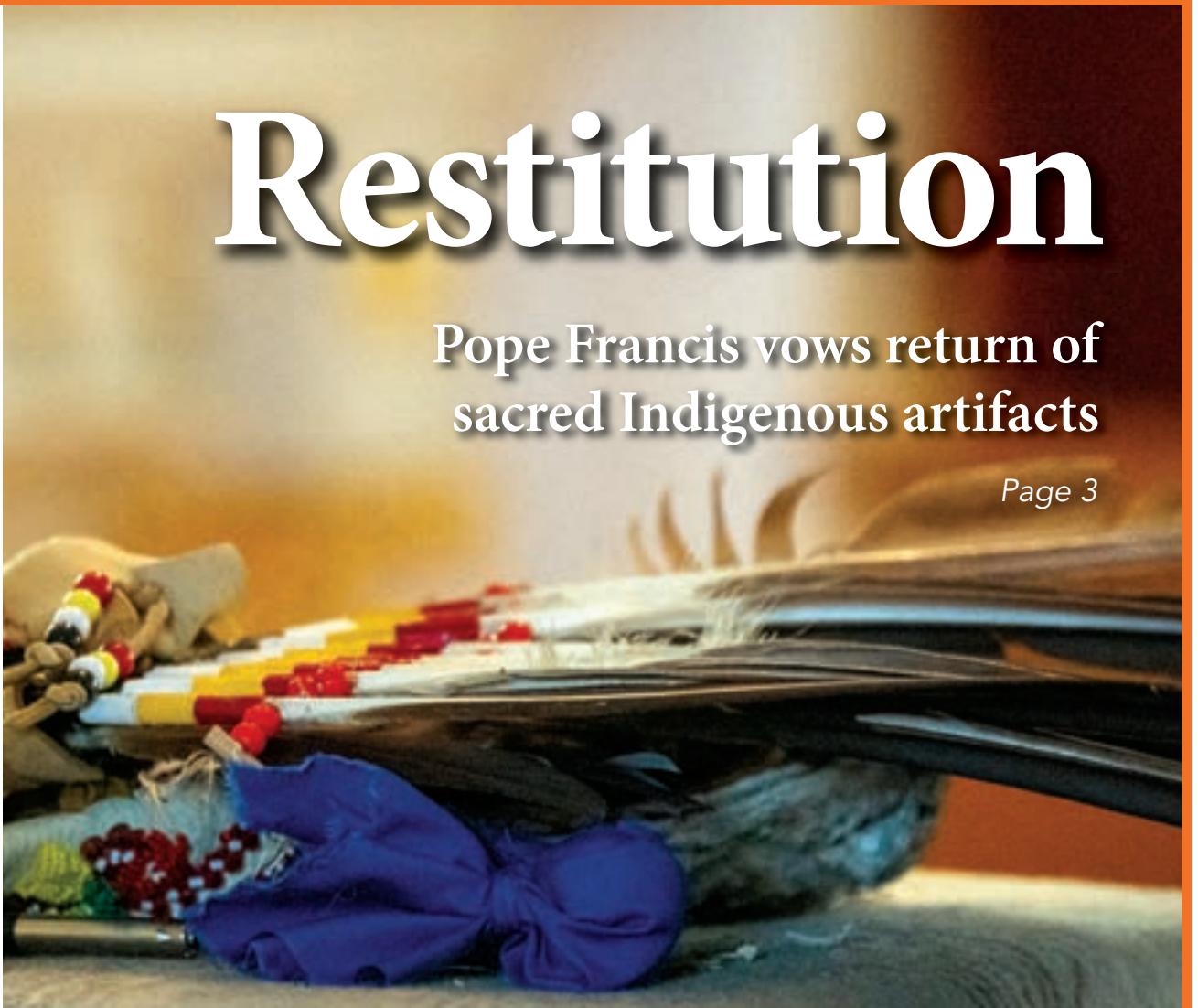
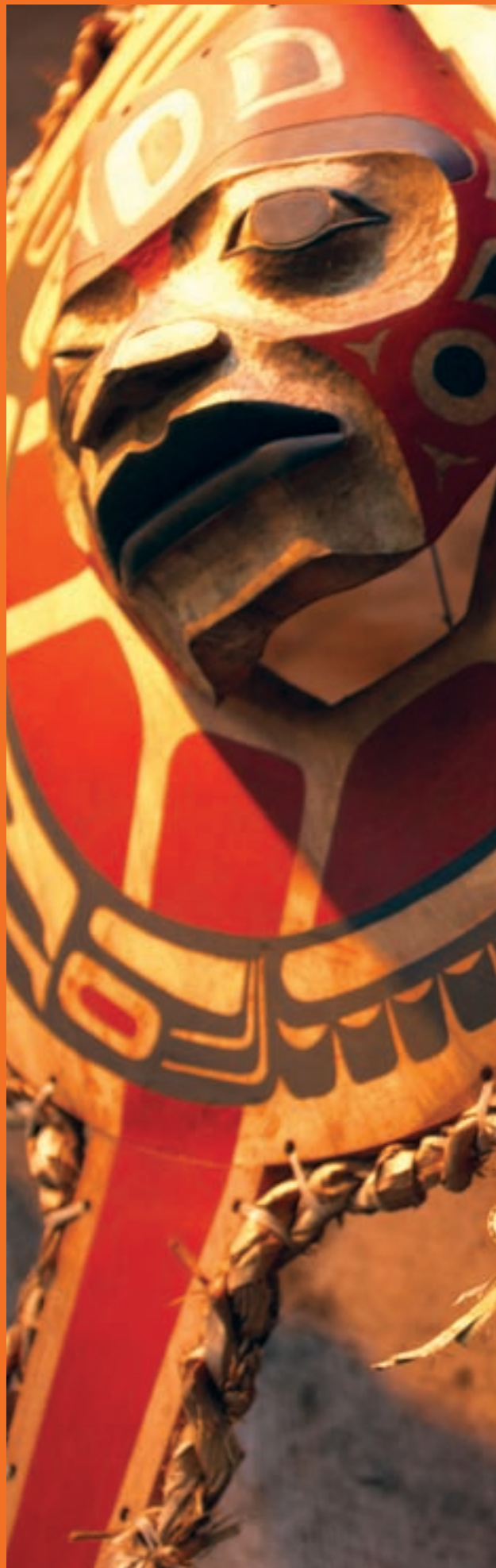


Restitution

Pope Francis vows return of
sacred Indigenous artifacts

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True faith is open to others, Pope stresses in Hungary

Unlock hearts — and borders — to those in need

BY CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

Praising the piety and charity of Hungarian Christians and their commitment to supporting traditional family life, Pope Francis said Christ also calls them to open their hearts — and perhaps their borders — to others in need.

When it comes to the Church or to society, isolationism is not Christian, the Pope said in a variety of ways during his visit to Budapest, Hungary, April 28-30.

Because of the 86-year-old Pope's mobility issues, the trip was confined to the capital and the official schedule was lighter than usual. He used part of his long midday breaks and early evenings for private meetings, including with Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Hilarion of Budapest and Hungary.

Flying back to Rome April 30, the Pope confirmed that he and Metropolitan Hilarion had spoken about Russia's war on Ukraine, and he said the Vatican has some special "mission" underway, but he declined to provide details.

The Pope also spoke about the war with Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

In his first speech in Hungary — to government and civic leaders and diplomats serving in Budapest — the Pope encouraged the leaders to foster greater European unity rather than going their own way.

The "passionate quest of a politics of community and the strengthening of multilateral relations seems a wistful memory from a distant past," he said April 28 in his speech at the former Carmelite monastery that now houses Orbán's office.

"More and more enthusiasm for building a peaceful and stable community of nations seems to be cooling, as zones of influence are marked out, differences accentuated, nationalism is on the rise and ever harsher judgments and language are used in confronting others."

Ukraine is one of Hungary's eastern neighbours and Hungarians have assisted some 2.5 million Ukrainians who have



At top, Pope Francis greets about 100 children and young people who gathered outside the Church of St. Laszlo in Budapest, Hungary, to pray for him April 29. At right, Pope Francis meets with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán at Sándor Palace in Budapest, Hungary, April 28 at the beginning a three-day trip to Hungary's capital with meetings with government officials.

(CNS photos/Vatican Media)

crossed the border since Russia's war on Ukraine began in February 2022. About 35,000 of the Ukrainian refugees have remained in Hungary.

Pope Francis repeatedly praised Hungarians for opening their country and their hearts to the Ukrainians, but in several speeches and at his Mass April 30 in Budapest's Kossuth Lajos Square, he urged them to be open to everyone in need.

"How sad and painful it is to see closed doors," he said in his homily. He cited "the closed doors of our selfishness with regard to others; the closed doors of our individualism amid a society of growing isolation; the closed doors of our indifference toward the underprivileged and those who suffer; the doors we close toward those who are foreign or unlike us, toward migrants or the poor."

The Pope also preached openness during a meeting with Hungary's bishops, priests, religious, seminarians and catechists April 28.



He called Hungarian Catholics to embrace "prophetic welcome" or "prophetic receptivity," which, he said, "is about learning how to recognize the signs of God in the world around us, including places and situations that, while not explicitly Christian, challenge us and call for a response."

Christians grow in "prophetic receptivity," he said, by "bringing the Lord's consolation to situations of pain and poverty in our world, being close to persecuted Christians, to migrants seeking hospitality, to people of other ethnic groups and to anyone in need."

Kremlin denies working with Vatican on peace talks

BY JUSTIN MCLELLAN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY

Moscow is not working with the Vatican to end the war in Ukraine, said a Kremlin spokesperson.

Asked by reporters May 2 if the Russian government was aware of a Vatican-led plan referenced by Pope Francis to advance the peace process in Ukraine, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov responded: "No, nothing is known," Russian state media reported.

On his return flight to Rome from Hungary, Pope Francis told reporters that the Holy See was engaged in a "mission" related to peace between Russia and Ukraine.

"There is a mission underway that is not public yet; when it is public, I will tell you about it," the Pope said.

The Pope did not say if the "mission" was diplomatic, humanitarian or something else.

According to CNN, the Ukrainian government also denied engaging with the Vatican in peace talks.

Pope Francis met with Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal at the Vatican April 27, one day before departing for his trip to Hungary. At Shmyhal's meeting with the Vatican secretary of state, the Vatican said, "various matters connected to the war in Ukraine were highlighted, with particular attention to the humanitarian aspects and efforts to restore peace."

