Lutheran Church.

Upon completion of three years, participants are awarded a certificate in Ecumenical Studies and formation from St. Andrew’s College and the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism (PCE).

The Program in Ecumenical Studies and Formation is of particular interest to ecumenical officers, those training for ministry, those engaged in ministry in an ecumenical setting, and lay people wishing to increase their knowledge of the ecumenical movement. Local scholars,

ecumenists and international visiting scholars lead the program.

One of the 2017 visiting scholars is Fr. Thomas Ryan, a native of Minnesota and a member of the Paulist Fathers community of Catholic priests. His ministry has been marked by three passions: spirituality; Christian unity; and interreligious understanding and collaboration.

Ryan is currently the director of the Paulist North American Office for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations in Washington DC, and a former director of the Canadian Centre for Ecumenism, and of Unitas, an ecumenical centre for Christian meditation and spirituality in Montreal, QC. He is the author or co-author of 14 books, and leads retreats internationally.

The other 2017 visiting scholar is Natasha Klukach, a lay theologian of the Anglican Church of Canada, who began

serving the World Council of Churches as a Programme Executive in 2011, with responsibility for Church and Ecumenical Relations, deepening and strengthening the fellowship of 348 member churches.

Klukach’s appointment for a term to the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue culminated in a consensus document called *In The Image And Likeness Of God: A Hope-Filled Anthropology*. She is a former ecumenical officer for the Anglican Church of Canada, and was a member of the Faith and Order Standing Commission of the World Council of Churches (WCC) from 2007 to 2010. She worked on the consensus text – *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* – adopted by the WCC in 2013. She is presently furthering research on the contemporary ecumenical movement, writing a doctoral dissertation at King’s College, London.

An information video about the program, and more information is available on the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism website at www.pcecumenism.ca or for more information contact (306) 653-1633 or email: programs@pcecumenism.ca

A program “sampler” is also available on the website. The sampler offers an opportunity to take a small part of the program (sessions from both the introductory and advanced units of the program) for a reduced cost, in order to determine whether to enrol in the full program, offered June 20-23 this year.

Prairie Centre for Ecumenism is supported by the



Challenge and blessing of serving in two northern communities

Editor's Note: Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, agreed in the summer of 2016 to go to the Archdiocese of Keewatin-LePas to serve at Southend and La Ronge, as part of a commitment by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon to support ministry in the north.

BY REV. LAWRENCE DEMONG, OSB

"Wow!" was the one word that came to my mind as I drove up to the rectory in Southend on Aug. 5, 2016, almost six months ago. It was the most beautiful spot where I had ever been asked to live.

And as I contrasted other commitments I've accepted, there was almost no struggle to say yes and to follow the call I felt as I sat with the Liebenthal congregation in the diocese of Saskatoon that Sunday in May of 2016 (when the move to the northern parishes was announced).

I had already related as pastor to the First Nations folks in Cumberland House over a 10-year period and had served La Ronge as well for a brief time. But Southend, named for being at the southern tip of Reindeer Lake with its rectory planted beside what seemed as the jewel of northern Saskatchewan, was totally new.

On the right side of the rectory, looking northwest out into the lake was what seemed like a private beach with rocks to the right reflecting the Canadian Shield and to the left a naturally carved slanted rock to protect you for a swim or sheltering a boat. To the southwest was the community's launching area for the many leisure and fishing boats with trailers parked along the shore.

The people in this northern village, almost all Cree speaking, are, like their natural space, beautiful, friendly and religious. There is poverty, yes, but the band is well organized and people have a good support system, a health centre well staffed and effective in dealing with people's needs. The school, up on the hill, has all the grades, is available 7 days a week and run by the aboriginal community, reflecting their preferences and values.

One of the first surprises in Southend was an additional symbolic way of dealing with grief at a funeral. I have always been impressed with how our First Nations handle the experience of death, having a wake that lasted over 48 hours, not having an undertaker involved at the wake or funeral, lowering the casket into the grave with ropes, shoveling the dirt over the casket themselves. But the additional even more dramatic symbol for me was

seeing family members and even mothers of small deceased children helping to pound the nails to attach the rough box lid after the coffin was placed inside it.

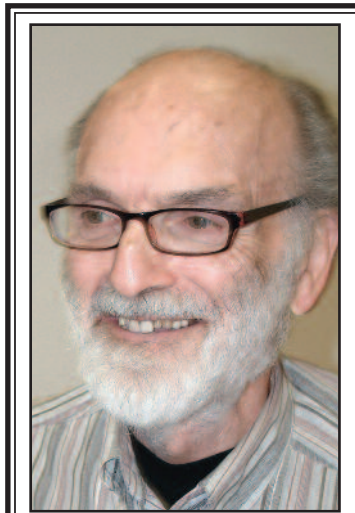
I have no regrets about having volunteered to work in the North as part of the response by the diocese of Saskatoon to the critical shortage of resources in the Keewatin-Le Pas Diocese. At one point I actually wrote down that I felt it was the action of God's Spirit that got me involved at this point in my life, that my 53 plus years of priesthood and some 60 years of monasticism were perhaps needed preparation for this endeavour.

On my first day of involvement as pastor of the La Ronge community when preparing to celebrate Mass for 11 am, I received a call at 9 am that the suicide of a parishioner had just been discovered.

On the morning of Jan. 1, 2017, I got the sad New Year's news in Southend that one of our parishioners had been murdered, a middle-aged woman, stabbed by a teenage woman, both parishioners. I believe the homily for the day's feast was able to give some needed help to the grieving community.

Several days later in the midst of preparing for the funeral I asked a reliable woman in the parish, a guidance counselor at the local school who had told me about her efforts to help this teenager, to come with me, not only to find the house, but to guide my feeble efforts to see the mother of the murderer. When we arrived at her house she told us how, lying on her couch, she had been crying and praying that someone would come.

La Ronge held a local TRC (Truth and Reconciliation)



Northern Report
**Fr. Lawrence
DeMong, OSB**

gathering on Feb. 22. This came from a conversation with Jonas Bird, a residential school survivor, who, with his wife, Virginia, told of how a previous pastor used to pick on the boys, especially the Aboriginal children. At that point I blurted out, "We need our own TRC!"

Jonas immediately took me up on it and, having had the excellent experience of the national TRC led by Justice Murray Sinclair in Saskatoon, I contacted him with the question of whether it was realistic to have this kind of local gathering. Senator Sinclair was very supportive, gave us information and suggested that it must be done in conjunction with local First Nations' leaders. Jonas Bird himself worked out the details with other band leaders for this event.

The regular pastoral work has been going reasonably well. When Fr. Mark Blom, OMI, came for the funeral of the murder victim in Southend, I saw how competent he was as pastor and evangelizer. Nevertheless, having joked with Archbishop Murray Chatlain about my age, I was quickly told that I was not the oldest, a rather positive way, I felt, of telling me to hang in there. Although I find myself less efficient in getting things done, I do believe that the Lord wants me to continue this work and I am quite willing to do so.

Although the First Nations struggles tend to cast a certain shadow over the description I have given here, I would not want to leave the impression that things are grim.

Our First Nations sisters and brothers have wonderful traditions, have great respect for the Elders (giving this old fellow a distinct advantage!), they laugh easily and often, they are amazingly welcoming and enjoy moments such as Santa's arrival on Christmas Eve by dog team, when the folks present persuaded me to sit on his knee.

My own private joke was on the feast of St. Lawrence when the only red vestment I could find was an ancient "fiddleback." For most younger Catholics this would be an item only to be found in a museum. A few weeks later I did some clean-up in the sacristy and found a somewhat antique but ample red vestment.

If La Ronge has lots of volunteers to carry out the pastoral ministry of the parish, Southend needs an extra prayer to find and support the volunteers who are needed. But their deep spirituality is already the foundation for an enlivened parish life and generous outreach to those in need.

De Margerie lecture at STM explores 500th anniversary of Reformation

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The commemoration of 500 years of the Reformation poses a spiritual and theological challenge to Christians, said Rev. Dr. Dirk G. Lange in a public lecture presented Jan. 26 at St. Thomas More College, part of the De Margerie Series on Christian Reconciliation and Unity in Saskatoon.

Originally from Winnipeg, Lange is an associate dean and professor of worship at Luther College in St. Paul Minnesota. He is also project officer for the global Joint Commemoration of the Reformation being prepared by the Lutheran World Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, and a Lutheran member of the International Joint Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue Commission.

The Reformation was an event that impacted the life of the church and the faith of millions, said Lange, tackling the question of how the past 500 years might be celebrated in 2017.

Lange pointed to five ecumenical imperatives that conclude the anniversary RC-Lutheran document *From Conflict to Communion*, citing the first all-encompassing imperative that Catholics and Lutherans should always begin from the perspective of unity, and all that is held in common, rather than from a point of view of division, and another



Rev. Dr. Dirk G. Lange gave the 2017 De Margerie Lecture.

saying that Catholics and Lutherans should "witness together to the mercy of God in proclamation and service to the world."

The document concludes by affirming: "The beginnings of the Reformation will be rightly remembered when Lutherans and Catholics hear together the gospel of Jesus Christ and allow themselves to be called anew into community with the Lord."

Lange also offered reflections on the events of a Joint Commemoration of the Reformation held Oct. 31, 2016 in Sweden to open a "year-long vigil" leading up to the 500th anniversary in October 2017.

Rather than being a conference or a symposium, the event featured common prayer, Lange noted. "A

liturgy launched this commemoration of the 500 years."

Worship was jointly led by Pope Francis and the president of the Lutheran World Federation, Bishop Munib A. Younan (who is the Lutheran bishop of Jordan and the Holy Land). The liturgy was held at the Lund cathedral – built as a Catholic cathedral in the 12th century, it became a Lutheran cathedral after the Reformation in the 16th century.

"In this liturgy, both Lutherans and Catholics gave thanks for the gifts that the Reformation brought to the church, they lamented and repented of the division and the violence that ensued, and they committed themselves to a common witness and service."

