



Newsletter of the Diocese of Saskatoon

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Diocese rejoices at appointment of new bishop

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Bishop Mark Hagemoen knocked on the door of the Cathedral of the Holy Family Nov. 23, 2017, and was welcomed with joy and thanksgiving by the people of the diocese and the wider community at his official installation as the eighth bishop of Saskatoon.

“May your bishop’s heart continue to be shaped by us, the people of the Prairies, as it was first shaped by the people of the North,” said Fr. Kevin McGee, speaking on behalf of the clergy, religious and laity of the diocese during the 2.5-hour liturgy. Hagemoen comes to the diocese of Saskatoon after four years as bishop of the northern diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith.

“As I left Mackenzie-Fort Smith, I learned that there is no Dene word for goodbye,” said Hagemoen. “The best translation of the related sentiment is ‘until we meet again’. What an appropriate expression, as we celebrate the end of the Church year, and also when bridging and acknowledging the link between great faith communities.”

Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, Pope Francis’ representative in Canada also addressed the assembly, saying: “My dear friends, welcome the new pastor and receive him as Pope Francis urges, as a father, as a teacher and as a guardian, and together with him continue to build this precious gift, which is the Church, the Catholic Church in Saskatchewan, in unity, in friendship, with collaboration with everybody.”

After knocking at the door at the beginning of the celebration, Hagemoen was met by representatives of the local and universal Church. Elder Irene Sharp presented the incoming bishop with a pair of moccasins as



Bishop Mark Hagemoen knocks at the door of the Cathedral Nov. 23.



At a diocesan celebration Nov. 23, Bishop Mark Hagemoen was officially installed as Bishop of Saskatoon, coming to the diocese after serving four years in the northern diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith.

- Photos by Tim Yaworski



Fr. Clement Amofah, Chancellor of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, shows the Apostolic Letter from Pope Francis appointing Bishop Mark Hagemoen as bishop.

- Photo by Tim Yaworski

a symbol of walking together into the future. Hagemoen was also greeted by Cathedral Pastor Fr. David Tumbach, by previous Saskatoon bishop Archbishop

Donald Bolen of Regina, and by the Apostolic Nuncio.

Presented with a crucifix, Hagemoen blessed and kissed it, and then moved through the building blessing the people, led by two First Nations dancers, accompanied by an Honour Song by the drum group Young Thunder.

As Hagemoen stood before the altar, diocesan Chancellor Fr. Clement Amofah opened the Apostolic Letter from Pope Francis proclaiming Hagemoen bishop of Saskatoon.

Amofah held up the document to show the Diocesan Consultors who have cared for the diocese since the departure of Bolen in October 2016, as well as showing it to the entire assembly before reading the letter.



Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina (right), former bishop of Saskatoon, presented a symbolic set of keys to Bishop Mark Hagemoen during a dinner held before the Installation Mass Nov. 23.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski



Debbie Ledoux, Parish Life Director of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, and Elder Michael Maurice of the Diocesan Council for Truth and Reconciliation greet Bishop Mark Hagemoen during the installation.

- Photo by Tim Yaworski



Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi (left) extends thanks on behalf of Pope Francis to Fr. Kevin McGee for serving as Diocesan Administrator of the diocese since October 2016.

- Tim Yaworski

DIOCESE WELCOMES BISHOP
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Born and ordained in Vancouver, bishop served four years in north

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

For the new bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, God's call has often been gentle and compelling, but at other times, it has been much more insistent.

"There were times when I put God on hold, and he became more like the 'Hound of Heaven,'" says Bishop Mark Hagemoen, citing poet Francis Thompson's image of God's persistence.

Hagemoen's faith was first nurtured in the heart of a Catholic family.

Born Sept. 4, 1961 in Vancouver, BC, he is the eldest son of Myra (née Longworth) and Eric Hagemoen. His late mother has a Saskatchewan connection – she was born in Crystal Springs, SK, moving to Vancouver in 1955, where she met and married Eric Hagemoen. The couple had two sons – Mark and his brother Daniel. Daniel is married to Lori and they have three children: Alana, Matthew and Jacob.

Parish life and Catholic education were important to the family, and helped to nurture Hagemoen's faith in his early years. "I was certainly active and comfortable in my home parish," Hagemoen recalls.

"I was an altar server and very much involved in my Catholic school of Holy Trinity elementary, and then later on, I went to a Christian Brothers high school, Vancouver College." He is still connected to Vancouver College today, serving as a board member of the Catholic elementary and high school for boys and young men.

Other important influences were pastors such as Fr. John Kilty, who served at Holy Trinity Parish in North Vancouver for 33 years, and other pastors there, including Fr. Rufin Mika and Fr. John Tritschler. "The lives of pastors and priests are important in the life of the people. That was certainly true for me," says Hagemoen.

"Certainly, through my teen years I thought about priesthood, but I also thought about many other things, – I thought about teaching, about social work. I also considered business," he says.

After attending the University of British Columbia for his undergraduate degree, Hagemoen found that higher education had raised more questions than answers. "I wasn't really sure about what I wanted to do.



Bishop Mark Hagemoen on the slopes: he also enjoys running. - Submitted photo

Along with that, personal questions about faith came up, and I needed to pursue those."

Hagemoen worked for a year in geological/mining exploration, raising money to take another year to travel around the world. "That trip was about seeing other places and countries, but it was also a pilgrim search." As he experienced other cultures and learned about other faiths and religious practices, Hagemoen underwent a powerful formative year of personal discernment.

"In a nutshell, it was during that trip that I was really compelled to look at the person of Christ in a very personal way," he says, describing how he purchased a Bible and turned first to the Gospel of Mark – partly because of the connection he felt in sharing the name of the Evangelist, but also because he knew it was the shortest gospel.

"The whole person of Christ really came alive for me in a renewed way," says Hagemoen. "It was then that I became convinced that really, in whatever I did, I needed to hear Christ's call to me."

During that trip, the priesthood would persistently come to mind for Hagemoen.



A young Mark Hagemoen with his parents and brother (l-r): Eric, Mark, Myra and Daniel. Born in Saskatchewan, his mother Myra moved to Vancouver, BC as a young woman, meeting and marrying Eric and raising two sons. She died July 5, 2017. - Submitted photo

"Eventually I knew that I had to at least check out the possibility of the priesthood. It was not going to go away."

Back in Vancouver, he approached Vancouver Archbishop James Carney in a letter, "kind of hoping that he would take a couple of months to respond to me." The archbishop called him the same day. After several meetings, 23-year-old Hagemoen entered St. Peter's Seminary in London, ON, where he completed a Master of Divinity degree.

"I found the studies surprisingly intriguing and refreshing, and really very interesting... It was another affirmation for me," says Hagemoen. "This was really speaking to my heart, and certainly to my mind, and I wanted to pursue it."

During those years in the seminary, he also began to gain pastoral experience in a variety of settings, including his year-long internship and summer ministry opportunities.

"It wasn't until my very last year that I said that I really feel this is what God is calling me to do. I said yes, not having all the questions answered – but I knew that was true in any life," says Hagemoen.

On May 12, 1990 in Vancouver, Bishop Lawrence Sabatini of Kamloops ordained Hagemoen and his classmate Fr. Paul Than Bui on behalf of Archbishop Carney (who was ill at that time).

In addition to serving in a number of parishes, Hagemoen worked for 10 years as the director of the Office of Youth Ministry in the archdiocese of Vancouver – an appointment that began shortly after he attended World Youth Day in Denver as a young priest.

Vancouver Archbishop Adam Exner, OMI, had a strong vision of diocesan youth ministry existing to offer support and

formation to the local parishes, which would then minister with and for their own young people. It's a solid vision that applies to most diocesan ministry, says Hagemoen.

"There is this sort of wonderful relationship between the diocesan church and the local parish community. That relationship is so important. The diocese provides what it is appropriate for it to provide, and the local faith community is where the relationships are really fundamental and dynamic. It is a vision that speaks to the living dynamism of the People of God."

Beginning in 2004, he served in a number of administrative roles in the archdiocese, including Vicar of Pastoral Services, Moderator of the Curia, and Vicar General. He also served as principal of St. Mark's and president of Corpus Christi Colleges in Vancouver from 2011-13.

In October 2013, Pope Francis appointed Hagemoen as bishop of the Diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith, and his episcopal ordination and installation was held Dec. 15, 2013 in Yellowknife.

In a huge northern diocese – with many needs and few resources – it was clear to Hagemoen that he had to start by getting to know the people.

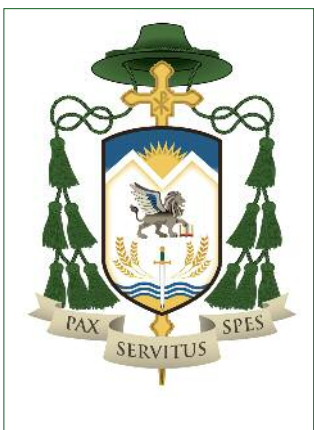
"At its heart, my time in Mackenzie-Fort Smith was about trying to be present and building relationships."

With his appointment as the eighth bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon in September, and his installation Nov. 23, building relationships remains a priority, Hagemoen says.

"What I have already discovered is that there are just so many features to the Catholic diocese in Saskatoon that I am looking forward to experiencing and supporting as a bishop."

Bishop Hagemoen's Coat of Arms

When he was appointed to the diocese of Saskatoon, Bishop Mark Hagemoen changed some of the imagery on his coat of arms to reflect the geography and history of his new home. Wavy blue lines at the bottom of the crest represent the Saskatchewan river (kisiskāciwani-sīpay in Cree). Sheaves of wheat – a Eucharistic symbol and a representation of the Saskatchewan prairies – are placed on either side of a sword, the traditional symbol of St. Paul, who is the patron of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. The sword also recalls the responsibility of the bishop to proclaim God's Word in all things to God's people (see *Hebrews 4:12*). Other elements from the bishop's Coat of Arms in Mackenzie-Fort Smith remain the same – including the eight-pointed sun recalling the vision "a new heaven and a new earth" (see *Rev. 21:1ff*) and of *Lumen Gentium* – Jesus Christ, the light to all nations (see *Luke 1:78-79*). The eight golden rays represent the eight Beatitudes, and the sun also links to the bishop's appointment under the papacy of Pope Francis, who augmented his papal crest by adding an eight-point star. The line with two peaked angles refers to Bishop Hagemoen's birthplace in North Vancouver, BC, and his love of hiking in the Coastal Mountains, specifically in the areas of twin peaks known as The Lions. The mountains also form an "M" for Mary, the Mother of God and Star of the New Evangelization, and reflect the Marian dimension of the Church and a bishop's spirituality. The Winged Lion with the Scriptures is a reference to Bishop Hagemoen's first name, as this image represents St. Mark the Evangelist. The bishop's Motto also remains the same: PAX, SERVITUS, SPES, which means Peace, Service, Hope. The Motto is Trinitarian: the Father is the author of all creation who restores all to a peace of harmonious wholeness and life; the Son, Jesus Christ, King and Lord of all, is the incarnate ultimate servant who gives his life for God's people; the Holy Spirit is God's active presence in today's world, renewing hope by the way of reconciliation, healing, and ongoing conversion.



Bishop's Annual Appeal nears goal

BY KIPLY YAWORSKI

As of Nov. 27, 2017, funds raised for ministries supported by this year's Bishop's Annual Appeal (BAA) total \$1.172 million.

Gifts continue to arrive – and it is not too late to give, says BAA coordinator Cathy Gilje of the Diocese of Saskatoon Catholic Foundation.

"We have received gifts from 79 of our 94 parishes, and 15 parishes have already surpassed their BAA goals," she reports, noting the diocese is well on its way to meeting the 2017 goal to raise \$1.575 million.

"The generosity of the people of the Saskatoon diocese is overwhelming – and is needed more than ever," says Gilje. "Parishioners are opening their hearts, responding to the gospel call to 'Let Your Light Shine' – which is this year's theme, from the Gospel of Matthew 5:16."

Gilje stresses that gifts to the Bishop's Annual Appeal will aid those in need "as we reach out in love through ministries such as Hospital Chaplaincy, Restorative Ministry (prison), Marriage and

Family Life, the Office of Justice and Peace, and Ecumenism."

"Donations also build up the church by supporting the faith journeys of seminarians, youth and young adults, and of those of all ages who are receiving sacramental preparation and getting to know Jesus through programs that are enriching and deepening faith and nurturing an encounter and a life-long relationship with Jesus Christ," she adds.

This includes ministries such as Lay Formation, Foundations: *Exploring Our Faith Together*, Youth Ministry, Vocations, Evangelization and Catechetics, the education of priests and future priests, and many other essential priorities and programs.

"Good stewardship is so important to the life, mission and

work of Christ and his Church," notes Bishop Mark Hagemoen in this year's BAA video.

It is not too late to make a one-time gift or a monthly pledge to this year's Bishop's Annual Appeal, Gilje says. Donations and pledge forms can be dropped into the parish collection. "Online giving is also a quick, easy and secure way to donate to the BAA," she adds. To give online, visit the website at: www.dscatholicfoundation.ca

For more information about the BAA or ways to give, contact Gilje at (306) 659-5851 or e-mail her at cgilje@dscatholicfoundation.ca

"Every gift, no matter the size, has value, and we are grateful for your generosity of heart," Gilje says, thanking donors, volunteers and parish leaders. "Thank you for letting your light shine!"

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Diocese welcomes new bishop

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With the assembly's response of "Thanks be to God," Bonazzi and Bolen handed Hagemoen his bishop's staff (crozier) and accompanied him to the bishop's chair ("cathedra") as a sign of the new bishop taking canonical possession of the diocese.

Hagemoen then came forward to accept greetings from representatives of groups and communities in the diocese, introduced by McGee.

Those coming forward to shake the bishop's hand and exchange a word of greeting included Fr. Matthew Ramsay on behalf of the Council of Priests and Linda Klassen, representing the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

Harry Lafond of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner came forward to greet the new bishop, accompanied by Carol Zubiak of the Diocesan Council for Truth and Reconciliation (DCTR). Other DCTR members also greeted Hagemoen: Parish Life Director Debbie Ledoux, Elder Michael Maurice, and Elder Gayle Weenie of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish.

Representing the laity of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon were Caitlin and Graham Hill and their children Ellie, Isla, Everette, Emelia, Arie and Esme; while religious orders of women and men in the diocese were represented by Sr. Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, Sr. Dolores Bussi re, FDLP, Br. Kurt Van Kuren, OSB, and Fr. Iheanyi Enwerem, OP.

Representatives from other Catholic rites in the community also brought greetings: Rev. Janko Kolosnjaji, Vicar General for the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, and his wife Genka, their son Alex and family; Kaesir Istifo and family of the Sacred Heart Chaldean Catholic community; and Fr. Anthony Plogen, with parishioners Baby Lukose and Salamma Mathew of the Syro-Malabar Catholic community.

Several leaders came forward to represent Catholic education and Catholic health care, including Dr. Terrence Downey of St. Thomas More College; Diane Boyko and Greg Chatlain of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS); David Hardy of the GSCS Foundation; Jim Anderson and Vicky Serblowski of St. Therese Institute of Faith

and Mission in Bruno; Robert Harasymchuk of St. Peter's College in Muenster; Scott Irwin of Emmanuel Care and Sandra Kary of the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan.

Ecumenical guests – Bishop Sid Haugen of the Saskatchewan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), Rev. Scott Pittendrigh, representing the Anglican Diocese of Saskatoon, and David Smith and Dr. Jeromey Martini of the Evangelical-Roman Catholic Commission for Common Witness – also came forward to greet the bishop as representatives of the wider Christian community. Ron and Jan Gitlin of the Holocaust Memorial Agudas Israel brought greetings, representing other faith communities, as did Saskatoon Mayor Charlie Clark, representing all elected officials across the diocese.

Diversity was also the hallmark of prayers of the faithful, presented in different languages representing the ethnic and cultural diversity of the diocese, including Cree, French, English, German, Tagalog (Philippines), Vietnamese, Spanish, Bari (South Sudan), Ukrainian, and Polish. Music was led by the Diocesan Choir, with representation from parishes and groups across the diocese.

Homily

In his first homily as the new bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, Hagemoen emphasized the call and the challenge to live in righteousness, following the example of Jesus Christ.

"One of the greatest biblical summaries of the way of righteousness – to be like God in this world – is Paul's letter to the Philippians, on having the same mind and heart as that of Christ Jesus," the bishop said, citing Philippians 2:5-11, which has challenged and intrigued him since before his ordination to the priesthood in the Archdiocese of Vancouver in 1990.

Striving for righteousness, for excellence in a Christian life of Christ-like service, must also be combined with the hope expressed in the term *supervivere*, described the bishop, a word that means, among other things, "to live beyond." Followers of Christ are called to look deeper, and discover the hope provided by living



Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada.

beyond survival, he added.

"We do face many tasks and challenges – our Church, our schools, our health care facilities, our local community, our families," said Hagemoen. "Lest the world and its complex affairs so overwhelm that we look only at the surface of things, the constant voice of our Saviour says: 'as the Father has loved me, so I have loved you' – that voice calls and leads us even deeper."

He added: "Righteousness and *supervivere* call us deeper than we might have ever imagined."

This is a way of life that calls for "ongoing healing and personal work," he said, expressing appreciation for his time with the Indigenous peoples of the North, and "for what they have taught me about faith and our common journey together, of ongoing healing and growth, as we come to know the heart of the one God of the world."

Hagemoen described how his appointment as bishop of Saskatoon came unexpectedly, and has a bittersweet quality, as he bids farewell to the diocese of Mackenzie-Fort Smith at a time when there is much work yet to do. "However, God's ways are not always our ways, and God has a plan for this community, and the faith communities of the North," he said.

Hagemoen expressed appreciation for the welcome and expressions of support he has received since his appointment, and for the pastoral leadership that has formed the church in the diocese of Saskatoon.

"I am very grateful and wish to acknowledge the pastoral leadership of this diocese's recent shepherds – Bishops James Weisgerber, Albert LeGatt and, most recently, Donald Bolen," (the three former bishops of Saskatoon were among the 20 bishops attending the installation).

"I come to a diocese that is in very good shape, in very large part because of them, and of course, the excellent work of a committed and dynamic people of God: clergy, religious and laity."

Hagemoen asked for prayers and patience as he takes up his new role. "I commit and pledge to strive to serve this local church as its bishop to the best of my ability, with all of God's help."



The new bishop of Saskatoon, Most Rev. Mark Hagemoen, goes forth from the Installation Mass Nov. 23 to greet the people at a reception. - Tim Yaworski

At the conclusion of the celebration, Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi brought greetings from the Holy Father: "It is a joy for me at the end of this moving ceremony – this Eucharistic celebration in which we have taken a deep participation – to transmit to you as a representative of Pope Francis here in Canada, the closeness, the prayers, the affection, the benediction of Pope Francis to each one of you."

Bonazzi quoted some of the testimonies and reflections he received about the diocese of Saskatoon during the year of discernment around appointment of a new bishop.

One person writing about the diocese of Saskatoon told the Nuncio: "our diocese has a rich tradition of extraordinary leadership from our bishops, each coming at the right time, with the right gifts to answer to the needs of our diocese at the given time... this will once again happen as we place all our trust in God and in Holy Mother Church."

Turning to Hagemoen, the Nuncio said: "You just have to continue this tradition of extraordinary leadership."

Bonazzi encouraged the entire diocese to continue its tradition of collaboration among clergy, religious and laity; as well as ongoing efforts in welcoming newcomers, in evangelization, in ecumenism, and in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

He also expressed thanks from Pope Francis to Fr. Kevin McGee for serving as Diocesan Administrator between bishops.

Words of Welcome

"Somehow, I feel lighter," McGee said with a smile, as he welcomed Hagemoen on behalf of the diocese.

"Bishop Mark, as we began our celebration this evening you were welcomed by a number of individuals and groups that represent the diversity and the texture of our diocese and the unique gifts and culture of the province of Saskatchewan," McGee said.

"From this moment on, these and many more hands will extend themselves to you and invite you into their lives as our Shepherd."

The new bishop's own "hands-

on" approach is an invitation "to enter into the mess and mystery of people's lives, and – to use a very poignant image of Pope Francis – to take on the smell of the sheep," said McGee.

"We invite you to journey with all of us... you will find much, much support here. You will be much loved," he said.

"And I assure you, as I speak on behalf of so many, that wherever you go, you will find an open door."

Installation Dinner

Some 1200 attended the installation, and the Mass was live-streamed on the diocesan website.

Events earlier in the day included an afternoon meeting of the Apostolic Nuncio with clergy of the diocese, as well as an installation dinner, which began with Chief Gil Ledoux of Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, and his wife Debbie Ledoux, Parish Life Director of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, extending a welcome to Treaty 6 territory. Sr. Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, led grace before the meal.

During the dinner program, Abbot Peter Novocosky, OSB, delivered thanks to McGee for his year-long service as Diocesan Administrator.

Archbishop Richard Gagnon of Winnipeg brought greetings on behalf of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The bishop's brother, Dan Hagemoen, spoke on behalf of the family, including the bishop's father Eric, who could not attend because of health issues.

Former Saskatoon bishop, Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina, welcomed Hagemoen to his new role with words of encouragement, and a symbolic "passing of the keys."

On behalf of the diocese, two gifts were presented to the new bishop: sponsorship of a day of meals in his name at Saskatoon Friendship Inn, and a Roughriders jersey, presented to Hagemoen by Christine Scherr, who works at the Catholic Pastoral Centre.

The bishop concluded the Mass by offering thanks to all – including a special thank you to his brother Dan for the support that he has provided to their parents since Hagemoen was first appointed bishop in the north.



At the door of the cathedral, Bishop Mark Hagemoen (right) accepts a gift of moccasins from Elder Irene Sharp, presented by the Indigenous Catholic community as a symbol of walking together. Former Saskatoon bishop, Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina looks on. - Photos by Tim Yaworski

“Be with me, God” is our cry in crisis: may we feel God’s presence always

BY BLAKE SITTLER, DIRECTOR OF PASTORAL SERVICES

Have you ever been with someone when they died?

Many of us have been present when a grandparent or parent has died, God forbid, even a child. It is a potent moment and one not easily forgotten.

Back some 15 years ago, I was in Edmonton studying at Newman Theological College. For my field placement, I decided to do a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), which is basically training to become a chaplain in a hospital, care home or even a prison.

I was wary of entering into the training because I was afraid I would not be properly equipped to help people in their moments of need. Before working in a parish, my only other jobs were primarily in the service industry: restaurants and clothing stores. I looked at chaplaincy much like the service industry — be pleasant and helpful; smile; just be nice and you will be fine.

One night when I was on call and just getting ready for bed, my beeper rang and I phoned the hospital.

“There has been an accident. A man and his daughter were hit by a drunk driver. The man is dead and the girl only has an hour or two left to live. Her mom and sister are here. Get here as soon as you can.”

As I sped down the road, my



Director’s Cut
Blake Sittler

heart was beating like a thirsty man guzzling water after finding a canteen. I could barely concentrate on both the road and the task that lay at the end of my journey.

As I pulled into the parking lot, I prayed, “God, I know I don’t pray as much as I should and I know I am not aware of your presence and guidance in my life, but please, tonight — be with me. Make me aware of your presence. Tell me what to say to try to comfort this woman who has lost her husband and will lose her daughter.”

A nurse led me to the room where the little girl, maybe 11 or 12 years old, was being worked

on by a large team of doctors. And there in the midst of them was a sobbing woman.

Terror is not a word I use very often in this life or in this country, thank God, but at that moment, I was terrified. This woman’s pain and anger and grief were not palpable like a mist, they were palpable like Jesus’s gurgling sobs coming off the cross as he cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

It took a while for me to connect; to get her to see that I was here for her.

“This is a nightmare! A [expletive] nightmare!” she cried. “It is a nightmare,” I responded, trying to align my presence with her pain.

The woman started to become overwhelmed. “My husband is dead. My daughter is hurt and these doctors don’t seem to be helping. What am I going to tell my other daughter? I don’t even know what to do. I need to call my mother. I need to tell work.”

The doctor then pulled me aside and stated, “The girl is dying. She has maybe a few minutes. Let the mother know.”

I went back to the mother and asked, “What is your daughter’s name?”

She told me. I said to her, “Your daughter is dying. Forget about everything. Forget about tomorrow. Just talk to her. She’s dying, let her know you are here.”

What came next was the closest thing to the Pieta that any of us can experience: the grit iron focus of a mother holding her dying child, telling her that she is not going anywhere, telling her that she loves her, and that it is going to be okay.

The girl died silently a few minutes later. In the hours that followed, I helped the woman wash the body of her daughter. I went with her to tell her remaining daughter that her sister and daddy were dead.

At the end of the night, I walked down with the woman and some of her family who had shown up. We walked to the big front doors and hugged.

She said, “Thank you. Thank you for tonight. Thank you for your tears.”

As I drove home, I prayed again to God. I prayed that I had said and done the right things. I thanked God for being present.

It is almost a part of how we are made — that we do not see God in our lives until everything else has been stripped away: worries, stress, ego, security, health, work. It is almost like the more we hold in our arms, the more our view of God is obstructed.