Asked during his April 30 press conference about his meetings with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, a friend of Russian President Vladimir Putin, and Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Hilarion of Budapest and Hungary, the Pope said that "peace is made by opening channels."

"You cannot create peace with closure," he said.

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Pope pushes return of Indigenous artifacts

'A positive step' toward truth, reconciliation

BY MICHAEL SWAN
The Catholic Register

Pope Francis is getting personally involved in making sure sacred items and cultural artifacts held in the Vatican Museums are returned to Canadian Indigenous communities.

"The restitution of Indigenous things of Canada is underway, at least we agreed to do so," Pope Francis told reporters during his news conference on the plane trip back to Rome April 30 following his papal visit to Hungary. "I will now ask how that's going."

Return of items from the Vatican Museums was a flashpoint in talks between Indigenous organizations and Church officials in the run-up to last year's papal visit to Canada along with Pope Francis' historic apology for Church complicity in Canadian policies of assimilation and cultural erasure. When Indigenous visitors to Rome were invited for a private showing of part of the Vatican Museum's holdings, the issue of returning items from the museums only grew.

"It is imperative that the Catholic Church facilitate the return of artifacts and other items taken from Métis people and communities, which are now stored in the Vatican and other Church-run institutions," Métis National Council president Cassidy Caron told *The Catholic Register* in an email.

Caron called the Pope's remarks on repatriating Indigenous items "a positive step forward in our journey of truth, healing, justice and reconciliation."

Giving Indigenous people access to their own history in the form of the art and sacred objects of their ancestors could play an important role in restoring some of what was stripped away by residential schools that sought to eliminate Indigenous culture and languages, said Odawa/Ojibway elder Rosella Kinoshameg.

"They could help to instil that sense of pride that these artifacts were made by our people, by our ancestors," said Kinoshameg. "It's maybe something that the younger generation can pick up to carry that on."

Kinoshameg is one of the founding members of the Guadalupe Circle, which brings together Indigenous elders from across the country with Catholic bishops.

The Indigenous heritage held in the Vatican Museums is a tiny slice of the thousands upon thousands of items held in museums across Canada and around the world. In Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island in northern Ontario, the complications of restoring patrimony lost to Western museums was illustrated by the 2017 agreement between the Canadian



Above is an Indigenous artifact on display at the McMichael Gallery in Kleinburg, Ont. Such artifacts are held in museums across Canada and around the world, including the Vatican Museums, and Pope Francis, in a news conference aboard the papal plane back to Rome from Hungary on April 30, bottom right, said the Vatican is making sure these artifacts are returned. Odawa/Ojibway elder Rosella Kinoshameg, bottom left, feels the return of these artifacts can help instill a sense of pride in younger Indigenous. (Pope photo a CNS photo/Vatican Media, others and cover photos by Michael Swan)

War Museum and the Wikwemikong First Nation.

The Ottawa museum holds the Mookomaanish sword, worn by Chief Mookomaanish, also known as Frederic Pebamitapi, in its collection of items from the War of 1812. The War Museum acknowledged the First Nation's right to the sword, but the community lacks a museum where it can be properly stored and displayed. The War Museum produced a replica sword for the community to use in ceremonies and educational settings, until such time as the Wikwemikong First Nation has a facility to house the item.

The Royal Ontario Museum, which has a vast collection of Indigenous cultural and sacred objects, has had a policy governing the restoration of these items to their home communities since 2001.

"It is the aim of the Royal Ontario Museum that all people have access to representation of their cultural heritage," reads the ROM policy. "The ROM recognizes that



some objects may have been acquired in circumstances which render the ROM's title invalid."

Pope Francis framed the issue in terms of the Seventh Commandment.

"This is the Seventh Commandment: if you have stolen something, you must give it back," he said.

There may be circumstances where it's difficult to do, but restoring such items to their rightful owners is the way to go, said the Pope.

"To the extent that you can return something, you should. This is good for everyone, so no one gets used to putting their hands in someone else's pocket."

For Assembly of First Nations National Chief RoseAnne Archibald, the Pope's action on the museum file is one more positive step.

"We have advanced and had success on our journey with Pope Francis," Archibald said in an email. "We asked for an apology and received his message of contrition at the Vatican and on Turtle Island. We sought an acknowledgment that genocide occurred, and he admitted that on his flight back to

Rome. We petitioned for him to rescind and repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery and the Vatican issued a statement of repudiation. We asked for the return of our sacred items, and they will make their way home soon."

For the Metis, the issue is reason for continuing dialogue with the Church.

"We look forward to sitting down with representatives from the Vatican Museums to ensure that these important pieces of Métis history are returned to the communities that they are from," said Caron.

"Inuit are optimistic that items of cultural importance may be returned to our communities," a spokesperson for the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami said in an email. "We value the relationships we have built with the Vatican Museums towards this goal. The remarks by Pope Francis are significant in that they recognize that this work is in line with Church teaching, that it is something the Vatican has agreed to do, and is a vital part of reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit and Metis."

(With files from Cindy Wooden, CNS)

'This is the Seventh Commandment: if you have stolen something, you must give it back'

Pope Francis

Busy retirement beckons Cardinal Ouellet

Prelate steps down from Vatican's Dicastery for Bishops

BY HANNAH BROCKHAUS
Catholic News Agency

VATICAN CITY

Cardinal Marc Ouellet has handed over the reins of the Vatican's Dicastery for Bishops office to Bishop Robert Francis Prevost.

Ouellet, 78, has led the dicastery — formerly called the Congregation for Bishops — since 2010. The transition marks the end of a long and varied career for Ouellet, whose time as a priest, religious, archbishop and cardinal has led him from Canada to Italy to Colombia and, finally, to nearly 13 years full time at the Vatican.

But the Quebecois cardinal will not be slowing down in retirement. Over the last several years, Ouellet spearheaded the international symposium “Towards a Fundamental Theology of Priesthood.” The latest gathering, co-organized by the Centre for Research and Anthropology of Vocations, was at the Vatican in February.

“The Catholic Church, I would say, is very clerical. It’s very grounded on the ordained ministry; that’s at the centre of the attention: the bishops, the priest,” Ouellet said. “But we lack awareness of the priesthood of the baptized.

“That was exactly the purpose of this symposium, to see (laypeople and priests) participate



Cardinal Marc Ouellet, prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops, walks through St. Peter's Square at the Vatican in this Feb. 21, 2019, file photo. Ouellet recently stepped down as head of the dicastery. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

in the unique priesthood of Christ — the baptized and the ordained ministry — to see the relationship between both. . . . This is, for me, a contribution that has to be added to the process of synodality.”

The result of the conferences was two books the cardinal hopes will serve as a reference for the formation of priests, laypeople and religious. The first volume of *A Fundamental Theology of the Priesthood*, edited by Ouellet, is expected to be published in English this month. Since March, Ouellet has kept a busy travel schedule, jetting to different European and U.S. cities to promote the books.

Ouellet grew up in the tiny town of La Motte, Que., the third of eight children. An avid hockey player as a teen, he decided to pursue the

priesthood after breaking his leg on an outdoor rink at age 17.

Ouellet told The Canadian Press in 2005 that the break, which happened when his skate got stuck in a rut in the ice, meant missing out on a season of playing.

“I started to pray and to read a little more spiritual things because I was unable to play. It was decisive for my vocation,” he said.

Even as a young priest, Ouellet continued to play hockey, joining a men's league while vicar at Saint-Sauveur Church in Val-d'Or, his first assignment after being ordained in May 1968.

Shortly afterward he headed to Bogotá, Colombia, where he taught at the major seminary, run by the Society of the Priests of St. Sulpice, which he joined in 1972. Ouellet would spend much of the next 17 years teaching at different seminaries in Colombia — in between a stint at the Grand Séminaire de Montréal and studying in Rome, first for a licence in philosophy and later for a doctorate in dogmatic theology.

His firsthand experience of Colombia later proved invaluable when in 2010 he was appointed president of the Vatican's Pontifical Commission for Latin America.

In 1990, Ouellet returned to Canada, where he became rector of the Grand Séminaire de Montréal, then rector of St. Joseph's Seminary in Edmonton.

Ouellet was a consultant to two Vatican congregations in the 1990s, and in 2001 he was appointed secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. From 1996 to 2002 he taught at the John Paul II Institute for the Study of Marriage and the Family in Rome.

He was named Archbishop of Québec in late 2002 by Pope John Paul II, who also made him a cardinal less than a year later. Ouellet led the archdiocese, with its more than one million Catholics, until 2010, when he was brought back to the Vatican as prefect of the Congregation for Bishops.

Throughout his ecclesiastical career, the cardinal has known four popes and worked closely with three.

"I have a debt, enormous debt of gratitude, with all these popes, starting with St. Paul VI, who ordained me a priest in May '68," Quellet said.

*‘I was unable to play
(hockey due to
an injury). It was
decisive for my
vocation’*

He also recalled Pope John Paul II's request for him to teach at Rome's John Paul II Institute 26 years ago.

“That was a good relationship. I admired his energy to evangelize and his testimony in suffering. He was a great man of offering his life and being at the foot of the Cross with the Virgin Mary,” he said. “I admired his last years, which were very heavy as a burden. But he gave a great witness to the Church.”

Ouellet called Pope Benedict XVI, instead, a “doctor of the Church.”

"I think we have a legacy of doctrine and reflection, and of a theologian, also, that will last for centuries" in Benedict, the cardinal said. "Ratzinger is a name that will last (for) centuries, for his contri-

bution to theology and also to the Church.

“Yeah, we had such different popes... And that’s in the continuity of the work of the Holy Spirit in history. He brings us the right man at the right moment. And that doesn’t mean that they are infallible in everything they do — all with limits and also mistakes — but they are men guided by the Holy Spirit. I’ve seen that in Pope Francis.”

Ouellet himself was considered “papabile” — a potential choice for the papacy — during the 2005 and 2013 conclaves.

And both during his time as an archbishop and as a cardinal, he has not been afraid to wade into Church debates. When the Vatican's 2019 Amazon Synod brought up the topic of ordaining as priests "*virī probatī*," meaning "proven men" who are married, Ouellet published a book defending the practice of priestly celibacy.

Explaining why he decided to write a book on the topic of celibacy, Ouellet said the subject deserves “serious treatment in the Church.”