A larger public event at the Malmö Arena focusing on the commitment to common witness and service of Catholics and Lutherans in a world, wounded and broken by conflict.

"The origins of this joint commemoration lie in 50 years of dialogue between Catholics and Lutherans," Lange said. The celebration's origins can also be traced back to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification signed by the World Lutheran Federation and the Catholic Church in 1999.

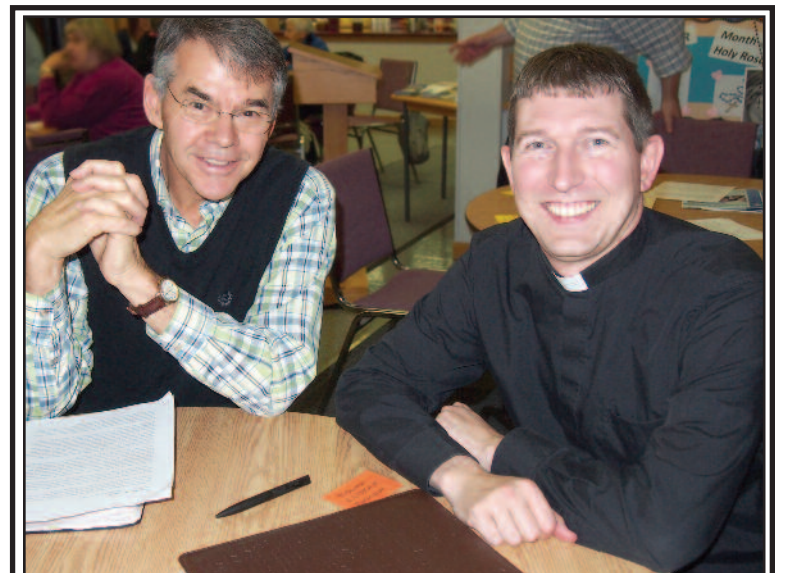
The joint Lutheran-Catholic dialogue continues to work on questions that remain to be

answered, especially on questions of church, ministry, and Eucharist, he said. "The next round of the joint commission is addressing the question, if we are one in baptism, why aren't we one at the table?"

Lange also pointed to the ever-relevant question: "As people of faith how does our witness today continually point to the life, the death and resurrection of Jesus?"

Held annually during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the De Margerie series is sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, the Dubé Chair in Catholic Studies at St. Thomas More College, and the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism.

Find more coverage of the January Week of Prayer online at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news



Evangelical-Catholic conversation

Pastor Harry Strauss (left) of Forest Grove Community Church and Fr. Matthew Ramsay of St. Anne's Catholic Church spoke about Evangelical and Catholic understandings of Mary and the Saints at a public event in October 2016, one of a series of events held to discuss portions of "Called to Common Witness" a 2015 joint statement by the local Evangelical Catholic Dialogue. Find an article about the presentation on Mary and the saints online at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news A new Evangelical-Roman Catholic Commission for Common Witness will be inaugurated at a joint worship service 7 p.m. Tuesday, May 16 at Holy Family Cathedral in Saskatoon. Everyone is welcome to attend.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Discernment House live-in year enriches faith

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

At Discernment House, the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary offer a unique housing and faith experience to young women seeking a place to live while studying or working in Saskatoon.

“The living, eating, praying, working, playing together is a mutually enriching experience,” says Sr. Cindy Lewans, PM. “This is all within a home, a house of hospitality.”

Sr. Lucie Hamel, PM, adds: “Sharing our home and our lives with young women is a huge blessing for us. Each year, the young women bring a newness to our community life and as we live and pray together, we challenge each other to ever fresher ways of responding to the challenges of living the gospel values.”

Located close to the University of Saskatchewan, Discernment House becomes home every fall for a new group of young women who are seeking affordable rent, an experience of community, a homey atmosphere, and opportunities for faith growth through prayer, reflection, spiritual direction and service.

“Discernment House is first of all a community, companions on the journey of faith in Christ,” stresses Lewans.

“Weekday mornings begin with lauds and Mass, shared not only with those who live within the house but also people from the city. We are nourished by the Eucharist and the community which gathers, and a bond has grown over the years. Weekly community meetings give us the chance to pray with the Word, to build community, and offer a chance to help each other, (and) to laugh,” she says.

Ongoing spiritual direction is also offered to the young women who come to live at Discernment House, notes Hamel. This is “an opportunity to savor one’s experience of God’s love in a unique way. It is a privileged space for reflection, for growing in awareness of one’s deeper identity.” She describes spiritual direction as a “path to greater peace and freedom” that helps to “carry one’s experience of grace, of the divine, into all of life.”

Tram Nguyen, an international student from Vietnam who is working on her masters in Educational Administration, said she appreciates the spiritual benefits of living with the sisters at Discernment House.



Established in Saskatoon in 1986, Discernment House provides an experience of community, prayer and spiritual growth to young women who come to live with the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary. - Photo by Sr. Lucie Hamel, PM

“On my journey with God, which is by far reinforced by the Sisters of The Presentation of Mary, I find myself listening to God more,” says Tram, who is in her second year at Discernment House. “Now I know how to pray with the scriptures. I am starting to have my favorite gospels, as I feel like scripture speaks directly to me. This is my very new experience that I never thought I would have.”

Community life at Discernment House has also made a big difference to Tram. “As an international student living far away from home, the Discernment House is truly my warm shelter, where I have a community living experience. We share our thoughts and concerns, enjoy tasty home-made meals all together, exchange gifts at Christmas, celebrate Thanksgiving and Easter, tell jokes, have fun, discuss the Gospels, share our living experience with God, and pray for people and for one another.”

She adds: “Many of my external and internal challenges are overcome thanks to my strong spirit fostered by prayer life in this house.”

Another student from Vietnam, Nhi

Nguyen, is living at Discernment House while she studies English. “I came in September and I’m so happy and comfortable living here at Discernment house. We share our lives and work together everyday,” says Nhi.

“When I have some troubles in my life, I can share with them. Especially, one of the sisters helps me to study English so much. She is always willing to help me whenever I ask. The food here is so good – I really like the cookies and cakes which the sisters bake. Sometimes we have parties and play games together,” she says. “For me, the highlights are that sisters always pray – they care about me and my family.”

Discernment House is also the location for other programs and retreats, including Advent and Lenten retreats for groups such as Time Out For Moms and for Presentation of Mary Associates, says Hamel. “These days offer precious moments away from busy active lives to pray, to share with each other, to be

energized on our spiritual journeys.”

Weekend discernment retreats are also regularly offered “to young men and women who are searching to grow in their awareness of God’s action in their lives,” adds Sr. Vivianne Gareau, PM. For example, “one retreat gives time and guided reflection on one’s personal stories, and how God is calling us to move forward.”

Testimonies from weekend participants illustrate the impact of the discernment retreats. One writes that it was “an energizing experience of faith and community,” while another says “the retreat showed me where I am at and gave me a direction forward.” Another states: “I experienced healing and peace.”

The Sisters of the Presentation of Mary are now taking applications to the Discernment House live-in program for the fall of 2017. For more information contact: Sr. Lucie Hamel, PM, at (306) 244-0726 or e-mail sk.dhouse@gmail.com or see the website at www.presentationofmary.ca



200th Anniversary of Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Members of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate came forward to add their signatures to the order’s founding document as a sign of their ongoing commitment during a 200th anniversary celebration held Oct. 21, 2016 at St. Francis Xavier parish in Saskatoon. Oblate priests, brothers and associates gathered with colleagues and friends from across the diocese for the celebration marking the establishment of the missionary order in 1816 by St. Eugene de Mazenod. Archbishop Donald Bolen presided at Mass, with Rev. Ken Thorson, OMI, giving the homily.

- Photo by Tim Yaworski



Anniversaries recognized at Denzil

Couples who celebrated significant wedding anniversaries in 2016 were invited to renew their commitment during Mass on New Year’s Eve at Sacred Heart Parish in Denzil. Under the leadership of Rev. Binu Rathappillil, VC, the idea was initiated as a way of celebrating family life in conjunction with the Dec. 30 Feast of the Holy Family. Couples who celebrated jubilee anniversaries during the year were given corsages and joined the entrance procession, renewed their commitment during the celebration, and were presented with a certificate.

- Photo by Michelle Sieben

Next steps for formation of permanent deacons in diocese now underway

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The next steps for the formation of permanent deacons are now underway in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

With the decision to begin calling, forming and ordaining permanent deacons, the diocese of Saskatoon joins many other Catholic dioceses across the world in restoring this ancient practice.

“The permanent diaconate, restored by the Second Vatican Council, in complete continuity with ancient tradition and the specific decision of the Council of Trent, has flourished in these last decades in many parts of the Church — with promising results, especially for the urgent missionary work of new evangelization,” states a 1998 Vatican declaration about the Formation of Deacons.

Several men are presently discerning a call to the permanent diaconate in the diocese of Saskatoon.

Four men presently journeying through this year’s diocesan Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation program have expressed interest in the permanent diaconate, says Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee.

The JOY program has been identified as a pre-requisite for those discerning the diaconate in our diocese, McGee explains. A diaconate formation committee is now determining next steps for these potential candidates in the year ahead.

It is presently envisioned that formation for deacons in the diocese of Saskatoon will be undertaken on an individual basis, tailored to the education and experience of each candidate, says McGee. As with other Holy Orders, the discernment process involves both the candidate and the faith community.

The permanent diaconate is open to married men over 35 years of age, and single men over 25 years of age — but

details about how permanent deacons are formed and how they function varies from diocese to diocese.

Having the JOY program as a pre-requisite year reflects a strong diocesan focus on service and outreach when it comes to forming permanent deacons, McGee notes.

In 2015, when Saskatoon’s bishop announced plans to move forward with both the JOY program and the permanent diaconate in the diocese, he explained how both answer a profound need for outreach and service.

“We situated our discussion in the context of God’s call and our response,” said Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen (now Archbishop of Regina).