Our church in the Western world, even in many of our parishes in this diocese, looks like a shopper at a Black Friday sale — the parcels and presents of

wealth and security are piled up past our eyes! We do not experience oppression. There is little expected of us as Christians. As long as we go to church regularly, no one imposes any other expectations. Is there a danger that we have lost sight of the faith that our parishes are supposed to promote?

We here in North America, especially in Canada, and especially in Saskatchewan, hold many wonderful things. We live in a safe, stable country where wealth and security are the norm, though still experienced unequally. Between our trucks and holidays, our movies and video games, our hockey and work and bills — the list goes on and on — where is there room for God?

Sometimes, the only way that God can get in is through the cracks in the armor of our security. We can be people who enter into a deeper relationship with God by setting down some of the parcels that we have gathered up. Because, whether we set these things down voluntarily or not, if they are keeping us from knowing the truth of God’s love, then are they really worth holding on to?

Every Advent season is an opportunity to set down some of our shopping and our worry, and to ask God humbly: “Be with me God. Help me be aware of your presence. Open my heart to those in need.”

Fr. Lawrence DeMong OSB sends greetings from northern parishes in Keewatin-Le Pas archdiocese

Dear Friends in the Saskatoon Diocese,

As you receive our new Bishop Mark, I want to express my welcome and my joy to this good man who is already a seasoned missionary in Canada’s North!

After living in La Ronge and Southend for more than a year, I feel the need to apologize for not sending more messages “home” as I did when I worked in Brazil. Though here extra travel and preparing food take time, I do want to add another dimension to my work: welcoming folks from home.

Early on, I complained to family members how the electric heat in the Southend rectory was weighing on me. As you may know, I’m a bit of an “environmental nut” (for some people) and, although our province has the best wind and sun conditions in the world, it produces close to the dirtiest electricity on the planet!

That persuaded Leroy and Ken, my two brothers from Cudworth, to come up here several times to re-insulate the house at no cost except the insulation. And in the process, they fell in love with this place and its people.

If you have computer skills, secretary skills or simply some good muscles, please do not hesitate to come to Southend for the experience: bring your gifts along. (Our overworked volunteer secretary, a single mom with

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon is walking together with the Archdiocese of Keewatin-LePas. This includes assistance in providing ministry -- through the appointment of Fr. Lawrence DeMong as a pastor to two northern Saskatchewan parishes – and fund-raising for Keewatin-Le Pas as part of a special diocesan collection for the “Needs of the Canadian Church: Focus on the North” to be taken on Jan. 28, 2018. Watch for details!

a full-time job, begged off the parish council and, even though she was the only one I know in the parish with a computer, I had to agree that she deserved a break.)

Last summer two priests, Fr. Bernard de Margerie and Fr. Jean Baptiste Murhumwa decided to spend vacation time in our two parishes here in the North. They were very appreciated by the parishioners and enjoyed their time. Speak to them to learn more. You would be welcome!

With much love to all,
Lawrence DeMong, OSB



Archbishop Murray Chatlain with an Elder at the Sandy Island pilgrimage in the Archdiocese of Keewatin-LePas. Originally from Saskatoon, Archbishop Chatlain will return home Dec. 11 to share his insights and hopes for his northern diocese.

- Submitted photos

The Church of the North



Archbishop Murray Chatlain will speak about The Church of the North Monday, December 11 at St. Anne Parish (Fr. Paul Donlevy Hall) 217 Lenore Drive, Saskatoon. Doors open at 7 p.m. Program at 7:30 p.m. Refreshments and conversation will follow the presentation. Everyone is welcome!

Sacred Heart Parish in Davidson welcomes Elder Ruth Cameron

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

After Sunday Mass and a potluck meal, parishioners at Sacred Heart parish in Davidson, SK, listened intently as Elder Ruth Cameron shared her experiences of residential school, of overcoming the trauma of being forcibly separated from her family, and of finding healing in the traditions and spirituality of her own culture.

"I am very honoured to be here today to share with you and help you to know some of the history of the Indigenous people and how we are looking at Truth and Reconciliation," Cameron said at the Treaty Elder event, where she shared her life experiences and traditional teachings, describing how she has now come to a time in her life where she feels "able to speak in my own voice."

Born in Treaty 4 territory, Cameron worked for some 32 years as home and school liaison in the Catholic school system in Saskatoon. She is a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

At the age of five, Cameron was taken away from her home to attend an 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 siblings, some of whom were taken to a different school in Manitoba.

The disruption to culture and to the family unit experienced in residential schools had many long-term effects on self-esteem and relationships, Cameron said. Although her mother always told her to be proud of who she was, the racism and denigration Cameron experienced throughout her life caused profound damage.

As a young child attending residential school, Cameron said

she did not feel welcome or valued, and was surrounded by unfamiliar ways and by children who were also sad, hurting and angry. She described lonely nights in the dormitory sitting by the window, and trying to look toward home. "I wasn't even sure which direction was home any more."

Later, at the age of 14, she struggled to integrate into a public school, eventually finding acceptance through athletics. However, something as simple as a class assignment involving a phone book was daunting – her family did not have a phone – and there was little understanding about cultural differences.

She described her fear, her relentless drive to be perfect as a way to stave off negative comments or racist attitudes, and her struggle to realize her own value and the value of her culture.

"I only learned about treaties later in life," she told her listeners. "We were not told about them, or that there was anything supposed to be good about me, or about being a gift from our Creator, who is God."

Cameron described how she gradually came to understand the ways in which the residential school system, colonization and racism affected her – and many others in her family and community.

At the same time, she stressed that she was not trying to make her listeners feel guilty. "It is history – but no one ever knew or shared the history of our peoples," she said, expressing hope that this generation and next generations will have a greater understanding. "They will know more about the beginning of the treaties, where they were signed, how they were signed, what was the purpose," she said.

"I believe that each and every one of us - from the very creation



Elder Ruth Cameron

of life – we are all here to represent God, the Creator who gave us each a life on this earth, and a reason for us," Cameron said. "I believe in truth and reconciliation; many of us are working and hoping to make changes."

But Cameron added that reconciliation is not easy. "It is not easy to forgive when you have been caused a lot of pain to your body, your mind, your soul, your spirit – because you know, as a child, when someone is knocking you down, ridiculing you all the time, it becomes a habitual thing, especially at a time when you had no one there to say: 'It's okay, it's okay to feel, okay to cry.'"

Coming to terms with those experiences – beginning to understand one's self and one's emotions and moving forward on a path of healing – is an arduous process that many are dealing with, she explained. "Many of us have travelled on those journeys."

Cameron has strived to help others grow in understanding and healing, including families she encountered in her work with the Catholic school system, as well as her children and grandchildren. It involves people finding "their own



During a Treaty Elder Series event at Sacred Heart Parish in Davidson Sept. 17, Elder Ruth Cameron and parish representative Mary Jane Morrison (l-r) spoke about the Treaty Plaque to be blessed and installed at the parish. At the Sunday afternoon gathering, Cameron spoke to parishioners and community representatives about her experiences in residential school, her journey of healing, and traditional teachings. - Photos by Tim Yaworski

voice," she said. "I can't change anyone, but I can help them understand how we can take control of our emotions, and how we have to have faith – how we have to have something to build on."

She stressed the importance of all Canadians coming to a deeper understanding of the experiences of Indigenous people, to realize why the damage continues to be seen in our communities and in hurting families – and in ongoing crises in our country, such as the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Cameron pointed to the scripture and the homily heard at Sacred Heart earlier in the day, – a message of forgiveness and understanding, a message about a loving, merciful God – contrasting it with the image of an angry, punishing God she often heard about as a child at the residential school.

"Today I know it is different. I have accepted God into my life, not by force, the way we were taught, but by choice, and by comparing the teachings that we got from my Elders, and many different teachings from our culture," she said.

"We have so much in common as human beings. We haven't always accepted that gift that we are supposed to be sharing in this life."

Mary Jane Morrison of Sacred Heart parish expressed thanks to Elder Ruth Cameron for her presence and for her inspiring words, and described plans to follow up the session with the installation and blessing of a Treaty Plaque in the church.

The diocesan Treaty Elder Series is an initiative supported by the Diocesan Council for Truth and Reconciliation (DCTR), and is offered in collaboration with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner.

Parishes across the diocese of Saskatoon are encouraged to begin their responsibility for reconciliation by inviting an Elder to speak. For more information on building a plan of reconciliation for your parish, contact Myron Rogal, coordinator of Office of Justice and Peace, at (306) 659-5841 or justpeace@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

For more information about the history of residential schools in Canada, or about the TRC and the TRC Calls to Action, see the website: <http://nctr.ca>

Treaty Elder Series presented at Francophone Catholic parish

BY MYRON ROGAL

Elder Agnes Desjarlais led a Treaty Elder session along with Lyndon Linklater of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner May 28,

hosted by Sts-Martyrs-Canadiens Francophone Catholic parish in Saskatoon.

Marie-Jeanne Will of Sts-Martyrs-Canadiens parish worked

with the Roman Catholic Diocese Office of Justice and Peace to organize the event. Several Treaty Elder Series events have now taken place as a partnership between the Office of the Treaty Commissioner and the diocese.

The diocesan events are a response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and its Calls to Action. One of those Calls to Action (59) asks churches to develop ongoing education strategies to help congregations learn about the Church's role in colonization, as well as the history and legacy of residential schools. Action 60 also calls on churches to learn about and respect Indigenous spirituality.

Fr. Jean Baptiste Murhumwa opened the event with words of welcome, expressing gratitude for the large crowd present and acknowledging that the parish resides on Treaty 6 territory. Traditional gifts and words of thanksgiving were exchanged, recognizing the willingness of the

Elder to partake in this series.

Lyndon Linklater thanked the diocese for the rich partnership with the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC). He then "set the table" for the event by sharing with wit and humor the necessity of reconciliation as a path to living out our treaty relationship.

Linklater expressed the hope that treaty relationships bring, especially in breaking down divisions. Listeners were challenged to view treaties as a mutual relationship that leads to accountability, growth and the success of each person.

Speaking softly, Desjarlais shared her experience of growing up in a Catholic residential school in southern Saskatchewan, describing moments of deep hurt along with pinnacles of joy.

Desjarlais then wove together how the trauma of that experience was lived out in her parents and herself, as well as in her siblings, and how it has continued in the

experience of her own children.

"It was through discovering that my people had spiritual practices and traditions that were healthy that caused me to seek out healing for myself," said Desjarlais.

"Growing up, I never knew that I had a culture, and if it had not been for my grandmother I may have never known."

Desjarlais described how she continued on to seek healing, finding out more about her culture and traditional spirituality.

Desjarlais ended by saying that "she is grateful to be alive" and hopes the Creator blesses her "with another 30 years or more!"

Some participants noted that the hosting of this event in a Catholic Francophone parish offered significant connections, given that the French language and culture, including religious freedom, have at times also been the victim of colonization and cultural imperialism, both in Saskatchewan and beyond.



National Aboriginal Day service

Delores Sand and Carol Zubiak proclaim scripture in Cree and in English during a National Aboriginal Day prayer service held June 18 at the Anglican Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist. The service included the unveiling of a Treaty Plaque, as well as prayers and reflections from representatives of many diverse groups and faith traditions. Find more coverage of this event at www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

- Photo by Sarah Donnelly.



RCIA workshop in Leader, SK

Fr. Joseph Thazhathemuriyil, VC, and volunteers from Little Flower Parish in Leader, SK., recently participated in a diocesan workshop about the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). During the Nov. 4 event in Leader, the parish team was provided with an overview of the RCIA process, as well as practical direction and concrete resources for journeying with those who are seeking to join the Catholic church.

- Photo by Blake Sittler

Diocesan office reorganized as “Evangelization and Catechetics”

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Originally known as Rural Catechetics, and more recently as Christian Initiation and Catechetics, the newly renamed diocesan Office of Evangelization and Catechetics is being reorganized in an effort to more effectively respond to the needs of parishes striving to evangelize and form Christian disciples, says Blake Sittler, Director of Pastoral Services in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Sacramental preparation, catechism, and faith formation at every age, including the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), will continue to be a priority, along with helping parishes embark on the “New Evangelization” as a way to inspire active and committed faith in parishioners, says Sittler.

Three part-time staff members, who were based in three different deaneries, will be replaced by one full-time staff member working out of the Catholic Centre in Saskatoon.

“Lynda Statchuk, Elan Ehresman and Michelle Sieben have served with dedication and commitment,” Sittler said.

Evangelization and Catechetics is supported by the



“We thank them for their years of service, and are grateful for the contributions of all who have served in this office since it was first established.”

Changes in society – including the introduction of new technology, shifts in population and changing travel patterns – along with a decline in faith understanding and parish participation in an increasingly secular culture, call for new methods and a renewed focus for the diocesan office, he said. Evangelization and Catechetics will assist parishes in answering the call to evangelize, initiate and form Christian disciples in this new reality.

“We must find ways to renew how we share the gospel and find practical ways to equip parishes to inspire and nurture an active, life-long faith as followers of Jesus.”



Matt Fradd, founder of The Porn Effect, spoke in Saskatchewan in September.

- Photo by K. Yaworski

Harms of pornography addressed by PPK speaker

By MYRON ROGAL

Matt Fradd spoke about sex addiction to a crowd of some 300 Sept. 14 at a Priest Prophet King (PPK) Catholic men’s group gathering at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

It was one of several events in Saskatchewan organized by One More Soul Canada featuring the American-based Australian-born Fradd, founder of The Porn Effect, a website and blog dedicated to helping people heal from the harms of sex addiction and pornography.

In Saskatoon, he spoke to

students from three Catholic high schools, as well as offering parents strategies for raising children in an Internet generation (see article, below).

Fradd opened his talk at PPK with a prayer, before explaining that it is crucial for those who are addicted to admit their need for healing. Fradd used extensive scientific and professional resources to back his presentation.

He stressed that sex and nudity are not the problem, reminding the audience that our bodies are good; that sex itself was created by God for us; and that sexual

desire is a good, holy gift. Porn does not have us thinking too much about sex, but too little, he said. Similarly, “the problem with porn is not that it shows too much, but that it shows too little.”

Fradd said that porn has nothing to do with healthy masculinity. The problem has reached epidemic proportions, Fradd asserted, saying that “today everyone is either addicted to porn or loves someone who is.”

He challenged the myth that pornography is about choice, sharing the words of Yale legal scholar and feminist activist Catharine MacKinnon who carefully named that “women are not part of pornography by choice, but by lack of choice.”

“Porn does not affect me” is another common myth that Fradd countered with evidence of growing rates of impotence faced by men addicted to porn.

A common cultural myth addressed was that “porn is not addictive, because it is not a drug.” Fradd offered scientific evidence that behaviours can be as addictive as substances. This is also true for other behaviours, such as gambling. Porn becomes a coping mechanism to regulate dopamine levels which have been reset through the addiction and can even cause the brain itself to shrink, he described.

The good news is that neuroscience demonstrates that the brain can heal from this damage, stressed Fradd.

The final myth is that the person addicted cannot change. “Freedom from porn is not a destination, but a daily choice”, stressed Fradd. “It is not an all-or-nothing battle, and seeing it as such is unhelpful.”

Fradd then outlined practical ways to deal with an addiction to pornography. An addicted person must map out the path that continually draws them into the addiction, including triggers, and from there create a deactivation plan.

Fradd outlined three “musts” to begin recovery. The first step is to access a group or program with one-to-one accountability, he said, stressing that accountability is about encouragement. The second step is to find a professional sex addiction therapist; and thirdly, to seek spiritual direction in order to “help heal the ‘God image’ in you.” Fradd identified several resources, including Covenant Eyes software and a number of books (proceeds from the sale of Fradd’s books assist women in escaping human trafficking).

While recognizing the importance of prayer, Fradd used the analogy that if someone is clinically depressed we must do more than tell them to read more scripture passages on joy or to pray more.

What is PPK?

John Hickey described the PPK Catholic men’s group as “a monthly gathering for men that fosters formation and fellowship.”

PPK (Priest-Prophet-King) evenings begin with words from a welcome team, followed by Eucharistic adoration and benediction, with an open invitation to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. Diocesan and religious priests from across the diocese have regularly been present to offer the sacrament and join in the fellowship. Following the time of prayer, a guest speaker gives a presentation, with food and refreshments available. While PPK is a Catholic group, men from other Christian denominations are welcome.

There is no charge for the evenings, to ensure they are accessible, although donations are always welcome and local companies have been generous in financially assisting the event.

PPK is coordinated by Dan Denis and Richard Schlichemeyer as an event independent of any organization or movement. For more information on upcoming PPK events, see the website at www.priestprophetking.org

Protecting children and youth from porn

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Content-blocking and accountability software are among the practical tools that parents and educators can use to protect children and youth from exposure to pornography on the Internet, Matt Fradd said Sept. 14 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

Pornography – including violent and hard-core images and videos – is easily accessed through mobile and hand-held devices, laptops and home computers, and even via gaming systems, Fradd noted at the session for parents, youth leaders, educators and pastors.

Children can easily stumble upon pornographic images accidentally, through maliciously-placed links or seemingly innocuous searches, and curious youth can easily find porn online with a click or two, he described.

“With the advent of the Internet, the dangers of the ‘big city’... have come into our communities, into our homes, and into our children’s back pockets.” With the advent of the Internet, never before in history has so much explicit, obscene material been so easily accessible by so many minors, in so many homes, with so few restrictions, he said, quoting statistics, studies and commentators.

Fradd stressed that this epidemic is not only of concern to Catholic parents, or to people of faith. “This is a big deal if you are human, and it is a big deal if you have children,” he said.

Acknowledging the barrage of information, responsibilities and tasks that flood parents today, Fradd urged his listeners not to “bury their heads in the sand” or succumb to “analysis paralysis,” but to take immediate, practical steps to proactively protect children from pornography, sooner rather than later.

“Do we want our children being exposed to hard-core, misogynistic, hate-filled, body-punishing

pornography, or not?” he queried, before offering steps to address the challenge.

In addition to two practical steps of installing content-filtering software that will block offensive sites/material (such as Net Nanny), and of using accountability software (such as Covenant Eyes) to monitor Internet use by family members, Fradd emphasized talking to children about pornography, as well as talking to other parents about the issue (including, if necessary, saying: “I’m sorry, but if you do not use filtering software, my child can’t play at your house anymore”).

The attitude that “my kids are good kids” which suggests that only “bad kids” are interested in sex or are affected by pornography, is nonsensical, Fradd insisted. “They are being exposed to this stuff, and what they are being exposed to is violent pornography,” he said. “Think what goes on inside an eight-year-old when they first see pornography, what that means for them.”

Parents must talk to children about pornography, he stressed, and probably at a much younger age than many think. He compared it to how we teach young children to be safe from other dangers, such as sexual abuse or abduction.

Fradd pointed to resources for speaking to young children, such as the book *Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn Proofing Today’s Young Kids* by Kristen A. Jensen.

The conversation between parents and children about pornography should be built on a lifelong and ongoing series of conversations about the goodness and beauty of the human body, he said.

“What happens online is not less real than what happens offline,” he stressed, describing the huge problem schools and families are now facing with “sexting” and the sharing of sexually provocative images via smart phones.

Sofia Berumen assisting groups with refugee sponsorship through diocesan Migration Office

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Helping parishes and other groups to navigate the complex process of private refugee sponsorship is the role of Sofia Berumen, the new coordinator of the Office of Migration in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

It is work pioneered by the late Fr. Paul Donlevy, who established the diocese as a government-recognized Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), approved to coordinate private sponsorship of refugees – at that time it was to help those fleeing from war and violence in southeast Asia. The Migration Office was later established at the Catholic Pastoral Centre with a legacy from the Donlevy family, and has continued with support from Holy Spirit Parish and the Bishop's Annual Appeal. Berumen follows in the footsteps of the late Ellen

The Office of Migration is supported by the



Erickson and previous coordinator Christine Zyla in reaching out to refugees and to those helping them to settle in Canada. She is assisted part-time in the office by Robyn Kondratowicz.

Berumen says she is delighted to have an opportunity to put faith into action in her new role. Extending welcome and support to those fleeing dangers, persecution, violence and war a way to live the gospel imperative to “welcome the stranger (*Math. 25:35*)”, she says.

“As a Catholic, I have a wonderful, warm feeling in seeing how the diocese has established this office and is actively doing this work.”

Berumen is familiar with some of the challenges of being a newcomer, and of dealing with cross-cultural communication. Originally from Mexico, she studied communication there – at Iteso University – as well as working toward a Masters in communication of science and culture. Berumen travelled to Barcelona, Spain, for post-graduate studies in cultural management and culture policies, and then to Toulouse, France for hands-on language and cultural studies.

“I have always worked in two main areas: coordinating communication (mainly for the cultural sector, non-profits, community services), and as a university lecturer (teaching communication theory, cultural studies or written communication).”

When Berumen came to Canada in 2014, she began working with the Open Door Society as an interpreter.

“That is when I began to learn more about the refugee issue, to understand the problems and the challenges they face.”

Coordinating the Office of Migration is a way to bring that experience to bear, and to serve as a bridge for newcomers, she says.

Private refugee sponsorship is a complex undertaking, with many policies and forms to navigate. It is a long and arduous process that can take years, she notes. The need is huge, and resources are limited, so at times it can be heartbreaking when the office is not able to help someone, Berumen adds.

Once a refugee family arrives, the sponsoring parish or group is committed to meeting all of their needs for at least a year – financially, medically, socially, emotionally.

“There are many areas where a volunteer can help,” says Berumen, noting that she hopes to encourage more parishioners and volunteers to get involved. In doing so, it is vital to provide support, training and resources, she adds.

Sponsorship committees in the diocese of Saskatoon have done amazing work over the years, says Berumen. Sharing that expertise with others who are just getting started in the process, and bringing in protocols and support that will help all sponsorship groups with sometimes-complex challenges is a priority for the new coordinator.

Ideas include recruiting a group of volunteers with specific expertise in particular areas, whom sponsoring groups could consult



Sofia Berumen

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

when needed – this might include nurses, doctors, counselors or lawyers, she suggests.

“Sometimes we are not ready to face people with stress or trauma,” she notes. “We are not counselors, but we can get help to identify those cases and refer them properly, for instance.”

Plans to clarify roles and expectations will also be helpful for both sponsoring groups and newcomers, she adds.

Developing guidelines and protocols can assist in making the experience a positive one for everyone. “This is where I hope to help,” she says.

For more information about refugee sponsorship, contact Berumen at (306) 659-5842 or migration@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

DONATIONS of Furniture and Household Items for refugee families, newcomers, or others in crisis, are being collected. To find out how to donate, please e-mail Robyn Kondratowicz at: migration2@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

School community sponsors refugee family from Burundi

By DERRICK KUNZ, GSCS

The two-year journey to bring a refugee family from Burundi to Saskatoon concluded Sept. 14 when a late evening flight landed and a family of seven was reunited.

Six members of the family – a husband and wife and their four children – arrived the week before, but there was not enough space on the flight out of Rwanda, so one family member – an adult sister – was left behind until a later flight could be arranged.

The joyful reunion at the Saskatoon airport included the newly-arrived family members, and École St. Matthew School representatives, parents and students, carrying welcome banners, homemade signs and Canadian flags. Speaking in French, the parents of the four young children expressed thanks to God for their safe arrival in Canada.

The family is among almost a quarter-million refugees who have fled the small eastern African country's years-long civil war.

In partnership with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, members of the St. Matthew school community spent several months planning before launching a fundraising campaign Feb. 4, 2016. St. Matthew was the first Saskatoon school to take the 1000 Schools Challenge to privately sponsor a refugee family.

A refugee sponsorship committee, co-chaired by local

parents Krista Schreiter and Danielle Schock, included St. Matthew students, staff, parents and members of the Catholic School Community Council.

“Support from the whole community has been amazing, and it's been a great experience for our students and families to see that we can make a real difference in the lives of others,” said Schreiter.

“At the beginning, it seemed like a long journey. We wanted to get the family here quickly and welcome them into our community. But the amount of work and fundraising activities has made the time go so fast.”

Initiatives to raise the estimated \$30,000 to sponsor the family included a bake sale, talent show, fun night and a cabaret featuring Saskatoon's The Barrelmen. Many members of the school community also made charitable donations. All the household items and furniture needed by the newly-arrived family were also donated.

“We are all so excited to finally see and welcome the family to our community,” said Schock. “We were a bit nervous when we learned the whole family wouldn't be coming at once. But they're here and safe; that's what's important.”

“There's lots of work to make sure they get settled into their new home. We're in this for the long haul to support the family in whatever ways they need—including getting the children to school and helping the parents find work.”



École St. Matthew School families were on hand to welcome the late-night flight of the final member of the refugee family from Burundi being sponsored by the Catholic school.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

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

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

Christine Zyla, the diocesan coordinator of the Office of Migration at the time, was enthusiastic about the application and the careful planning done by the school committee. “This is what Catholic education is about, this is faith in action, this is everything that we are called to,” she said at the time of the application launch.



Fifty years of Development and Peace

Past, present, and future were highlighted during a program held April 30 at St. Mary's parish in Saskatoon to mark the 50th anniversary of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. The program highlighted individuals who have supported, nurtured and furthered efforts by Development and Peace to “put the gospel into action” both globally and locally over the past 50 years – including long-time supporter Leo Kurtenbach (front, right). In addition to a number of speakers, a lively “reader's theatre” panel presentation written by Sr. Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, gave an overview of the history of Development and Peace, which was created by the Catholic bishops of Canada in response to Pope Paul VI's ground-breaking encyclical “On the Development of Peoples.”