“And because,” he continued, “I think it is an extraordinary gift of God to the Church, the gift of celibacy for priests and the gift of celibacy, also, in religious life and consecrated life. It’s so important for evangelization. Why? Because it is a witness to the identity of Jesus: Who is Jesus?”

The cardinal has not been without controversy. Last year, Ouellet was accused of sexual assault by a woman in a class-action civil suit filed by multiple plaintiffs against the Archdiocese of Québec. The accusation dated to the cardinal's time as Archbishop of Québec.

The cardinal, who has strenuously denied the accusation, filed a defamation lawsuit in Québec courts in December 2022.

"I have never been guilty of these reprehensible behaviours," the cardinal said in a Dec. 13 statement accompanying the lawsuit.

“I am taking legal action for defamation before the courts of Québec in order to prove the falsity of the allegations made against me and to restore my reputation and honour”

The Vatican conducted a preliminary investigation into the accusation in August 2022. Pope Francis determined that there was not sufficient evidence to begin a canonical investigation against Ouellet for sexual assault.

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Roe v. Wade looms over March for Life

U.S. victory fuels pro-lifers north of border

BY QUINTON AMUNDSON

The Catholic Register

The buzz leading up to the 26th National March for Life in Ottawa on May 11 is very encouraging to event organizers at Campaign Life Coalition.

In recent years, robust crowds of over 5,000 rallied on Parliament Hill on behalf of the unborn. Debbie Duval expects the 2023 demonstration could attract “over 10,000 people.”

“We have double the amount of buses coming from out of town compared to last year,” said Duval. “We have really spread (the word) far and wide. Our staff has done a great job sharing the information with parishes and youth groups.”

Duval added that the overturning of Roe v. Wade last year by the Supreme Court of the United States has energized the pro-life community north of the border.



Pro-life supporters rally during a past National March for Life on Parliament Hill. This year's march is May 11. (CNS photo/Art Babych)

“We need to have something like that happen in Canada,” said Duval.

In-person and online events will be staged on the days before the march starting on May 7. One of the notable items on the

schedule — hosted on May 9 — is an early-preview screening of the documentary *Roe Canada: The True North in a Post-Roe World*, which is directed by award-winning Catholic filmmaker Kevin Dunn. A round-table discussion

will feature Dunn and his creative partners, Campaign Life's Josie Luetke and Ruth Robert. The three interviewed expert voices in both Canada and the United States for a comprehensive portrait of the legal landscapes in both countries. They also presented the facts of what it would take for the Canadian pro-life community to enjoy a seminal victory akin to the American decision.

Duval said she would like to see more people participate in the Mass and candlelight vigil hosted the eve before the march.

“It is a really wonderful, prayerful night. The attendance fluctuates. I believe last year there were over 300 people. It is really great. There is prayer, a blessing, praise and worship music and testimony. It is the prayer component of the march — after all we cannot do anything without Him.”

Ottawa Auxiliary Bishop Yvan Mathieu will preside over a Mass at St. Theresa Church. Afterwards, attendees will trek over to the Canadian Human Rights

Monument for the vigil.

The spiritual dimension of the fight for the preborn is evident in the march theme “Stand Firm,” which is derived from Ephesians 6:14: “Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness.”

“It is much a perfect Scripture for this time,” said Duval. “In fact, I like the entire (passage) as it tells us to ‘put on the full armour of God so you can stand firm against the deeds of the devil.’ Right now, we need to stand up and be firm in our beliefs. This is evil.”

The rally on Parliament Hill will begin at 12:30 p.m. The march through downtown Ottawa will begin at 1:30 p.m. and at 2:30 p.m., special guests will share their Silent No More Awareness testimonies. At 3 p.m., the Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute will lead the closing prayer service.

Provincial marches will also be hosted in Alberta, Saskatchewan, B.C., Nova Scotia and Manitoba.

Visit marchforlife.ca for more information.

Waterloo trustee apologizes for ‘racist,’ ‘anti-Christian’ tweet

BY QUINTON AMUNDSON

The Catholic Register

Wendy Ashby, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board trustee under fire from parents for posts on Twitter deemed as “racist, sexist and anti-Christian,” has broken her public silence with a statement released on the school board's website.

“I apologize for my tweets that offended people and I apologize to my board colleagues for how this has impacted them,” stated Ashby in the April 26 statement.

The Catholic Register reported on two of Ashby's tweets. The first read: “The most dangerous creature on the planet is the white Christian male. They're a threat to anyone that is not them.” The second tweet stated, “Hush Money. Buying silence about being underpaid. White women make obedient soldiers for the christofacist patriarchy.”

Ashby's statement following the apology pivoted to a personal explanation of her mission as a trustee.

“Conversations about inequality are often uncomfortable,” wrote Ashby. “As a Métis woman and in my professional role, I encounter these discussions regularly and part of these discussions is to challenge our existing systems. A great deal of my education and advocacy work is around understanding and furthering diversity, equity and inclusion.”

She added that she decided to deactivate her Twitter account to ensure her “comments and advocacy will not be taken out of context, in the future.” The trustee also affirmed she remains “dedicated to con-



Protesters picket outside the Waterloo Catholic District School Board offices demanding the resignation of trustee Wendy Ashby. (Photo courtesy Parents As First Educators)

tinuing to work with my colleagues and our community to support all students.”

Ashby was not the only WCDSB official who released a public statement. Earlier, trustee Marisa Philips rebuked her colleague's online behaviour in a release.

“I stand with the concerned parents and community members who denounce my colleague's words,” wrote Philips. “Racism and sexism against any group have no place in our society. These actions become especially heinous when they originate from an elected school board trustee whose hurtful comments are aimed directly at many of the

families she has been tasked with representing,” Philips added, “our children deserve a healthy learning environment free from inflammatory politics and hateful rhetoric.”

The board — which has approved hiring an outside consultant to review the situation — also released a statement, the first half concerning Ashby's conduct.

“The board of trustees of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board does not support statements made by trustee Wendy Ashby in social media posts,” the release stated. “The board is aware of concerns raised by community members regarding the contents of the posts by trustee Ashby and is doing its due diligence in ensuring that those concerns are heard. Whenever there are allegations of a breach in the code of conduct, the board follows up with a review into those allegations.”

Part two of the board's printed remarks provided the board's perspective of what unfolded during a charged open-to-the-public school board meeting on April 24, where concerned parents, championed by the advocacy group Parents as First Educators (PAFE), descended upon the meeting to protest Ashby and the board, and demand she resign or be terminated. Ashby did not attend this event in person.

When the meeting got underway it was not any of the parents in the gallery who confronted trustees, but David Menzies, an on-camera personality with Rebel News. The contentious interaction was taped and shared on social media by the pro-life organization Campaign Life Coalition.

Menzies challenged the board to state

if they “approve or condemn” Ashby's behaviour. Trustees paused the meeting and exited into an adjacent room, followed by Menzies, his crew and the Campaign Life videographer, though they were barred from entry. Police were called and the “meeting resumed and trustees received the presentation from the meeting's sole registered delegation.”

Teresa Pierre, the founder of PAFE, attended the meeting in person. Pierre said she had no foreknowledge that Rebel News was going to attend the meeting. She shared her disappointment over the board exiting the room instead of responding to Menzies and the parents.

“The conflict shows that the public is demanding answers from the board, and won't be satisfied with complete and utter silence. The board has a credibility problem at this point and can't continue to rely on external forces to keep order. Sooner or later the board needs to address these racist remarks publicly and not make private decisions in back rooms.”

When the meeting resumed, the delegate invited to speak was parent Ahmed Kassad, a former public board trustee candidate.

“Seeing a trustee make these disgusting remarks, is a sure sign that this trustee subscribes to woke ideologies based on critical race theory,” said Kassad. “These concepts that teach that white people are oppressors have no merit and do harm to everyone exposed to them.”

On the PAFE website there is a petition demanding Ashby's removal that sought 2,000 signatures. It had 3,346 as of May 2.

You can be Indigenous, Christian, speakers insist

Cardus project responds to secular belief it's not possible to be both

BY ANNA FARROW
Montreal Correspondent

OTTAWA
At the Ottawa offices of Cardus, coinciding with the 343rd anniversary of the death of St. Kateri Tekakwitha, four Indigenous Canadians spoke to a mixed crowd of what it means to be both Indigenous and a person of faith.



Andrew Bennett, program director of Cardus Faith Communities, with 12 Indigenous Canadians. Those interviews form the heart of the Cardus project, Indigenous Voices of Faith.

Bennett traced the origins of the project to a conversation with a friend who was both a First Nations Canadian and a Baptist. His friend had remarked, “sometimes I’m not supposed to be a Baptist.”

Bennett spoke of the Cardus initiative attempting to provide a

thoughtful response to “the secular elite narrative that asserts that you cannot authentically be an Indigenous person if you are also a Christian.”

The first panel of the evening consisted of three Catholics, Fr. Cristino Bouvette, Maria Lucas and Dr. Rose-Alma MacDonald. The three panelists hold a common Catholic faith, but also share backgrounds made up of a multiplicity of cultures and traditions.

Lucas was baptized in the Slovak Greek Catholic Church and is of Black-Metis heritage.

“I was a bit of a cultural orphan,” said Lucas. “I knew that we were Black, and I knew that we were Metis, but I didn’t fully understand what that meant culturally. What are our practices? What are our traditions?”

Those questions were further complicated by being a cradle Catholic. She asked, “How does my family integrate being Catholic with being a Black-Indigenous family?”

Lucas said she has taken a “circuitous journey” to reach her home in the Catholic Church. Along the way, she discovered that the emphasis placed in Indigenous cultures on the centrality of spirituality to everyday life was entirely consistent with her Catholic faith. Faith should, Lucas says, “inform everything that you do.”

Bouvette and MacDonald can both claim a family lineage rich with Christian faith and witness. Bouvette, a priest of the Archdio-

cese of Calgary, has Italian-Canadian, Metis and Cree-Ojibwe lineage. His great-great-great grandfather, Rev. Henry Bird Steinhauer, was a Methodist minister, an Ojibwe from southern Ontario who relocated to Alberta “to proclaim the Gospel to his own people.” Steinhauer was responsible for the translation of biblical texts and hymns into the Cree language.

MacDonald is a Mohawk from Akwesasne. Her great uncle was Msgr. Joseph Bourget who for 42 years was the pastor at the St. Regis Mission Church at Akwesasne. He translated the prayers and hymns into Mohawk. Despite this family history, MacDonald did not learn Mohawk growing up. She says it is only because the current pastor, a Filipino who is “brown like us,” has re-introduced Mohawk into the liturgy that she knows a little of her language.