“We looked at different models of the diaconate, and eventually experienced a coming together of minds and hearts, as we were increasingly drawn towards a vision of the diaconate that would have as its primary focus a ministry of outreach which summoned the whole Church to reach out in service and compassion to places of great need,” said Bolen in 2015.

Running from September to June, JOY offers once-a-month practical formation and engagement in justice and outreach, grounded in Catholic Social Teaching. Fifteen participants — men and women, lay and religious — are presently taking the JOY program inaugural year (see Page 19).

Applications are now underway for next year’s JOY program. To apply, or for more information, see the JOY website: www.joyformationprogram.com or contact Kate O’Gorman at (306) 659-5847; joy@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Those interested in discerning a call to the permanent diaconate in the diocese are invited to contact Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee at (306) 659-5824 or bishopsoffice@saskatoonrcdiocese.com



Edward Gibney



Michael Yaremko

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon will gather in joy and thanksgiving for the

ORDINATION OF

**EDWARD GIBNEY
&
MICHAEL YAREMKO**

**TO THE SACRED ORDER OF THE PRIESTHOOD
7 p.m., Thursday, June 29, 2017**

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Marriage Task Force seeks new ways to strengthen marriages

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Phil and Mary Wrubleski are eager to bring practical marriage enrichment opportunities to couples in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

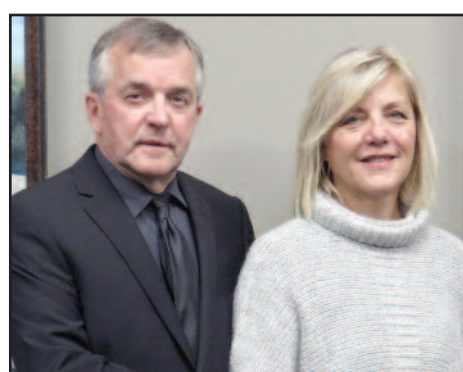
The Wrubleskis are current chairs of the diocesan Marriage Task Force, which over the past 15 years has worked to affirm, celebrate and enrich marriage.

Finding new ways to strengthen marriages in an era when programs such as Marriage Encounter have ebbed is a priority, says Phil.

Married couples seem to be getting into trouble earlier, adds Mary. “We need something more between Marriage Preparation and Retrouvaille (aimed at marriages in crisis).”

One exciting new idea is marriage mentoring, in which a younger couple is invited to meet monthly with a more established mentoring couple in the parish who is trained to engage in helpful conversations about marriage, life and children.

The diocesan task force has been connecting with Family Life Canada, looking into the training required to prepare



Phil and Mary Wrubleski
Diocese of Saskatoon Marriage Task Force
- Photo by Merv Hey

mentor couples for this role, says Phil. The strength of marriage mentoring is that it is low-key, relational and grounded in real-life experience, based on the idea that “most marriages don’t need an overhaul, just regular tune ups.”

Couples who have weathered difficulties have a lot to offer younger couples, says Mary. “Phil and I would not still be together, had it not been for the crises we went through together. You develop tools, your marriage gets stronger.” Sharing insights with younger couples in a social setting can plant seeds and provide critical support that helps a marriage grow rather than breaking up.

In recent years the diocesan Marriage Task Force has led a number of initiatives — such as marriage enrichment evenings, re-examining marriage preparation materials, and leading local “Lineamenta” discussions

on marriage and family life in response to the Extraordinary Synod on the Family.

This spring, the Marriage Task Force partnered with a number of evangelical Christian churches for a Saskatoon Marriage Network event. The “Weekend of Impact” conference featured a number of marriage and parenting workshops by Dave and Donalyn Currie of Doing Family Right Ministries April 27-29 at Circle Drive Alliance Church. The Christian churches involved in the Saskatoon Marriage Network all recognize the importance of marriage and family life, says Phil. “We have a lot in common.”

Conference sessions included a day for couples married 20-plus years; a second day-long marriage-building experience with a special focus on those married less than 20 years; and a luncheon session for clergy and ministry leaders about the issue of pornography. How to leave a spiritual impact on confident children was the topic for a separate parenting workshop on the evening of April 28.

Exploring “Amoris laetitia”

Working with Catholic dioceses and eparchies across Saskatchewan, the Wrubleskis are also busy developing a study guide for *Amoris laetitia* (“The Joy of Love”), Pope Francis’ post-Synod apostolic exhortation on marriage and family life; and they are also assisting in planning for a provincial Catholic conference on *Amoris laetitia* to be held in Saskatoon next spring.

Amoris laetitia is a beautiful document, easy to read and filled with insights that deserve to be widely known and discussed, say the Wrubleskis.

“It is such a pastoral document,” says Phil. “It is timely and very brave.” It doesn’t shy away from the real challenges facing families, and it is filled with hope for healing and strengthening ordinary family life, fitting in with Pope Francis’ image of the Church as a field hospital, tending to wounds in the world, the couple notes.

“We need to remember how many people that we meet and talk to have a situation that is real, that is difficult. They need to be listened to and loved,” says Mary.

The April 2018 provincial Catholic conference on *Amoris laetitia*, will feature ordinary couples connecting their lived experiences to the document themes and insights. “Our dream is to get this out to the whole diocese, the whole eparchy,” says Phil.

The Wrubleskis also hope to attract other married couples from all areas of the diocese to participate in the work of the Marriage Task Force and move toward putting other ideas into action — including digital outreach.

“We want to offer people something to sink their teeth into, to get more things into motion,” says Phil.

Anyone interested in getting involved in the Marriage Task Force is invited to contact Blake Sittler at the Catholic Pastoral Centre in Saskatoon at (306) 659-5834 or director@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Marriage and Family Life is supported by

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Retrouvaille is a lifeline for struggling marriages

A few years ago, the marriage of Anastasia Winterhalt and Anthony McCarthy was at a breaking point.

“I didn’t think I could possibly fix what was broken,” says Winterhalt. “We had no communication, I was ready to divorce my husband.”

When Anastasia thought all was lost, her mother suggested she try Retrouvaille.

Lack of communication, resentment, fighting, and living separate lives while married are just some of the common factors responsible for the breakdown of many marriages. The reasons are as varied as the couples that take part in Retrouvaille.

Retrouvaille has Catholic roots but the program is for

“You don’t have to accept a bad marriage; you can change it. This program helped me save the most valuable thing in my life.”

– Anastasia Winterhalt, Retrouvaille Participant.

everyone who wants a stronger marriage, regardless of religious affiliation.

It is based on an intensive weekend experience followed by six follow-up sessions. The main emphasis of the program is on communication and rebuilding relationships.

Anthony says Retrouvaille gave him a new language. “I was never much of a talker, especially when it came to the hard stuff. The program was intense but it

got to the root of things,” he explains.

“It’s given me the confidence to express my emotions with my wife and the rest of my family.”

The next Retrouvaille weekend will be held Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2017 in Saskatoon. For more information, please call (306) 652-7155 or e-mail: retrouvaille@sasktel.net

(Retrouvaille is supported by the Bishop’s Annual Appeal in the diocese of Saskatoon.)



Anthony McCarthy and Anastasia Winterhalt say Retrouvaille helped to save their marriage. The next Retrouvaille weekend in Saskatoon will be held Sept. 29 to Oct. 1 in Saskatoon. More info: www.restoremarriage.ca



Parish Life Directors and Pastors share leadership

Pastoral teams from parishes across the diocese that have a Parish Life Director sharing leadership gathered with diocesan Human Resources Manager Patrick J. Clarke (left) for a day of reflection and discernment Jan. 19 at Queen’s House. Topics included vocation, communication and pastoral responsibilities.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski



Pastor for Wynyard, Foam Lake and Wishart

The installation of Fr. Augustine Osei-Bonsu as pastor of St. Mary’s, Wynyard, or Christ the King, Foam Lake, and of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Wishart was held Sept. 18, 2016, with Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee presiding. Pictured at the celebration in Wynyard are (l-r) Brenda Ackerman, Michael Siton, Dale Chubak, Lian Principe, Fr. Kevin McGee and Fr. Augustine Osei-Bonsu.

- Submitted photo



Davidson Pastoral Region celebration

Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee officially installed Fr. Madonna-Godwin Aghedo, OP, as pastor of parishes at Davidson, Outlook, Kenaston and Elbow at a celebration of the Eucharist at Sacred Heart Parish in Davidson. Find an article about the Jan. 15, 2017 installation online at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski



Cana Continues family camp

Families pray vespers at the lake as part of the Cana Continues family camp offered by the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon. Registration is underway for the Aug. 13-19, 2017 family camp. See the website at www.skeparchy.org/flo/ministries/our-cana-camp

- Photo by Teresa Bodnar-Hiebert

Former convent will become Humboldt assisted-living facility: “The Elizabeth”

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The spirit and legacy of the Sisters of Saint Elizabeth is reflected in a seniors’ housing development planned for the order’s former convent in Humboldt, say those who initiated the project as a response to a desperate need.

Christened “The Elizabeth,” the planned assisted-living facility in the former Elizabethan convent will permit low-income seniors to live independently, safely and securely, with meals provided, and other support available through home care.

For generations, women religious in the region – the Franciscan Sisters of Saint Elizabeth and the Ursulines of Bruno – responded to the needs they saw around them, rallying the wider community to create needed facilities, services and outreach, points out Agnes Pratchler, a member of the local committee that is now planning the convent redevelopment.

For instance, the Sisters of Saint Elizabeth built and operated St. Elizabeth’s Hospital and St. Mary’s Villa in Humboldt, lobbied the government to provide home care nursing, and initiated Meals on Wheels.

“When the Sisters left Humboldt, they left behind a great void that has not been closed thus far, and the community is struggling with that void,” says Pratchler, adding that it is now up to the community-at-large to respond to needs – such as the desperate lack of affordable housing for seniors who do not need high levels of nursing care, but who still require some support.

Pratchler describes how in May 2013 a group of local women met to discuss the struggles of seniors who needed help with daily needs. “They came up with the idea of having the people who are in the need of help (to) live in the same housing complex and to get their meals provided”, while also accessing home care services.