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

First group completes Justice and Outreach Year (JOY)

BY BLAKE SITTLER

A new Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation in the diocese graduated its first class of 13 participants June 10 in a celebration held at Queen's House in Saskatoon.

Grounded in a practical experience of Catholic social teaching, the JOY program was launched in the fall of 2016. Leaders in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon first began discussing the initiative some three years ago, with the first JOY group meeting in August 2016 for an orientation weekend, before continuing with monthly sessions for the next 10 months.

Once a month, JOY participants gather on a Friday evening and all day Saturday to reflect, learn and be formed through experience and challenging presentations by staff of many local ministries and outreach organizations. The program goes beyond simply educating participants about various social justice issues – it offers an opportunity to wrestle with the deeper sociological causes of injustice and the theological responses as Christians that begin percolating in participants.

During the year, each participant also dedicates eight additional hours each month to volunteering with a local agency. Volunteer placements included Sherbrooke Centre, Friendship Inn, L'arche Saskatoon, and Saskatoon Correctional Centre.

On Friday nights, the JOY group gathers at Queen's House for theological reflection based on their experience of their field placements. During this time, they share stories about their volunteer hours and also work together to discuss insights gleaned through



The first graduates of a new diocesan Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) program wound up their experience with a celebration June 10 at Queen's House in Saskatoon. The program offers monthly formation focused on Catholic social teaching and justice issues, with participants visiting local service-based agencies and working alongside people who experience life on the margins. - Photo by Blake Sittler

dialogue and prayer. This adds an extra layer of depth to the volunteer experience, according to JOY coordinator, Kate O'Gorman.

On Saturdays, the group meets at a variety of venues in the community, interacting with volunteers from the city's various outreach groups. Weekends explore themes based on the various pillars of Catholic social teaching, addressing issues such as international development, economic justice and peace, refugees, walking with Indigenous and Métis people, poverty, human dignity, health and elder care, hunger and food accessibility, restorative justice, youth and family, and ecology.

To conclude each Saturday, the entire group visits various parishes in the city and attends Mass together. Parishes also host a supper for participants, with family members joining them to discuss some of what they learned on the weekend.

"Our inaugural year of the JOY program was really amazing," said O'Gorman. "We

learned a lot about the various needs that exist within our city and we've carried each other in community and prayer as we discerned the ways in which we, as individuals and as church, are being called to respond to that need."

O'Gorman said participants were highly engaged in the JOY process. "I've been extremely impressed with the level of commitment each participant gave to the program, particularly in terms of their volunteer field placements," she said. "This has really proven to be the heart of the JOY program in many ways, and I am so very proud that, through this new diocesan initiative, we are offering laypeople an opportunity to explore and discover what it means to be missionary disciples."

The first JOY participants concluded their experience with a simple graduation ritual and a Mass celebrated at Queen's House. Fr. Marvin Lishchynsky, judicial vicar for the diocese of Saskatoon, presided and preached at the liturgy.

"In many ways, the offering of justice is like love in marriage," said Lishchynsky. "Love and justice cannot be kept to yourself or in your family... God calls us to share it with the world, to bring it where it is not."

JOY graduate Diane Cote described the impact of the program. "JOY developed in me a deep awareness of the many people and organizations that are active in our community...people who are doing wonderful things passionately," she said.

Cote described the experience of being uncomfortable at times – but it was when she was pushed to the edge of her comfort zone that she learned the most.

"It is then that you learn from the bottom up, just meeting them as people first," she said. "It is all about relationship and seeing that God is in everyone."

Married couple Bonnie and Ken Roberts went through the program together.

"For me, it was a low-burning fire," Ken said. "With every experience, every presentation, I

Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) program is supported by the



learned something more and wanted to learn more. It has been a conversion experience".

Ken worked at the Friendship Inn for his field placement. "I became more comfortable over the year working there and really got appreciate the work they do," he said. "I am going to continue on there."

Ken urged other Catholics to consider the program. "What I would tell someone though is not to take it if you don't want to change – because this program will change you," he laughed.

Bonnie Roberts says the program gives lifelong Catholics a new way of growing in their faith through concrete action.

"For me, it was a framework to start learning about and paying attention to the dignity of each human being," she said. "The poor were invisible to me, [but now] I can't turn away...I ask myself: How can I help my brother? My sister?"

The first graduates of the diocesan Justice and Outreach Year of Formation are Helen Belsher, Nicholas Blom, Mike Broda, Diane Cote, Denise DeBrou, Lori Ethier, Ryan LeBlanc, Margaret Marcoux, Peter Oliver, Bonnie Roberts, Ken Roberts, Marie-Jeanne Will, and Murray Wood. Sr. Marie-Noëlle Rondot, SMS, assisted O'Gorman on the weekends and journeyed with the participants.

"This is where our church is going," Ken said. "This is the future of our church."

JOY participants challenged by reflection on privilege

BY KATE O'GORMAN

The Justice and Outreach Year (JOY) of Formation program kicked off its second year Sept. 15-16 with a new cohort of participants from across the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

A key piece of learning within the JOY experience is discovering that authentic solidarity means being present with people and acknowledging our mutual brokenness. It is a model of service that veers away from "me helping you" and draws nearer to "us standing together." The healing power of friendship is the most effective agent for healing, and also the most demanding. It also requires a shift in perspective: it requires an awareness of privilege.

Anita Verlangen, an English-language instructor with the Saskatchewan Intercultural Association, facilitated the first JOY session, addressing the nature of privilege as a set of basic, often unconscious, assumptions.

"Privilege is a set of circumstances in the world that we are all part of, whether we want to be or not – it's how the fabric of our society is made up," she said.

"So it's important to start to recognize that we don't all start on the same footing," Verlangen explained. "We don't all start at the same starting place...Canada has a reputation for being a pure, multicultural, very open society – and it is. But we also have a history that is founded on racism and colonization."



Anita Verlangen spoke to the 2017-2018 JOY group in September. - Photo by Kate O'Gorman

Verlangen added that it is important that we grapple with and understand how our self-understanding and assumptions have been formed out of this history, especially before reaching out to others in service. "What we're talking about is power: who has it; who doesn't; how it is exercised; and how it is perpetuated," she said.

"Your level of privilege is dependent on many different factors," explained Verlangen, "such as your level of education, your class, whether or not you are a citizen of a country, your race, your sexual orientation, your gender, being able-bodied or disabled, etc... [Privilege] is a power dynamic that shifts and changes, and our identity informs our privilege. For

example, a white male who has grown up in poverty will have less privilege than someone who has grown up with wealth."

She went on to identify what privilege is not. "It does not mean all white people have it easier than all minorities. White privilege does not mean white supremacy or 'white guilt'. It does not mean it is okay to discriminate against white people, and it does not mean that if you are not white you can never achieve anything in this society," Verlangen explained.

"Rather, privilege means: I don't have to think too much about my race. It means I am not defined by my race and my actions do not reflect my race (either positively or negatively)," she said.

"Privilege means I expect to be treated fairly and justly; and when I am not, I expect to be heard and the situation rectified. And finally, privilege means I do not have to learn about other cultures unless I want to."

Being aware of our privilege as people who are about to reach out to others in service is an imperative, the JOY participants heard. Participants do not bring anything greater or better to volunteer placements and acts of service – they simply bring themselves. Being aware of one's privilege also creates openness and willingness to being changed through encounters with others.

As Jean Vanier wrote in his book, *Community and Growth*, "we have to

remind ourselves constantly that we are not saviours. We are simply a tiny sign, among thousands of others, that love is possible, that the world is not condemned to a struggle between oppressors and oppressed, that class and racial warfare is not inevitable."

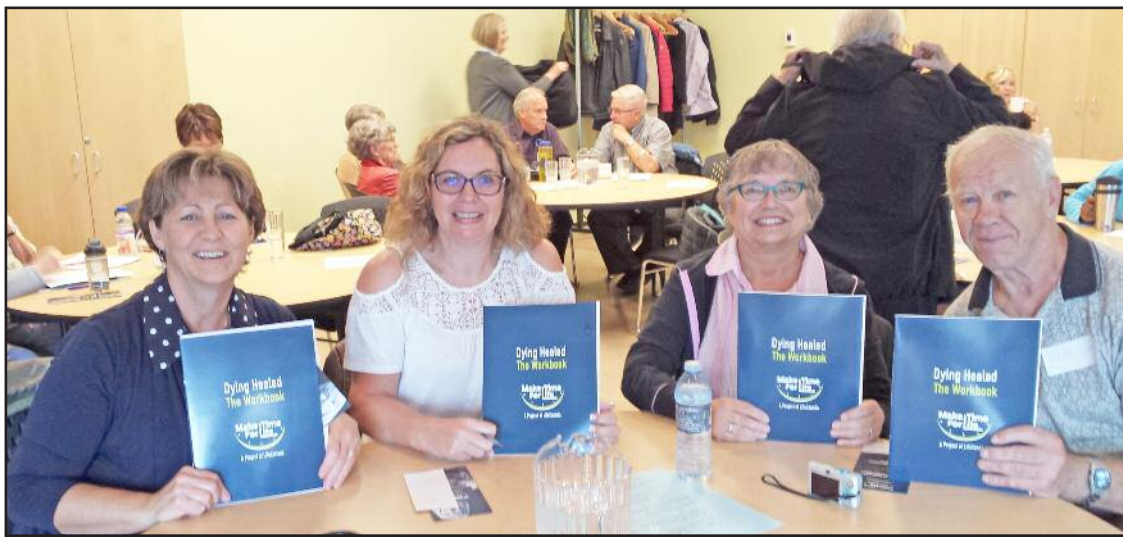
In her concluding remarks, Verlangen offered a quote by Fr. Gregory Boyle from his book, *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, which speaks to the heart of the JOY program and to the call that belongs to all the baptized.

"No daylight to separate us. Only kinship. Inching ourselves closer to creating a community of kinship such that God might recognize it," wrote Boyle.

"Soon we imagine, with God, this circle of compassion. Then we imagine no one standing outside of that circle, moving ourselves closer to the margins so that the margins themselves will be erased.

"We stand there with those whose dignity has been denied. We locate ourselves with the poor and the powerless and the voiceless. At the edges, we join the easily despised and the readily left out. We stand with the demonized so that the demonizing will stop. We situate ourselves right next to the disposable so that the day will come when we stop throwing people away."

Follow the JOY journey via Facebook or through a blog posted online at: www.joyformationprogram.com



Diocesan “Dying Healed” workshop

Board members from Saskatchewan Pro-Life Association (SPLA) attended a diocesan Dying Healed workshop Sept 23 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon, entitled *Make Time For Life*, (left to right): SPLA President Colette Stang, Life Canada representative Valerie Witzaney, Yorkton representatives Emily and Ted Deneschuk. The program tackled end-of-life issues, as well as concepts related to suffering, dignity, and the power of human presence. Workshop facilitators emphasized that physical and cognitive powers are not the source of human dignity; that human life does not lose its inherent value in the face of disability, illness, aging or dying; and that ordinary people can make a difference by providing a loving, caring presence to those who are suffering. *Dying Healed* was produced by Life Canada.

- Submitted photo



Help for persecuted Christians

Myron Rogal, coordinator of the diocesan Office of Justice and Peace (left), and Nadeem Imtiaz Bhatti spoke at an annual information and fund-raising evening held in Saskatoon April 30, 2017, in support of persecuted Christians around the world. “We need to stand with our brothers and sisters. We need to extend our prayer support as well as our financial support to help them,” said Nadeem Bhatti.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

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“Dads Doin’ Time” exhibit reveals the impact of prison on families

BY KATE O’GORMAN

Art enthusiasts and those with a heart for restorative justice gathered at the SCYAP Art Gallery in Saskatoon Sept. 15 for a one-day exhibit entitled “Dads Doin’ Time.” The project highlighted the impact of incarceration on families.

Showcasing the work of 18 writers and visual artists, both inside and outside of correctional facilities, the collection was six months in the making, from April to September, 2017. Volunteers and program coordinators from STR8UP, the Inspired Minds All Nations Creative Writing Program, the University of Saskatchewan, and the Saskatoon Correctional Centre collaborated with artists to create and curate the exhibit in an effort to shine awareness on the impact that incarceration has on husbands, fathers and children.

“This project brought together people who were involved in Inspired Minds Creative Writing classes and STR8UP members,” said Dr. Nancy Van Styvendale, a professor of English at the University of Saskatchewan who coordinates the Inspired Minds program, a volunteer writing workshop run through Saskatoon Correctional Centre.

“Everyone here is interested in creative expression as a way of thinking through their own feelings, as a way of communicating a social message and giving back to the community.”

STR8UP, a gang prevention and support services organization in Saskatoon, values community engagement through artistic expression. This exhibit follows on the heels of two previously released collections of writing from STR8UP members, featuring artwork and personal stories of recovery from gang life.

Meeting with a group of men at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre, volunteer student facilitator, Jillian Baker, also worked with the artists to produce the exhibit.

“While it varied from week to week, we would have anywhere from 10 to 15 people in the room,” said Baker. “We had opportunities to do private writing and to share our writing. We did writing activities and gave writing prompts. It was really wonderful.”

Baker added: “It was a really great learning experience for me and being able to work with the men was one of the most pleasant teaching atmospheres I have ever



Prison ministry

Stations of the Cross were again held at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre on Good Friday, organized by the diocesan Office of Restorative Ministry. With the help of parishes and donors, this office also provides liturgies and special outreach to men at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre during the Christmas season, including the purchase of small gifts to show that they are not forgotten. Monetary donations are now being collected for Christmas purchases. Contact Dianne Anderson at the Catholic Pastoral Centre, (306) 242-1500 for more information.

- Photo by Dianne Anderson

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been in. Everyone was very enthusiastic. It was a really safe and welcoming place for people to contribute. Very early on we established an environment where people felt safe and comfortable to share and be vulnerable, which was huge because we dealt with some important subject matter.”

Josh, a member of STR8UP and a participant in the “Dads Doin’ Time” project, said: “It was a good learning experience. I learned a lot about how to be a good father – and I’m still learning.”

He also expressed a deep desire to see parents receive more access to their children while in prison.

All visits at the Correctional Centre are “no contact”, which means physical access to family is restricted.

“I hope people will take from this project an understanding of the personal impacts of incarceration on fathers, sons and families, and the way in which changes need to be made to the system to facilitate the strengthening of family bonds,” said Van Styvendale.

“If people are in jail, they are only able to see [family members] through glass, it’s a heartbreaking reality. So, there are some policy changes, I think, that need to happen.”

She explained: “We need to put more stock in the importance of family connection because people in the criminal justice system come back into the public world. They need to have family support

that will assist them with reintegration into society in an attempt to reduce recidivism. Strengthening family connections is actually a preventative measure.”

Exhibit coordinators spoke about the limitations that exist around access, letter writing and postage, as well as the high cost of making a phone call within the Correctional Centre.

“It’s very difficult to stay in contact with your family when you’re incarcerated.”

“Dads Doin’ Time” offered an opportunity to bring awareness and offer healing through creativity, said those involved in the project.

“The voices presented here speak powerfully to the very real pain, but also the joy that comes along with being a parent while in prison,” notes Van Styvendale.

Gallery visitors were invited to write anonymous notes to the artists still in jail and express their comments on the work exhibited – messages of encouragement and hope to those experiencing incarceration and an acknowledgement that their voices are being heard.

“It’s been really wonderful to see this project come to fruition,” said Van Styvendale.

“All of the men are really proud of their contributions and it’s wonderful for them to be able to see the fruits of their labour.”



St. Anne’s Parish holds “Chew On This” event

As part of a national “Chew On This!” campaign calling for a Canadian poverty reduction strategy, members of the Justice and Peace Committee at St. Anne’s Parish in Saskatoon handed out materials after every Mass on the weekend of Oct. 14-15, at the start of Poverty Awareness Week. The “Chew On This!” bags contained an apple (donated by Little Quail Orchard, Okanagan, BC), a fridge magnet and a postcard addressed to MP Jean-Yves Duclos, Minister of Children, Families and Social Development, calling for a federal action plan to reduce poverty. Citizens for Public Justices and Canada Without Poverty organize the cross-country “Chew On This!” event in conjunction with World Food Day Oct. 17. It is one part of the Dignity For All campaign for a poverty-free Canada. For more information see <http://dignityforall.ca>

- Photo by John Lahey-Wiggs



Our Lady of Fatima Pilgrim Statue at Fox Valley

Parishioners and visitors at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Fox Valley, SK. gathered Aug. 5 to welcome the international pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima, part of an international tour of the statue that included stops in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon and surrounding area at some 15 parishes, at a local community centre, and at an annual pilgrimage held in Rama, SK. The international pilgrim statue tour was held to mark the 100th anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady of Fatima to three shepherd children in Portugal, between May 13, 1917 and October 13, 1917. In addition to the Fox Valley visit, parishes at Anaheim, Humboldt, Lake Lenore, Englefeld, Watson, Wadena, Cudworth, Bruno, Wilkie, Unity, Denzil and Macklin welcomed the statue, as did St. Mary, St. Paul and St. Patrick parishes in Saskatoon.

- Photo submitted by Kendra Volk



Children and families gathered for Eucharistic adoration at the Cathedral of the Holy Family Oct. 13, marking the 100th anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady of Fatima to three shepherd children. After the hour of adoration at the cathedral, Mass was celebrated across the city at St. Mary’s parish in honour of the anniversary.

- Photo by Lynette Murza

Children of the Eucharist event marks 100th anniversary with hour of adoration

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Children and families gathered Oct. 13 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon to mark the 100th anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima’s appearance to three shepherd children in Portugal.

Oct. 13, 1917 was the sixth and final apparition of Our Lady of Fatima to the three children – Jacinta and Francisco Marto (who were canonized as saints earlier this year) and their cousin Lucia dos Santos. Her message to the children was a call to conversion and prayer. Thousands in attendance at the Cova da Iria that day reported seeing the “miracle of the sun”.

Organized as part of an annual Children of the Eucharist event in Saskatoon, the gathering at the cathedral included Eucharistic adoration, prayer and music.

Children of the Eucharist is a worldwide educational and evangelistic program to

“gather the children to follow the way of the little shepherds of Fatima.”

In Saskatoon, the annual Children of the Eucharist gathering echoed others around the world in focusing this year on the anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady of Fatima. Children of the Eucharist highlights Eucharistic adoration as a way to follow the lead of Saint Francisco Marto, “whose desire it was to console the heart of Jesus.”

Hundreds of other such Children of the Eucharist events were being held at the same time in some 140 countries.

The hour of prayer and adoration for children and families was followed by a pilgrimage across the city to St. Mary’s Parish in Saskatoon to celebrate Mass later that evening in honour of the 100th anniversary. (See photo of the St. Mary’s celebration on Page 16.)

100th anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima appearance celebrated

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The message of Our Lady of Fatima to three shepherd children was highlighted during two days of celebration May 12-13 in Saskatoon, marking the 100th anniversary of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s first appearance in the Cova da Iria, Portugal.

Hundreds attended a candlelight vigil and outdoor procession at Holy Family Cathedral May 12 led by Diocesan Administrator Kevin McGee and Deacon Donat Davatz, who gave the homily. Davatz described the continuing need to hear the prophetic message of Our Lady of Fatima, who asked for “penance, conversion of sinners, and praying of the rosary in order to obtain peace for the world.”

On May 13, the anniversary date of Our Lady’s first appearance, some 650 attended a Saturday afternoon Mass at St. Mary’s Parish in Saskatoon, concelebrated by McGee and pastor Fr. Ciro Perez, CSsR, with participation by representatives of parishes, Catholic organizations, many cultural groups, the Catholic Women’s League and the Knights of Columbus. Prayers written by students from Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools were brought



Children at the May 13 celebration at St. Mary parish in Saskatoon. - Photos by Kiply Yaworski

forward during the prayers of intercession and placed near the altar.

A basilica and chapel have been built at Fatima, and millions of pilgrims from every corner of the globe have visited the sanctuary, described event organizer Jennifer Nunes. St. Pope John Paul II attributed his survival of an assassination attempt on May 13, 1981 to the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima.

The 100th anniversary was celebrated this year by Pope Francis in Fatima on May 13 during a visit to Portugal, and included canonization of the two youngest children – St. Jacinta Marto, who died in 1920 at the age of nine years, and St. Francisco Marto, who died in 1919 at the age of 10. Lucia Santos was a Carmelite sister who died in 2005 at the age of 97 years.

Three local children participating in the Saskatoon celebrations were dressed as the children to whom Mary appeared: Jacinta Leyne as St. Jacinta Marto, Christopher Nunes as St. Francisco Marto, and Ana Coghlan as Servant of God Lucia dos Santos. A group of other children were also dressed as angels for the anniversary Mass, which included the crowning of the statue of Mary by Fr. Kevin McGee, a children’s liturgy, and hymns sung by a multi-cultural choir.

Mass was followed by a procession through Saskatoon’s core neighbourhood, with the crowd praying the rosary and singing hymns. A gathering in the hall afterwards included a potluck lunch and entertainment representing many different countries and cultures. Find more coverage and photos on the diocesan news page at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news



Jacinta Leyne, Ana Coghlan, and Christopher Nunes (l-r) , dressed as the three shepherd children, led the procession with the statue of Our Lady of Fatima May 13.



Outlook parish hosts Fatima anniversary events

One hundred years ago, on May 13, 1917, the Blessed Virgin Mary first appeared to three small shepherd children in Fatima, Portugal, bringing a message of peace and hope to a world shattered by World War I. Our Lady of Fatima appeared six times, asking for repentance, recitation of the rosary and prayers that Russia would be converted. Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Outlook commemorated these apparitions each month beginning on May 13, 2017, by praying the rosary and celebrating Mass. Mass intentions asking for the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima were submitted by the participants and presented on the altar. On Oct. 13, the anniversary of the final apparition of Our Lady of Fatima to the three children, those in attendance participated in an outdoor procession led by three children dressed as shepherd children. Other children carried signs and ribbons. The procession was followed by the praying of the rosary, celebration of Mass, complete with special intentions. Mass was followed by fellowship and refreshments. The parish Vision Committee offered special thanks to Fr. Madonna Godwin Aghedo, OP, for his commitment to the project. The committee also thanked all parishioners, including those from Outlook’s sister parish of St. Andrew’s in Kenaston, for participating in the celebrations over the six months.

- Photo and submission by Connie Achtymichuk

Fatima pilgrimage

Sr. Teresita Kambeitz, OSU, of Saskatoon, stands on the spot where a famous photo was taken of the three shepherd children to whom Our Lady of Fatima appeared 100 years ago. Pilgrims gathered at Fatima with Pope Francis were honouring “the holiness of little children, innocent little shepherd kids through whom God has done incredibly marvelous things these past 100 years,” she notes. “It is a mystery beyond words!” - Submitted photo



Search continues to inspire youth in the diocese

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Twenty-two youth took part in a diocesan Search retreat held Oct. 20- 22 in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Search weekends are offered to youth Grades 9-12 in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, coordinated through the office of Vocations and Youth Ministry.

An intense weekend of spiritual growth that was revived in the diocese in April 2015, 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.”



Search retreat participants and directors, including Fr. Darryl Millette (back, centre), concluded the Oct. 21-22 weekend retreat with celebration of Sunday Eucharist at St. Anne’s Catholic Parish in Saskatoon, joined by St. Anne’s pastor Fr. Matthew Ramsay (not pictured), parents, families, and team members. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Searchers come to know themselves, others, and God in a more loving and personal way, he says.

Follow-up is important, he adds, saying that team members stay connected with the Search participants. “Search is a real mountain-top experience of faith, but we’re not going to just say ‘go back to the valley’,” he said. “In the days that follow, there will be opportunities to connect, and to follow up – and also to serve as disciples, in their own local parishes or beyond.”

For more about Search see: www.saskatoonsearch.ca

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Michael and Ava MacLean - Submitted photo

Daughter shares dad’s passion for campus ministry

By KATE O’GORMAN

Michael and Ava MacLean are a father/daughter team, both committed to building the Body of Christ through comprehensive campus ministry.

As a member of the Campus Ministry Team at St. Thomas More College – a team that includes Madeline Oliver, Fr. André Lalach and Fr Mark Blom, OMI, in collaboration with Basilian Father Ron Griffin, as well as Gertrude Rompré, who is the director of mission and ministry – Michael works professionally to foster faith formation and spiritual support to students, faculty and staff.

His commitment to campus ministry

extends to the national level as well, where he is the executive team chair of the Canadian Catholic Campus Ministry (CCCM), an association which serves campuses across Canada.

Like her dad, Ava has also taken a leadership role in witnessing to the Gospel on the University of Saskatchewan campus and beyond while completing her degree in education. As the elected 2017 western representative and president on the executive team for the Canadian Catholic Students’ Association (CCSA), a national body that mirrors and works in tandem with CCCM, Ava has followed in her father’s campus ministry footsteps.

“Dad does so much around campus and I wanted to contribute as well, but I was worried people would think I was involved only because my dad was involved,” she said.

However, the independent nomination process that led to her election as CCSA president alleviated her fears.

“It’s been really great for me to find a place in the CCSA,” Ava continues, “I get to do this good work in a similar but different way.”