The second conversation of the evening was between Bennett and Melissa Mbarki, a Cree woman who in her 20s embraced the pipe carrier traditions of her maternal grandfather. Mbarki, adopted and raised by her grandparents, said her “upbringing was unusual.” Her grandmother was a residential school survivor and a devout Catholic. Her grandfather practised the traditional ways. Mbarki believes her grandparents modeled the true meaning of reconciliation. She said that they, in turn, “wanted me to be a bridge, to be a voice of reconciliation.”

The question period at the end covered a range of topics, including the difference between inculturation and syncretism, church burnings and the role and meaning of land acknowledgements. In each case, the panelists gave thoughtful and, at times, unexpected answers. That diversity in the responses served to underline that many Indigenous voices are not always represented in the public square.

Bennett has said that going forward, he “will be sharing the booklet and the interviews therein with faith leaders across the country over the coming months to help shape the discussion on Indigenous Canadians and faith.”



Melissa Mbarki

Bill C-11 passes

Effect on religion remains to be seen

BY QUINTON AMUNDSON
The Catholic Register

Bill C-11, one of the most hotly debated pieces of legislation in recent Canadian history, received royal assent and became law on April 27.

Also known as “The Online Streaming Act,” it amends the 1991 Canadian Broadcasting Act and subjects digital content creators, notably streaming and social media giants, to regulation by the Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). Platforms like Netflix and TikTok will be treated akin to traditional broadcasters. As such, it will be mandated for these services to pay millions of dollars to invest in Canadian content and artists.

What it all means for the Catholic Church, other denominations and religion in general it is too early to tell. But one of the bill’s fiercest opponents expects faith will draw much interest from proponents of the bill that many believe will lead to government censoring voices opposed to those in the corridors of power.

“Let me put it this way,” said Peter Menzies, a senior fellow at the Macdonald-Laurier Institute and a former member of the CRTC. “Religion has always been a topic of interest within the CRTC. There has been concern shown towards religious licences and broadcasters. These broadcasters must include content from other religions or no religion. Now that the CRTC is in charge of the global Internet, I’m not sure how it will affect religious websites, films and other institutions.”

That’s long been a concern for Canadian Catholic entities. In November, the Catholic Civil Rights League (CCRL) expressed concerns about Bill C-11’s possible impacts on free speech in an email to *The Catholic Register*.

“In a free and democratic society, efforts to limit free speech must be opposed in favour of open communication, which includes opinions that the government might view as dissentient,” wrote executive director Christian Elia.

In particular, Elia was concerned about the pro-life voice.

“We support the dignity of the human person from conception until natural death in our opposition to abortion and euthanasia. We hope that broadcasters will allow such voices to be heard in a

robust way rather than submit to government diktat.”

The federal government however, has framed the bill as standing up for Canadian content.

“Today, we are standing up for our stories, our artists, our producers and our creators,” said Heritage Minister Pablo Rodriguez in a statement released upon the bill’s passage. “We’re standing up so that Canadians have even more opportunities to see themselves in what they watch and listen to.”

Critics have dubbed C-11 as the “online censorship bill.” The Conservative Party of Canada, content creators, media industry experts and reps for the big tech platforms have raised concerns that this bill could control what Canadians see and hear online. Artificially enhancing the visibility of selected Canadian artists via playlists, feeds and algorithm recommendations means other content — the media an Internet user likely wants to see — would have to be pushed down.

Menzies served at the CRTC for nearly 10 years, including as vice-chairman and president of telecommunications. He expects “years of court challenges — there will probably be constitutional challenges — and regulatory haggling” and said “It puts tens of thousands of jobs at risk and raises plenty of conundrums for the CRTC. We’re now not only including Canadian companies in supporting the production of Canadian film and television production, but we’ve now outsourced the funding of Canadian film and television projects to foreign multinationals.”

Menzies suggests that companies like Netflix, Amazon Prime and YouTube were already “investing in Canadian television and film jobs quite nicely.” He said Canada has enjoyed great “online prosperity” in the past decade and that this bill could potentially disrupt the monetary success enjoyed by individual content creators on the global marketplace.

Menzies expects the regulatory body will hold some hearings about the Online Streaming Act in the immediate future and that this might take “two or three weeks.” Debates triggered from this hearing could stretch for months, said Menzies. These debates could inspire appeals to the government and constitutional challenges.



Peter Menzies

PILGRIMAGE TOURS WITH AGNES AND MARIA



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CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

**WE ARE
MANY,
WE ARE
ONE**



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in Christ, and individually we are
members, one of another."
(Romans 12:5)

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Catholic schools form students inside and outside of the classroom

This month we will celebrate Catholic Education Week, a time for the community to recognize the importance of Catholic education in our province, where more than 500,000 students attend 1,135 elementary schools and 219 secondary schools encompassing 29 Catholic school boards.

Catholic schools continue to provide an outstanding education that can be witnessed in graduation rates, credit retention of students and application on provincial and worldwide education assessment.

Don't let anyone tell you our schools are not being successful with our students, because that isn't the case. But we can and must do better.

While some may seek to see education simply to produce people for the future job markets as the most meaningful reason to have schools, Catholic educators disagree. To begin with, Catholic education, the oldest educational system worldwide, has never believed that our schools exist to solely provide academic knowledge. Our students do well



JOHN B. KOSTOFF

academically, to be sure, but that is not the purpose of Catholic schools.

In a recent publication entitled *Educating for Eternity: A Teacher's Companion for Making Every Class Catholic*, Brett Salkeld, the Archdiocese of Regina's archdiocesan



Brett Salkeld

theologian, writes, "Our job as Catholic educators is to form students inside and outside of the classroom into people who know that they are made for greatness and understand what true greatness is; people who believe in the possibilities of a good life and are cultivating the virtues needed to live it."



Catholic schools provide an outstanding education that develops students for the classroom and beyond. (Register file photo)

We created Catholic schools so our students would have an integrated understanding of life, where faith infuses all subjects.

Where students learn not only how to be critical, discerning citizens but also the purpose of life, the importance of virtues and attitudes that support all in the community. A fundamental orientation towards creation and the gifts of creation, of recognizing the importance of faith in one's life and having a moral compass that leads one through the challenges that we all face. A fundamental orientation that sees a relationship with God as an essential part of maturing and living meaningful lives of service and dedication to others. A fundamental relationship that recognizes that we all worship something or someone in our life, but the ability to discern what is it that we worship makes all the difference.

A definition of success, and community that is not tied to an individualistic and self-centred way of seeing the world. An education that teaches us that "we are all in this together." An education that must be fundamentally hopeful and not allow our students to be consumed by the negative aspects of our culture or the events they encounter as we move through life.

As Jesus says, and it applies most directly to Catholic schools, "I came that thy may have life and have it abundantly." An education that invites students to enter into

an authentic relationship with Jesus and the community that is the Church. An education that sees all of life with a sacramentality.

For our students to know, as the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote, "Earth is crammed with Heaven, and every common bush afire with God; but only he who sees takes off his shoes, the rest sit around and pluck off its blackberries."

Catholic education of course is always challenged, as all education is, to ensure that it provides equal quality of experience and outcomes to all students. It must continue to grow, to meet the authentic needs of students, parents, the community they serve and our Church. Catholic schools can leave no student behind who enters its doors.

Catholic schools cannot be museums of the past, nor can they be a play thing that is used then discarded because someone did not know the value of what they had.

Thomas Groome writes, in *What Makes Education Catholic*, "surely Catholic education can draw a life-giving vision from its rich spiritual wisdom bequeathed by its Jewish roots, from Jesus of Nazareth, and from over 2,000 years from engaged faith tradition.

See OUR STUDENTS on Page 9

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Our students are called to greatness

Continued from Page 8

The legacy can lend a spiritual vision for Catholic schools encouraging them to educate both for their immanent and transcendental purposes, encouraging in students both a horizontal and vertical perspective on life in the world.”

The vision for Catholic schools must always be on the horizontal plane, of what to learn and on the vertical plane of how to integrate that knowledge into a life well lived according to our faith tradition. Each day teachers, priests, bishops, superintendents, principals, directors of education,

trustees, support staff, parents and millions of Catholic supporters seek to remind our students that they are not made for the ordinary but for greatness. Where we assist students in hearing the call of God for each of them in their lives.

This year celebrate with your local Catholic school, attend whatever event they offer during Catholic Education Week. Catholic schools approach curriculum in a uniquely different way, an education that is manifested in the Religious Education Program, the Family Life Program, our secondary Religion Program, our sacramental

Educators teach our young to hear the call of God in their lives

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

WE ARE MANY, WE ARE ONE

Celebrating

Catholic Education Week

2023

All the living praise you, O God, just as I do today. One generation to the next makes known your faithfulness.

(Isaiah 38:19)

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Catholic curriculum integrates the faith perspective in all academic learning. (Register file photo)

program, our chaplaincy programs and religion consultants, and of course, the Catholic Graduate Expectations that all serve as a vision for our system.

A curriculum program for our students that integrates the faith perspective in all academic

learning. A school system, that seeks to have students walk, like those frightened and worried people in the Gospel story of Emmaus, who eventually began to understand their faith through accompaniment, discussion, teaching and celebration, not on

our timeline but on theirs. (Kostoff, serves as the executive director of OCSOA, and has published frequently on the topic of Catholic education and the Catholic family. He is a frequent contributor to The Catholic Register.)

CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK

April 30-May 5, 2023

CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

WE ARE MANY, WE ARE ONE

"We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members, one of another."

(Romans 12:5)

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Rock star's reconciliation legacy a hit

Catholic schools embrace 'truth teller' Gord Downie

BY WENDY-ANN CLARKE
The Catholic Register

The legacies of late Tragically Hip frontman Gord Downie and Chanie Wenjack, an Anishnawbe boy who never came home from residential school, are helping to transform Catholic education for the better.

Since 2018, the Chanie Wenjack Fund has been providing tools and resources to educators across Canada to build cultural understanding and create paths toward reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Through various art projects, school initiatives and educational resources, the program is helping educators raise awareness about residential schools and to celebrate and acknowledge local Indigenous communities and lands.