The vacant convent building was sold to the city of Humboldt in 2014, after the Sisters of Saint Elizabeth had retired to Saskatoon. “It is a solid brick building and good for many more years,” says Pratchler, describing how committee members met with city of Humboldt officials, the Humboldt Housing Authority, the provincial Health minister, and representatives of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation about the idea.

With the encouragement of officials, and now incorporated as a non-profit organization, Elizabeth’s Place Inc. board is fundraising for furnishings, as Stewart Properties works to renovate the facility, with a hope of opening 39 units in the spring of 2018, says board member Cori Norman.

“Humboldt can be very proud of the Sisters and their legacy – and this building is a part of their legacy,” Norman asserts. “They knew that their last gift to the community could continue their legacy.”

Sr. Philomena Dobmeier, OSE, has expressed the order’s support for the project: “In all our dealings we felt the convent should be re-purposed. It was built so well and was kept up so well. Senior housing and affordable housing was something that was very much needed in the city of Humboldt. This would certainly carry on the legacy and charism of the Sisters of Saint Elizabeth who for over 100 years brought quality health care to Humboldt and the surrounding areas,” she says.

For more information about The Elizabeth, see the website at: www.theelizabeth.ca or call: (306) 682-2983.

Alma House is second L'Arche home in Saskatoon

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

With great joy, L'Arche resident Christopher Powell cut the ribbon to officially open Alma House, the second L'Arche home in Saskatoon, during a celebration Dec 2 that included residents, family members and friends, board members, and government representatives.

Located at 546 Christopher Lane in southeast Saskatoon, the newly-renovated Alma House is home to four core residents and four live-in assistants who share life together in a model pioneered by Jean Vanier some 52 years ago in France.

Today there are over 150 L'Arche communities around the world in 37 different countries, including 29 L'Arche communities in Canada, noted Executive Director Wyndham Thiessen.

Historically, L'Arche stood at the start of the movement to de-institutionalize care for those with intellectual disabilities, said Thiessen, describing how the L'Arche vision was born when Jean Vanier welcomed two men who had been living in an institution to come and live with him. "This (is a) vision of people with and without disabilities, sharing life together, creating mutual relationships and friendships, creating a place where everyone and their gifts can be celebrated," Thiessen explained.

Two of the four core residents now living at Alma House are former residents of Valley View Centre in Moose Jaw. That institution is closing, and residents are gradually being moved into residential care.

"It is a pleasure to be here today, especially to be here for (core residents) Christopher, Milton, Adeline and Shaun," said Social Services Minister Tina Beaudry-Mellor. The government of Saskatchewan provided some \$560,000 toward the mortgage of Alma House, as well as some \$420,000 in annual operational funding.

L'Arche Saskatoon also includes Christopher House, which opened in 2008 as a home to four core residents and four live-in assistants, as well as providing vocational support for adults with intellectual disabilities in a workshop day program in Saskatoon.

"In 2012 we began the workshop to facilitate interaction with the wider community. With ministry funding in 2015, that workshop was transformed to a full-time program," said L'Arche Saskatoon Board Chair Myron Rogal. "Our workshop is designed to meet the needs of individuals, particular to their abilities, and aligned with their interests... The workshop encourages expression through art, music and other media."



A ribbon-cutting ceremony Dec. 2 marked the official opening of Alma House, L'Arche Saskatoon's second home in Saskatoon, with (l-r) L'Arche Saskatoon Chair Myron Rogal, Executive Director Wyndham Thiessen, residents Shaun Becker and Christopher Powell, Social Services Minister Tina Beaudry-Mellor, Saskatoon City Councillor Bev Dubois, and Saskatchewan Education Minister Don Morgan.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Education and awareness is another part of the L'Arche story, Rogal said. "Part of our vision is to spread this philosophy into more parts of society."

Rogal explained: "With L'Arche we cease to fear our limitations, shifting our focus to our abilities and our gifts. With L'Arche we have the opportunity to foster deep and meaningful friendships, not based on any conditions or factors. With L'Arche we practice and live into hope. At its depth, it is a community where we can be with one another, where we can be ourselves with one

another, and that is the beauty, the gem of L'Arche."

In closing, Wyndham Thiessen explained the evolution and meaning of the name Alma House, noting the crab apple tree that grows in the yard.

"One of our assistants who had a Hungarian background said that the Hungarian word for apple is alma. So we started thinking about that word," Thiessen said. "Alma is a word that actually has meanings in different languages: it means

'soul' in Spanish and 'on the water' in Arabic, but it also means 'nourishing' in Latin – if you think of the term 'Alma Mater,' – so the name really grew on us."

Thiessen concluded: "That's my hope and that's my prayer for this home, for Alma House: that the people who live here will be nourished – and that those who come and visit, and are part of the life of this home, will be nourished as well – by the relationships that they build here."

School dedicated to Msgr. Len Morand

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Students filled the gymnasium at Holy Family Catholic School March 23 to celebrate the dedication of their school and its chapel to the late Msgr. Len Morand.

Morand died in June 2007, after serving 51 years as a priest in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Holy Family students led a Liturgy of the Word to mark the dedication. "We pray in thanksgiving for Monsignor Morand – may the memory of his service to other people be kept," students prayed. "Keep the memory of Monsignor Morand alive in our school and may the special plaque that we display in our chapel be cherished."

Terry Cratty, who served in youth ministry at Holy Family parish when Monsignor Morand was pastor, shared memories of his mentor and friend.

"Monsignor was the holiest and the best man that I have ever known," Cratty told the children, who listened intently and looked at images in a slide show of Morand's life.

"Monsignor was originally from a small community just outside of Windsor, Ontario. He was one of nine children, two girls and seven boys – six of those boys became priests," Cratty said.

"Since your school is dedicated to Monsignor, there are some very important things that you should know about him. Firstly there was no greater advocate for youth in our diocese," said Cratty said of the priest and one-time teacher, who



After a school celebration March 23 to dedicate Holy Family Catholic School to the late Monsignor Len Morand, teacher Diana Bergermann gathered with students around his photo, telling them more about the priest who served in the diocese of Saskatoon from some 51 years.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

also worked with the Catholic board of education.

"As pastor of Holy Family, Monsignor came to all the elementary feeder schools, he came to all their sporting activities, and most importantly he prayed for all of the students that were in the schools, and that was something really exciting for you, because I know right now Monsignor is praying for each one of you."

Cratty described Morand as a man of wisdom, of prayer and of great love. "Monsignor was a good shepherd and he cared for everyone. He founded Guadalupe House, served in so many parishes and in every level of leadership in our diocese," he said. "Your school is truly blest to be dedicated to him."

The dedication concluded with the assembly singing the school

song, with signing by school Sign Club members from Grades 1 to 3.

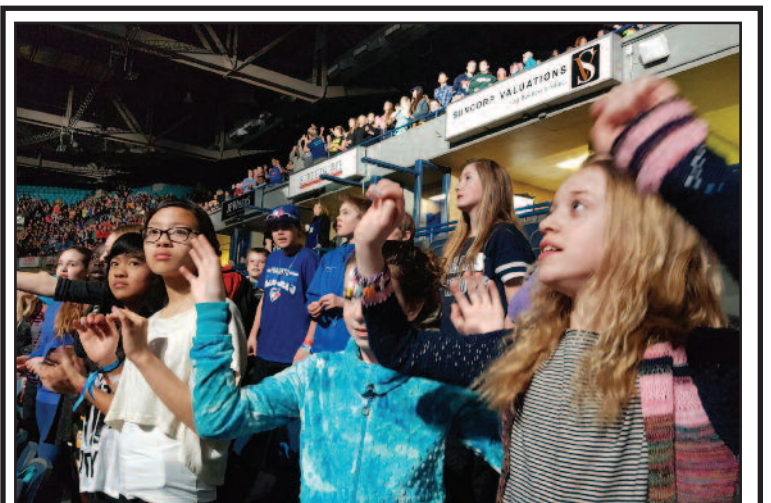
After the celebration student leaders brought a gift of candy around to students in every classroom to mark the special event.



Youth and Liturgy

Teams of Grade 6 students from Bishop Roborecki, Mother Teresa and Georges Vanier Catholic schools took part in this year's Youth and Liturgy Project, learning more about prayer, scripture, the Eucharist, the liturgical year, liturgical symbols and different Catholic traditions. Teachers Jana Lalach, Janine Baier and Nicole Gursky accompanied youth for the program, which is provided with funding from Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) Foundation, and led by Rachele Ng of GSCS Religious Education Services.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski



We Day

Students from St. Philip Catholic School in Saskatoon were among the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools participants at this year's We Day March 15 at SaskTel Centre in Saskatoon. Saskatchewan students earned a spot in the crowd by engaging in acts of charity, justice and advocacy at both a local and a global level throughout the year.

- Photo submitted by GSCS

St. Paul's gives a gift of learning

BY BRIGID FULLER

In September St. Paul's Co-Cathedral set out to help students of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools with collecting donations of school supplies.

St. Paul's encouraged the faith community to give the gift of learning to students whose familial, social, or economic

situation prevented them from having access to adequate school materials.

Organizers were overwhelmed by the generosity and love shown by the parish community: St. Paul's Co-Cathedral was able to collect over 1,400 school supply items for children all over the city.

Phil Fontaine reflects on reconciliation at STM event

By MYRON ROGAL

Phil Fontaine spoke on the meaning of reconciliation Nov. 30, 2016 at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon.

As someone who has devoted his entire life to the endeavor of perusing reconciliation, Fontaine exudes his life's passion of building reconciliation across North America and more foundationally, in his own life.

Having served as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations for three terms, his calling to bring people together in understanding and action has been honored with 16 Honorary Doctorates and a strand of other achievement awards.

Dr. Terrence Downey President of St. Thomas More College said

the event was an "historic evening." Fontaine's public lecture was hosted by the Chair in Indigenous Spirituality and Reconciliation at St. Thomas More College – the first public event organized by this new chair. The central attraction of this well attended evening was Fontaine himself, who radiates a presence of both humility and wisdom while walking comfortably in many divergent circles.