Ava’s involvement in Catholic student leadership has afforded her many opportunities.

Together, the CCCM (with Michael as chair) and the CCSA (with Ava as president), work to support faith and leadership development opportunities, offer pastoral care, unite students from campuses across Canada and promote the mission of the Church in higher education nationwide.

One highlight was attending the International Movement of Catholic Students (IMCS) in Italy earlier this year where she interacted with Catholic students from all over the world and participated in a general assembly with Pope Francis.

“Campus ministry is important,” says Michael. “University is a special time when young people begin their first foray into independent academic study. All sorts of questions about faith and meaning, as well as questions about other Christian denominations and religions, start to come up. Those questions are marvelous. As campus ministers, we help students wrestle with those questions, as they grow in both their academic and their faith lives.”

Ava adds: “Leadership is synonymous with service. It’s students wanting to serve other students to create a better environment.”

It has also helped prepare her to be a leader in the workplace as a teacher.

With her term as CCSA President nearly completed, Ava wants to encourage other students to become involved in student campus ministry.

“In my experience, it gives you a broader awareness to the wider Catholic student community. You get to understand that we all play a part in the Body of Christ. Everyone brings something different to the table, and we all make the community that much richer. Being involved with campus ministry has affected my faith life as well. I’ve really grown to understand how my faith can be lived everywhere, not just in church on Sundays.”

Ava highlights how campus ministry is not exclusive to STM students alone. “The university is a big place,” she explains. “It can be rare to find those communities that are ready to welcome you in, but campus ministry does that.”

With both father and daughter holding parallel Catholic leadership positions, Michael and Ava often work together to offer local events such as TED talks and coffee houses through the Newman Centre on campus.

While Michael has found it exciting to share his work and passion with his daughter, Ava initially expressed concern over “the optics.”

Looking at the impact CCSA and STM’s Newman Centre have had in the life of his daughter and in the lives of students across the University of Saskatchewan, Michael says he is confident in the future of Catholic campus ministry.

“We will continue to have creative ideas that will draw the campus community together, in all its diversity,” Michael says he is committed to offering a campus ministry that is comprehensive in its approach.

“It’s exciting to see students become aware that there is unity within the diversity. We are all connected, we all belong.”



Prairie Messenger Editors Don Ward, Maureen Weber and Abbot Peter Novocosky (l-r). - Photo by Jacquie Berg

STM medal presented to Prairie Messenger

By CAITLIN WARD

The St. Thomas More Medal was presented this year to the Prairie Messenger weekly Catholic newspaper, which will close down in May 2018.

St. Thomas More College awards the medal to recognize individuals or groups who combine care, integrity and faith with contributions to community and public life.

The Prairie Messenger was founded in 1923 by the Benedictine monks of St. Peter’s Abbey in Muenster, and has been a key voice for Catholicism on the Canadian prairies, covering the local lives of parishes across the western provinces as well as the struggles and victories of

the universal Church.

The award recognizes that the editors and writers have rarely been content to simply report on doctrine or theology, but have consistently asked what these things mean in the context of a diverse and rapidly changing world. Confident in the Church’s teachings, the Prairie Messenger has not retreated from secular culture, but instead has sought to engage with and understand it, according to the nomination. “The Prairie Messenger has never shied away from calling out the Church’s clay feet... (it) loves the sacramental church but is willing to recognize its corporeal flaws.”

Mission trip to Haiti was a moment of transformation for couple

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The husband and wife team who now coordinate the Lay Formation program in the diocese of Saskatoon are passionate about faith and about deepening their relationship with God – and it is a passion they long to share with others.

For Jennifer and Blair Carruthers, Lay Formation is a new forum for faith sharing and faith growth that involves placing trust in God. Right now, it also involves learning the ins and outs of the program alongside participants and fellow team members.

“God is leading us down this faith-filled path and we will humbly walk wherever God may lead,” say the couple.

Born and raised in Biggar, SK, the couple were married in 1990, and Jennifer, a Lutheran, was confirmed in the Catholic Church in 1997, after journeying through RCIA as a candidate.

They were part of St. Gabriel parish in Biggar for some 16 years before moving to Saskatoon and becoming part of Holy Family Cathedral parish. Jennifer was a Registered Nurse and Blair has been involved in banking and a range of businesses over the years.

They are the parents of five adult children – Brandon, Rebecca,



Blair and Jennifer Carruthers are the coordinators of the Lay Formation program in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. - Submitted photo

Jessica, Blaise and Amanda. Blair describes the couple’s core values as “faith, family, fitness.”

The whole family’s journey of faith was powerfully impacted in 2014, when all seven participated in a Holy Family Cathedral parish mission trip to Haiti.

“Our lives have been forever changed. We saw God at work in the lives of the poorest of the poor, and we started a new journey of faith,” Jennifer describes.

The trip led to greater

involvement in their faith and a deepening relationship with God, say the couple.

The call to apply for the Lay Formation position was not something they were looking for or expecting. Their discernment about applying began with people of prayer in their parish asking them to consider it.

The couple began coordinating Lay Formation this fall for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. Participants in the two-year Lay Formation gather for prayer, learning and community at Queen’s House for one live-in weekend a month from September to June.

An eparchial Lay Formation stream coordinated by Sr. Bonnie Komarnicki and Sr. Marijka Konderewicz of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon also started this September, as did an Aboriginal Catholic stream (with participants from the dioceses of Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Keewatin-Le Pas), now coordinated by Marlene Hansen of Buffalo Narrows (see article, below).

Altogether, 36 participants in the three streams have started Lay Formation this fall.

This year for the first time, the diocesan and eparchial streams will meet Friday evening and all day Saturday, but not on Sunday.

The Aboriginal stream will continue to be offered until Sunday after lunch. The change in the diocesan and eparchial schedule is an attempt to address costs as well as the sometimes-challenging time commitment of the faith formation program, said Jennifer.

The new coordinators stress the importance of having taken on the position as a couple. Together they bring a range of skills that will assist in the coordination of the program, says Jennifer.

Finding ways for people to deepen their faith and become missionary disciples is the ultimate goal of Lay Formation and a range of other efforts, such as Alpha, Blair notes.

“You have to bring yourself to Mass, you have to bring yourself, your gifts, your brokenness, and develop this relationship, this communication with God — and that is what Alpha brought to me, and what I am experiencing now with the people in Lay Formation. You can do a lot of this stuff and understand it on one level, but ultimately you’ve got to develop this communication with God,” he stresses.

Deepening a relationship with God is key to the transformation that happens through Lay Formation’s focus on prayer,

Lay Formation is supported by the



learning and community – three things that are really at the heart of all that the church does, says Blair.

Jennifer said it is important that new ways are found to help those who can’t attend Lay Formation or other programs, those in smaller or remote parishes, or those who presently are not deepening their faith in any way.

Finding and developing programs of all kinds that help people to take “the next step” is part of a conversation the couple say they are having with pastors, Lay Formation alumni, parish and diocesan representatives.

Blair stresses that the two of them are both still on this journey of faith, with lots to learn, and more growing to do.

“We are taking Lay Formation right now – we just also happen to be coordinating it as well,” he points out.

“In the last few years we have really learned just to trust God in everything we do,” summarizes Jennifer.

Hansen shares Aboriginal Lay Formation experience with others

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Deepening a relationship with God through the Aboriginal Lay Formation program changed Marlene Hansen’s life. As the new coordinator of the program, that transformation is something she now shares and encourages in others.

“The more you get to know God, the more you get to know about love,” says Hansen, a parishioner at St. Leo the Great Catholic Church in Buffalo Narrows.

Encouraged by a colleague, Hansen first experienced the Aboriginal Lay Formation program as a participant in 2012-2014. She also took the Spiritual Direction program offered at Queen’s House in Saskatoon.

“The more I got to know God – I wouldn’t say life is easy, but it is easier to deal with, knowing God and having God in my life to lean on, through the difficult times.”

Hansen, who works in the area of mental health and addictions for the Keewatin Yatthe Regional Health Authority in northwestern

Saskatchewan, is presently leading nine participants in the Aboriginal Lay Formation program held one weekend at month at Queen’s House.

Jointly offered by the dioceses of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Keewatin-Le Pas, Aboriginal Lay Formation is held in conjunction with a Ukrainian Catholic eparchial stream and a Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon stream of Lay Formation. Participants in each stream are together for some sessions, and apart for others. All three streams offer an opportunity to deepen faith and a relationship with God through prayer, learning and Christian community.

Taking Aboriginal Lay Formation was the best thing she could have done, asserts Hansen.

“It was really about finding out about my relationship with God, how does God work in my life, was God in my life, where is God? Because I always thought God was ‘out there’,

I didn’t know God was in here,” she says, pointing to her heart.

“It is just easier to live life now, and it just makes life more beautiful,” Hansen adds, noting that Lay Formation has brought healing, and helped her to see God at work even in the difficulties and darkness.

The spiritual walk enriched by Lay Formation has also permitted her to reach out to others, to confidently share faith, to assist confidently in her parish, and now to accompany the nine participants in this year’s Aboriginal Lay Formation program. The content of the program, the prayer, the learning, and the connections built between traditions have a powerful effect on people’s lives, says Hansen. “They are able to take that back to their communities.”

Lay Formation is about trusting God and being open to listening to God, she says. “If we really open our hearts to it, our lives will really make a difference in helping others. And I believe that is why we are here.”



Marlene Hansen of Buffalo Narrows is the new coordinator of the Aboriginal Catholic stream of Lay Formation. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Lay Formation graduates sent forth on Pentecost Sunday

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Graduates of a two-year Lay Formation program were sent forth in two missioning ceremonies this June: one for participants from the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon and another for those from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

The purpose of the Lay Formation program is to help adult Catholics fulfill their baptismal commitment to the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ, through a process of formation and faith education.

Seventeen eparchial graduates were sent forth June 3 at a celebration held at Sts. Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church. The next day, nine diocesan Lay Formation graduates were anointed and sent forth by Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee at a celebration at St. Paul Co-Cathedral.

“As servants of Christ, we are to be men and women motivated by the spirit of the



Diocesan and Eparchial Lay Formation graduates, team members, and pastors at the 2017 diocesan missioning celebration held on Pentecost, June 3, at St. Paul’s Co-Cathedral. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

gospel: we are called to a life of holiness, prayer and action. Such a mission requires ongoing formation and renewal,” said coordinator Mona Goodman when

introducing the graduates. It was Goodman’s final Lay Formation graduating group, as she retired from the position a few months later.

After the renewal of their baptismal promises, each diocesan graduate was anointed by McGee, as a sign of being sent forth into the community to continue the journey as a disciple of Jesus Christ. He encouraged the graduates to go forth to be “the living fire of Jesus Christ, proclaiming his love and mercy.... Continue to be the fire of God’s love in this world.”

This year’s diocesan graduates are all from Saskatoon:

- Annette Bley, St. John Bosco Parish
- John Lyrette, St. Patrick Parish
- Eileen MacKenzie, St. Francis Xavier
- Maria Luisa Mendoza O’Sullivan, Holy Spirit Parish
- Katelyn Peterson, Holy Spirit Parish
- Cecilia Mui, St. Joseph Parish
- Marjorie Stevens, Holy Family Cathedral
- Chong Wong, St. Paul Co-Cathedral
- Maylane Wong, St. Paul Co-Cathedral.

Anniversary Mass held to celebrate the ongoing impact of Lay Formation

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Thirty years of Lay Formation and its impact in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon was marked Oct. 20 with a celebration at Queen's House.

Alumni from across the diocese and beyond were among those in attendance – including Edward and Delores Ortynski, members of the very first Lay Formation class, who travelled from British Columbia for the celebration.

Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner presided at the 30th anniversary Eucharist, along with Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee and Fr. Ivan Nahachewsky of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon.

Wiesner was part of the team that originally developed the Lay Formation program in the diocese of Saskatoon at the request of Bishop James Mahoney. He worked with the late Sr. Cecile Fahl, SMS, Gisele Bauche, and Fr. Don Hamel to develop the program, grounded in prayer, learning and Christian community.

As with any relationship, our relationship with God requires commitment and ongoing connection, and needs to be cared for and intensified, said Wiesner, emphasizing the importance of the process of ongoing conversion and formation to deepen our faith.

He quoted a talk that Pope

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Francis recently gave to priests. “He told us that one of the things that is most important is to be constantly deepening your life of faith, your relationship with God,” Wiesner related.

“When we look at the teachings of the Church, the teachings of the Second Vatican Council, the Church reminds us that the ‘followers of Christ must hold onto and perfect in their lives that holiness which they have received from God’ (Lumen Gentium, 40),” he said. “Must hold onto and perfect. Not just ‘it would be nice’ ... it says must.”

The Christian vocation of all the baptized is a “vocation to the apostolate,” said Wiesner, stressing the importance of each baptized person taking up their role as a missionary disciple of Jesus Christ. That is a role that requires formation, training and support “to share the mission and the message of Jesus.”

“We have that duty, to work hard to acquire a deeper knowledge of revealed truth,” he said, adding that this a process that never ends nor is it achieved during our life on earth. “We are called to respond in faith to that

unconditional love of God.”

The 30th anniversary of Lay Formation is a moment to look back and see “what so many have achieved over these last 30 years – God’s promises have become much clearer to us. We understand more fully the covenant God has entered into with us, that intimate bond of love, God’s fidelity,” said Wiesner, expressing thanksgiving to God for all that has unfolded through the Lay Formation program, and for all the leaders and participants over the years. “When we look back we see much more clearly the privilege and the responsibility that are ours in promoting God’s Kingdom.... It is all God’s gift to us.”

At the conclusion of the Mass, Wiesner presented a certificate of a papal blessing for the Lay Formation program from Pope Francis: it was received by diocesan coordinators Jennifer and Blair Carruthers, to share with all those involved in Lay Formation.

The anniversary celebration continued the next day with a Lay Formation Alumni gathering at the Cathedral of the Holy Family: a day of reflection led by Fr. Michael Dechant, OMI (*below*).

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).

The goal was to help adult Catholics fulfill their baptismal commitment to the mission and ministry of Jesus through a process of formation and faith education.

Some 900 have graduated from the program over the past three decades. The program expanded in 1999 to include a Ukrainian Catholic Eparchial stream and again in 2007 to include an Aboriginal Catholic stream involving people from the dioceses of Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Keewatin-Le Pas.

Lay Formation is two years in duration, with participants gathering for one live-in weekend a month for ten months from



Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI, one of the founders who helped create the Lay Formation program launched in the diocese of Saskatoon in 1987, presented an apostolic blessing from Pope Francis marking the 30th anniversary. The framed blessing was accepted by Blair and Jennifer Carruthers, the new diocesan Lay Formation coordinators, at the 30th anniversary Mass celebrated Oct. 20 at Queen's House in Saskatoon.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

September to June in the pastoral setting of Queen's House.

In the diocese of Saskatoon, Lay Formation is funded through the Bishop's Annual Appeal as well as through participant fees, usually shared equally between the participant and their parish.

Lay Formation is marked by the involvement of highly qualified presenters, from Saskatoon and across Canada, who bring a broad spectrum of theological thought to the learning component of Lay Formation.

Lay Formation also provides an enriching experience of Christian community as Catholics of many backgrounds journey together, praying, learning, and sharing life.

Deepening a relationship with God through prayer is an essential component of Lay Formation.

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 in the diocese and beyond 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.



Sr. Cecile Fahl

One of the designers and founders of the Lay Formation program in the diocese of Saskatoon, Sr. Cecile Fahl, SMS, died Aug. 18, 2017 at the age of 85 years. She worked alongside then-Fr. Gerry Wiesner, OMI, Gisele Bauche and Fr. Don Hamel to develop the program which was launched in the fall of 1987, with Fahl as the first coordinator.

- Submitted photo

The new diocesan coordinators of Lay Formation are Jennifer and Blair Carruthers, with Marlene Hansen of Buffalo Narrows coordinating Aboriginal Lay Formation (*see related articles on Page 12*).

Eparchial coordinators are Sr. Bonnie Komarnicki, SSML, and Sr. Marijka Konderwicz, SSML.

For more information about the Lay Formation program, visit: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/layformation



Lay Formation farewell

Former Lay Formation coordinator Kathy Hitchings and program co-founder Bishop Emeritus Gerald Wiesner, OMI, were among the friends and colleagues who gathered Sept. 7 to bid farewell to Monna Goodman (*centre*) who served as Lay Formation coordinator from 2008-2017. Find more coverage of the farewell event on the diocesan website at www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Lay Formation alumni reflect on living as Eucharistic people

BY TERESA BODNAR-HIEBERT

A group of some 50 faithful Lay Formation alumni joined Fr. Mike Dechant, OMI, Oct. 21 for a day of enrichment and reflection at Holy Family Cathedral in Saskatoon.

“I want to touch your hearts,” Dechant said, opening the annual Lay Formation Alumni gathering on “Living as Eucharistic People.”

Dechant stressed that “Eucharist has to have a focus, the celebration of the Lord within us.” Like a table meal, this celebration will be lively, interactive, and engaging, he suggested.

Dechant encouraged his listeners, saying: “We need to imitate, to imbue the presence of Christ.”

He reiterated some common examples:



Lay Formation Alumni held a fall gathering Oct. 21 during the program's 30th anniversary year, reflecting on the call to be Eucharistic people, led by facilitator Fr. Michael Dechant, OMI.

- Photo by Teresa Bodnar-Hiebert

“You might be the only bible that kids ever read” and “you might be the only church that person ever experiences.”

In Eucharistic celebration “we experience this moment of salvation. Death no longer has a hold on us,” he

described. Dechant encouraged the gathering of Lay Formation alumni to actively live as Eucharistic people.

“When we come in anonymity, it undermines the Eucharistic mindset,” he said.

“Bring your daily concerns. Pray for someone and tell them and ask them to pray for you. Gather in little clusters with those near you, create your own little cluster – the Body of Christ is nourished.”

The afternoon concluded with celebration of the Eucharist in the Queen of Peace Chapel.

Those assembled experienced Christ in the midst in a powerful way, especially when a young stranger visiting the church building joined the celebration, asking for prayers.

St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon continues to provide spiritual care

BY BRIAN ZIMMER
ST. PAUL’S HOSPITAL

In its 2017 spring budget the Government of Saskatchewan announced that spiritual care would no longer be funded in publicly owned healthcare facilities.

In the Saskatoon Health Region, this affects Saskatoon City Hospital, Royal University Hospital, and Parkridge Centre.

Spiritual care at St. Paul’s Hospital is not financed with public funds and spiritual care continues to be offered at St. Paul’s.

The government wants faith communities to continue to serve their members as always. One of the services offered by the now-terminated spiritual

care workers was to help facilitate the connection between faith communities and those of their members who wished a visit in hospital. As of Sept. 27, these spiritual care workers are no longer employed.

Consequently, if you anticipate a hospital stay at Royal University Hospital or Saskatoon City Hospital and wish to have a visit or communion during your stay, let your parish know, or contact the diocesan Hospital Chaplaincy coordinator Jackie Saretsky at (306) 659-5839 or by cell phone at (306) 292-5531.

(Catholic Hospital Chaplaincy at RUH and Saskatoon City Hospital is funded in the diocese of Saskatoon by gifts to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal.)

Deutscher appointed bioethicist

SUBMITTED BY ST. PAUL’S HOSPITAL

Mary Deutscher, PhD, has been appointed to the position of Bioethicist at St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon.

As ethicist, Deutscher works with and for the faith-based institutional members of the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS) in urban and rural Saskatchewan; and in a collaborative partnership with the Saskatoon Regional Healthy Authority, explained Jean Morrison, President and CEO of St. Paul’s Hospital.

The ethicist works in the context of a Mission Integration team of St. Paul’s Hospital, which includes leading Catholic health care facilities in the ongoing development, implementation, evaluation and integration of ethics support services, as well as some potential ethics research.

Deutscher received her doctoral degree in philosophy, public policy; her Bachelor of Arts honours (with high honours in philosophy) from the University of Saskatchewan; and she holds a Master of Arts in public ethics from the University of Ottawa.

She recently worked as a Clinical



Mary Deutscher is bioethicist for St. Paul’s Hospital and CHAS. - Photo by Tim Yaworski

Ethics Fellow for the Centre for Clinical Ethics in Toronto; and presented workshops in various locations among several provinces on euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada. Her presentations have also included ethics of human reproduction and ethical decision-making in health care.

Deutscher brings experiences in clinical and organizational ethics, obtained through graduate programs, serving as hospital chaplain, volunteer activities, and her role on the St. Paul’s Hospital Ethics Committee, as well as the work she completed with the Palliative Care Team at St. Paul’s Hospital.

Making difficult health care decisions

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Making difficult health care decisions involves the same process we use to make other difficult decisions, ethicist Mary Deutscher said at a recent diocesan Foundations: *Exploring Our Faith Together* program hosted by Holy Spirit Parish in Saskatoon.

The ethicist for St. Paul’s Hospital and the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan engaged her listeners in a reflection on making decisions and the role of conscience, before addressing some specific scenarios related to artificial nutrition and hydration.

Deutscher led the crowd in brainstorming steps to take when making any difficult decision, listing such things as gathering information/facts, determining effects on others, prayer, consultation with family and experts, weighing pros and cons, doing a “gut check” to see how you are feeling, checking your conscience, and taking a step back to reflect (as well as trying to make the decision when not under extreme stress).

Describing conscience as determining “what is it that God wants me to want,” Deutscher asked those present to discuss what conscience means to them: such as determining right from wrong, empathy for others, being at peace with something, listening to God’s will, and seeking a

Foundations: *Exploring Our Faith* is supported by the

guiding light. The Church holds that a person’s conscience must be formed and educated – it is not always enough to just rely on our “gut feeling,” noted Deutscher.

Healthcare decisions often happen in a whirlwind, in a time of stress and confusion, fear or trauma. “You need to try and take a step back, and ask for as much time as you can, to try and find that peace of heart, and make an educated and informed decision,” suggested Deutscher.

It was noted that thinking about such decisions beforehand – such as in an advanced care directive – means discernment happens apart from the pressures of being in the midst of a healthcare crisis. The Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS) has published “A Faith-Based Advance Directive For Health Care” as a tool to assist with such discernment.

For more about this Foundations: *Exploring Our Faith Together* session see: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news



St. Paul’s Hospital Community Day

Performer Parob Poet entertains children as St. Paul’s Hospital in Saskatoon welcomed hundreds of students from the surrounding neighbourhood to the annual Community Day on the hospital grounds May 31. Some 100 volunteers from St. Paul’s Hospital and other sites in the Saskatoon Health Region – as well as high school students, hospital board members and community sponsors – assisted with the day, which included activities and food (2,500 donated hot dogs, buns and popsicles).

- Photo by Brian Zimmer

Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan has moved

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS) has moved to a new location on Taylor Street in Saskatoon, poised to refocus on supporting and enhancing Catholic health care in the province.

CHAS is now sharing office space with Emmanuel Care, the Catholic health organization that owns and sponsors 13 of the 15 health care facilities that are members of CHAS.

Other CHAS members include health care organizations, Knights of Columbus and Catholic Women’s League councils, parishes, professional and business groups, and individuals that support the ministry of health care.

Executive Director Sandra Kary said the move to the Taylor Street location was both fiscally responsible and a boon for closer collaboration with Emmanuel Care.

“We have always had a close relationship, which will be strengthened by the even-closer proximity we will now share,” said Kary. “We work together on issues that are helpful both for Catholic healthcare facilities, as well as for parishes and the public.”

There are greater financial challenges since provincial funding to community organizations like CHAS was cut a year ago, Kary said.

The cuts have required some difficult decisions, including a reduction in staff. Mission Education Coordinator Sandy Normand will be leaving in November.

CHAS’s Witness to Mission program will continue to be offered to Catholic health care facilities, said Kary, expressing appreciation for Normand’s work on that program. Witness to Mission is designed to help those working in healthcare facilities to understand how their personal values connect to the mission and ministry of Catholic health care.

In the midst of change and restructuring, CHAS has been refocusing on its strategic priorities, which include providing education and resources, and connecting to the community, said Kary. “We want to continue to build even more meaningful links to our diocesan and parish partners, engaging them in health care and the healing ministry of Jesus.”



Sandra Kary, Executive Director of CHAS. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

CHAS is also committed to the priority of advocacy and communication, particularly when it comes to issue-based projects, such as the production of *Finding the Gifts* videos in response to the legalization of Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia (see www.findingthegifts.ca)

“We find that we are in a place where we need to continue telling the Catholic health care story,” says Kary. “We can’t assume that people understand what that story is.”

This means getting back to the basics, and simplifying some of the messaging to get to the heart of what Catholic health care is, and why it is needed, she said.

CHAS held a “get to know you” social event at Holy Spirit Church in Saskatoon Nov. 20, with information about CHAS and Catholic health care.

“Every year that the sisters aren’t in the facilities is one more year where that story of Catholic health care is a bit more distant. We want to build and strengthen that understanding and connection to tell the story of what Catholic health care is about, and what we bring to the table.”

For more information about CHAS see <http://chassk.ca> or call 306-955-2427.