Currently there are over 7,200 educators and youth leaders across Canada participating in the Legacy Schools program, including more than 5,800 active schools, Catholic



Tragically Hip singer Gord Downie's legacy in promoting awareness for reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous peoples is a hit in Catholic schools. (Photo from Wikipedia)

and otherwise, and clubs.

Born in Ogoki Post on the Marten Falls Reserve on Jan. 19,

1954, in 1963, at the age of nine, Wenjack was sent to the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School

in Kenora, Ont. In 1966, at 12-years-old, he ran away attempting to reunite with his family 600 kilometres away in Ogoki Post. His body was found beside the railway tracks on Oct. 22, 1966, a week after he fled.

Downie, who passed away in 2018, learned this story through Wenjack's sisters Pearl and Daisy and was deeply moved to raise awareness. The families came together to create the fund in Wenjack's memory.

In 2016, Downie asked all Canadians to look at the state of Indigenous-settler relations in this country and to "do something" to change them for the better. For his reconciliation efforts, Downie was given the Lakota Spirit Name Wicapi Omani, which translates as "Man who walks among the stars,"

Sarah Midanik, president and CEO of the Downie Wenjack Fund, says the program's fast-growing reach in just a short few years is due in large part to the efforts of schools like St. Bonaventure in the Dufferin-Peel Catholic board, led by teacher Andrea Eby. The Grade 1/2 teacher acted as a liaison for the program within the school to bring classrooms on board and promote

the importance of the reconciliation message.

Downie was a "truth teller," said Midanik, who used his platform with the hugely popular Tragically Hip to shine a light on social justice for Canadians of all spiritual beliefs.

"As Christians or Catholics, Jewish people or Protestant, you name it, it really is about having that humility to look at the horrific injustices of the past and say, 'What is our role to do better today?'" said Midanik. "How can we contribute to building a more equitable and just society and relationship with Indigenous peoples and communities today? I think the amount of Catholic schools that are participating in the Legacy Schools program is really representative of the hope and I would say heart forward work that needs to be done as we embark on this healing journey together."

Now in her 18th year teaching and 16th at St. Bonaventure, Eby became aware of Wenjack's story in the 2017-18 school year while teaching empathy as the virtue of the month, but felt her young students were struggling to truly

See PROGRAM on Page 11



We Are Many, We Are One

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Program raises reconciliation awareness



Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire’s *Secret Path* tells the tragic residential school story of the Indigenous boy Chanie Wenjack in northern Ontario.

Continued from Page 10

understand what that meant.

In search for someone who could emulate the virtue of empathy for her students, she found the story of Downie, who passed away the following week, and his work with Indigenous peoples. Eby said she was blown away and discovered her role model for empathy.

The students were immediately taken with the story and Eby began investigating curriculum with board consultants. With her students she created a series of projects on anti-racist and anti-biased learning.

Since then, the entire school community has been built around Indigenous education, learning more and advocating to do the right thing. Most of that, Eby says, has been confirmed through the Downie Wenjack Fund.

The Secret Path is a 10-song album by Downie with a graphic novel by Jeff Lemieux that tells the story of Wenjack. Among St. Bonaventure’s many reconciliation projects, lessons and activities that take place throughout the year, on Orange Shirt Day, every class was given a song from the album and tasked with creating an interpretation of the lyrics. The lyrics were hung on a tree along with pieces of art created by students. The whole school enjoyed the project as an outdoor art walk.

The program’s place in Catholic education brings the residential school story in many ways full-circle, says Eby. So much of reconciliation is about doing the work to become aware and building meaningful connections with Indigenous communities.

Eby’s efforts and those of teachers, administration, parents and students has transformed the school culture to one that centres on awareness and healing all year long. This includes special projects highlighting truth and reconciliation day and activities for Catholic Education Week.

Eby is currently the only Catholic educator on the fund’s advisory board. The role and weight of responsibility of this position is not lost on her.

“I am very aware that I have a unique viewpoint, one that really is linked to my duty to serve as a Catholic educator in the wider community,” said Eby.

“I take back a lot of really tough questions and issues to the school and the school board and our wider community which is continuing. Although this started in 2017, as a virtue of the month on empathy, it really has become school-wide. We can all express empathy, but it takes a lot of work and it takes a lot of unlearning.”



Andrea Eby

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School steps up for Ukrainian refugees

BY WENDY-ANN CLARKE
The Catholic Register

As First Communion approaches for the St. Demetrius Catholic School community, many members who had fled Ukraine and its war found themselves in need of more than sacramental nourishment.

So the school community has stepped up to provide First Communion clothing to allow Ukrainian refugee families to fit in as the young receive the sacrament.

Staff recognized the need for dresses and suits for these children who arrived in Canada with next to nothing, says school principal, Lily Hordienko. Almost half of the students at the school are in need of as much assistance as possible.

This year alone, the Eastern Rite Catholic school has welcomed 175 Ukrainian refugees. In total, since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the school has taken in roughly 220 refugee students. Many of these families consist of mothers who have travelled to Canada alone with their children, leaving the father's behind to face the war.

Families of their classmates began donating communion suits. The school's affiliate church community, St. Demetrius the Great Martyr Parish, has also stepped up and a post on a parent group site on social media brought



Some of the clothing donated for Ukrainian refugees soon to receive First Communion at Toronto's St. Demetrius School. (Photo courtesy Lily Hordienko)

donations of 12 dresses and nine suits.

A section of the school library has been dedicated to the collection of communion garments as well as clothing for students' upcoming Grade 8 graduation. The school is still accepting donations.

"We're trying to do everything we can for these people who have come here fleeing a war," said

Hordienko. "Most of them are coming with nothing, just a bag with a few items. We want them to have their dignity and we want them to try to have as much of a normal life here whether they are staying or going back."

Since the war in Ukraine broke out more than a year ago, the school has been putting the Catholic Education Week theme,

We Are Many, We Are One, into tangible action. One of three Eastern-rite Catholic schools in the Toronto Catholic District School Board, many of the staff and 100 per cent of the student body at the kindergarten to Grade 8 school have family in Ukraine. Roughly 25 students have returned to Ukraine with family, many of them missing their father's, says Hordienko.

Beyond communion suits, new children that come to the school are given uniforms, backpacks, lunch bags and shoes. Families also receive gift cards to help purchase staples for the household. With the surging cost of food, the school also has a pantry in the library that is replenished with food every week and given to families in need to take home, as well as toiletries, some medical supplies and diaper.

Trustee Markus di Domenico has advocated on the school's behalf, collecting funds to buy gift cards for the those in need. Hordienko says none of this would be possible without staff going the extra mile to help make sure the children and their families feel welcome and have what they need.

"These teachers are not teachers, they are honestly angels from Heaven," said Hordienko.

"They are so dedicated and go so above and beyond every single day. They don't just teach these children but are looking after every aspect of these children's lives. It's incredible. They are going in the evening to buy something because it's missing in the pantry. It's truly unbelievable... People would be floored if they saw it, really."

The school also provides lunches for the students four days a week. People give through the parish to pay for the food and women from the parish along with staff prepare the lunches.

The school currently has more than 430 students. Before the war started it was at just over 250. Six portables have been ordered to expand capacity, which will bring the total to eight.

The influx has completely transformed the school, says Hordienko, who has had to hire a number of new staff, not the least of which has been those providing English as a second language and mental health supports.

"We've literally gained 175 ESL students," said Hordienko. "Some have seen awful things. Some of them have lost their father during this war. The needs are greater than just a regular school year."

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April 30 - May 5, 2023

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«Nous qui sommes plusieurs, nous sommes un seul corps dans le Christ, et membres les uns des autres.» (Romans 12:5)

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The many become one in Christ

Catholic Education Week 'a beautiful time' for schools

BY QUINTON AMUNDSON
The Catholic Register

The theme for this year's Catholic Education Week, "We are Many, We Are One," originated from Romans 12:5.

The passage reads: "We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members, one of another."

Anne O'Brien, the director of Catholic education for the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA), said there were several sources that inspired this year's theme.

"We were thinking of how we rebuild (post-pandemic)," said O'Brien. "We thought 'we are many, we are one' because we are coming back together. We also have the (upcoming) Synod on Synodality ... so that was a part of it."

There was also truth and reconciliation emerging from Pope Francis' penitential visit to Canada, last summer and "the principles of inclusion and equity... which Pope Francis wrote about in the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*," O'Brien added.



Anne O'Brien, director of Catholic education with the Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association. (Photo from OCSTA)

O'Brien said the rich diversity of students among the 575,000 students enrolled in the Ontario Catholic school system makes the 2023 theme fitting. The OCSTA conceptualized a treasure trove of teaching resources, classroom activities and

multimedia to impart the message of Catholic Education Week to each stakeholder group of the community.

One of the items released early to create buzz was an upbeat theme song called "We are Many, We are One," featuring lyrics, music and instrumentation from Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board teacher Nancy Bodsworth. The chorus message of this track is "We are Many, We are One, shining brightly, like the sun, coming together, one Body in Christ, We are Many, We are One."

Lessons were also designed for elementary and secondary students. The plans formulated for the younger age groups features a "minds on" activity, which invites the students to reflect upon and discuss a prayer, a reading or media they heard. They then engage in a reading and classroom brainstorming "action" project. The final step of the lesson, "consolidation," empowers each student's creative muscle. This component could feature arts and craft, outdoor fun, classroom skits and more.

The teachings for the secondary school are steeped in spiritual reflection, Scripture and prayer to

speak to the students reaching adulthood. There is also a rubric with guidance to help teachers to lead their students through a one-day spiritual retreat if they so choose.

"As a former teacher myself, I can tell you that we always look forward to Catholic Education Week every year," said O'Brien. "It really is a chance for us to come together as a community. There is a great combination of classroom and larger school activities like assemblies. It is a beautiful time for families to come into the schools. A lot of plays are performed during this time and different showcases of the arts are presented."

Another partner in Catholic Education Week is the Archdiocese of Toronto. A special Eucharistic celebration was hosted May 3 at St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica.

The "We are Many, We are One" spirit transcends beyond the borders of Ontario, said O'Brien. Over the years Catholic school boards across Canada have asked to utilize the OCSTA materials and logos.

"We say absolutely," said O'Brien. "Whatever we can do to support you in your areas."

A photograph of five students (three girls and two boys) standing in front of a stone wall. The wall has a large sign that reads "ST. THOMAS MORE COLLEGE" in red letters, "UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN" in black letters, and "1437 COLLEGE DRIVE" in black letters. To the right of the sign, it says "OVER \$225,000 in student awards!".