The message of the evening was crystalized in a systematic manner where it seems no words were wasted or used in excess. A preamble focused on the necessity of recognizing and working into our burdens together as peoples.

The first burden requiring acknowledgment is that of the

wrong committed. Secondly, there is the burden of guilt held by the institutions that inflicted the harm.

Healing begins with the importance of our words in admitting liability and taking steps towards reconciliation. Steps taken towards reconciliation can be measurable. Fontaine gave examples throughout the evening for both individual and collective actions that are leading towards healing.

Words preceding actions are paramount, he said. The 2008 Government of Canada's Statement of Apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools was given as an example on the collective level. The words of this apology were "genuine, true and full of meaning," said Fontaine, who worked relentlessly to make that historical action possible.

Another example took place in 2009 when Pope Benedict XVI acknowledged the harm caused by the Residential Schools. Fontaine was one of the representatives invited to the Vatican for the meeting with Pope Benedict.

On a personal level Fontaine shared heartwarming stories about Archbishop Emeritus James Weisgerber being adopted into Fontaine's family.

Words that are meant demand integrity, which flows into action – and according to Fontaine this action can be measured for institutions. In looking at history, institutions can examine what they have done and not done in committing or enabling harm

towards Indigenous Peoples.

Once harm has been recognized and admitted, an act of reconciliation can begin, he said.

For instance, if we excluded hiring Indigenous people in the past, we can change our policy to begin to reverse that harm. Another example would be if we taught history with a colonizing world view we can teach history now amongst our leadership with an un-colonizing view.

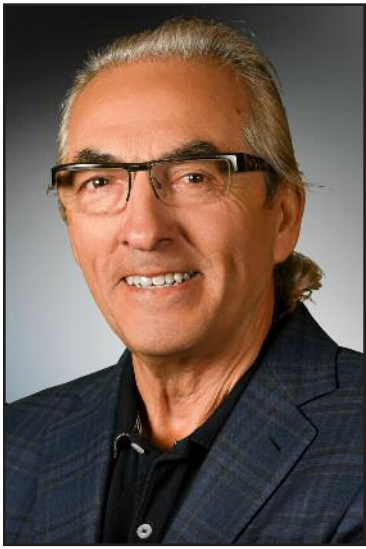
Fontaine cautioned against following words with inaction, and pointed to the federal government's recent decision on pipelines as an example.

Acknowledging that there is much work to be done on the Indian Act, Fontaine pointed to this flawed Act as the only legislation directed at a specific race.

It is vital to together understand Canada for what it was, what it is, who we are now and why we behaved the way we did, he said.

One way of coming to truly understand ourselves was presented as the "ultimate expression of reconciliation" – fixing our origin story to include the truth of Indigenous peoples and their contributions.

Canada began as a one-nation story as presented by the British Empire, he pointed out. In the first half of the 20th century, French nationalists began to question that story. Canada then evolved into having a two-nation story. Now that we know that this story is missing a piece, why not enlighten our way into a three-nation story? Fontaine suggested that this could



Former National Chief Phil Fontaine spoke at STM.

- Photo by Fred Cattroll

happen for the 150th birthday of our country in 2017, encouraging his listeners to contact their MPs, the government and opposition parties about the idea.

The keynote address ended with Fontaine highlighting the pain that all people have suffered and the desired intention to seek amends in restoring relationships for all people involved and impacted by this hurt.

As the floor opened to questions, Fontaine said it is crucial to build on hope and look to stories of success. Examples cited included increasingly high enrollment of Indigenous students in post-secondary institutions, Indigenous representation in many levels of politics, and the over 40,000 businesses in Canada owned and managed by Indigenous individuals.



STM hears ways to welcome Indigenous students

St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon has established a faculty-led Academic Working Group on Indigenous Engagement which sponsored a public forum Jan. 17 entitled, "What should a Catholic college know to be truly welcoming to Indigenous peoples?" Panelists Marie Battiste, Verna St. Denis, Erica Violet Lee, and John Merasty addressed those assembled at STM's Father O'Donnell auditorium, including youth, students, faculty, staff and community members. The Indigenous Academics and Elder offered insights and suggestions for initiatives to further nurture relationships and understanding, and build a welcoming community and positive academic experience for Indigenous students.

- Report by Jacquie Berg, Photo by Miriam Muller

Reconciliation in the midst of Irish conflict

By GERTRUDE ROMPRÉ

The conflict in Northern Ireland has been one of contradictory identities based upon, amongst other things, differing political aspirations and religious affiliations, leading to communal identity defining itself along these lines. This has often created an oppositional identity in which the two communities generally classify themselves according to who they are not, rather than who they are.

In Northern Ireland this has resulted in the development of boundaries that are challenging both psychologically and – during times of heightened violence and tension – physically, to cross, guest lecturer Dr. Maria Power said at a presentation Feb. 9 at St. Thomas More College.

Ecumenical communities in Northern Ireland have been at the forefront of challenging notions of oppositional identity and feelings of moral superiority by offering participants a "safe space in which to step out of [their] comfort zone" through which they can get to know something of the beliefs and attitudes of the "other side," said Power.

Through this process, inter-church groups eventually brought more peaceful relationships to their area.



Dr. Maria Power

- Submitted photo

Power is a lecturer in Religion and Peace Building at the Institute of Irish Studies, University of Liverpool. She focused on the historical development of local inter-church peace initiatives in Northern Ireland, exploring in particular the means through which they challenged accepted notions of communal identity. Through the work of local churches, religion has consistently been used as a means of reconciliation, long before the cease-fires and subsequent European peace funding made cross-community work safe and acceptable, she said.

The presentation was one of several sponsored in 2016-2017 at St. Thomas More College through the Leslie and Irene Dubé Chair for Catholic Studies.



The Annual Newman Retreat was led by Fr. André Lalach of STM campus ministry. - Photo by Michael MacLean

Newman retreat presented at St. Peter's Abbey

By MICHAEL MACLEAN

Some 20 twenty students, staff and faculty gathered at St. Peter's Abbey Jan. 27-29 to hear Fr. André Lalach explore "God's Dream For Us" at this year's annual Newman Retreat.

Lalach, who serves as a campus minister at St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon, examined biblical dreams and then introduced the idea of dream analysis. During the retreat, he also presided over Byzantine prayer services that were new to many retreat participants. Fr. André has been serving at STM since 2006, and also serves as pastor at the Ukrainian Catholic parish of the Dormition of the Blessed Mother of God.

The Newman annual retreat offers three days of reflection, relaxation, prayer and process.

Comments from retreatants at the end of the weekend revealed that their experience was positive. Some said they appreciated Fr. André's

prayerful approach, while others commented that the best part was the sense of peace.

The Abbey at Muenster, SK, is certainly a place known for its peaceful setting. Retreatants enjoyed quiet reflection time, walks outside despite brisk temperatures, and even had a chance to feed the chickadees.

Newman Centre has been visiting St. Peter's Abbey for the annual retreat since the early 1970s.

Newman Centre is the longest standing Catholic student club at the University of Saskatchewan. The Newman office is in STM Rm 104, and works closely with STM Campus Ministry. It is an organization dedicated to building Christian community on campus. The Newman motto is: "Heart Speaks to Heart".

For more information about Newman Centre and campus ministry at STM see the website: <http://stmcollege.ca/campus-ministry>

Trinity parishes pull together to create Catechesis of the Good Shepherd atrium for young children

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

“Awe and wonder.” Those are the words that Lisette Fontaine uses to describe the introduction of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd to Trinity’s three rural parishes.

“Only the Holy Spirit could be behind this,” says Fontaine. “The series of promptings and gentle encouragement has led to an amazing community project beyond imagining. And it is not over yet: it has only just begun.”

What began as Fontaine’s search for more visual aids to enrich a parish sacramental preparation program has turned into “an amazing catechesis” for 3-6 year old children, she reports. A presentation introducing the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* at a Catholic mothers’ group initiated enough interest that a training session for catechists was held in January and May 2016.

“By the fall, after much help from the three communities of Prud’homme, St Denis and Vonda, we began our first year in the Trinity Atrium,” says Fontaine. Atriums have also been established at St. Patrick and St. Francis Xavier parishes in the city of Saskatoon, in addition to the very first atrium established in the province at St. Vincent of Lerins Orthodox Church, Saskatoon.

In the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS), an atrium is a sacred, hands-on space created by catechists, where the Montessori-inspired religious formation program is offered to children ages 3-6, exploring the mysteries of the Christian faith as revealed in scripture and liturgy.

“What is Catechesis of the Good Shepherd? Brilliant, Holy-Spirit inspired, a labour of love, a journey in faith for all involved, a joy,” lists Fontaine.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) began in Rome some 60 years ago, and has spread to 37 countries, including Canada in the 1980s.

“CGS is Catholic, yet adaptable for all liturgical Christian denominations. It is Montessori-based faith education,

where children are given time to work with material with their little hands and bodies in mind, responding to their deepest needs, and guiding them with the essential truths of our faith in an organized environment, where the catechists ponder alongside each individual child, and the Holy Spirit does the rest,” summarizes Fontaine.

She strongly believes that the Holy Spirit has guided the establishment of CGS in the Trinity area.

“People from all three parishes (and beyond) donated items, gave a lot of their time and skill, contributed financially and continue to support ongoing work to prepare all the material and formation for the atrium,” she says.

The Trinity Atrium is a sacred space where children gather for their 90-minute sessions. Specially prepared for small children, a CGS atrium features child-sized furnishings of low bookshelves housing precious materials, as well as items such as a small baptismal font, altar, tabernacle and work stations.