The Spirit of St. Paul’s Hospital videos

are now available for viewing online at

<http://www.stpaulshospital.org/about/mission/spirit.php>

“The Heart and Soul of St. Paul’s Hospital” (9 minutes)

“What it means to be a Catholic Hospital” (7 minutes)

“Reflections on St. Paul’s Hospital” (11 minutes)

View on the St. Paul’s website or search for “St. Paul’s Hospital Foundation” on YouTube.

Effects of government cuts to spiritual care discussed

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Hospital chaplains, pastors, and spiritual care volunteers were among those who gathered Oct. 3 for a meeting about the elimination of government-funded spiritual care services in Saskatchewan health care facilities.

Information and concerns about the new reality in the Saskatoon Health Region were provided at the meeting held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon, along with suggestions about provincial advocacy and moving forward.

Denominational chaplains continue to provide spiritual care and pastoral visits in Saskatoon hospitals – including Catholic hospital chaplaincy at Royal University and City Hospitals (funded by the Bishop's Annual Appeal), and spiritual care at St. Paul's Catholic Hospital (provided through donations). However, these denominational chaplains have lost key support from a health region spiritual care department, and many patients without connections to a particular church or denomination are no longer receiving spiritual care.

As part of the 2017 provincial budget announced March 22, government funding for "pastoral care services" was eliminated from provincial health care (for an estimated savings of some \$1.5 million annually).

The impact of the announcement became reality at Saskatoon City Hospital and Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon on Sept. 27, with the elimination of the spiritual care department in the Saskatoon Health Region (SHR). Spiritual care services continue to be offered at St. Paul's Hospital, since spiritual care at the Catholic hospital is funded through the legacy from the Grey Nuns. The situation at other care homes and facilities varies, the gathering heard.

At the information meeting, Simon Lasair – a former spiritual care practitioner in the SHR who presently serves as the Saskatchewan Regional Admitting Chair of the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care – provided an overview of what spiritual



Lutheran denominational chaplain Rev. Ron Bestvater, diocesan ecumenical coordinator Celeste Woloschuk, spiritual care practitioner Simon Lasair and Catholic hospital chaplaincy coordinator Jacqueline Saretsky (left to right) were among those speaking at an information meeting about the elimination of government-funding for spiritual care in health care facilities.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

care consists of, and what the elimination of government funding for spiritual care means for patients and staff, as well as for the denominational chaplains and volunteers.

Every human being has a spiritual dimension, and spiritual care is a crucial form of care within public health care, said Lasair. When patients or their families face a crisis, they often need to explore spiritual questions, regardless of whether they have a formal faith affiliation or not, he stressed.

In addition to patients and families, spiritual care professionals in the province's hospitals and long term care facilities also regularly provided support to staff who often deal with trauma, loss or other crises, he said.

Spiritual care is sometimes called a "ministry of presence," said Lasair.

"In times of crisis, spiritual care practitioners are exceptionally skilled at offering emotional and spiritual support," he described. Other health professionals might

be sensitive to the spiritual concerns of patients and their families, but no other health care providers are trained to care for these needs explicitly, Lasair stressed.

"As a result of this decision, this specialized knowledge, this specialized practise is no longer available to patients and their families in many Saskatchewan hospitals," Lasair said. In addition, other health care professionals – who already have a myriad of tasks when it comes to patient care – must now operate without the expertise or support of a spiritual care practitioner on the health care team.

Various denominations, clergy and volunteers will continue to provide some support to patients, but many more will not receive the support they need, said Lasair.

"Under privacy legislation, denominational clergy are not permitted to be contacted by hospital personnel unless there is a specific request for them, or unless the person requesting support belongs to their specific denomination. Given that there are, on any given day in the health care facilities, at least 50 per cent of people, patients, families who have no stated religious affiliation: those people are not going to get access to any spiritual support."

As well, the infrastructure surrounding the professional practice of spiritual care in hospitals and other care facilities is now eliminated – something which impacts the pastoral and spiritual care being provided by churches and faith communities.

Day in and day out, it was the spiritual care department that provided patient lists of congregation members in hospital to the visiting clergy and denominational volunteers, always operating within the bounds of privacy legislation.

Without the spiritual care department to coordinate that service, privacy concerns may make it more difficult for hospitals to offer that service. In some cases, this has already made visits by local clergy and faith-based volunteers more difficult, and adds to the possibility that patients in crisis are being missed, he said.

It was also noted during the meeting that some patients who do not specify a denomination when admitted, would at times do so later, in conversation with the health region's spiritual care professional, permitting the spiritual care department to eventually connect the patient with their faith community, or to answer a patient's request to help facilitate reconciliation or healing of his or her estranged relationship with a particular denomination.

The spiritual care department also provided orientation and information to local clergy and volunteers around such matters as infection control requirements and privacy legislation. "It will not be as

Catholic Hospital Chaplaincy is supported by the

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streamlined a process as it was previously," he said. Church representatives and volunteers must now to travel to St. Paul's Hospital for that registration/ paperwork.

Jackie Saretsky, coordinator of Hospital Chaplaincy for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, encouraged the pastors, ministers and spiritual/pastoral care volunteers in the room to make sure they get their health region clearance tags, necessary paperwork and checks done to reassure staff and patients.

Another step would be to get Clinical Pastoral Education training, she added. "We need all of you on board, we need all of you to act and support and encourage each other to maintain that high standard, to show the government and the hospitals that the bar is high. We have been called to go and answer (that call) to the best of our ability," said Saretsky.

Now that the spiritual care department has been eliminated, churches and various denominations need to take the initiative to make sure that the names of designated chaplains are on the health region lists for both City Hospital and RUH, so that the correct, up-to-date information will be available at the switch board, to nurses' desks, at emergency and in the intensive care unit, to ensure that staff know who to call "to get the right chaplain to the right patient," she said.

As the health care system in Saskatchewan undergoes other fundamental changes, with the planned elimination of health regions and the creation of a single provincial health authority, church leaders and denominational chaplains are also looking ahead, hoping to develop a new spiritual care affiliation agreement with that new single health authority, Saretsky noted. "They are redesigning a lot of things, and maybe spiritual care will be redesigned along with that."

Rev. Ron Bestvater of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada reported that right now only a few faith groups have negotiated an agreement with the Saskatoon Health Region for provision of denominational spiritual/pastoral care, including the United Church, the Anglicans, Lutherans, and Roman Catholics.

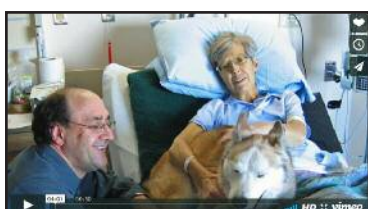
The upcoming creation of a new province-wide health region will call for serious ecumenical engagement and cooperation to ensure that people's spiritual needs are cared for, he stressed.

Ways to advocate for publicly-funded spiritual care in the provincial health system were discussed, with participants noting the need to emphasize the health care benefits of spiritual care, which in turn brings financial savings.

The days when volunteers and non-professionals can handle this important outreach on their own has passed, another speaker suggested, comparing it to how a growing community moves beyond a volunteer fire department to a professional, paid department when the complexity, size and challenge of providing the service becomes too much for volunteers.

Parish Nurse Ethna Martin of St. Philip Neri Parish in Saskatoon suggested the issue must be talked about in local churches to raise public awareness about a cut to spiritual care services that many are not aware has happened. Those who require spiritual care for themselves or family members may now also have to be much more active in requesting that support, others noted.

"Finding the Gifts" initiative presents short videos showing reasons to hope in an era of euthanasia and assisted suicide



Finding the Gifts:
palliative care



Finding the Gifts:
suicide prevention



Finding the Gifts:
caring for the elderly



Finding the Gifts:
the L'Arche community

"Finding the Gifts in a World of Choices" is a series of short videos produced in Saskatchewan under the leadership of our Catholic bishops, thanks to financial support from the Saskatchewan K of C Charitable Foundation. The four videos prepared so far illustrate paths of compassion and caring being lived in our community. Let's change the conversation about assisted suicide and euthanasia: there is another way!

Please watch and share the videos:
www.findingthegifts.ca

For more information contact the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon communications office: (306) 659-5844 or communications@saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Ministry to the divorced and separated marks 10th anniversary

BY BLAKE SITTLER

A ministry aimed at supporting Christians who are struggling through the trauma of separation and divorce is celebrating a milestone in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon: Transitions is 10 years old. The diocese began offering Transitions in the autumn of 2007.

Originating in Connecticut, the program came to Saskatoon via the diocese of Calgary where Saskatoon resident Sharon Powell had heard about it. Powell introduced the program to the Catholic Pastoral Centre and, with the support of the bishop, piloted Transitions here.

Powell emphasizes the need to offer outreach and support to those who are struggling with separation or divorce.

"People don't usually come to the end of their marriage without a lot of pain, and sometimes that pain has been occurring for many years," says Powell.

After 10 years, Transitions has been facilitated by the diocese some 20 times and has been attended by nearly 200 people.

Ten years ago, many Transitions participants had been separated or divorced a year or more. Recently, more people are coming to the program still in the early stages of shock.

"Those going through divorce and separation are grieving the death of their relationship... and the death of their dreams," says Powell.



Transitions facilitators recently reflected on the history and impact of the 10-year-old diocesan program for those who are divorced or separated; (back l-r) Lori Driedger, Jan Bigland-Pritchard, Bev Kirilenko, (front l-r) Sharon Powell, Judy Douglas, Helen Zimmer. - Photo by Blake Sittler

"Each one of our participants went into their marriage thinking they would be married forever, so when the marriage comes to an end, it is devastating, and it feels like their world is falling apart. This is when the person needs the most help," she says.

The 12-week Transitions program addresses topics such as grief, anger, self-image, stress, guilt and blame, children, forgiveness, and loneliness, as well as coping with challenges, such as how to get through the holidays.

Transitions is not a drop-in program. Participants are asked to

be present at every session in order to maintain trust and confidentiality in the group. This continues to be a strong practice generally appreciated by the participants.

When a couple gets divorced, it is one of the most painful experiences for a family. For many Catholics, the experience was doubly difficult because on top of the actual schism of the marriage, there was often a feeling of rejection or alienation from the faith community.

In an early letter from then-Bishop Donald Bolen about Transitions, words of assurance

were balm to participants: "It is important that you do not consider yourselves as separated from the Church. As a baptized person you can be assured that the Church is there to support you in your need."

Divorced Catholics often say that they feel ostracized by their fellow parishioners.

"It still happens," says Lori Driedger, one of the current facilitators of Transitions in the diocese. "We still get the impression that (divorce or separation) is not acceptable... that we don't 'fit' anymore."

On the final evening of the Transitions program, a liturgy is held, led by the bishop or the vicar general of the diocese, or in the absence of a bishop, by a diocesan priest. This is seen as a huge sign of support by participants, note the program's leaders.

"It is important to have that spiritual element," says Driedger. "A spiritual home is important when you are isolated (or) alone... I didn't even have my kids half the time."

The diocesan Transitions team currently has a cohort of 11 facilitators. All of the facilitators are either separated or divorced, and have been through the program themselves.

"I had been separated two years when I went through the program," says Judy Douglas.

"I wanted to go through to make sure I was grieving properly," she adds. "What I

found was a safe place...where I was not judged for saying and feeling what I felt."

At a recent gathering, Transitions facilitators discussed the program's history, successes and some of the current issues.

"As a non-Catholic, I think it is important to keep it Christian," says Rev. Jan Bigland-Pritchard, an Anglican pastor. "The spiritual aspect is so valuable to those who go through something so difficult."

Transitions is open to people of all faiths, and to both men and women, offering balance and perspective, as well as support.

"Men and women talk more respectfully of each other when they are in each other's presence. This helps in the healing, to be able to see the other person's perspective," says Helen Zimmer, one of the group's first facilitators.

One facilitator notes that she was assisting in the ministry because of what she herself received from the program.

"I got so much out of the program," says Bev Kirilenko. "Facilitating later on helped me to see how far I had come in my grieving."

The next session of Transitions will begin at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2018 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, 123 Nelson Road, Saskatoon. For more information, please contact Sharon Powell at (306) 374-1425 or sharon@holyspiritsaskatoon.ca

St. Mary is home to many cultures, includes programs in Spanish

BY DARLENE POLACHIC

(Previously published in the Saskatoon StarPhoenix)

St. Mary's Catholic Parish is the second oldest Roman Catholic parish in Saskatoon. It was established in 1919 and was originally named 'Our Lady of Victory' to celebrate the end of World War I.

The first St. Mary's church building was destroyed by fire in 1927 and the present red brick church on Avenue O South was opened in 1930. The Oblates turned over the parish to the Redemptorist Order in 1934. It was the Redemptorists who initiated the establishment of St. Mary's Credit Union to aid parish families and people of the community.

Fr. Ciro Alfonso Perez, CSSR, is the current pastor of St. Mary's parish. He was ordained in Columbia in 2000, and after eight years working in cities, villages and missions in Columbia, he came to Saskatoon at the invitation of then-Bishop Albert LeGatt to work with the burgeoning Spanish-speaking Catholic community in the city.

Today the Spanish-speaking congregation of St. Mary's numbers well over 100 and represents people from 18 different countries in Latin America, South America, Central America and Mexico.

In August of 2015, Perez was appointed pastor of St. Mary's Parish, of which the Spanish community is a part.

From its very beginnings,



Fr. Ciro Perez, CSSR
- Photo by Darlene Polachic

Perez says, St. Mary's was a culturally diverse parish.

It started with French, English, German, Ukrainian and Irish Catholics, and from its earliest days was identified as a parish whose goal was to build community from diverse cultures.

Our Lady of Guadalupe parish, which serves Indigenous and non-Indigenous, First Nations and Metis parishioners, also uses the St. Mary's Church building for Sunday Eucharist and various events through the year.

Our Lady of Guadalupe pastor Fr. Graham Hill, CSSR, is a fellow Redemptorist, who works with Parish Life Director Debbie Ledoux to lead Our Lady of Guadalupe parish.

"In the past two decades, St. Mary's has become significantly more culturally diverse," Perez says.

"We have welcomed people



St. Mary's parishioners from many cultures were celebrating the 100th anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima Oct. 13.
- Photo by Jennifer Nunes

from all over Africa, the Middle East, Palestine, Iraq, Syria, and Asia, as well as people from Europe...

"In all, 40 to 60 different countries are represented at St. Mary's. When I look out on the congregation, I see every colour of face. It's beautiful."

Perez identifies in many ways with the newcomers who attend St. Mary's. "English is their second language, as it is mine. I preach more slowly here, with shorter, simpler homilies, often on themes concerning adjusting to life here and how we can support one another. I encourage them to face their new challenges with faith. It's not always easy."

The English-speaking and Spanish-speaking communities within St. Mary's hold some activities together, but Perez says the Spanish congregation is particularly active.

Spanish-language Mass is held every Sunday at 4 p.m. and once a month is followed by a supper hosted by one of the Spanish-speaking countries – all are welcome to attend. The menu is representative of the country of origin, as is the musical entertainment.

Perez says: "It has been a great experience for me to work with this community. We may speak the same language, but each Spanish-speaking country has its own traditions and customs. Some are more liberal, others are more conservative. How we celebrate our faith is different, and that includes how we celebrate the holy holidays like Christmas or Easter."

Perez says the Spanish-speaking congregation is involved in many activities beyond the Spanish-language Mass and the monthly suppers.

"We hold regular Bible studies,

prayer groups, a charismatic prayer group, young peoples' group, catechesis for the children, and meetings for couples. One congregation member teaches guitar lessons, and a man from Chile is starting drama classes."

He says the Spanish community also conducts a very active welcome program to help newcomers.

In the fall of 2016, St. Mary's Church organized a cultural festival to highlight and help integrate the various cultures and nationalities represented in the parish. Perez says it was so successful, the church plans to make it an annual event. "Our aim is to showcase the various cultures and celebrate diversity and unity in our community."

Though St. Mary's is one of the poorest parishes in the city in terms of socio-economic area, it is well-known for its charity. Perez describes several programs at St. Mary's that provide help and support for those in need.

"We operate a Back Door Ministry that serves sandwiches and coffee, and at Christmas time we distribute food hampers. The rest of the year, we give out as many as five food hampers a day to needy people. We also give away clothing, especially in winter."

"A big thing for me at St. Mary's is counselling people in distress," Perez says. "There are so many of them – people with addictions and many other difficult circumstances. I listen, I pray, and I bless them."

St. Philip hosts celebration for Fr. April

BY KATE O'GORMAN

A celebration was held June 25 at St. Philip Neri Parish in Saskatoon honouring Fr. Emile April on the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood, and bidding him farewell as he retired from active ministry.

April's ministry as a priest began at St. Philip Neri Parish after his ordination in 1967, and for the past five years parishioners there were pleased to have him back at the same parish where his journey began. In the years between, Fr. April had many rich experiences serving locally and abroad.

To celebrate his Golden Jubilee, his 75th birthday and the eve of his retirement, April was surrounded by parishioners, his brother priests, friends, and family as they "roasted and toasted" him for his many years of selfless service, during a celebration that included an afternoon Mass, a program, and a barbecue.

A large part of April's ministry was spent in União dos Palmares, Brazil, where he served from 1972 to 1998 as a missionary from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Sr. Claire Novacosky, OSU, and Fr. Les Paquin both worked closely with April in Brazil, and both shared fond memories of that time. Paquin explained in a letter read at the celebration that, while in Brazil, April pastored a large parish of 50,000 parishioners – and how his focus was on building small Christian communities for the laity.

The task of caring for the sacramental and ministerial needs of a parish that large was no small undertaking. On weekends, Paquin explained, it was not uncommon to have three sets of baptisms, each involving some 30 to 40 children.

In conjunction with serving a parish, April was involved with a number of special projects, one of which was mobilizing a work bee to assist flood victims rebuild their homes. Through this project, April saw 250 homes constructed.

There was always something to be done, but, as Paquin explained in his written tribute to April, the secret to being a good missionary is to have a nap after lunch – something that April mastered. Fr. Les Paquin and Sr. Claire Novacosky both took the opportunity to tease April about his penchant for sneaking in a snooze where he could.



Sharing stories and memories was part of a celebration for Fr. Emile April marking his 50th anniversary as a priest, his 75th birthday, and his retirement. - Photo by Kate O'Gorman

Sr. Novacosky recounted times when April was caught sleeping through a homily or during reconciliation, "he nearly fell out of his confessional chair," she remembered with a smile. "But I'm sure the Lord showed mercy," she teased, "not only on the sinner but on Fr. Emile as well."

While Sr. Novacosky and April lived and served in different parts of Brazil, she recounted how April would often visit, "for a meal or a siesta."

"We had good discussions," she said, "where we, of course, always solved all of the social, political and religious problems of the day." April ardently denounced injustice and inequality. "He was passionate for God's Kingdom and the poor," said Paquin. "He loved the poor and took a stand on their behalf and at times this made him unpopular with the rich land owners."

While in Brazil, April was involved in supporting the rights of landless farmers who were being illegally denied access to safe and productive work.

After taking steps with local authorities to help support poor workers reclaim their land rights on one farm in particular, April found himself the target of an intended assassination. By upsetting the social and political power that contributed to systemic inequality around land rights, he served as a voice for the voiceless. Commenting on the threats April suffered, Sr. Novacosky said: "It didn't seem to faze him too much."

April was unwavering in his work to defend the landless and the small farmers.

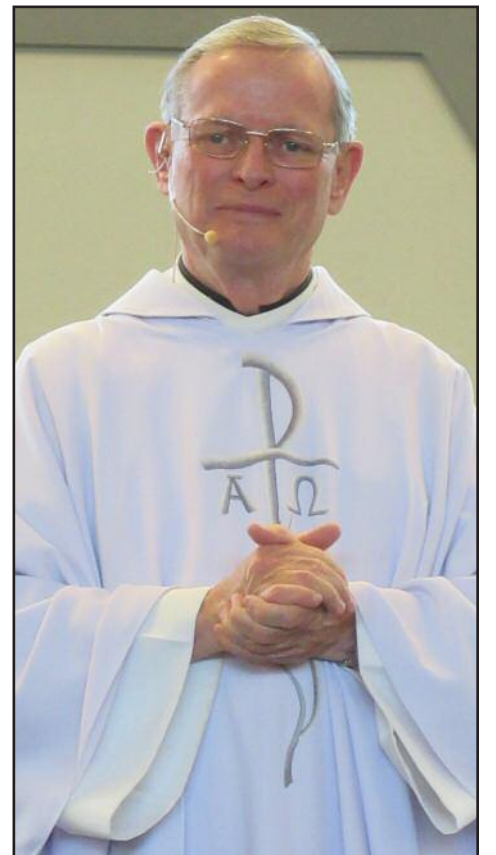
As he himself went on to explain, the threats against his life did not materialize. "This was just one of the little ways in which God has protected, helped and supported me all these years and I am extremely grateful," he said.

April is known for his hospitality, both in Brazil and here in Canada. He always had time and the necessary patience to welcome others. The crowd heard him described as honest, welcoming, courageous and loving, with a sense of humour, and a prayerful spirit. Paquin described him as a great friend and mentor.

In a tribute to his ministry with students at Holy Cross high school between 1969-1972, the choir, under the direction Leanne Hamm, performed two songs – *Take Up Your Cross* and *This is Not the End* – both of which had meaning for the students and resonated with April's anniversary and retirement. Hamm expressed deep thanks to April for all he has done for students at Holy Cross.

During his years of ministry, April also spent a total of 10 years serving in the Humboldt deanery, where he was pastor in Watson, Englefeld, St. Gregor, Lanigan, and Humboldt.

Abbot Peter Novacosky, OSB, offered some words of congratulations and thanks. "Fr. Emile was deeply shaped by the Vatican II vision of the Church," said the abbot. "He led people to a renewed vision of celebrating the liturgy, of empowering the lay people and of working for social justice."



Fr. Emile April started and ended his pastoral ministry as a diocesan priest at St. Philip Neri Parish in Saskatoon. He also served 26 years in the diocese's Brazil Mission. - Photo by Kate O'Gorman

Abbot Novacosky went on to say that, "Fr. Emile is a pastor in the style of Pope Francis. Pope Francis has described the Church as a field hospital and tells us to reach out to people on the peripheries of church and society and I think that describes the role Fr. Emile adopted in his ministry, whether in Brazil or here in this diocese. It isn't easy to be a great pastor in two very different cultures and in two different languages,"

Abbot Novacosky thanked April for spreading what Pope Francis calls "the joy of the Gospel."

Upon his retirement, April plans to return to Brazil for a time to visit friends and subsequently enjoy a year of rest. After that he affirms that Saskatoon will remain his home and he will be available to assist and minister from time to time when needed.

"These have been wonderful years, both in Brazil and in Canada," said April. "I enjoyed the work that I did very much."

Fr. Ron Beechinor, who concelebrated Mass alongside April during the celebration, summed it up best in his homily when he said: "for your ministry and for your fidelity to the priesthood, thank you, thank you, thank you."

Bruno playground named after Fr. Joe Ackerman, OSB

BY JAMES RILEY

A chilly day could not quell the warm appreciation that the town of Bruno holds for Fr. Joe Ackerman, OSB. In a public ceremony Oct. 12, the name of the town's new playground was officially revealed: "Fr. Joe Park" – much to the surprise of 93-year-old Ackerman.

"Victor Granger (chair of the St. Bruno parish council) came and picked me up, saying, 'It's been a while since you've been out and around the town. Let's go see what's new', " said Ackerman.

Stopping at the new playground, Granger suggested that they get out and attend the naming ceremony that was about to take place.

After a brief address by Bruno's Mayor, Dale Glessman, and words of congratulations from MP Kelly Block on the completion of Bruno's "Canada 150" project, the sign bearing the new park's name was unveiled. Fr. Pius Schroh, current pastor of St. Bruno Parish, and Fr. Ackerman then blessed the park.

"I was completely dumbfounded. My



The name chosen for a new park in Bruno, SK – suggested by Éowyn Riley (right) – honours the contributions of long-time parish priest Fr. Joe Ackerman, OSB (seated). - Photo by James Riley

mouth was opened wide enough to drive a tractor in," said Ackerman when asked about seeing the park's name. "I was surprised, surprised, surprised. There are

so many people that have spent their whole lives here in Bruno, and I've only been in Bruno for 19 years."

Ackerman served as Pastor of St. Bruno

parish from 1998 until retiring last year. Throughout his time in Bruno, he was always involved in community activities and gatherings, whether they were at the church, school, rink, community hall, or elsewhere.

"This will be a great remembrance of who Fr. Joe is and what he has all done for our town. He gathered everyone, no matter who you were, to be a part of everything. Especially the little ones," said Bruno resident Michele Hoppe.

The name for the new playground was the suggestion of 13-year-old Éowyn Riley, who submitted the name as a part of a summer "name the park" contest held by the town. She didn't know that her name suggestion had been selected until she was called from the crowd by Mayor Glessman to unveil the sign.

"When I think of Bruno, that's who I think of," said Éowyn Riley. "Fr. Joe is a very fun-loving guy, and always wants other people to enjoy themselves, so I felt that naming a community park after him would be a good choice."

Ordination of two priests celebrated in diocese of Saskatoon

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Years of discernment and journeying in faith culminated for two men on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, as the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon joyfully celebrated the priestly ordination of Fr. Michael Yaremko and Fr. Edward Gibney.

With the diocese of Saskatoon still waiting for the appointment of a bishop at that time, Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen returned to Saskatoon for the ordination held June 29, 2017 at Holy Family Cathedral.