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Students from Mississauga, Ont.'s Holy Name of Mary College School take part in a mission journey in March to San Joaquin, Dominican Republic. (Photo by Euginia Nicoletti)

Mission trip combines science with service

BY ANGELICA VECCHIATO
Register Correspondent

A unique mission trip offered at Holy Name of Mary College School blended medicine and philanthropy in a seminal journey to San Joaquin, an impoverished village of around 250 people, in the Dominican Republic.

Organized annually by Holy Name of Mary instructor Euginia Nicoletti in partnership with the Foundation for Peace based in the United States, these Grade 8 students with a heart for serving others were able to make the trek to the Global South, volunteering their time from March 17-24.

Nicoletti, who has organized the medical mission trip for the past eight years, says that each year the journey is life-changing for her students.

"The trip transforms the girls into helping others. It aligns with our core Felician values of respect for human dignity, justice, compassion and transformation," said Nicoletti, the Medical Science Leader at the Mississauga, Ont., school.

When the girls first arrive, Nicoletti takes them on a walking tour. She notes that at first, her students are very quiet and emotional, unable to grasp how "desolate the conditions are."

"At the beginning, on the tour, the girls are in shock," she said. "Some wanted to leave when they first saw the orphanages in town because they had never seen disabilities to this extent. But I told them that by taking time from their lives to be with these children, they were giving a big gift to them. These children need to be loved."

Offered as part of the medical science program at Holy Name of Mary, an independent all-girls Catholic school, the trip merges science and charity.

Attendees were able to participate in door-to-door clinics, where they visited the homes of patients who were either immobile or too sick to attend walk-in hours. Students carrying medications and prescriptions, accompanied by doctors, observed the diagnosis process and one-on-one patient

care at the door.

The students were also able to volunteer their time at walk-in clinics where they acted as "runners" supplying doctors with pharmaceutical prescriptions from the local apothecary.

With walk-in and door-to-door clinic days combined, the students saw as many as 300 patients.

As well as volunteering their time in medically related areas, the students spent a day at a special needs orphanage. Throughout the trip, they also handed out food and clothing to the villagers.

The abject poverty of San Joaquin fostered a sense of gratitude among the young Canadians.

"The homes in San Joaquin don't have flushing toilets, kitchens, washrooms or fridges. Homes are ridden with leakages and broken windows. Most floors are made of dirt. Many of my student's garages would have been a dream home for these people," said Nicoletti. "The girls do not return to Canada the same students as they were before because they realize what God has gifted them in their health and by being born here in Canada."

This year was a standout one for Nicoletti who saw her students go the extra mile to serve others.

"Students didn't want to say goodbye, it was an emotional parting," she said. "In the end, giving became contagious — a burning need to help the poor develop. This year was the first time that some girls left most of their luggage and clothing behind. They left with just the clothes on their back."

Nicoletti is proud to see that some of the girls who have taken this mission trip have gone on to pursue careers in medicine and STEM-related fields.

"One student received direct entry to medical school from high school. She is going to school in Ireland. She told me that her goal is to learn Spanish so that when she goes back to San Joaquin, she can speak to the people in the village. That is a transformation."

Academic supports help spread the faith

BY MARY FRENCH
Register Correspondent

As another school year nears its end, education partners are sharing a message of hope to educators and students while continuing to spread the spirit of the faith in Ontario's Catholic schools.

Dean Woodbeck, president of the Catholic School Chaplains of Ontario (CSCO), and Mark Siolek, chair of the Catholic Association of Religious and Family Life Educators of Ontario (CARFLEO), are among those taking steps to ensure faith continues to flourish in the classroom.

"We really need to try to expand what we do and how we do it," said Woodbeck.

With new internal support planned for the year ahead, Woodbeck is hopeful that the chaplaincy will continue its work of keeping the faith alive in Catholic schools and fulfilling the primary task of being present to and providing a spiritual touchpoint for the next generation of Catholics on their journey of faith.

"As chaplains, it's very important

for us to really walk with and try to see the giftedness of each student and staff member that's part of our community and help them to continue their journey," Woodbeck says.

In late April, CSCO held its annual conference in Gananoque, Ont., with a theme of "Reimagining Ministry." Expanding ministry to social media platforms and spending more time in small groups are some of the ways chaplaincy ministry looks to adapt to the current times.

With churches and gatherings closed off in the previous years, Woodbeck said chaplaincy is simply focusing on fostering community and bringing people together to gather again in prayer.

"We have to take a look at how we can try to make that (community prayer) more available, comfortable and interesting — not just to the students, but to the families, so we can get

reconnected," said Woodbeck. "I think those are issues that not only chaplaincy in schools needs to look at, but parishes I think also need to look at."

This year's conference offered important support for the chaplaincy leaders as well. Gathering again after the isolation of COVID offered a touch point for senior and new chaplains alike that was much anticipated.

"Not having four years of chaplaincy gatherings and annual gatherings meant that there's a number of chaplains who are new," explains Woodbeck, "so we're looking at some new possibilities for some workshops and a package for new chaplains."

Siolek said CARFLEO is likewise taking steps to help faith flourish in the classroom. His main focus with CARFLEO this year is creating mentorship opportunities for new consultants, coordinators and teachers. To support Catholic teachers, reconstruction of the CARFLEO website is also underway, which will provide easier access to curriculum, religious prayers, religious and family life education.

For teachers expanding their knowledge base or stretching their expertise to new theological discussion in the classroom, CARFLEO provides the tools to teach confidently and orthodoxically. For those seeking answers, the truth of the faith needs to be fearlessly and explicitly accessible, said Siolek, because of the abundant and overwhelming access to varied interpretations of the faith online.

"Catholic education is a rich gift. It needs to be shared," said Siolek. "We do amazing things and we raise the next generation of concerned, competent, caring, Catholic citizens."

With support and easy access to clarity on the teachings of the Church, Siolek is working to build a strong spiritual core in schools and hopes this will empower students to develop a living faith and spirit of charity both inside and out of the classroom. By building confidence in their spiri-

tuality, he believes conversations among students, teachers and staff have the potential to inspire, evangelize and draw out the connections between people on all stages of their faith journey.

As Catholic education continues to dynamically respond to the words of the Church, Siolek says that Ontario Catholic education has been involved with the current Synod on Synodality as well. The conversation has drawn out success stories of Catholic education and has opened further conversation to where to improve the teaching of religious education and engagement within the parishes and youth.

"We can only do better by sharing and listening," said Siolek.

Following Catholic Education Week, parents, chaplains, teachers, administrators and Catholic partners from across the province will be gathering for the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) Symposium in Toronto May 9 and 10 to share more thoughts, ideas, approaches and strategies for continuing to share and improve Catholic education in Ontario.



Dean Woodbeck



Mark Siolek

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CATHOLIC REGISTER STAFF

Graduates who have made their mark in sportscasting, broadcasting, the National Basketball Association, education, nursing and cartoons are this year's Distinguished Alumni Award honorees of the York Catholic District School Board.

Sportscaster Andi Petrillo is a familiar face to sports fans across Canada. She is seen on CBC Sports and is an analyst with OneSoccer. Petrillo has been honoured as best sports host with a Canadian Screen Award and is a graduate of St. Joan of Arc High School in Maple, Ont.

Andrew Nembhard, a graduate of Aurora's St. Jerome's Elementary School, currently plays for the Indiana Pacers of the NBA. He has represented Canada on the world stage at a number of FIBA competitions from the U-16 to the men's national team at the 2019 FIBA World Cup.

James Anderson manages a number of Rogers TV studios in York and Durham Regions and has his hands on a number of productions as director, including *The Parenting Show*. The graduate of Our Lady Help of Christians Elementary and St. Robert's High Schools is also on the board of directors of Georgina Cares.

John Calarco does extensive research in the Department of Cell and Systems Biology at the University of Toronto and is a Canada Research Chair in Neural RNA Biology. The assistant professor and researcher attended the University of Toronto and started a research lab at Harvard University. He attended St. Francis of Assisi and St. Peter Elementary Schools and graduated from Fr. Bressani High School in Woodbridge.

Daniele Rossi is a digital marketer and cartoonist who has been drawing comics most of his life, offering support to fellow stutterers through his "Stuttering is Cool" podcast and his online community Stutter Social. His book that shares the name of his podcast has also been used by speech therapists. He is a graduate of St. Elizabeth High School in Thornhill.

And Maria-Rosa La Neve is a clinical research nurse coordinator at Toronto's Sick Children's Hospital and RSV nurse coordinator. She is currently working in the Division of Infectious Diseases. La Neve attended St. Rene Goupil Elementary School, St. Michael Catholic Academy and graduated from St. Robert High School in Thornhill.



Among the six York Catholic District School Board Distinguished Alumni for 2023 are sportscaster Andi Petrillo, left, and NBA player Andrew Nembhard. (Photo at left from Wikipedia, at right from Facebook)



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A little Attila the Hun in all of us



IN EXILE
FR. RON ROLHEISER

There's a saying attributed to Attila the Hun, a fifth-century ruler infamous for his cruelty, which reads this way: For me to be happy, it's not just important that I succeed; it's also important that everyone else fails.

I suspect that Atilla the Hun was not the author of that, but, no matter, there's a lesson here.

The Gospels tell us that God's mercy is unlimited and unconditional, that God has no favourites, that God is equally solicitous for everyone's happiness and salvation and that God does not ration His gift of the Spirit. If that is true, then we need to ask ourselves why we so frequently tend to withhold God's Spirit from others in our judgments — particularly in our religious judgments. We are blind to the fact that sometimes there's a little of Attila the Hun in us.

For example, how prone are we to think this way? For my religion to be the true, it's important to me that other religions are not true. For my Christian denomination to be faithful to Christ, it's important that all the other denominations be considered less faithful. For

the Eucharist in my denomination to be valid, it's important that the Eucharist in other denominations be invalid or less valid. And, since I'm living a certain sustained fidelity in my faith and moral life, it's important to me that everyone else who isn't living as faithfully does not get to Heaven or is assigned to a secondary place in Heaven.

Well, we aren't the first disciples of Jesus to think this way and to be challenged by Him in our Attila the Hun proclivities. This is in fact a large part of the lesson in Jesus' parable regarding an over-generous landowner who paid everyone the same generous wage no matter how much or little each had worked.