“The atrium is a community project,” adds Fontaine. “From cleaning out a storage room (and other spaces to house what came out) to laying carpet, taking apart old pews for lumber to make the furnishings and materials, to collecting various household items and figures or small statues, to sewing and painting, cutting and creating, a lot of work and a lot of people are involved in setting up an atrium, and ours is no exception. It takes a community to raise a child, and the parishes of Sts Donatien et Rogatien, St Denis and St Philippe-de-Néri are welcoming them lovingly in preparing the space to nourish their faith journey.”

The response to the program itself has been overwhelmingly positive and joyful. “Parents recognize the gift Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is to their children, bringing them every week to spend time with God in

this sacred space,” says Fontaine.

She shared comments from parents, including:

• “The atrium gives my child the opportunity to grow in wonder at our faith, to become comfortable with the Liturgy he sees at Mass and to make his own relationship with God. I appreciate the calm peaceful environment he is learning in.”

• “We bring our child to the atrium to become closer with Jesus and to grow a stronger faith. To have a feeling of Jesus and the Holy Spirit within them and to feel the joy that Jesus brings into our lives.”

• “I love to send my children to the atrium because it is a space in which they spend time with God and encounter Him at their own level. / C’est un espace calme et sacré qui permet aux enfants d’explorer l’amour de Dieu à leur façon.”

• “I bring my child to Catechesis of the Good Shepherd because I love the format. It seems to really allow the children to grow and discover their faith in their own way, guided by amazing teachers in such a peaceful atmosphere. Even at such a young age my child is learning how to be silent and listen to the Holy Spirit and encounter Jesus!”

• “I bring my child to the atrium to experience the Lord in a unique and calm atmosphere... I am confident the Lord blesses his time in the atrium with the still and quiet whispers of the Holy Spirit.”

And in the words of one of the children: “J’aime aller à l’atrium parce que Jésus est à l’atrium et il aime les enfants.” (I like going to the atrium because Jesus is in the atrium and he loves children.)

Response has been such that the Trinity Atrium is hosting two



Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

Cynthia Foster (front, right) presented information about the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd faith program March 16, during an open house held at St. Francis Xavier parish in Saskatoon. Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) atriums are now in place at St. Francis and St. Patrick Roman Catholic parishes in Saskatoon and at St. Philippe de Neri parish in Vonda, as well as at St. Vincent of Lerins Orthodox Church in Saskatoon. A CGS atrium is a sacred, hands-on space where the Montessori-inspired religious formation program is offered to children ages 3-6, exploring the mysteries of the Christian faith as revealed in scripture and liturgy. A training session for CGS facilitators will be offered May 23-28 at St. Francis parish. For more information contact Cynthia Foster at (306) 955-4854. - Photo by K. Yaworski

sessions on Saturday mornings, with plans for expansion if enough catechists can be trained, says Fontaine.

Other helpers are also needed to assist with sessions, she adds.

“The gift must be shared, as well as the responsibility. And so we seek people to register for training in Saskatoon May 23-28, a rare opportunity, and pray that many more will be interested and called to become trained catechists,” she says. “Let the children come, and let there be enough catechists to guide them.”

Find more info about CGS at www.cgsac.ca or e-mail Linda Funk at lfunk@shaw.ca or call Cynthia Foster at (306) 955-4854 about the catechist training being offered in Saskatoon May 23-28.

(Diocesan bursaries are available through the Education of Laity Fund, which is supported by the Bishop’s Annual Appeal.)

To tour the Trinity Atrium contact Lisette Fontaine at (306) 258-2212. “Online videos will also help in understanding the gift of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Check it out,” she adds.

FacetoFace presents retreat at Lanigan for area youth

BY BONNIE COURCHENE

A confirmation retreat was held April 2 in Lanigan, with youth from the eastern part of the diocese, ranging in age from 10 to 17 years gathering for the day-long event.

Presenter Jonathan Courchene of FacetoFace Ministries kept the youth actively engaged with a mix of teachings, games and spiritual reflections. The adults present were also able to participate in their own spiritual reflection exercise.

The day took on new meaning as the youth were tied hand-to-hand as they ate their lunch. This

exercise was brought into perspective when Jonathan explained to the confirmation candidates that as they continue in their lifelong faith journey, they will need to work together with their peers and many adults.

Those in attendance agreed that it was wonderful to see such an age range of youth together enjoying “God moments” and each other. “We are so thankful for the FacetoFace retreat team in our diocese that meets the needs of our youth,” said a member of the hosting parish. “They are able to present the sacraments in a fun loving way.”



Regional retreat at Naicam

St. Front Pastoral Region hosted a Confirmation / First Communion retreat April 1 at St. George parish in Naicam. Enthusiastic presenter Jon Courchene from FacetoFace Ministries led a retreat aimed at both children and their parents. With 36 children ages, 7-11 years, and 37 parents in attendance, he did an amazing job including everyone. The retreat featured interactive songs, demonstrations, a slide show, games, and an opportunity to reflect on which gift of the Holy Spirit each child wanted to pray for. As part of the retreat everyone also had an opportunity to say/write his or her “Yes” to God (right).

- Photo by Jennifer Flasko



Notices & Upcoming Events

“Justification and the Unity of the Churches: A lecture on Evangelical-Catholic relations” - Dr. David Guretzki of Briercrest Seminary will speak **Monday, May 15** at 7 p.m. at Forest Grove Community Church, 502 Webster St, Saskatoon. A response will be offered by Dr. Brett Salkeld, Theologian, Catholic Archdiocese of Regina. For more information, contact Nick Jesson at jesson@ecumenism.net or (306) 659-5814.

That They May Be One: A Service of Celebration and Commissioning - All are welcome to this inter-church service to launch a new Saskatoon Evangelical-Roman Catholic Commission for Common witness at 7 p.m. **Tuesday, May 16** at Holy Family Cathedral, 123 Nelson Rd, Saskatoon. Preacher is Dr. David Guretzki of Briercrest Seminary; worship leaders are Fr. Kevin McGee (Diocesan Administrator) and Rev. Jakob Palm (Saskatoon Evangelical Ministers' Fellowship). For more info contact Nick Jesson at (306) 659-5814 or by e-mail: jesson@ecumenism.net or e-mail Pastor Harry Strauss at: harry@forestgrovecc.com

Crack That Catechism! will be held 7 p.m. Thursdays **May 25, June 1 and June 8** with Andy Korvmaker at St. Michael's Church, 18 - 33rd St. East, Saskatoon. Everyone is invited to one, two or all three sessions. Cost is by donation; offered through Foundations: *Exploring Our Faith Together*.

Youth Minister needed - St. Peter the Apostle and St. Michael parishes in Saskatoon are seeking a full-time Youth Minister to provide ministry to youth and families of both parish communities. Applicants must have Certificate in Youth Ministry (or equivalent or be currently pursuing it), along with 3-5 years experience. Submit application form, cover letter, resume and pastoral reference by e-mail to: st.pta@sasktel.net **by June 16**. (E-mail st.pta@sasktel.net for detailed position overview and application form.)

Getting married this summer? Last chance this spring to participate in a Catholic Engaged Encounter weekend marriage preparation retreat **June 2 to 4, 2017** near Woleseley, SK. For more information or to register go to www.ceewest.com or call Stella and Ron Anderson at (306) 596-2951.

FacetoFace Ministries summer programs: Youth bus trips July 18-26 and July 27-Aug.1; Ignite youth camps Aug. 7-12 in Saskatchewan and Aug. 20-25 in B.C. Find more information at www.f2f.ca

One More Soul presents Matt Fradd on Thursday, Sept. 14 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, 123 Nelson Road, Saskatoon. Matt Fradd is a Catholic speaker, author, and founder of the *Porn Effect* (offering practical strategies for parents to protect their children from the lies of an over-sexualized culture). For more information see: www.omsoul.ca

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. Next retreat is **Oct. 13-15, 2017**. Contact Elaine at (306) 480-8911 or r.vineyardsk@sasktel.net

Fund-raiser supports work of Serena

BY ANNETTE BENTLER

Sixty-eight guests traded winter boots for flip-flops, leis and colourful Hawaiian attire Feb. 4 to support Serena Saskatchewan's work in teaching couples natural family planning, which in turn improves marriages.

The Hawaiian-themed fund-raiser at St. Anne's parish hall in Saskatoon included an authentic menu, a wine toss, and entertainment that included a photo both nestled in a grove of palm trees, a silent auction "market square," and a 50-50 draw. A "hoola hoopster" demonstration rounded out the evening, and many guests returned home with Hawaiian memorabilia: flower hair clips, fruit basket, and great silent auction finds.

Presentations during the evening revealed how Serena's teacher couples are seeing the fruit of their labours. James and Elizabeth Couture taught Andrew and Shancelle Hildebrandt, who are now a teacher couple, as well as Joey and Mikaelah Paul. The Hildebrandts and the Pauls shared their stories during the evening.

Mark your calendars for Serena Saskatchewan's sixth annual **Run for the Family** to be held on Saturday, Sept. 9, 2017 at 10 a.m. (note new time) at



St. Anne's parish hall was transformed for a Hawaiian themed evening. - Photo by Matthew Bentler

Meewasin Park North in Saskatoon. Choose from 1-km, 3-km, or 5-km distances (run, walk, strollers welcome).

To register for the run, visit www.runningroom.com ("races - province SK - click date - register"). Spring is a great time to start training!

Serena is a natural family planning method that provides a safe, healthy, and effective way to achieve or avoid pregnancy, without the use of harmful hormones, chemicals or devices.

Serena's natural family planning method keeps track of a woman's naturally occurring signs of fertility and is 99 per cent effective. Serena is effective for regular or irregular cycles, and is backed by research, medical professionals and organizations.



The annual Serena Run for the Family will be held Sept. 9, 2017. - Photo by Jim McLane

Volunteer couples are trained locally, and then accredited by Serena Canada. The national team consists of medical advisors and program managers.

Serena was founded in 1955 by Gilles and Rita Breault from Lachine Quebec, who first developed the sympto-thermal method for their own needs, but soon realized that couples in their community were in need of this same knowledge to plan their families in a way that respected

their values. The first team was established in 1962 under the name Serena. Serena Saskatchewan was founded in 1974.