“It has been a privilege to play a part in your respective journeys to the priesthood,” Bolen told Yaremko and Gibney, thanking Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee for the invitation to preside at the celebration.

Archbishop Murray Chatlain of Keewatin-Le Pas, Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon, Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB, of St. Peter’s Abbey in Muenster, and some 65 priests joined Bolen in blessing Yaremko and Gibney in the presence of family, friends, and the diocesan and parish representatives who filled the cathedral for the evening celebration.

Fr. Colin Roy, who along with Fr. Daniel Yasinski, serves as a diocesan Vocations Director, presented the candidates for priesthood, while rectors of the seminaries where each man studied provided testimony on behalf of the candidates.

Fr. Stephen Hero described how Yaremko came to St. Joseph Seminary in Edmonton with training as a teacher and some five years of formation with the Legionaries of Christ before discerning a call to serve as a diocesan priest. “His years of previous formation had certainly helped to form a missionary heart in this mature young man, and he brought gifts of discipline and joy, prayer and charity to our community,” said Hero.

“Michael completed his Master of Divinity degree this year in Edmonton, and his ministry at the seminary and at



Fr. Michael Yaremko and Fr. Edward Gibney (l-r) were ordained as priests for the diocese of Saskatoon in June 2017.
- Photo by Tim Yaworski

St. John the Evangelist parish in Edmonton again showed the maturity of this missionary disciple of Christ and his readiness to shepherd, teach and sanctify the people of God as a priest, after the heart of Jesus Christ.”

Canon Philip Gillespie of Pontifical Beda College in Rome sent a letter in support of Gibney, read by Fr. Colin Roy. “As Ed comes to the end of his four years at the Beda College, we thank him most sincerely for the warm and generous way in which he has engaged with and enriched the life of the college... we believe that good foundations have been laid and he has shown ample evidence of the talents and the priestly heart necessary for ministry within the diocese,” wrote Gillespie.

“We rely on the help of the Lord God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, and we choose these men, our brothers, for priesthood in the presbyteral order,” announced Bolen following the testimonies, with the assembly responding “Thanks be to God,” followed by a round of applause.

In his homily, Bolen reflected on God as the potter who forms and sculpts our lives – just as he formed and sculpted the lives of St. Peter and St. Paul.

God has been intimately at work shaping Yaremko and Gibney, Bolen added, using imagery that particularly resonated with Gibney’s background as an artist and sculptor. “This is your story too – God the potter, God the sculptor, doing the work that only God can do,” the archbishop said.

Bolen described how, when he arrived as bishop of Saskatoon in 2010, Gibney was the State Deputy for the Knights of Columbus. When Gibney mentioned in passing that he might consider the seminary after his term was finished, Bolen “remembered that word” and reminded Gibney of it later. In a similar way, Ed Gibney’s uncle, Fr. Charles Gibney, had been a mentor to Bolen years ago, “speaking a word” that opened the door to the priesthood for him.

Originally from Yorkton, Yaremko came to the diocese

Vocations and the education of priests and future priests is supported by the



after years of discernment and faith formation, with “gifts that had been growing, that had been tested,” noted Bolen. “When you got in touch with me, your message had been preceded by a couple of others...saying ‘there is a fellow who is going to be coming to you about coming to the diocese of Saskatoon: this is good news’,” Bolen recalled.

Bolen urged Yaremko and Gibney to trust that God will be there to support them, just as God was there for St. Peter and for St. Paul. “Trust God with your own brokenness, your own woundedness. Trust God with your poverty. Let Jesus minister to you there, as he ministered to Paul and to Peter there, and let that be a source of compassion as you respond to others in their woundedness,” said the archbishop.

The rite of ordination continued with Gibney and Yaremko declaring their intention to care for the Lord’s flock, promising to celebrate the mysteries of Christ faithfully, to preach the gospel, and, uniting themselves to Christ, to consecrate their lives to God for the salvation of the people. Both men then pledged obedience to the local “ordinary” or bishop.

As a sign of surrender to God, Gibney and Yaremko lay prostrate upon the floor in front of the altar while the assembly prayed for the intercession of the saints and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The archbishop then conferred ordination by laying his hands upon the head of each man – a gesture repeated by the many priests present at the celebration, as a sign of unity and shared spirit.

After a prayer of consecration by the archbishop, the newly-ordained were vested with the stole (a sign of the priestly office) and the chasuble (the Eucharistic vestment) with Fr. Christopher Dubois assisting Gibney; Fr. Andrew Paulowicz and Fr. Stephen Hero assisting Yaremko.

Each newly-ordained priest then knelt before the archbishop, who anointed their hands with the oil of Sacred Chrism, blessed at the diocesan Chrism Mass in Holy Week.

A chalice and paten were presented to each new priest, with the words: “Know what you are doing and imitate the mystery you celebrate: model your life on the mystery of the Lord’s cross.” Yaremko and Gibney then joined the bishops and priests at the altar to celebrate Eucharist.

The celebration was followed by a reception, with long lines of those wishing to congratulate the new priests and receive their blessings.

The son of Terry and Pamela Yaremko, Fr. Michael Yaremko is presently serving as associate pastor at St. Augustine parish in Humboldt, SK, St. Scholastica parish in Burr, SK, Holy Trinity parish in Pilger, SK, and Assumption of Our Lady parish in Marysburg, SK.

Born in Canora, SK, Fr. Ed Gibney is the son of the late Hubert and Adeline Gibney. He is presently serving as pastor of St. Gabriel the Archangel parish in Biggar, SK and Our Lady of Fatima parish in Landis, SK.



Priests arrive in diocese

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon recently welcomed two missionary priests from Africa who will be living and serving in the diocese of Saskatoon. Fr. Dominic Andoh of Ghana (left) and Fr. Richmond Diala of Nigeria (right) recently spent time at the Catholic Pastoral Centre for orientation with Patrick Clarke of Human Resources (centre). Clarke went through “on boarding” materials developed for those who are new to the diocese. Fr. Richmond also participated in a four-week orientation to Canada offered at Newman Theological College in Edmonton – he will be providing hospital chaplaincy at St. Paul’s Hospital. Fr. Dominic will be living and serving at St. Paul’s Co-Cathedral.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski



Priestly Ordination in the Eparchy of Saskatoon

Clergy, religious and family members gathered for the presbyteral ordination of Fr. Warren Dungen by Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR, July 20 at the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of St. George in Saskatoon. Dungen started his career in Youth Ministry in Calgary and married Lori Lou Michalchuk. Dungen then served as Director of Youth Ministry at the Archdiocese of Mobile, Alabama; as Steubenville South Coordinator in the Diocese of Alexandria, Louisiana; and in the Diocese of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. The Dungen family began the transfer process into the Ukrainian Catholic Church in 2010 while they were in Prince Albert. Dungen completed his studies at Holy Spirit Seminary in Ottawa, Ontario. He was ordained to the Diaconate for the Eparchy of Saskatoon by Bishop Bayda in January 2017 in Ottawa. Fr. Warren Dungen, his wife Lori Lou, and their four sons, Peter, Andrew, James and John, continue their journey in the Kamsack/Norquay district of the Eparchy of Saskatoon as of August 2017.

- Photo by Teresa Bodnar-Hiebert



Syro-Malabar Catholic community welcomes pastor

Fr. Plogen Antony (left) recently arrived to serve as pastor to the Syro-Malabar Catholic community in Saskatoon, appointed by Bishop Jose Kalluvilil, Apostolic Exarchate, Canada (centre). Diocesan Administrator Rev. Kevin McGee welcomed the new priest and his bishop at a recent celebration at St. Augustine Parish in Saskatoon. The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church is one of the 22 Eastern (Oriental) Catholic Churches in full communion with Rome. It is the second largest Eastern Catholic Church after the Ukrainian Catholic Church and the largest of the Saint Thomas Christian (Nazrani) denominations with some 4.6 million members. Before Fr. Antony’s arrival, the Syro-Malabar community was served on a part-time basis by the Vincentian priests currently in the diocese of Saskatoon, Fr. Joseph Thazhathemuriyil, VC, Fr. Binu Rathappillil, VC, and Fr. George Chatholil, VC.

- Photo submitted by Fr. Kevin McGee

Our Lady of Sion Academy reunion honours Sisters of Sion

BY ELEANOR PULLES KENNEDY
(CLASS OF 1964)

Fifty years after the doors of Our Lady of Sion Academy closed in 1967, more than 300 former students and teachers gathered in Saskatoon on the Labour Day weekend, to honour the Sisters of Sion for their huge contribution to Catholic education in Saskatoon.

The Sisters of Sion arrived in Saskatoon in 1917 and took up residence in a large white house that stood approximately where Avord Tower stands today on Spadina Crescent. They named the house Rosary Hall, the first of three residences to bear that name.

By 1919, the sisters acceded to a request to open a boarding school for girls, and after obtaining title to the beautiful Drinkle property on Avenue A North, they opened Sion Academy Sept. 9, 1919 with 30 students. In 1967, two years after provincial funding was granted to Catholic high schools, Sion Academy closed.

By 6:30 p.m. Friday night, Sept. 1, the first reunion arrivals started streaming through the doors of the Cathedral of the Holy Family for a meet and greet event. There were many cries of recognition among old classmates, hugs to establish re-connection, and peels of laughter, as attendees checked out the school photos printed on each others' name tags.

The Spirit of Sion permeated the room. An 80-foot Wall of Memories was created with life stories, obituaries, photos and memorabilia.

Saturday afternoon Sept. 2 was reserved for reminiscing in smaller



Sr. Kay McDonald, NDS, was one of the former teachers in attendance.

groups, and many attendees brought yearbooks, photos and clothing to show and share. After more conversation over coffee and tea, the afternoon ended with a reflection facilitated by Sr. Elizabeth Losinski, NDS, and concluded with a rousing school cheer.

Alumnae and teachers streamed into Bishop LeGat Hall for a Gala Banquet that evening. Each of the Sisters of Sion was introduced, greeted with applause and expressions of goodwill extended by the entire gathering.

Tributes were offered by Inge Andreen, who attended Sion as an elementary student in the 1940s, and Margot Brunelle Urff, a boarder in the final years of the school.

"What an honour – to have the opportunity to thank and acknowledge the Sisters of Sion for caring for my sister Peggy, and myself," said Andreen. "My father had died at age 34 and my mother



Sisters of Sion stand next to an 80-foot Wall of Memories on display during a gala reunion for Our Lady of Sion Academy in Saskatoon, held to mark the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Sisters of Sion in Saskatoon.

- Photos by Nina Henry

was in the local TB Sanitarium. We were basically orphans with nowhere to live. My mother was terrified and her only hope was for us to be boarders at the convent, even though we were not Catholics," she related.

"As she was sitting in the parlour on her day pass from the San, she watched the Mother Superior sweeping down the hall, with many children attached to her habit, everyone laughing. Her worries disappeared."

Urff described life in the dorm from 1962 to 1965. There were many chuckles from the gathered alumnae as she talked about lining up to use the only telephone, the compulsory study halls, and the communal mealtimes. "The nuns really tried hard to create a homey, caring atmosphere and to be our 'pseudo-parents'."

Sr. Jocelyn Monette, NDS, and Sr. Margaret Zdunich, NDS, gave a short presentation about "Sion in the World Today." The evening ended with a tearful singing of the school song *Rise for our Alma Mater*.

Holy Family Parish embraced the reunion group at their 11:30 a.m. Mass Sept. 3, with a special blessing. In his homily, Fr. David Tumbach noted the kindness of the sisters, describing how he was the recipient of many breakfasts at the Acadia Drive Convent as a seminarian.

Two well-loved teachers of the Academy, Sr. Kay McDonald, NDS, and Sr. Donna Purdy, NDS, joined the celebration on Sept. 3. Purdy offered a wish to all "for a full life," and McDonald addressed the room for a few minutes as well.



A gala reunion for former students and teachers of Our Lady of Sion Academy was held Sept. 1-3 in Saskatoon. The organizing committee dressed in the school uniform (back, l-r): Dorothy Loran Fortier, Elaine Leier Zakreski, Jeanne Stroeder Manegre, Sharon Cooper Murza; (front, l-r): Donna Wraith Darbellay, Eleanor Pulles Kennedy, Terry Chrusch Miley.

Sr. Pauline Greenizan, NDS, gave thanks to the gathering on behalf of the Congregation of Sion.

"The sisters are very proud of all the Alumnae, because they have gone beyond their ordinary tasks to take on leadership roles, using their talents and gifts to change the world," said Greenizan. "Many have raised families and are now finding joy in their children, grandchildren and even great grandchildren."

Organizers of the reunion have received many messages of thanks from those in attendance.

"It brought us together as a united sisterhood and not just the few ladies from our class year," said Sharon Cooper Murza of the Class of 1966.

"My sister has been ill for over 10 years, chiefly with memory issues," said Elaine Leier Zakreski, Class of 1960. "All weekend

people kept telling me how sorry they were that she had to go through this trial. They told me about all the great memories they have of her, stories about how well-loved she was, how pretty and vibrant she was – they hugged me and consoled me and brought my sister back to me. I didn't expect that from this reunion."

Pauline Bublish Perpick, Class of 1953, told organizers that the reunion "will always be a warm and special memory."

Terry Chrusch Miley, Class of 1966, noted that the reunion brought together sisters, teachers and students from all years, and from across Canada and the United States.

"Renewing old friendships and memories made for a truly spectacular weekend, one that will forever be remembered," she said.



Sr. Donna Purdy, NDS, greets Connie Kurtenbach Brassard at the reunion.



Bishop Emeritus' 80th birthday

Fr. Kevin McGee (left) and Abbot Peter (right) watch as Bishop Gerald Wiesner, OMI, prepares to blow out the candles at his 80th birthday celebration held at Queen's House in Saskatoon. Born June 25, 1937 and raised on a farm near Denzil, SK, Wiesner made his perpetual vows as a Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate in 1959 and was ordained Feb. 23, 1963. Over the years he has taught, preached, pastored and led in many capacities, including as the bishop of the diocese of Prince George, BC, from 1993 until his retirement in 2013. He presently lives at Trinity Manor in Stonebridge, Saskatoon.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski



Celebration for Fr. Ripplinger

Retired priest Fr. Steve Ripplinger (left) celebrated his 93 birthday in March with parishioners and pastor Fr. Madonna Godwin Aghedo, OP, at Holy Redeemer Parish in Elbow, SK.

- Submitted photo

Brother Benedict professes solemn vows as Benedictine monk

By Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB

“Since Brother Benedict is a musician, I think he wanted to provide a prelude to today’s celebration. And we had that prelude last night, orchestrated by God. What a sound and light show we had,” Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB said, in his address, July 11, during a celebration to mark the solemn vows of Brother Benedict van Ginkel, OSB. A thunderstorm the previous night lit up the sky and brought welcome rain after weeks of hot, dry weather.

The day was also special for Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, who made his own solemn profession 60 years earlier: he renewed his profession of vows at the July 11 celebration (*see article, below*).

“It struck me that when we look back in history, St. Benedict would have been about the same age as Brother Benedict is now when he wrote his Rule at Monte Cassino. We know from the document itself that two major sources guided his Rule. The first was the Bible, and the second was his own experience of living as a hermit and then living in community,” Novecosky said at the celebration held at Sts. Peter and Paul Church at St. Peter’s Abbey, Muenster.

St. Benedict followed the same practise as St. John XXIII did when he served as pope: “See everything, overlook a great deal and correct a little.”

Pope Gregory the Great wrote that St. Benedict saw much around him. He went to Rome as a young man to study and became disgusted by the violence and immorality. St. Benedict sought refuge in a cave in Subiaco and then went to Monte Cassino



Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB, congratulated Brother Benedict van Ginkel, OSB, (left), on his solemn vows, July 11 at St. Peter’s Abbey, and Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, on his 60th year of profession as a Benedictine monk of St. Peter’s Abbey, Muenster. - Photo by Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB

where he wrote his famous Rule, a guide that changed the course of history in Europe.

St. Benedict overlooked many things that happened around him. He lived among many personalities in his community and he adjusted for them, noted Novecosky. St. Benedict said the abbot should arrange everything to allow the strong to have something to yearn for, and the weak to be free from having to leave.

Commenting on the readings, Novecosky said St. Paul illustrated the wisdom of the Rule when he spoke of letting love be genuine. Love, above all, overlooks what’s on the surface and sees

the deeper reality of each person. St. Paul spoke of rejoicing in hope, being patient in suffering, persevering in prayer and extending hospitality to strangers.

The central vow of St. Benedict is “conversion of life,” said Novecosky. People may begin a vocation with a lot of enthusiasm and then find life tedious and boring. Conversion is difficult because it begins with a new vision and new possibilities.

“Brother Benedict, we ask you today to consider well the covenant you are about to enter with the Lord. Angels are present here taking note of it, and you will have to give an account of it at the coming of our Lord

Jesus Christ. I set before you today a way of life, which images that of the Lord himself. To embrace it, you must leave all else aside. Yet this very renunciation, which is evidence of dying to ourselves, at the same time, proclaims the victory of Christ’s cross.”

Van Ginkel, 55, was born in Winnipeg and named Peter by his parents August and Josephine Van Ginkel. He has one brother and three sisters.

In 1983, he began teaching piano lessons after earning his Grade 10 in piano. In 1987, van Ginkel earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English and Psychology at the University of Manitoba. In 1993, he earned his Bachelor of Music in Music Education at the University of Saskatchewan. He received his Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Toronto as a piano teacher. He taught English to junior and high school students in Winnipeg for three years and classroom music for 19 years. In 2012, he received a diploma for teaching French immersion. He taught French for eight years, while also teaching music.

“Mom has always encouraged me to keep praying and search for peace in life. I have many role models, including saints, who have inspired me in my teaching,” van Ginkel said. Among them are St. Benedict and St. Scholastica. In 2014, van Ginkel was professed as a monk at St. Peter’s Abbey where he chose the name Benedict.

He serves as the abbey organist, accounts payable clerk in the business office and assistant in the library. He is presently studying to be a library technician.

What inspired DeMong to join religious life? And how did he persevere?

By Paul Paproski, OSB

Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, a Benedictine monk of St. Peter’s Abbey for 60 years, renewed his vows July 11, at the same celebration when Brother Benedict van Ginkel, OSB, took his solemn vows to begin his first year as a solemnly professed monk.

“I would have to begin with my parents who worked hard to be faithful, and faith-filled,” DeMong commented when asked who inspired him to become a Benedictine of St. Peter’s Abbey. “Pastors, too, like Fr. George Brodner, OSB, and Fr. Alphonse Ludwig, OSB, were models for me.”

He continued: “I would have to say that all people who have come to the abbey, even those who left after a period of monasticism, have inspired me.”

Shortly after joining St. Peter’s Abbey, DeMong was sent to St. John’s Abbey, Minnesota to enroll in the formation (novitiate) program where he received instruction in monastic life. He was the only novice at St. Peter’s Abbey. He returned to the abbey at Muenster to make his first vows on July 11, 1957. Three years later, he celebrated his final solemn vows on July 11, 1960.

The meaning of the ceremony’s prayers of dying to the

world was deepened when he learned that a cousin, had died from spinal meningitis. DeMong wrote on a slip of paper, ‘To God, David and Lawrence’ and placed the paper in a pocket of his monastic habit. The prayer was later sent to the bereaved parents, his Uncle Matt and Aunt Viola DeMong.

DeMong read his vows and then acted on them in a dramatic way by lying on the sanctuary floor. A black funeral pall was draped over him and it was framed by six wooden candlesticks. Candles glowed as the Litany of the Saints was prayed.

The vocation to monastic life was challenged during the turbulent years of the 1960s when religious communities went through changes inspired by Vatican II. Many religious left and some who exited St. Peter’s Abbey were DeMong’s close friends.

The biggest challenges were embracing issues that “went against the grain,” he said. He often faced disappointments, but he said that the frustrations taught him more about obedience than lectures, books or even the witness of other monks.

In 1963, DeMong was ordained to the priesthood. The following year, he attended Laval University, Montreal, for a master’s degree in French, finishing his studies early. The next stage of the program was teaching French at St. Peter’s College. However, due to a miscommunication, someone else was assigned. Abbot Jerome Weber, OSB, told DeMong to return to Laval

University and continue in the Master’s Program.

“I got on to the train to Quebec City, a very unhappy and angry monk. All the while, I did have one tiny light of hope. I had remembered a sign on campus with an arrow and the word ‘catechèse’. So the first thing I did after arriving, with no student residence reservation, was to register both with catechetics and the two-year program in French.” He studied both French and catechetics after being informed by Fr. Vincent Morrison, college principal, that catechetics would count for education class credits.

“Amazingly, that year so changed my life and so transformed my thinking that I had to admit that every subsequent year began to be the best year of my life,” admitted DeMong. “And all because I reluctantly obeyed my superiors and ended up allowing someone else, like with poor St. Peter, to put a belt around me and lead me where I would rather not have gone.”

In 1982, DeMong answered a call to help at the national office of religious education “in spite of all the negative feelings, and a repeated dream of walking into the mouth of a lion.” In 1998, he was asked to leave his role as pastor at St. Augustine parish in Humboldt to replace Fr. Emile April in União dos Palmares, Brazil, for a sabbatical year.

“Initially I accepted with no problem, but as it drew nearer I began feeling really negative and, when the final week came, the gospel contained the precise reading about St. Peter. Because I

confessed to the congregation what I was going through, the parish actually gave me a belt with that text reference printed inside,” said DeMong.

“In effect, I fully expected to not make it home alive. And that year did have some high drama, including the escape from a 2.5-metre coconut branch falling exactly where I had been standing a split second before.” DeMong feared for his safety after raising the ire of the landowners by defending the “landless”. He wrote up a “last will and testament” in case he was killed.

Reflecting on the past 60 years, DeMong said the use of the vernacular, rather than Latin, in the divine office (monastic prayers) has been very positive for monastic life. He was happy when ‘lay brothers’ were permitted to pray divine office with the priests, make solemn vows, and join the monastic chapter (solemnly-professed monks) for decision-making.

After Vatican II, the monks learned about the ancient formula, *ecclesia semper reformanda* (the church must always be in a process of reform and change) he noted. The monk is on a path of *conversatio morum* (constant conversion) as he learns obedience and discipline.

The words discipline and disciple are interlinked, he remarked. A disciple is open to be transformed into the image of Jesus, as he lives for others.

“Monastic communities could really be attractive places if we all lived these vows to the full,” he said.



Ordination anniversaries marked

At the 2017 Chrism Mass banquet, Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee (right) presented papal blessings to a number of priests celebrating significant anniversaries, including Fr. Joseph Jacek, OMI, (left) and Fr. Emile April (centre), who in 2017 both celebrated the 50th anniversary of ordination to the priesthood. Priests celebrating their 60th year of ordination this year included Fr. James Kendziorski and Fr. George Gruber, OMI. Fr. André Poilièvre celebrated his 55th anniversary of ordination in June, as did Fr. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB, before his death from cancer on Oct. 9, 2017.

- Photo by Kiply Yaworski

Fr. Lawrence DeMong initiates garden project for poor

By Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB

Whenever Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, visits St. Peter's Abbey during the summer months from his northern parishes, he changes into work clothes and disappears into his abbey garden, a special project for the needy in northern Saskatchewan.

"I was acutely aware how Canada's northerners have been paying outrageous prices for vegetables," DeMong said.

"So when I was appointed pastor of Southend and La Ronge, especially since it was seeding time, I felt strongly that I should add some garden at the abbey to help support those I would be called on to nourish in more spiritual ways as well."

Friend Jim Ternier provided DeMong with advice and help in planting his first garden in 2016. Ternier is a professional gardener and grows vegetables for the abbey in exchange for using abbey land for his own garden.

Archbishop Murray Chatlain, of the diocese of Keewatin-Le Pas,



Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, an avid gardener, this summer raised vegetables for the poor near his parishes in northern Saskatchewan.
- Photo by Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB

supports DeMong's gardening project, informing him that the federal government is promoting gardening initiatives in the North.

The first garden plot at the abbey was planted in 2016 with help from Ternier and some Benedictines.

A special collection in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon on January 28, 2018 for *"The Needs of the Canadian Church: Focus on the North"*, will include raising funds to support ministry in the North, such as funding Fr. Lawrence DeMong's ministry at two parishes in the Archdiocese of Keewatin Le-Pas, and other ministry priorities of Archbishop Murray Chatlain.

"That success, along with getting to know people in health care at Southend who were able to distribute this food to those who truly needed it, encouraged me to continue the project in 2017," said DeMong. "But getting to know Isabelle Doran, a First Nations person and friend of St. Peter's College, who was recognized by her Prince Albert community as a leader in caring for people in need, encouraged me to add considerably to the size of the project," said DeMong.

The 2017 garden became covered in weeds after commitments in the north prevented DeMong from returning to the abbey. He had asked a friend

for some help in weeding, but that fell through due to illness. The garden looked as if it had become a failure and should be plowed under.

"Weeds that were belly-button high were soon, with our excellent growing conditions, up to my eyeballs," DeMong said. He returned to the abbey in July and spent many hours reclaiming his vegetables.

"Sadly, we had to plow down a good portion of the carrots. Our present garden is mainly carrots, beets, parsnips, broad beans and squash. The garden measures 48 feet by 234 feet. For a guy who turned 80 on August 29, I have rarely worked so hard."