We are all familiar with this story. A landowner goes out one morning and hires workers to work in his fields. He hires some early in the morning, some at noon, some in mid-afternoon and some with only an hour left in the workday. Then he pays them all the same wage — a generous one. The people who worked the full day understandably became resentful,

upset that (while their wage was in fact a generous one) they felt it was unfair to them that those who had worked a lot less should also receive an equally generous wage. The landowner in response says to the complainant, "Friend, I am not being unjust to you. Didn't you agree to this wage? Why are you envious because I am generous?" (Matthew 20:1-16).

Notice that Jesus addresses the one making the complaint as "friend." That's a designation for us, we, the ones who are faithfully doing the full day's work. Note His tone is warm and soft. However, His challenge is less warm and soft: Why are you jealous because God is overly generous? Why is it important to us that because we are doing things right, that God should be hard on those who aren't?

Full disclosure: sometimes I imagine myself, after having lived a life of celibacy, entering Heaven and meeting there the world's most notorious playboy and asking God, "How did he get in here?" and God answering, "Friend, isn't Heaven a wonderful place! Are you envious because I am generous?" Who

knows, we might even meet Attila the Hun there.

One of the core values held by a certain group of Quakers is something they call generous orthodoxy. I like the combination of those two words. Generosity speaks of openness, hospitality, empathy, wide tolerance and of sacrificing some of ourselves for others. Orthodoxy speaks of certain non-negotiable truths, of keeping proper boundaries, of staying true to what you believe and of not compromising truth for the sake of being nice. These two are often pitted against each other as opposites, but they are meant to be together. Holding ground on our truth, keeping proper boundaries and refusing to compromise even at the risk of not being nice is one side of the equation, but the full equation requires us to be also fully respectful and gracious regarding other people's truth, cherished beliefs and boundaries.

And this is not an unhealthy syncretism, if what the other person holds as truth does not contradict what we hold — although it might be very different and may

not in our judgment be nearly as full and rich as what we hold.

Hence, you can be a Christian, convinced that Christianity is the truest expression of religion in the world without making the judgment that other religions are false. You can be a Roman Catholic, convinced that Roman Catholicism is the truest and fullest expression of Christianity, and your Eucharist is the real presence of Jesus, without making the judgment that other Christian denominations are not valid expressions of Christ and do not have a valid Eucharist. There's no contradiction there.

You can be right, without that being contingent on everyone else being wrong!

(Fr. Rolheiser can be reached at ronrolheiser.com)

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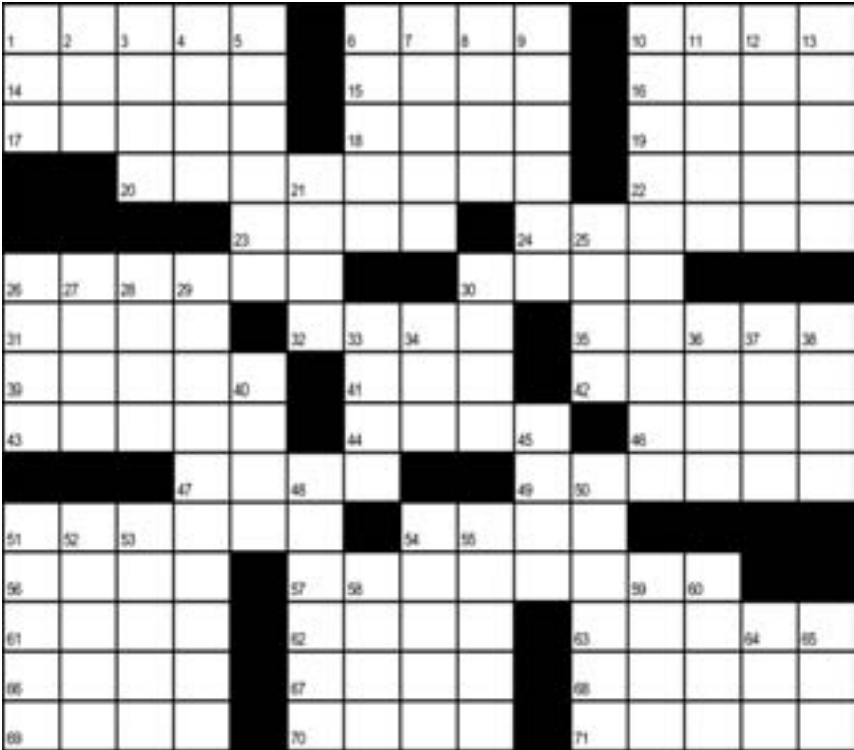
ACROSS

- 1. Zones
- 6. Father-daughter boxers
- 10. Karate level
- 14. Marsh grass
- 15. Mother of Helen of Troy
- 16. Actor Sharif of "Dr. Zhivago"
- 17. Separate
- 18. Singles
- 19. Hawaiian goose
- 20. Apostle who replaced Judas - his memorial is May 14
- 22. Suffix for perform
- 23. Thin
- 24. Wears away
- 26. Glasgow girls
- 30. Thunderbirds' org.
- 31. Opposed to
- 32. Faucets

DOWN

- 35. Tiffs
- 39. Post office purchase
- 41. Larry & Curly's partner
- 42. Heaps
- 43. Type of sax
- 44. Architect ____ Saarinen
- 46. Transmitted
- 47. Person, place or thing
- 49. Beef cuts
- 51. Muscle twitches
- 54. Marine mammal
- 56. Period before Easter
- 57. Foundress of the Vallumbrosan Nuns whose memorial is May 22
- 61. Aware of
- 62. Novelist ____ Bagnold
- 63. Swerves
- 66. Hearing-related
- 67. Confirmation, for one
- 68. Gladden
- 69. Prepare for a trip
- 70. Suffix for young
- 71. More withered

- 5. Come to terms
- 6. Luau greeting
- 7. Stalin's predecessor
- 8. Notion
- 9. Talks back
- 10. Patron saint of flight attendants whose memorial is May 29
- 11. Redact
- 12. Spear
- 13. Genealogical charts
- 21. Examination
- 25. Rough file
- 26. Endure
- 27. Poker pot starter
- 28. Comic book legend, ____ Lee
- 29. English Carmelite saint whose memorial is May 16
- 30. Consumer
- 33. So be it
- 34. Edgar Allan ____
- 36. Pub pints
- 37. Camper's shelter
- 38. Orly landers, once
- 40. School dance
- 45. Out loud



Last issue's answers

DOWN

- 1. Comparison words
- 2. Agent
- 3. Dutch cheese
- 4. Taj Mahal site

- 48. Shows to a seat
- 50. Martini garnishes
- 51. Sailboat
- 52. Prefix meaning five
- 53. Shenanigan
- 54. Hit, biblically
- 55. Duck down

- 58. Military group
- 59. Prefix for vision
- 60. Twelve months
- 64. Hwy.
- 65. Sun. talk

Designed by: Bob Carson

As a chosen race, we are Jesus’ companions

Fifth Sunday of Easter (Year A) May 7 (Acts 6:1-7; Psalm 33; 1 Peter 2:4-9; John 14:1-12)

Tension and misunderstanding in church communities is nothing new. As the faith continued to spread, more people from disparate backgrounds joined the community, which often gives rise to friction and resentment.

The first incident involved the Greek-speaking members of the community, who felt that they were being neglected in the distribution of the bread. It was obvious that the Apostles had too many responsibilities. No one can do everything, and usually job performance suffers as a result of overwork. Seven men of good character were chosen and installed by the laying on of hands. They were *diakonoi* —



GOD’S WORD ON SUNDAY
FR. SCOTT LEWIS S.J.

servers — and at this stage there is no evidence that they fulfilled any liturgical function. There is evidence, however, that women were also *diakonoi*. We know this from both Christian and pagan sources.

The question of female deacons

is under study by a Vatican commission and a favourable outcome is possible. The takeaway from this account of the choosing of deacons is the way in which they dealt with conflict. Rather than name-calling and open warfare, the matter was settled through dialogue, prayer and the Spirit. The Spirit cannot do its work if the people are not right with one another and with God. Those chosen to distribute the bread at table viewed this as a sacred calling and ministry, in line with Paul’s insistence that no part of the body of Christ is more important than the other.

This is echoed in the image of Christ as the living stone along with the living stones of those who believe and follow His path. The letter urges them to build a living temple in which true sacrifice and worship can take place.

Christ is precious to those who believe in Him, but the letter recognizes that not all will see Him in this light. Some are indifferent, while others are outright hostile. And so it must be — in a sense, Christ is the cause of division as the Gospels tell us. There will be those

who embrace His message, those who will shrug their shoulders and then those who will be negative and hostile.

The letter continues with the acclamation that we are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation and God’s own people. This is not because of any achievement or spiritual superiority on our part other than our commitment of faith and our willingness to walk the path of Jesus. Those titles all signify service and example, not superiority or dominance. God will use us and depend on us for the spreading of the Gospel and the ministry to souls. In this way we exercise the priesthood that we have all been given in Christ.

The Gospel reading is quite dense and requires much unpacking. Jesus reassured His disciples that through faith both in Him and in God the Father they would never be alone or separated from the Lord. Jesus had already urged them to dwell or remain in Him and that means He carries them within Himself. They still did not understand, and they were on the verge of panic at His imminent

departure. But He again reassured them that there was room for many and that there were numerous way-stations on the journey. And then He clarified all their questions by revealing that He is the “way, the truth and the life.”

He was not speaking of Christianity, but of Himself. He is the divine pattern for all of humanity. In His person He has revealed the nature of God — love and light, as we are told in John’s letters. To all who follow His path, He promised life — that is, dwelling in the conscious awareness of God’s presence. He then said something rather shocking: those who believe in Him and follow His path will be able to do even greater things than Him. Jesus came to transform His followers into what He is and to embark on a long journey in service to God and to struggling souls.

Jesus does not need fellow travelers and those just along for the ride. He needs and wants co-workers, companions and partners. After all, He invited us to be His friends, not His servants. The next move is ours.

Pope calls for a ‘new sexual revolution’

One that respects life and marital love

BY JUSTIN MCLELLAN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY
Humanity needs a revolution in how it thinks about sex, Pope Francis said.

“We need to discover the beauty of human sexuality by once again turning to the great book of nature, learning to respect the value of the body and the generation of life, with a view to authentic experiences of conjugal love,” he wrote in a message to participants in an academic conference on fertility published April 28.

The Pope said that serious education in the relational and procreative dimensions of sexual relationships is increasingly necessary “in a world dominated by a relativistic and trivialized view of human sexuality.”