For more information about Serena see the website at www.saskserena.ca or e-mail: sask@serena.ca or text/ call: (306) 934-8223.

Queen's House

retreat & renewal centre

Queen's House is a home of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) Mission and Ministry. All are welcome to this shared holy ground where diverse conversations and spiritual reflection can be held in a place of warm hospitality. At Queen's House many expressions of faith and community continue to find a place to share, be strengthened and celebrate their work in the world. Please consider Queen's House as a place to meet, plan, retreat, dialogue and learn.

Visit the website at www.queenshouse.org and like us on Facebook to review programs, event opportunities and offerings. Consider supporting this ministry in a practical way through fund-raising initiatives. We rely extensively on the support of our patrons and donors to sustain our work.

Ongoing events and initiatives include:

- **Spring Fling:** tickets on sale now for draws every day in May.
- **Oblate Scramble Golf Tournament:** registering players, teams and sponsors for June 17.
- **Bike-A-Thon:** accepting pledges now for the Sept. 17, 2017 ride.
- **Gala Dinner:** scheduled for the evening of Nov. 23, 2017.
- **Continuing Capital Campaign called Kaleidoscope 2:** see www.queenshouse.org for details

To our many patrons and visitors: a humble thank you, and to those who have been away for a while – or who have never had the opportunity to drop in – we look forward to seeing you. On behalf of our beloved Oblates, our Oblate Associates and Board, our community of support and our staff: *God bless!*

Queen's House is located at 601 Taylor St. W., Saskatoon. Register at (306) 242-1916 or E-mail: receptionist@queenshouse.org For more info see: www.queenshouse.org

Upcoming at Queen's House:

Knights of Columbus Brothers' Keeper Men's Breakfast at 7 a.m. **May 9, June 13, July 11**. Suggested donation: \$10.

Catholic Women's League Twilight Retreat 7 p.m. Thursday, **May 11**; presentation on *Development & Peace, 50 Years*, followed by a social. Suggested donation \$5. All CWL members are welcome

Iconography Retreat with Anna Mycyk and Gisele Bauche 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. **May 15-19**. Commute \$525 (includes lunches).

Spiritual Formation Days - all are welcome, \$40 per session, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (includes lunch):

- **First Nations Spirituality** with Bishop Sylvain Lavoie and Harry Lafond **May 13**.
- **Social Justice and Spirituality** with Bob McKeon **June 17**.

Eucharistic Adoration in the Queen's House Chapel on **May 22-23 & June 26-27** (noon Monday to noon Tuesday) call Sally Danchak for more info: (306) (306) 373-2621.

Abide in Me: A retreat for clergy, pastors and ministry leaders with Rev. Paul Matteson, Fr. Kevin McGee and Dianne Mantyka, 4 p.m. to 4 p.m. **May 28-29**; \$150 (includes meals).

The Book of Exodus with Fr. Paul Fachet, OMI, 10 a.m. to noon, **June 7**; \$15 or \$25 including lunch.

Transitions: Your Journey of Transformation Through Grief and Loss with Sarah Donnelly, from 7 pm. on **June 15 to June 18** at 1 p.m. Grounded in Christian spirituality & prayer, this supportive program offers hope and insights into the experience of grieving; \$390 (includes bedroom and meals).

Summer Stillness Retreat with Fr. Ron Rolhesier, OMI, begins with a public lecture 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. **Monday, July 10**, "A Secret Since the Foundations of the World - the cross as revealing the basis for trust"; cost \$20 or \$35 with supper. Retreat 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. **July 11 to July 13**: "Why Simply Being Good-hearted is Not Enough"; commuter cost \$200; commuter-plus \$260; live-in \$410.

Triumph: Freedom Through Healing Retreat is a nine-day Christ-centered journey of inner healing and discovery fueled by the transforming power of God's merciful love, rooted in Scripture, tradition and prayer and anchored by teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Therese of Lisieux. Triumph will be presented by Jerry and Donna Kristian **July 14-23** at Queen's House;; Call: (306) 242-1916 or see the triumph website at: www.triumphretreat.com

Humboldt CWL 90th Anniversary

CORRECTION: Bev Yaeger and Karen Fleischhacker (l-r) cut the cake at a 90th anniversary celebration for the Catholic Women's League at St. Augustine parish in Humboldt June 4, 2016. (Bev Yaeger was incorrectly identified as Jenny Irwin in the fall 2016 edition of the Diocesan Newsletter. Apologies for the error!)

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Pure Witness recruiting missionaries for a year of service

BY LAURA RICE

Pure Witness Ministries is winding up its sixth year of service within the diocese of Saskatoon and across Western Canada.

This 2016-17 school year Pure Witness had a team of seven missionaries who have been serving the Church in the New Evangelization by using gifts and talents to encourage youth and families to set Christ at the heart of their lives.

This year, Pure Witness has held six YEP events and ReConnect evenings for youth and families within the Saskatoon diocese. Different parishes hosted these events, including Our Lady of Lourdes, St. John Bosco, Immaculate Heart of Mary



Praise and worship at a Pure Witness YEP held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon this year. - Photo by Laura Rice

(Martensville), Holy Family Cathedral, and the final one May 6 at St. Anne's parish in Saskatoon. YEP is an all day event for youth, Grade 8 and up,

to go deeper in their faith and their relationship with God. ReConnect is held in the evening after the YEP for the whole family and this year has included two

family dances, two Adoration nights, and a coffee house.

The Pure Witness Team has also been sharing the gospel message with thousands of youth and families in schools and parishes from Manitoba to BC. Through talks, testimonies, games, music, skits, and a special drama presentation featuring the life of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, they share the gospel with youth in a relevant way.

A new Pure Witness headquarters and the residence for our missionaries out at Blackstrap Lake has been one of the greatest blessings for us this year. The seven team members, along with two staff members, live there in community. The house is large enough for times of training as

well as providing office, rehearsal, and storage space. It has provided a place of retreat for staff and team alike as they prepare for events and live this year set apart for missionary work.

Pure Witness is currently recruiting missionaries, 18 years and older, for the 2017-18 year. This is a call to experience a transformational year of radical, counter-cultural living, embracing the three-fold mission of community living, faith formation and outreach. For more information or to apply e-mail program director Carmen Marcoux: carmen.marcoux@purewitness.com

Check the website for more information about Pure Witness: www.purewitness.com

St. Therese Institute celebrates tenth anniversary of faith formation program

BY CHRIS O'HARA

The 10th anniversary of St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission in Bruno is being celebrated this year.

Since its opening, nearly 200 alumni have come through St. Therese, spending a year of their lives focusing on developing their

relationship with God, being formed in the Catholic faith, and practicing the spirituality of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. The Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi will join St. Therese **Saturday, May 20** as presider at the 2016-17 year-end Commissioning Mass.

Many have attended St. Therese's various events, retreats and conferences, while others from the diocese have either attended as students, or have children or family members who have attended. Many have generously supported our school through their financial stewardship.

Advent/Lenten Conferences

After hosting a Lenten Conference for a number of years, this year St. Therese expanded the conference series to include one during Advent as well. The Advent Conference keynote speakers were the Sisters of Life, while the Lenten keynote speaker was musician and artist Jimmy Mitchell.



Both conferences benefitted the students at St. Therese and also blessed many guests from the diocese of Saskatoon and neighbouring diocese who had the opportunity to participate. Mark your calendars for next year's Advent Conference taking place Dec. 1-3, 2017, with Bishop Scott McCaig.

A concert featuring Joe Zambon will be held at St. Therese May 6. He travels extensively across North America sharing his music. SCMA-nominated artist and sister duo Jay & Jo also perform May 6.

St. Therese is now accepting applications for the 2017-18

school year. Do you know a young adult (age 18-35 years) who would benefit from spending a year at St. Therese Institute learning about the Catholic faith, immersing themselves in a life of prayer and discipleship, and living in a vibrant Christian community?

This one-year program is a unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for those who wish to serve the Church and the New Evangelization, and discover their mission and purpose. St. Therese now offers transfer credits to select universities across Canada.

Find more information at www.StTherese.ca



A number of events at St. Therese Institute are open to the public. For more information see www.StTherese.ca - Photos by Chris O'Hara

Ministry to Tourism: A Time For Africa 2018

Africa is Ministry to Tourism's major destination for 2018, says Fr. Ralph Kleiter.

Often a pilgrim journey is connected to destinations made special because of holy men and women or religious events, "but a pilgrim journey to Africa shines a spotlight on Mother Nature and her bounty of treasures," says Kleiter.

In cooperation with Crystal Cruises and Collette Vacations, participants will be able to choose between two ways to experience some of the vast African continent in January/February 2018.

Collette's program – *The Plains of Africa, Out of Nairobi* – will have a strong emphasis on safaris, featuring up to 13 game drives and visits to different African communities. Crystal Cruises' *From Cape Town to Mauritius* (15 Days) will enable participants to experience South African ports along the shores of the Indian Ocean. There are ample opportunities for shore excursions (even overnight) with classic game drives to view wildlife that will enhance the African exposure.

Kleiter states that no trip to Africa would be complete without getting up close to wildlife where they live and feed. "Both programs will enable the search for the elusive 'big five' – the African lion, leopard, rhino, elephant and Cape buffalo." Ministry to Tourism offers options to experience Africa on an extended land safari experience in Kenya or to do so from the *Crystal Symphony* as it begins the first segment of its 2018 World Cruise.

People who travel are often keenly concerned about helping the developing world, notes Kleiter. Complimenting each program will be the opportunity to visit projects benefiting the future of Africans, as part of exclusive special features arranged by Ministry to Tourism.



Each program has distinctive advantages, although costs do not vary much, he says. "You cannot do Africa for the same price of many other destinations such as in Europe. The distance, park fees and the small numbers that most of Africa is only currently able to handle is reflective in the costs," says Kleiter.

"The main barriers to extensive travel experiences is not necessarily money," he adds. "More significant is one's health and ability to be away from home for 15 or more days."