Lay men and women make commitment as Oblates of St. Peter's Benedictine Abbey

Submitted by St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster

The Oblates of St. Peter's Abbey are a blessing to the Benedictines, and their presence, prayers and support have always been greatly appreciated, according to Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB, Oblate director.

Oblates of Saint Benedict are lay Christian men and women who associate themselves with a Benedictine religious community to strengthen their baptism and enrich their Christian way of life. Oblates do not take vows or live in a monastery. They make promises to live the Rule of St. Benedict, which immerses them in the gospel. People of all Christian backgrounds may become Oblates. New members are always welcome.

Paproski has been Oblate director since 2010. Many of the Oblates have said that they are pleased to know the monks are praying for them, he reports. Some Oblates enjoy visiting the abbey and helping with work, whether in gardening, lawn or courtyard maintenance.

Others have volunteered with mailing out Oblate and abbey newsletters and looking after the Oblate library.

The financial support of Oblates has been used to fund a handicap lift, new windows and a new heating system for the abbey.

One Oblate donated haskap plants which are used to grow haskap that is made into jam.

Another used her expertise in monastic prayer and computers to simplify the monastic prayer books. She assists the Oblate director in managing the Oblate files and records.

"All the volunteer work means so much to our community of 15, which isn't able to keep up to the

demands it once did with many more members," notes Paproski.

There are presently 75 Benedictine Oblates attached to St. Peter's Abbey who live primarily in Saskatchewan. The remainder reside in communities across Canada. There is one Oblate of St. Peter's Abbey who lives in the United States.

Oblates are invited to meet three times a year at the abbey on Oblate Day, which is held on a Saturday.

The gatherings give the Oblates the opportunity to celebrate Lauds (morning praise), Mass and Vespers (evening prayer) with the Benedictines and socialize with them at dinner. Meetings are held in the afternoon, when everyone is invited to listen to one or two guest-speakers. The topics are always about an aspect of the Rule of St. Benedict. Newsletters are also regularly sent to the Oblates.

Oblates are invited to attend special liturgies at St. Peter's Abbey on the feasts of St. Benedict and other special

occasions. Even if they many not be able to participate in gatherings at St. Peter's Abbey, Oblates are always welcome to become involved in monastic life, indirectly, through their apostolic witness at home and work.

The word Oblate comes from the Latin *offero* (to offer). Families once offered their sons and daughters to monasteries and convents for religious education and vocational training. These children were called Oblates. Adults eventually expressed the desire to live the spirituality of the Rule of St. Benedict outside monasteries. They, too, became Oblates as adults in their own homes and communities.

An Oblate may support a monastic community through public witness, prayer, volunteer work or financial contributions.

Oblates, like Benedictine monks, seek a balance of prayer and work in their lives.

They strive to live by the Benedictine motto: *Ora et Labora* – Prayer and Work. They follow



Benedictine Oblate Annette Zawada of St. Gregor, SK, shows a bird feeder she donated to the St. Peter's Abbey court yard. A generous volunteer at the abbey, one of her projects is helping keep the court yard looking neat and trim.
- Photo by Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB

the Benedictine motto: *Ut In Omnibus Glorificetur Deus* - that in all things may God be glorified (1 Peter 4:11).

For more information about

becoming an Oblate, please contact Fr. Paul Paproski at St. Peter's Abbey in Muenster at (306) 682-1777 or by e-mail to paulpaproski@hotmail.com



Mount Carmel Pilgrimage
Abbot Peter Novacosky, OSB, blesses the fields July 16 during the annual pilgrimage to the Mount Carmel Shrine.
- Photo by Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB



Diocesan Study Days

Randal Rauser, a Baptist scholar from Edmonton, was the speaker at an annual Study Days session for leaders in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon Oct. 11-12, 2017. Rauser explored "Five Great Pillars of Christianity" which he said can open up a dialogue between Roman Catholics and Baptists, namely: the Trinity, sin, the Incarnation, atonement, and the Resurrection. Rauser supports people asking difficult questions of their church and of their faith. "It is people who ask hard questions who force us as Christians to expand our thinking and understanding of God," he said. For the complete news article about Rauser's Study Days presentation see the news section of the diocesan website: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news
- Photo by Blake Sittler

Building expansion opens at St. Thomas More College:

STM president emphasizes need for Catholic higher education

By KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The mission of St. Thomas More College (STM) will be enhanced and strengthened by a recently-completed renovation project on the north side of the building, according to leaders speaking at an official grand opening Sept. 15 in Saskatoon.

The \$5-million renewal and expansion at the federated Catholic college on the University of Saskatchewan campus includes major additions and renewal to STM's research library; increased energy efficiency and sustainability; an expansion of the popular Choices cafeteria; installation of an elevator to ensure accessibility to all levels of STM's building, as well as new student-centred space, including a bright and comfortable lounge and a student services hub.

The ground breaking for the North Building Renewal Project was held in May 2016, with the work completed as students arrived this September. The new development is on the opposite side of the STM campus from the major building addition that was completed in 2013.

STM President Dr. Terry Downey said the grand opening offered a chance to both appreciate the past and recommit to the future. "My colleagues and I commit to uphold and enhance all that has been entrusted to us by our illustrious predecessors," he said.

"We do so at the outset by acknowledging that however proud we are of this handsome new facility, what really matters is what happens in these buildings, day in and day out. We mark this historic occasion by recommitting



Speaking in a bright new student space, St. Thomas More College President Dr. Terry Downey stressed the importance of the Catholic intellectual tradition. The Catholic college's North Building Renewal Project was officially opened Sept. 15 on the University of Saskatchewan Campus in Saskatoon. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

ourselves to the Catholic intellectual tradition."

That tradition, which brings faith and reason into rigorous dialogue, is needed now more than ever, Downey said.

"We recall what is at the root of any Catholic institution of higher learning: the belief that each one of us is created in the image and likeness of God – including those who think, look, act, and believe differently than ourselves. As such, we recognize that each person is characterized by an inherent dignity that deserves the utmost respect," he said, stressing the need for civilized discourse in creating a healthy democracy.

"The grounds have shifted under the feet of those who live in western society. Rights have been endangered, great nations have turned inward, starving

refugees have been turned away from wealthy borders and wealthy shores, immigrants and those of certain faiths have been villainized as politicians trade on people's fears, ignorance and prejudice. Our own society has by no means been immune," he said.

"There has never been a greater need for an informed citizenry."

A free and vibrant society requires citizens who have been taught to wrestle with questions of justice, ethical behaviour and the obligations of citizens, Downey continued.

"The Catholic intellectual tradition, (under) which we operate here, makes such conversations possible, thereby enabling our graduates to be informed and courageous participants in the increasingly complex policy deliberations that an uncertain world and a vigorous democracy demand."

This process of learning and vigorous debate will be enhanced by the improved facilities, several other speakers also noted. "This is another example of how STM truly is offering more," said Ashley Smith, chair of the college's board of governors.

"The design of the student space reflects the college's commitment to students and the community," added fourth-year

student Brent Kobes, a member of the STM student union. "It is keeping students at the centre of our college."

The addition enhances student access to the unique collections in STM's library, while also providing additional research and study space. The renovation has also improved energy efficiency and accessibility in the building, speakers noted.

A 50-year-old air handling unit, cold winter drafts and lack of an elevator to serve all floors, had previously posed mounting challenges for the college.

"We knew that to increase our energy efficiency and solve environmental challenges we needed to replace the aging air handling unit and construct a new north entrance foyer," said Derrin Raffey, CFO and Director of Administration, in a media release about the project.

"Building an elevator to serve all floors of the college and provide access for all persons, has also been a long-time goal."

Recognized as a Canada 150 initiative, the North Building Renewal Project grand opening included messages of congratulations and support from special guests Lyndon Linklater of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner; Kevin Doherty, provincial minister of advanced education; U of S President Peter

Stoicheff; and Peta Bonham-Smith, Dean of Arts and Science at the U of S.

Lyndon Linklater pointed to the Treaty Plaque on display at the grand opening as a sign of hope and reconciliation.

"The treaty we made was with the newcomers and God our creator," Linklater said. "The treaty we made was to share the land and to live in peace and harmony with each other and work together to build a new country."

Speaking on behalf of the provincial government, Doherty described how collaboration of the college with the university, donors, faculty members, students and both the provincial and the federal levels of government brought about the project.

"This is all for one purpose: to continue to strive to make post secondary education better for students – not just those students who are here today, but those who are here tomorrow," he said.

Navdeep Bains, federal minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development also sent a message, read at the opening celebration.

Founded in 1936 by the Basilians, STM offers some 230 arts and science credit courses in 14 areas of study.

Approximately 4,500 U of S students are enrolled in STM courses.

During the grand opening, University President Peter Stoicheff and U of S Dean of Arts and Science Peta Bonham-Smith both expressed appreciation for the presence of STM on campus.

Stoicheff pointed to STM's leadership in reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, in the humanities and social sciences, and in environmental sustainability – all part of the university's mission and vision.

"I am glad we have such a strong relationship, such a strong partnership," said Stoicheff.

"It is wonderful to have a federated Catholic college on this campus. It is a sign of the diversity of this campus to have such a strong, such a vocal college, that is immersed in a very articulate way in the social justice issues of the day."



Academic Mass at STM

Fr. Ron Griffin, CSB, and Fr. Mark Blom, OMI, (l-r) presided at the Academic Mass at St. Thomas More College Sept. 24, continuing a long-standing tradition of celebrating Michaelmas near the Sept. 29 Feast of St. Michael the Archangel to mark the beginning of the academic year. In his homily, Fr. Ron Griffin, CSB, referenced Pope Francis' 2014 call to educators: "The mission of [educators] is to develop a sense of truth, of what is good and beautiful.... together, these elements enable us to grow and help us to love life.... True education enables us to love life and opens us to the fullness of life."

- Photo by Jacquie Berg



Theology on Tap

Dr. Chris Hrynkow (centre) was the guest speaker at the first Theology on Tap of the season Oct. 4 at Louis' pub on the U of S campus, speaking on "The Season of Creation: Christians Cooperating to Care for Our Common Home." Theology on Tap is an outreach event for young adults over 19, offered as a collaborative effort by St. Thomas More College Campus Ministry and the Youth Ministry offices of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon and the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon.

- Photo submitted

Catholic school boards launch campaign to cover costs of court appeal

BY DERRICK KUNZ, GSCS

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) has joined the other seven Catholic school divisions in the province seeking support to cover the legal costs to appeal the Theodore court-case ruling.

The controversial April 2017 court decision ruled that only Catholic students attending Catholic schools can be funded, and stated a Catholic baptismal certificate would be necessary for students to attend Catholic schools throughout the province. This very narrow and restrictive definition does not reflect the inclusive and ecumenical nature of Catholic education and faith, nor does it consider the diversity of the family in modern society.

The ruling has been appealed by both the Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards Association (SCSBA) and the Government of Saskatchewan.

On Nov. 8, the provincial government introduced legislation invoking the notwithstanding clause of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to give a temporary, five-year reprieve from the ruling. However, a permanent reversal through the

appeals process is still needed.

“We feel strongly that education funding should stay where it belongs, in our classrooms, but at the same time, we need to pursue an appeal of the court decision to ensure Catholic education is an option for all parents who want it,” said SCSBA President Vicky Bonnell in a news release. “So, we are reaching out to our supporters for their help.”

Under the theme “Schools You Can Believe In,” the fundraising campaign, with a goal of \$300,000, will provide what is needed to appeal the decision up to the Supreme Court of Canada should that become necessary. All Catholic school divisions in Saskatchewan are participating and are looking to parents and guardians, families, parishioners, provincial Catholic organizations, clergy and friends of Catholic education for donations.

Diane Boyko, GSCS board of education chair said, “We have much to gain through a successful appeal. Your support will help ensure Catholic education is available to all who choose it, no matter the reason, for future generations.”

Boyko noted that, as Saskatchewan’s largest Catholic School division, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools’ “share” of the provincial initiative would be about \$140,000 (or roughly \$7 per student).

“Our role as Catholic educators goes so far beyond helping parents and guardians equip their children as leaders of tomorrow. We have the responsibility to walk with

students along their faith journey, and help them realize their inherent dignity as children of God and know the hope to which he calls them,” said Boyko.

Donations can be made through Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Foundation. Donations can also be dropped off at your local Catholic school or to donate online, visit <https://foundation.gscs.ca>



A ribbon was cut Oct. 19 to officially open St. Nicholas Catholic School in the Evergreen neighbourhood of Saskatoon – the last of 18 new schools officially opened this year in Saskatchewan as part of a provincial joint-use schools project. Six of those 18 new schools are in the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools division.

- Photos by Derrick Kunz

GSCS community celebrates opening of six new schools

BY DERRICK KUNZ, GSCS

Students and staff in Saskatoon’s Evergreen community joined the provincial Education Minister, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) leaders, and Cathedral of the Holy Family parish representatives to officially open St. Nicholas Catholic School.

It was the 18th and final school to officially open as part of a provincial joint-use schools project. Six of those 18 new schools are in the GSCS division.

The other five new GSCS schools are Holy Trinity Catholic School in Warman, École Holy Mary Catholic School in Martensville, and three other Saskatoon schools: St. Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic

School in Stonebridge neighbourhood, St. Lorenzo Ruiz Catholic School in the Hampton Village neighbourhood, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic School in the Rosewood neighbourhood.

“We’re proud that the people of Saskatoon, and all of Saskatchewan, want Catholic education for their children,” said Diane Boyko, chair of the GSCS school board. “We’re humbled that parents entrust us with the task of educating their children and building faithful disciples of Christ.”

Since 2007, the government of Saskatchewan has committed about \$1.5 billion toward 67 major school capital projects and numerous smaller projects.



Students from Holy Cross and St. Joseph high schools in Saskatoon built altars and crosses for the sacred spaces in six new Catholic schools,

- Submitted photo

Students build altars for new schools

BY DERRICK KUNZ, GSCS

Students at two local Catholic high schools have helped build a legacy of faith for six new elementary schools in the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) division.

New Saskatchewan schools built under a P3 model (public-private-partnership) come well equipped, but some things are not included – such as the items that help make schools distinctively Catholic, including crucifixes and altars for sacred spaces in which school celebrations, liturgies and Masses are held.

Kent Gauthier, principal of the new St. Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic School in Saskatoon’s Stonebridge neighbourhood was tasked with outfitting the new sacred spaces for four new Catholic schools in the city of Saskatoon, as well as one in Warman and one in Martensville.

He brought the request to Laurie Karwacki, chair of the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Foundation, the charitable arm of the GSCS system that funds items outside the mandate of the Ministry of Education. “She suggested that high schools might be able to help fill some of our needs,” Gauthier said.

“Through donations, we are able to provide materials and experiences for students and staff to practice their faith in our schools,” said Karwacki, describing the role of the GSCS Foundation. “We are very excited to be part of this project.”

At Holy Cross, practical and applied arts (formerly known as industrial arts) teachers Ron Blais and King Kwan led teams of Grade 11 students to design and build wooden altars. “I asked my 15 students if they could use their God-given talents for a better cause,” Blais, said.

“Many skills were learned and we came

up with creative solutions to problems as they arose,” added Blais, estimating that each student put in some 45 hours of work. Phil Rapin at St. Joseph led creation of the crucifixes.

“This is about more than saving some money, or teachers and students helping out. This is about building a legacy that everyone can be proud of for many years to come,” Gauthier said.

Holy Cross founding class holds 50th anniversary reunion

BY DELORES MCLEAN

Students and teachers who attended Holy Cross Catholic High School during its inaugural years of 1963-1967 gathered for a 50th anniversary reunion Sept 22-24 in Saskatoon. Events include a social, tour of the school, banquet, Mass, and a ride on the Prairie Lily riverboat.

The reunion of the school’s founding class provided an opportunity to share memories, rekindle friendships and reconnect with other alumni and with teachers.

Those in attendance also remembered classmates who have died, including Kathy Brauner-Bain, Eileen Rush, Henry Leier, Rod Donlevy, and Gary Ulrich.

The school’s first principals – Most Rev. James Mahoney and Lorne Ehman – as well as all other deceased teachers were also remembered.

During the reunion, members of the class of 1967 revisited the halls of Holy Cross High School, which has undergone an amazing transformation since the first three classrooms were borrowed from St. Charles Elementary School in 1963. The school is now a significant complex that includes a new gymnasium, an industrial arts centre, and chapel, as well as other



Ribbon cutting for Holy Trinity Catholic School and Traditions Elementary School was held Sept. 18 in Warman, SK, with representatives of both Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and the Prairie Spirit School Division and of the provincial government on hand to help students and staff cut the ribbon. Holy Trinity is Warman’s first Catholic school.



Members of the Holy Cross Catholic High School founding class (1963-1967) gathered recently for a 50th anniversary reunion; (back, l-r:) Pat Mulligan Korpan, Johnny Horsley, Marilyn Hunter Whitehead, Terry Greenaway Preston, Mary Molloy, Bob McEwen, Ron Klein, Bob Foret, Allen Schaan, Scott Gordon; (middle, l-r): Val Kostyna Davis, Diane Lucyshyn, Judy Creswell Pasitney, Betty Lou Keenan McDonald, Sally Sader Ciepliski, Elsie Betz Merz, Cheryl Lefebvre Stewart; (front, l-r): Jackie Flitchel Fernet, Frances Rush Murphy, Sharon Schneider Hill, Lorraine Plischke Belak, Joanne Horsley Pinder, Marilyne Bandet Yager.

- Submitted photo

features that did not exist 50 years ago, such as computers and a website.

Fellow 1963-67 classmates Robert Enright and Jerry McHale were also among those inducted into the Holy Cross Wall of Honour on the same weekend.

Holy Cross alumni from other years whose photos were also added to the school’s Wall of Honour in September 2017 included: Dr. Tom Hack (1976-80), Trevor Herriot (1972-76), and Keith Martell (1976-80).

Couples renew marriage vows at St. Ann's Home

By ST. ANN'S SENIOR CITIZEN'S VILLAGE

The buzz of excitement was felt by all who walked through the doors of St. Ann's Nursing Home in Saskatoon on Sept. 30, as 14 couples gathered in the chapel for a wedding vow renewal and blessing ceremony, attended by family, friends, St. Ann's residents and staff.

Each of these couples – with at least one or both being residents of St. Ann's Nursing Home – had their turn in the spotlight. Altogether, the group of 14 married couples could boast that in total, they had been together for 848 years.

The longest married of the group, Clifford and Myrtle Swenson, celebrated their 74th anniversary only a few days before.

A bulletin board in the dining room showed each couple on their wedding day, looking young and in love.

The team at St. Ann's worked to ensure that the residents were looking their best and the home was ready for the 70 expected guests. The beautiful ceremony included tears and laughter, kisses and hugs, and memories aplenty.

After the ceremony, a reception was held in the dining room and lounge, with old musical favourites and a little rock and roll provided for dancing.

Couples were photographed by a wedding cake, which guests and residents later enjoyed with coffee and punch.

Families gathered around tables and celebrated their loved ones, just as they would have on a wedding day. Daughters danced with fathers and sons danced with



Iva and Jack Beck (married 54 years) were among 14 couples participating in the celebration at St. Ann's Home Sept. 30.



Couples, staff and residents were dancing at the reception which followed a wedding vow renewal and blessing ceremony Sept. 30 at St. Ann's Home. - Submitted photos

mothers. Staff got on the dance floor with other residents, bringing out smiles that couldn't be matched.

Comments included: "That was exceptional!" "Such an amazing day!" and "I haven't seen Mom and Dad this happy in years!"



Marie and Bud (Preston) Kobussen pose for a photograph by the wedding cake at the St. Ann's Home celebration for 14 couples participating in a wedding vow renewal and blessing ceremony. Marie and Bud were married at St. Mary's Church in Saskatoon 69 years ago.



Rebuilding Catholic Culture

Fr. Geoffrey Young (left) was guest speaker at a Rebuilding Catholic Culture event emceed by Celine Sidloski (right) at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish Aug. 17, 2017 in Saskatoon. In his address, Young said liturgy offers answers to the relativism, skepticism, and cynicism that plagues society today. A priest of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, Young is studying in Rome at the Pontifical Institute for Liturgy at Sant-Anselmo. See the diocesan news page at www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news for an article about Young's presentation. The Rebuilding Catholic Culture group also hosted a conference on Catholic history and apologetics Nov. 24-25, featuring author and teacher Anne Carroll. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski



Papal Blessing for St. Therese Institute

St. Therese staff stand with Archbishop Luigi Bonazzi, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada, as he presented St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission in Bruno, SK with an Apostolic Blessing from Pope Francis, in recognition and celebration of the 10th anniversary of the centre of Catholic formation. In part, the blessing reads: "The Holy Father prays that in imitation of their heavenly patron (St. Thérèse of Lisieux), they may joyfully and humbly follow in her 'little way' along the path that leads to Christ." The Nuncio also brought gifts from Pope Francis for the 36 students at St. Therese, and presided at the May 20 commissioning Mass for the class of 2017. For more information about the nine-month formation program offered at St. Therese, as well as programs and conferences that are open to the public, see: www.sttherese.ca - Photo by Naomi Jalbert

Recently-ordained member of Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter celebrates with local Latin Mass community

By JULIE ABERNETHY

Sacred Heart of Jesus Latin Mass Community in Saskatoon and Fr. Andrew Wychucki welcomed Fr. Adrian Debow and five seminarians from the Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter (FSSP) for an evening Mass June 6, 2017 followed by a short talk and communal gathering.

Debow, originally from Calgary, is a newly ordained priest of the Fraternity, an order dedicated to saying the traditional Latin Mass. After his ordination in May 2017, he made his way across Canada, saying Mass in various parishes as he went. He had previously visited Saskatoon as a seminarian and decided to pay the community a visit, this time as a priest. The evening began with a talk for the youth at the parish, focusing on the meaning of the priesthood, followed by special blessings given by the priest in his first year of priesthood.

The highlight was the High Mass that Debow celebrated as one of his first

masses. One of the seminarians, helped by servers from the Latin Mass Community, assisted at the Mass while three other seminarians sang the ancient liturgy in Gregorian chant.

"One finds it difficult to describe in words the beauty conveyed to all the senses as I was carried along by the humble and venerable actions of Fr. Debow, accompanied by the solemn Gregorian chant of the seminarians," said parishioner Troy Shantz. The feeling was echoed by many of the 140 people in attendance, some of whom had never been to a Latin Mass before.

After Mass, the community gathered in the hall and each seminarian gave a short account of how he had decided to join the priesthood. Some had been faithful Catholics all their lives, while others had grown up with no faith at all.

"It was a great opportunity for our children to see the joy and youth of these men who have dedicated their lives to



Visitors from the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter were in Saskatoon this June. - Submitted photo

serving Christ and his Church," said Shantz.

"It was important for them to see that Christ calls people from various backgrounds to serve him, and that it is important not only to say 'yes' to him, but also to remain faithful to that 'yes'."

The Priestly Fraternity of Saint Peter is an order of priests dedicated to saying the traditional Latin Mass throughout the world. Founded in Switzerland in 1988, the Fraternity now has apostolates in Europe,

Asia, Africa and North America, including seven parishes in Canada.

Debow, one of the 23 Canadian priests, is now stationed in Seattle, Washington.

The Latin Mass is celebrated every Sunday at 9 a.m. at Our Lady of Czestochowa church in Saskatoon, and at various times throughout the week.

For more information about the Latin Mass in Saskatoon, as well as for a weekly list of Mass times, see the website at www.saskatoonlatinmass.com

FacetoFace Ministries: encountering Christ and deepening faith

BY DARLENE POLACHIC

Jon Courchene and the FacetoFace Ministries team encountered some 27,000 Catholic youth last year. Courchene is executive director of FacetoFace, a ministry that reaches out to Catholic youth across Western Canada.

The ministry had its beginnings in 1999 when a parish youth minister, Ken Yasinski, organized a weekend retreat at St. Walburg, SK. The retreat went well and Yasinski was asked to lead similar retreats in other locations. By 2003, he was doing it full-time as FacetoFace Ministries.

Courchene first heard about the organization when his parents urged him to attend a FacetoFace retreat. “I brushed them off,” he says. “But in 2005 I became a parish minister and learned that a FacetoFace retreat was booked for my area. I saw immediately it was a legitimate ministry the Lord was using. I was very impressed with the team that led it, and the retreat which really kick-started our youth group.”

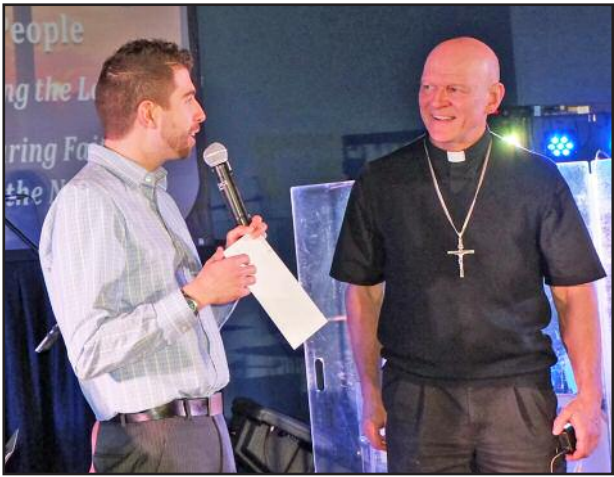
When Courchene returned to Saskatoon in 2007, he began volunteering with FacetoFace while attending the University of Saskatchewan. He became the executive director in the fall of 2012.