Space is still available and there are early booking savings. For details contact Fr. Ralph Kleiter at (306) 244-3747; or e-mail Kleiter@shaw.ca

Ministry to Tourism 2017 Programs

- **Pilgrim Journey to Prague and Poland:** Aug. 28-Sept. 11, 2017.
- **Holy Land Pilgrim Journey:** Ministry to Tourism's 24th exclusive design featuring Israel and Jordan (with option to visit Rome) is currently available.

For details contact Fr. Ralph Kleiter at (306) 244-3747 or e-mail: Kleiter@shaw.ca or visit www.pilgrimjourneys.ca

Latin Mass community holds Quarant'ore in Lent

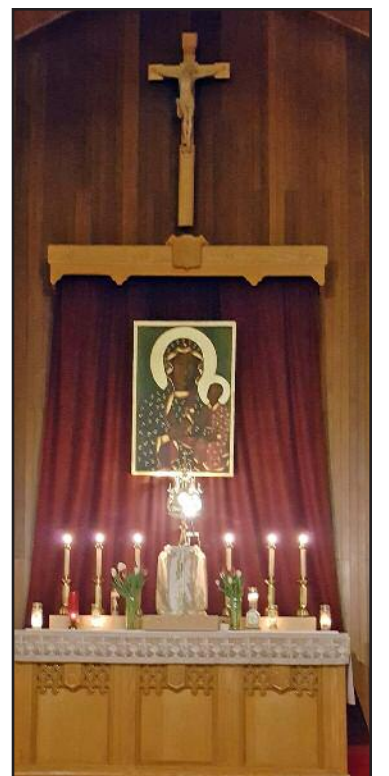
BY MARJ KORTE

Quarant'ore is an Italian word meaning 40 hours devotion. It is practiced in the Catholic Church as an exercise of devotion in which there is continuous prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in solemn exposition, for 40 hours.

This devotion originated from the 40 hours that Jesus passed in the tomb: in some countries, the Blessed Sacrament is still buried in a kind of sepulchre on Good Friday, and solemnly taken out of it on Easter Sunday in the very early morning.

This 40 hours of devotion was held from 8 p.m. Sunday, March 12 to 12:00 pm Tuesday, March 14 at Our Lady of Czestochowa parish in Saskatoon, with members of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Latin Mass community participating as a way to strengthen their Lenten journey.

The Latin Mass is celebrated every Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. at Our Lady of Czestochowa parish, 301 Avenue Y South. Fr. Andrew Wychucki is the current



Eucharistic adoration for 40 hours. - Photo by Marj Korte

celebrant. All are welcome. For more info, see the website: www.saskatoonlatinmass.com

For 30 years, Lay Formation has nurtured, inspired and empowered Christian disciples across the diocese

BY LAY FORMATION TEAM

Launched in the fall of 1987, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon's Lay Formation program was part of the diocesan response to St. Pope John Paul's request that the formation of lay people should be among the priorities of every diocese (*Christifideles Laici*, 57).

Lay Formation was established to help adult Catholics fulfill their baptismal commitment to the mission and ministry of Jesus through a process of formation and faith education. The program was created to help lay people to "put on the mind and heart of Jesus Christ."

Some 900 people have graduated from the program over the past three decades.

The program is two years in duration, with participants meeting one weekend a month for ten months from September to June. Queen's House of Retreat and Renewal provides a beautiful setting for the participants.

As a live-in program, Lay Formation costs are higher than some programs. But in the words of long-time presenter, Rev. Ron Rolheiser, OMI:

"This is one of the few programs that recognizes the importance of community and prayer as integral pieces of the overall formation process, and that has been its strength."

As Rolheiser notes: "By asking people to live together, share meals together and pray together one weekend out of every month, the Lay Formation program becomes more than simply a workshop or an in-service, it becomes a journey that fosters deep spiritual transformation."

Lay Formation is funded primarily through the Bishop's Annual Appeal and participant fees, usually shared equally between the participant and their parish.

Through the years, the emphasis of Lay Formation has remained solidly on formation rather than specific ministry training.

This "formation focus" enriches the faith of all participants who come to the program, while still providing the impetus to move on to more in-depth ministry training for those who desire it.

Other streams

In the fall of 1999, participants from the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon joined with participants from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon in the first experience of a shared formation program.

Roman Catholic and Ukrainian Catholic perspectives were woven together into a program that celebrates the gift of diversity which enriches our common Catholic faith. This is the only shared formation program of East and West in the world.

Based on the success and the

Lay Formation is supported by the



Coordinator
Mona Goodman

"Lay Formation was a respectful, safe, and prayerful place to 'incubate' in God's presence, to find Jesus and follow the path I am being called to live."

- Lay Formation graduate



Lay Formation began in 1987 under the leadership of Bishop James Mahoney. It was a response to St. Pope John Paul II's request to make the formation of lay people a priority in every diocese.

- File photo



Fr. Gerald Wiesner, OMI, presiding at an early Lay Formation missioning: along with Sr. Cecile Fahl, SMS, Fr. Don Hamel and Gisele Bauche, he helped plan and launch the Lay Formation program in the diocese of Saskatoon.

- File photo

model of the shared diocesan-eparchial program, Lay Formation was expanded to include an Aboriginal Stream in fall 2007.

Roman Catholics – Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal – as well as Ukrainian Catholics, now study common topics together while also meeting as separate streams to explore faith and spirituality in the context of their own traditions and cultures.

Bishops of Prince Albert Keewatin-LePas and Saskatoon work together to provide the program for Aboriginal Catholics in each of their three dioceses.

Awaken

Highly qualified presenters from Saskatoon and across Canada bring a broad spectrum of theological thought to the learning component of Lay Formation.

Areas of study include scripture, theology, morality, liturgy, spirituality, justice and peace, as well as Church history, Vatican II, Christology, ecclesiology, sacraments, Church traditions, ecumenism, Catechism of the Catholic Church, Catholic social teaching, Canon Law and Mary.

Lay Formation streams also explore Aboriginal spirituality, the medicine wheel, Aboriginal worldview/treaties, the healing journey, images of God, contemporary spirituality, spiritual pastoral care, youth ministry,

stages of faith, adult learning styles, collaborative ministry, and spiritual direction.

Enrich

Lay Formation provides an enriching experience of Christian community as Catholics of many backgrounds journey together, praying, learning and sharing life. Small Christian Community prayer is part of the Lay Formation experience

Deepen

Deepening a relationship with God through prayer is an essential component of Lay Formation. Participants engage in daily personal prayer and have many opportunities for communal prayer on the weekends. Participants gather for the Liturgy of the Hours in the morning and in the evening, and the liturgical seasons are celebrated with special liturgies on Saturday evenings. The Lay Formation weekend concludes with celebration of the Eucharist/Divine Liturgy on Sunday afternoon.

Participants prepare and provide the lay liturgical ministries for Eucharist, and lead the Liturgy of the Hours and other prayer services. In addition, participants are empowered to facilitate Small Christian Community prayer groups.

Lay Formation introduces participants to various prayer

- Lay Formation began in the diocese in the fall of 1987 – the first missioning of graduates was in June 1989. Some 900 people have completed the program (Lay Formation Alumni Association).
- Lay Formation is a two-year program, meeting for a full weekend once a month, from September through June.
- Lay Formation is a live-in experience which takes place at Queen's House of Retreat and Renewal in Saskatoon.
- There are three streams of Lay Formation journeying together: Diocesan, Eparchial, and Aboriginal.
- The purpose of Lay Formation is to prepare adult Catholics to live fully their baptismal commitment to serve the mission & ministry of Jesus.
- The three key elements of Lay Formation are faith education, prayer, and community life.

Applications are now being taken for September 2017!

Contact Mona Goodman (306) 659-5847 or layform@saskatoonrcdiocese.com
www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/layformation

forms and the varied and rich ways of prayer that are part of the Catholic tradition – including centering prayer, Taizé prayer, Aboriginal prayer, the rosary, praying with icons, and praying with scripture as well as Franciscan, Ignatian, Augustinian, and Thomistic prayer traditions.

Alumni Association

A strong Alumni Association has grown out of the Lay Formation program and graduates are found in all areas of parish and diocesan life.

Some of the areas in which Lay Formation graduates provide ministry include parish pastoral leadership teams, diocesan commissions and advisory groups, RCIA, youth ministry, religious education, pastoral visiting, care of the sick and dying, preparation of liturgy, funeral vigils, inner city ministry, restorative justice, marriage preparation and marriage enrichment.

What do graduates say?

Graduates repeatedly express a profound sense of gratitude for Lay Formation, describing how it gave them a renewed confidence in their faith, and brought about a deeper Christian commitment.

Graduates describe a new and deeper understanding of their Catholic faith.

Graduates add that they value the Christian community they encounter at Lay Formation. The deep friendships that are formed are among of the most precious

gifts of the experience. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Lay Formation graduates say the prayer and the spirituality that they encounter together in this program has deepened their relationship with God. Lay Formation transforms lives.

Here are a few comments:

"Lay Formation was a profound, awesome experience that will resonate in me for the rest of my life. The program influenced my family relationships, friendships, and ministry for the better."

"I loved every aspect of Lay Formation. What surprised me was the wide variety of pertinent topics and activities. The calibre of speakers was impressive!"

"It has been a blessing to meet and spend time with people in community who share a common desire to grow in their personal faith journey, free from judgment."

"Profound revelation and understanding of being 'God's Beloved' – chosen, blessed, and broken to be given. This was foundational for me."

Apply today

Applications are now being taken for all three streams of Lay Formation – Diocesan, Aboriginal and Eparchial – for the two-year program starting in September 2017.

For more information, contact Mona Goodman at (306) 659-5846 layform@saskatoonrcdiocese.com



Alumni reflection day

Lay Formation Alumni greet members of STR8UP: 10,000 Little Steps to Healing Inc. during an alumni reflection day held Oct. 15, 2016 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. STR8UP helps men and women leave behind the violence and despair of a gang lifestyle.

- Photo by Wayne Kzyzyk