The ministry has always been based out of Saskatoon. In 2006, it received registered charity status, and the following year began branching out with more programs.

One popular program is Ignite Summer Camp which is held for a week each



Jonathan Courchene
FacetoFace Executive Director
- Photo by D. Polachic



Jonathan Courchene welcomed Bishop Mark Hagemoen to the FacetoFace United Conference Nov. 19 in Saskatoon.
- Photo by K. Yaworski

summer in Bruno at St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission. About 100 youth come together for the camp that includes three teaching sessions a day, along with large group games and prayer.

“Ignite is a chance for youth to grow in their faith,” Courchene says. “Everything we do goes back to our vision: that all people would encounter Christ and embrace the call to be saints. Our mission is to live and proclaim the fullness of the Catholic faith. How do we facilitate this? God is always reaching out to us, and we have the opportunity to respond. We try to ‘prime the pump,’ so to speak, by getting youth ready for the encounter, then staying out of the way and letting God do the work.”

The three daily sessions involve praise and worship, hearing a testimony from a volunteer team member and teaching from a guest speaker, plus involvement in small groups to discuss and unpack it all.

Courchene says the week also provides

plenty of time for fellowship. “We want youth to connect and grow and see that there’s a bigger church out there than their local community. Often the highlight of the weekend is Eucharistic Adoration which involves sitting in silence with the Lord.”

FacetoFace still holds weekend youth retreats, but one of the biggest aspects of the ministry, and the one that keeps staff busiest, is school retreats. The team does 80-plus school retreats across Western Canada each year for elementary, junior high and high school students.

Often, Courchene says, these are repeat visits. In elementary schools, retreats start with a large group assembly at the beginning of the day, then break into different age-grouped activities, followed by an assembly at the end of the day.

Each year, the ministry chooses a different theme “to get the message across” and gears the talks, games and music to the theme.

FacetoFace also runs a bus trip pilgrimage to the United States each year. Students go to Steubenville, Ohio, to a weekend conference run by the Franciscan University of Steubenville. Some 2,000 Catholic youth gather from near and far to hear top speakers and great bands. They also do mission work in soup kitchens or elsewhere to serve people in need.

The biggest event of the year for FacetoFace is the United Conference which is held in Saskatoon in November. This is a youth conference with an adult track. It draws about 350-400 people.

“The conference is youth-focused, but we had so many parents saying, ‘My kid’s been transformed. How can I get that, too?’ that we’ve opened it to adults,” Courchene says. The Nov. 18-19 United Conference at Holy Family Cathedral in Saskatoon featured keynote speaker Ken Yasinski, founder of FacetoFace, and participation from Bishop Mark Hagemoen – just days before his installation as the eighth bishop of Saskatoon.

Besides four full-time staff, FacetoFace typically employs two summer students to help facilitate the summer program. “Plus, we have a whole bunch of amazing volunteers,” adds Courchene. “An Ignite Camp, for instance, will involve as many as 35 young adults volunteering their time to make a difference in someone else’s life. Most are former campers who want to give back.”

Funding for FacetoFace comes from individuals and a monthly donor base which supplements what isn’t raised through event registration. Courchene says donor giving makes the program affordable for all parishes and schools.

For more info see: www.f2f.ca



Praise and worship was part of a FacetoFace United Conference Nov. 18-19 in Saskatoon.
- Photo by K. Yaworski



Challenge group for girls

Challenge is a Catholic youth ministry program for girls in Grades 2 and up, held weekly at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Saskatoon, pictured here with pastor Fr. Phong Pham. Challenge offers young women an opportunity to grow in knowledge of their Catholic faith and in friendship with Christ, while empowering them to make a difference and have a positive impact on their families and friends, and in the world around them. Challenge and the Conquest youth ministry group for boys are part of the Regnum Christi movement, sharing the spirituality of the Legionaries of Christ. For more information about the Challenge group in the diocese of Saskatoon, contact Corinne Kirkpatrick at corinnegk@sasktel.net or (306) 229-1062.

- Submitted photo



Cana Continues: a family retreat camp

Prayers at the lakeside are part of the annual Ukrainian Catholic camp retreat for families, which focuses on “families evangelizing families” in the context of beautiful Eastern-rite spirituality. Cana Continues! will be held again from Monday to Saturday, Aug. 13-18, 2018 at St. Michael’s Ukrainian Catholic Camp at Madge Lake, in Duck Mountain Provincial Park. This is a unique getaway for parents and their children – a chance for families to come and play, pray, and find adventure in God’s great outdoors, letting go of distractions. Registration opens in January. Find details at www.skeparchy.org/flo/ministries/our-cana-camp or e-mail: ucfamilylifeoffice@sasktel.net or phone the Family Life Office at (306) 653-0138.

- Photo by Teresa Bodnar-Hiebert



Conquest group for boys

Conquest is a Catholic youth ministry program for boys in Grades 3 and up, which meets weekly at Georges Vanier Catholic School in Saskatoon. Conquest offers young men an opportunity to grow in knowledge of their Catholic faith and in friendship with Christ, while empowering them to make a difference and to have a positive impact on their families and friends and in the world around them. Conquest and the Challenge program for girls are part of the Regnum Christi movement, sharing the spirituality of the Legionaries of Christ. For more information about the Conquest boys’ group in Saskatoon, contact Gerald Lashyn at bjlash@sasktel.net or (306) 222-1106.

- Submitted photo

Help provide nutrition and hope by supporting Friendship Inn

When counting blessings, many of us are thankful for full bellies and the warmth of family and friends.

Some of our neighbours depend on the Saskatoon Friendship Inn for that same nourishment, comfort and acceptance, 365 days a year.

Many of us respond with donations to the Friendship Inn during the Christmas giving season. However, children, youth, adults, seniors and families experience hunger year-round.

Help address this ongoing need by becoming monthly donors. This option is convenient and has an ongoing impact, assisting the Friendship Inn to serve up to 1,000 meals a day throughout the year.

To learn more visit the website at: www.friendshipinn.ca or call (306)-242-5122.

As you prepare to enjoy your own Christmas dinner, please remember those who go without healthy food now and throughout the year.



Diocesan CWL Convention

The annual diocesan convention of the Catholic Women's League was held May 1 at the Watrous Civic Centre and at St. Ann's Parish in Watrous, focused on the 2017 CWL theme: "Inspired by the Spirit, women respond to God's call." Speakers included national CWL President Margaret Ann Jacobs, Chris O'Hara of St. Therese Institute in Bruno, Lay Formation grad Connie McGrath and Lay Formation coordinator Mona Goodman. Find more coverage of the convention at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/news - Photo by Kiply Yaworski



At one recent meeting, Holy Family CWL members reflected on history of Indigenous peoples through the blanket exercise. - Submitted photo

CWL council at Holy Family undertakes variety of activities

BY DORIS SMITH, COMMUNICATIONS
HOLY FAMILY CATHEDRAL CWL

The Cathedral of the Holy Family CWL council has been involved in a variety of activities during the past year, thanks to its enthusiastic membership.

Adele House was the recipient of the council's "Purse Project" last Christmas. CWL members collected gently used purses filled with personal items that are always in great need at Interval House for women and children fleeing abusive relationships.

Holy Family CWL council also supports the Pregnancy Option Centre by holding a "Baby Shower" every June to collect much-needed baby articles.

At a recent meeting, CWL members participated in the Blanket Exercise, which offers insights into history from the perspective of Indigenous Peoples. Members stood on blankets which represented the land and walked through pre-contact, treaty making, colonization and resistance, removing blankets (land) as more contact was made, therefore decreasing the lands belonging to the

Indigenous People. It was a powerful and emotional experience.

Holy Family CWL council hosted the Fall Gathering of the Diocesan CWL Council Sept. 18 at the cathedral. It was well attended. The council's annual bake sale and raffle was held Dec. 3. Prizes are donated, and the money raised was donated to the cathedral and to a local charity.

The parish CWL council continues to support many functions that occur at the Cathedral of the Holy Family, such as the FacetoFace United Conference, the parish Vacation Bible Camp, the 100th Anniversary of Fatima, the diocesan Rite of Election, priestly ordinations, and the recent installation of our new bishop.

On Saturday, March 10, 2018, the Cathedral of the Holy Family CWL Council will hold a workshop on the theme "Inspired by the Spirit, Women Respond to God's Call." The morning workshop will be led by diocesan CWL officers followed in the afternoon by a "Celebration of the CWL", presented by honorary and life members. All are welcome to attend.



Pure Witness Ministries

The Pure Witness Ministries missionary team is made up of young Christian men and women who have dedicated time in their lives to share the love of Christ with others. In this year's Revive Retreat, the Pure Witness missionaries take students in schools and parishes through a journey of understanding what it means to allow Jesus to revive their lives. For more information about Pure Witness retreats, please contact James Marcoux at james.marcoux@purewitness.com or (639) 998-1145. Upcoming events include YEP for youth in Grades 8 and up, 10 a.m. to 7p.m. Jan. 13 at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Saskatoon, followed by a Reconnect family dance for all ages at 7 p.m. More information can be found at www.purewitness.com - Submitted by Laura Rice

Mission in Kenya continues to grow

BY MICHELLE PETERS

The Kenya Orphanage Mission: *Jesus Leads Us* continues to grow.

Fr. Modestus Ngwu, OP, a missionary priest who served recently in the diocese of Saskatoon, visited Kenya over Christmas last year to witness the mission's growth. The boarding school has completed a dining hall and kitchen with funds raised this past year. It was a much-needed renovation from the previous tin shack.

The sisters have grown an orchard,

garden, and started to raise cattle, goats, and chickens to help sustain the school.

Ancilla Boarding School and Day Academy is quickly becoming congested with some 350 boarders now attending. The sisters are now eager to expand the dormitory.

Thank you to all who pray and support the mission financially. For more information, contact Michelle Peters at (306) 682-0775 or to donate, visit the website: www.jesusleadsus.com

Saskatoon Diocesan Catholic Women's League presents



**Inspired by the Spirit,
Women Respond to God's Call**
Saturday, Jan. 13, 2018

Hosted by St. Augustine CWL, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Jan. 13
at St. Augustine Parish, 809-10th Street, Humboldt, SK

Morning Workshop — presented by Diocesan CWL officers

Afternoon Celebration of CWL — presented by Honorary and Life members

Please pre-register by calling Bev (306) 682-5906 or Karen (306) 682-3598

Registration deadline: Jan. 8, 2018. (Free will offering for lunch.)

The Saskatoon Diocesan CWL Council is also planning to offer this workshop in other locations in the upcoming months, hosted by local CWL Councils:

Sacred Heart, Davidson, SK. - Feb. 1, 2018 from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Little Flower, Leader, SK. - Feb. 24, 2018 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Holy Family Cathedral, Saskatoon, SK. - March 10, 2018 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Queen's House
retreat & renewal centre

Queen's House is a home of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) Mission and Ministry that serves our diocese, our wide and vibrant faith community locally, across the Prairies and increasingly the North. All are welcome to this shared holy ground where diverse conversations and spiritual reflection can be held in a place of warm and sincere Oblate hospitality. Many expressions of faith and community continue to find a home at Queen's House, where people can share, strengthen 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.

Please also consider engaging in Queen's House ministry in a practical way by supporting fund raising initiatives. Queen's House relies extensively on the support of patrons and donors to sustain its work, and recent economic challenges have made this challenge even more acute. Fundraising events include an annual Gala Dinner (held Nov. 21 this year), a Spring Fling Raffle each May, the Oblate Scramble Golf Tournament in June and an Annual Bike-A-Thon in September. In addition, the continuing capital campaign Kaleidoscope 2 remains active even as we prepare for our new campaign in 2018 following our work with our Oblate Leadership Team regarding the future look of retreat ministry at Queen's House.

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 us all!*

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



Vacation Bible Camp participants at the Cathedral of the Holy Family explored faith, the sacraments and the Word of God during a week of fun this summer. - Photo by Patsy Pohler

Summer program offers faith and fun at Holy Family Cathedral

BY PATSY POHLER, CAMP DIRECTOR

Vacation Bible Camp was held July 10-14, 2017 at the Holy Family Cathedral Parish in Saskatoon, with 88 young campers in attendance for an action-packed week of faith, food and fun. The theme of the camp was “A Wilderness Adventure through the Sacraments – Jesus in My Heart.”

Using Vacation Bible School (VBS) materials produced by Cat.Chat

(<https://catchat.ca>), a Catholic music and resource production company based in Saskatchewan, 28 junior volunteers and 22 senior youth volunteers assisted 10 adult station leaders.

Parish staff and the wider community assisted with many details and logistics that go with presenting the camp, which concluded with a hot dog lunch provided by the Catholic Women's League.

Serena Run for the Family

BY ANNETTE BENTLER

The Serena Run for the Family was held Sept. 9 this year, one week earlier than usual, starting at 10 a.m. rather than 8:30 a.m. These two changes made for a pleasant running temperature.

Families came out for exercise, fun, food, and above all, connecting with other families. Memorable moments included watching two families cheer on a grandmother as she burst to the finish line, the joy as two young runners discovered they were wearing matching outfits and almost the same number, and Fr. Michael Yaremko's attendance at the run, including giving the runners a blessing.

Prizes were presented to Jerome Montpetit (gold, 18:55), Fr. Michael Yaremko (silver, 20:34), and Stacey Corrigan (bronze, 23:17) for the five-kilometre race.

Prizes also went to Luc Montpetit (gold, 13:59), Nicholas Levesque (silver, 16:27) and Patrick Levesque (bronze, 16:52) for the three-kilometre race.

And finally, prizes were given to Vanessa Montpetit (gold, 4:46), William Corrigan (silver, 5:40), and James Redl (bronze, 5:41) for the one-kilometre race.

The gold prize for most pledges went to Paul and Rachelle Bentler, who raised \$1400.25. Prizes were also given to those who registered first, and there were also a number of prize draws.



Two young participants in the Serena Run for the Family Sept. 9 were delighted to discover they were “twins,” wearing matching outfits, and with almost the same number.

- Photo by Annette Bentler

For more information about the family run or about Serena and natural family planning, e-mail: sask@serena.ca or visit “Serena Saskatchewan” on Facebook.



Fr. Ralph Kleiter of Ministry to Tourism (right) recently met Fr. Mirak Misura (who at one time served in the Saskatoon diocese) during a visit to London, UK.

- Submitted photo

Unique pilgrim journeys feature cultural enrichment for the soul

BY FR. RALPH KLEITER

Ministry to Tourism recently offered a pilgrim journey to Eastern Europe, characterized by a palette of cultural enrichment.

The pilgrim journey Aug. 28 to Sept. 23 began in Prague and then proceeded around Poland for ten days, concluding in Vienna and a classic Danube ten-day cruise aboard the *Crystal Mozart*. It was a journey that engaged a traveler's body, mind and spirit.

One participant commented that: “this time was a cultural pilgrimage holistically featuring such things as history, music, art, architecture, cuisine, witness of saints and the beauty of the places visited which were all fully curated.”

Ministry to Tourism will continue offering such unique travel experiences

with two more major destinations in Iberia and Greece in 2018.

Upcoming offerings include “*Greece and its Islands and St. Paul's Sights*” from May 31 to June 14, 2018; “*Reflections in Portugal*” from Oct 31 to Nov 5, 2018 (Lisbon, Portuguese Riviera & Fatima); “*A Spanish Pathway to Sunshine*” from Nov 5 to Nov. 13, 2018 (Barcelona, Montserrat & Balearic Islands of Mallorca & Ibiza); and “*Autumn Passage*” from Nov. 13 to Nov. 27, 2018 aboard Oceania's newest ship, *Riviera* (sailing from Barcelona to Miami via Costa del Sol, Canary Islands with special re-positioning fares).

For details contact Fr. Ralph Kleiter of Ministry to Tourism at kleiter@shaw.ca or call (306) 244-3747. Visit the website at: www.pilgrimjourneys.ca

Upcoming Events

Serena Saskatchewan presents a Medieval Feast from 6:30-9:30 p.m. Feb. 10, 2018 at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Saskatoon. Tickets are free, thanks to charitable donors – this is a fundraiser so please be generous. The evening includes a catered feast, a wine toss and wassail, silent auction, 50-50 draw, and entertainment. Dress code is “Medieval” with awards for best dressed. For tickets, contact sask@serena.ca or call (306) 934-8223.

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-abortive emotions to begin the process of restoration, renewal and healing. The next Rachel's Vineyard retreat will be held April 6-8, 2018. Contact Elaine at (306) 480-8911 or r.vineyardsk@sasktel.net

Getting married in the near future? Catholic Engaged Encounter weekends are held at St. Peter's Abbey in Muenster, SK, with two options offered in 2018: **April 6-8, 2018** or **Oct. 19-21**. An Engaged Encounter Weekend gives couples planning marriage the opportunity to dialogue honestly and intensively about their future lives together. The weekend is designed to deepen and enrich relationships with one another, God, the Church and the World. Couples are given opportunities to learn more about one another as they engage in deep and meaningful discussions dealing with all aspects of married life. Cost per couple is \$480 and this includes all meals and accommodations. All registrations are done online by visiting www.ceewest.com For more information contact Heather and Craig Stomp at (306) 682-3326. Other marriage preparation opportunities in the Diocese of Saskatoon are listed online at: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com/marriage-and-family-life

Saskatoon Christians mark Reformation 500 together in prayer

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Christians in Saskatoon gathered together Oct. 29, 2017 to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with an ecumenical worship service, repenting for the division and violence of the past, and pledging to move forward together as followers of Jesus Christ.

Five hundred years ago, on Oct. 31, 1517, Martin Luther sent his Ninety-Five Theses calling for reform of church practices to the Archbishop of Mainz – an action immortalized in the image of the reformer posting his statement on the church doors. The date is considered to be the start of the Reformation, with the movement spreading across Europe throughout the 16th century.

Christians across the world have been marking the 500th anniversary together – not as a celebration of division, but as a moment of healing focused on Jesus Christ.

Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon welcomed hundreds to the Sunday afternoon worship at the Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Family, noting how, for the past 50 years, Christians have been on a journey “from conflict to communion,” recognizing that what unites Christians is far greater than what divides.

“We come with different thoughts and feelings of thanksgiving and lament, joy and repentance, joy in the Gospel and sorrow for division,” McGee said. “We gather to commemorate in remembrance, in thanksgiving and confession, and in common witness and commitment.”

The Reformation 500 event involved participation by representatives of a number of Christian denominations, with a joint sermon given by Bishop Sid Haugen of the Saskatchewan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and Archbishop Donald Bolen of Regina, Metropolitan of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops in Saskatchewan.



Worship leaders included (l-r) Shirley Karstad representing inter-church families, Anglican Deacon Marie-Louise Ternier; Dr. Del Haug, MD; Carmen Kampman of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada; Rev. Lindsay Mohn of Vanscoy-Delisle United Church; Bishop Sidney Haugen of the Saskatchewan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; Archbishop Donald Bolen of the Catholic Archdiocese of Regina; and Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon. - Photo by Kiply Yaworski

“The message is really the service itself,” said Haugen. “That we are here: that we are here to give thanks for the gifts of the Reformation, but also to repent for the ways that we have sinned against each other.”

Haugen recalled two words from a single verse in the Bible, John 11:37, when, upon learning that his friend Lazarus had died, “Jesus wept.” It was a text that came to Haugen when he taught the history of Christianity. “I didn’t want to tell those stories of what we did to each other for centuries,” Haugen said. “We have been the cause, I think, of Jesus weeping for his children.”

The possibility of “re-reading the Reformation” emerges after years of dialogue among Christians, said Bolen, reflecting on Martin Luther’s desire to initiate a discussion about things in the Church that needed to change. “Above all

we discovered that Martin Luther, in his own life, heard the call of the gospel and that it transformed him.”

After the past 50 years of patient dialogue, Christians are praying together, serving and witnessing together, Bolen said. He pointed to the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by Lutherans and Catholics in 1999 as an important fruit of dialogue.

The Catholic archbishop quoted the document, which in Article 15 summarizes: “Together we confess: by grace alone, in faith in Christ’s saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works.”

The 1999 declaration came about, not through compromise, but through “deep listening,” Bolen said.



The Saskatoon worship service also included reflections on healing, reconciliation, dialogue, and unity, which were read by representatives of different Christian communities, including Rev. Carmen Kampman, executive director for advancement at Horizon College and a candidate for ordination in the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC); Dr. Del Haug, MD; Rev. Lindsay Mohn, of Vanscoy-Delisle United Church; Deacon Marie-Louise Ternier, preparing for her Nov. 30, 2017 ordination as a priest in the Anglican communion; and Shirley Karstad, a representative of interchurch families.

During the celebration, the assembly together recited the Apostle’s Creed, prayed the Lord’s Prayer – each in his or her own language – and exchanged a sign of peace. Intercessory prayers and hymns were also part of the service, with music provided by a combined choir and a brass quartet.

Five representatives of Christian communities each read a commitment for deepening unity, taken from dialogue documents, before lighting a candle from the paschal candle.

Those lighting candles were Gerri Madill, chair of the Prairie Centre for Ecumenism; Rev. Harley Johnson, Pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church; Rev. Sandra Beardsall of St. Andrew’s College; Rev. Munye Mtata, a Lutheran pastor from Zimbabwe; and Celeste Woloschuk, who was serving as coordinator for ecumenical and interfaith relations for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

Evangelical-Roman Catholic Commission for Common Witness launched

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The relationship between Evangelical and Roman Catholic Christians has entered a new phase in Saskatoon.

After more than five years, a local Evangelical-Catholic dialogue group has concluded its work, and a new Saskatoon Evangelical-Roman Catholic Commission for Common Witness has been established. The new commission was launched May 16 at a joint worship service of celebration and commissioning held at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon.

Pastor Jakob Palm, Chair of the Saskatoon Evangelical Ministers’ Fellowship (SEMF), and Diocesan Administrator Fr. Kevin McGee of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon opened the evening of prayer and witness, which included a blessing of the Evangelical and Catholic members who have so far been named to the new commission.

Since December 2011, the local Evangelical-Catholic dialogue has met together to build friendships, to share faith, and to actively dialogue, exploring what the two traditions hold in common and where differences continue to divide, described dialogue co-chair and SEMF member Pastor Harry Strauss of Forest Grove Community Church.

Over the years, the Evangelical-Catholic dialogue has held joint worship services, developed a joint statement entitled “Called to Common Witness,” and hosted public events.

The new commission “is to give particular attention to prayer and education



Fr. Bernard de Margerie and Pastor Brendon Gibson (l-r) offered prayers.

for Christian reconciliation and unity, and to forming Christian disciples committed to working together in common witness and service,” said dialogue co-chair Nicholas Jesson, outgoing Ecumenical Officer for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon.

During the joint worship service, Evangelical-Catholic dialogue members David Smith of Holy Spirit parish and Pastor Bob Parker of the Church of Christ spoke about the impact of the dialogue on their lives, and the friendships that developed in the process.

“I came to a deeper realization that the gifts that we have – the gifts of God’s children – are different... but they are very complementary, and we do have an obligation to share our respective gifts among the traditions,” said Smith.

Phil and Mary Wrubleski of the diocesan Marriage Task Force also shared their experience working as part of the ecumenical Saskatoon Marriage Network, describing how they discovered a new group of Evangelical Christian friends and



Members of a new Saskatoon Evangelical-Roman Catholic Commission for Common Witness were commissioned May 16 at the Cathedral of the Holy Family in Saskatoon. - Photos by Tim Yaworski

colleagues to pray and to collaborate with. Scripture from Ephesians 4: 1-16 was proclaimed by Leanne Bellamy, followed by a reflection from guest speaker Dr. David Guretzki of Briercrest College in Carleton Place, SK, who has served on the national Evangelical-Catholic dialogue.

“We all have a role to play in the body of Christ – everyone in the body of Christ has a place – there is beauty in the diversity of Christ’s body,” said Guretzki, stressing that Christian unity is not something in our power to achieve, but is the work of God.

“My prayer is that we will repent of any hubris to think that we are the ones who accomplish unity, and... that we would make every effort to keep our eyes fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, the author and the perfecter of all of our work,” he said.

The joint worship service continued with prayers, hymns, and the exchange of a sign of peace among those assembled,

before Fr. Bernard de Margerie and Pastor Brendon Gibson offered prayers of blessing and commissioning for members of the newly-formed commission.

Commission members are: Dr. Jeromey Martini, president of Horizon College and Seminary; Dr. Johann Malan and Mientjie Malan of Emmanuel Baptist Church; Pastor Larry Thomas, Courts of Praise Foursquare Gospel Church and member of SEMF; Cathy LaFleche of Holy Family parish, executive director of Saskatoon Pregnancy Options Centre; Daniel Pettipas, Coordinator of Evangelization and Adult Faith Formation at St. Anne parish; Myron Rogal, Coordinator of Justice and Peace for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon; David Smith, a member of the original Evangelical-Catholic dialogue group from Holy Spirit parish; and Nathan Yaworski, a member of Holy Spirit parish and a member of the diocesan Ecumenical Commission.