Such education requires “an anthropological and ethical approach in which doctrinal issues are explored without undue simplifications or inflexible conclusions.”

Pope Francis underscored the need to affirm both the unitive and procreative elements of sex, noting that without them “the experience of sexuality is impoverished, reduced to sensations that soon become self-referential, and its dimensions of humanity and responsibility are lost.”

The fertility conference, hosted at Rome’s Catholic University

of the Sacred Heart, marks 70 years since the development of the Billings Ovulation Method of natural family planning, which attempts to identify fertility patterns to avoid or achieve conception. While this approach may have appeared “outdated and less reliable” when compared with artificial birth control, the Pope said, the Billings method “has continued to prove timely and challenging,” since it has led to serious reflection on creating an integral vision of human sexuality and promoting “a culture that welcomes life.”

While the Pope supported using scientific methods that can enhance fertility to assist and support a legitimate desire to conceive, he said that in vitro fertilization, to “suppress” embryos, the buying and selling of sperm or eggs and to resort to surrogate parenthood are “wrong.”

The pope also emphasized the role of Catholic universities to further study fertility and spread awareness of fertility and natural family planning methods.



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Snapshot



Kenyan authorities continue to retrieve bodies from shallow graves in a ranch in Kilifi County. By May 1 the official death toll was 110. All victims were followers of the Good News International Church Pastor Paul Mackenzie. He told his followers to pray and fast to meet Jesus and that the world would end April 15. They starved to death. (OSV News photo/Moses Mpuria, courtesy Sheshi Visual Arts)

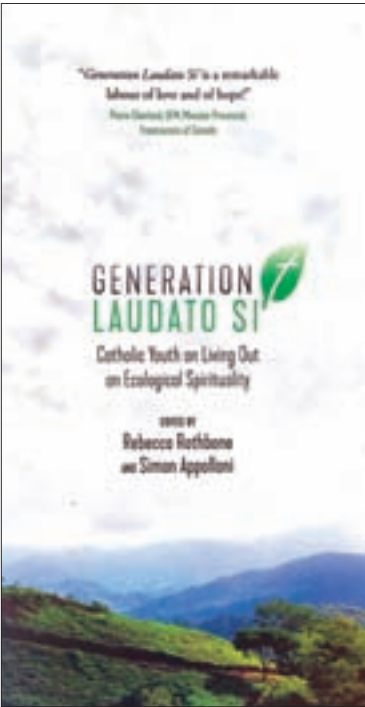
This essay is taken from *Generation Laudato Si’*: Catholic Youth on Living Out an Ecological Spirituality, edited by Rebecca Rathbone and Simon Appolloni, published this year by Novalis. It is by Nolan Scharper, who is studying for a master’s in environment and sustainability at the University of Toronto. Since graduating from Oberlin College near Cleveland, Ohio, in 2016, he has worked with the New York Restoration Project, at the Canadian Ecology Centre in Samuel de Champlain Provincial Park near Mattawa, Ont., and as an educational programmer at Toronto’s Brickworks.

In 2016, a little over a year after the release of *Laudato Si’*, I thought I had left the Catholic Church far behind. I was 22 years old, had just moved to New York City and viewed Catholicism with a mix of anger and confusion. I could not, I thought, untangle my faith from the history of colonialism and imperialism that are woven into the legacy of the Church.

In New York, I started working for an environmental non-profit called the New York Restoration Project. They put me to work in Highbridge Park — a long, thin sliver of wild land that cuts through the steel and concrete flesh of Manhattan for almost 50 blocks, from 155th Street in Harlem to just below 201st Street in Inwood, one of the northernmost neighbourhoods in Manhattan, where the island descends into the ocean.

Highbridge Park sits on the heights, the lofty ridges that adorn northern Manhattan, affording awesome views of the Harlem

” Verbatim



River and the Bronx.

Yet, just like the city on which it perches like a brooding sentinel, Highbridge intertwines both the sacred and the profane into seemingly inextricable knots. It is a place where people come to do what in other places is taboo — whether that is to worship spirits, both beneficent and malevolent, to sacrifice animals, to shoot up, to live when there is nowhere else to go, to hide stolen goods and even to murder and bury the bodies of their victims.

People perform such acts in Highbridge because it is not a

typical forest. It is a place that is infested with one of nature’s most enigmatic parasites: vines.

In Highbridge, vines grew rampant, seeming to choke every tree they could wrap themselves around and thereby consume the forest. I remember seeing vines as thick as pythons encircle trunks like fingers around a helpless throat. Because of their density, the vines obscured what was happening in the forest to the outside observer, allowing people privacy and sanctity to engage in both sacred and profane rituals and activities. My job, along with my crew, was to unwind these vines, trace them back to their roots and then dig them out. After doing so, we would plant native trees in an effort to restore balance to the forest.

As I did this work of physical untangling, I felt the old cynical prejudices strangling my faith begin to uncoil. Miraculously, I began to pray again — something I had not done seriously in years — at first alone, then with others of my crew.

“Around these community actions” Pope Francis articulates in *Laudato Si’*, “relationships develop or are recovered and a new social fabric emerges.” Ecological and spiritual restoration are not separate endeavours. They are interwoven into this “new social fabric,” threading together the mending of Mother Earth with the healing of the human soul.

Verbatim is a weekly feature of The Catholic Register. Texts are edited only for consistency of style and brevity.

Beware loose lips

Catholic school trustee Wendy Ashby has shown a penitential measure of class and character April 26 by publicly apologizing for her bizarre Twitter outburst against “white Christian” men and the “white women” who support “christofascist patriarchy.”

Of course, the Waterloo Catholic District School Board member should have displayed an even greater of degree circumspection before putting her fingers to keyboard. She could then have avoided the well-deserved public scolding she received from her fellow trustees once the tweets hit the fan.

The board as a whole would have been spared officially distancing itself from, and ordering a formal review of, her remarks. The wider world beyond Waterloo would have gotten along just fine, thanks, without Rebel News showing up at the next board meeting to unconscionably milk the local controversy for all the YouTube likes it was worth.

As Register reporter Quinton Amundson writes in this issue, a Rebel “reporter” — we confess to contorting the term far beyond its accepted definition — apparently acted out a delusion that the Waterloo Catholic board is somehow accountable to him. He subsequently hooted long enough and obnoxiously enough at trustees that police were called to restore order. Perhaps a Rebel leader will whisper in the young man’s ear that whatever fantasy image he was conjuring, behaving like a minor league media circus clown has nothing whatever to do with the craft of journalism.

All could have been avoided had Ashby had made the right first choice between delete and tweet. Instead, social media was set in motion with the usual ill effects of bloated outrage, polarized finger-pointing and utterly pointless embarrassment over words that never needed to be said. That said, her relatively rapid recanting of her inexplicable ranting does merit her being shown political forgiveness on Catholic grounds at least

To borrow from St. Paul, all have sinned and fallen short of resisting Twitter’s temptations. It’s instruction she has taken to heart by cancelling her account. Ashby’s lesson, in fact, reinforces a crucial contemporary lesson for the rest of us. The very existence and nature of free speech compels us to daily renewal of our obligation to exercise self-restraint. We’re equally free to speak, and captives of the cost of what we say.

Recently, we’ve witnessed a \$785.5 million quantification of self-restraint’s importance in the Fox News legal settlement with the Dominion Voting machine company. In its wanton gluttony for ever higher audience appeal, and resulting advertising dollars, Fox aired reams of news content it knew to be false, and now faces a near billion-dollar bill as the price of its profligacy.

As in trustee Ashby’s localized minor variation, all could be avoided by adhering to Our Lord’s injunction in Matthew’s Gospel: “It is not the thing that enters the mouth that defiles us, but the thing that proceeds from the mouth.” Add in typing fingers as well, as we have an adage fit for the social media apologizing age.

THE CATHOLIC REGISTER

Founded in 1893. The Catholic Register is published at 1155 Yonge Street, Suite 401, Toronto, ON M4T 1W2.

Tel: 416-934-3410 or Toll Free: 1-855-441-4077
Advertising: Ext 412. ngomes@catholicregister.org
Circulation: Ext 404. circ@catholicregister.org
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Office: accounting@catholicregister.org
Information: info@catholicregister.org
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Published 47 times per year. Subscriptions (taxes included): One year \$48.98, two years \$89.25, Seniors 65+ and students, one year \$44.00, two years \$80.75. Note: Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, one year \$52.71, two years \$96.05; Seniors 65+ and students one year \$47.35, two years \$86.90. U.S.A, one year \$150.00. Foreign \$250.00. Digital Edition: With print subscription \$9.99. Digital only subscribers: \$24.99 (47 issues); \$15.00 (24 issues); \$9.99 (12 issues). The Register is a Qualified Canadian Journalism Organization (Q1229921), with digital subscriptions eligible for tax credit. The Register is a registered charity under the Income Tax Act (# 84212 0685 RR0001) and issues tax receipts for donations of \$20 or more. To donate: CatholicRegister.org/donate. ISSN 0383-1620.



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Don't fall for Satan's con

No doubt you've heard about the sold-out, international "SatanCon" that took place in Boston over the weekend of April 28-30. Of course, the "Con" stands for "Convention." It was put on by The Satanic Temple (not to be confused with The Church of Satan — I guess even Satan's followers have denominations).

Many Satanists claim to not believe in God or Satan, and The Satanic Temple is no exception. According to its website, The Satanic Temple is "a church for non-theistic Satanists." In fact, it's "the only Satanic religious organization recognized as a church by the IRS and the Federal Court System."

The TST does meet a basic requirement for a true religion (in a theological sense): sacrifice. All true religions offer sacrifice, and thus worship their deity(ies) — whether they realize it or admit it or not. TST's sacrifice is abortion (aka child sacrifice). Prominently featured on the TST homepage is an "Abortion Clinic Fundraiser."

Although TST spokesperson Dex Desjardins states that "Satanism is its own unique religious tradition... not a reaction to or a subset of other religions," that's rather difficult to substantiate, since Satan is known to us



A bronze statue of Baphomet, a goat-headed winged deity that has been associated with satanism and the occult, is displayed by The Satanic Temple in Salem, Mass., in this undated photo. (OSV News photo/Ted Siefer, Reuters)

through the Judeo-Christian Bible and tradition.

How can Satanists claim not to believe in Satan? For church members ("church," by the way, is a Christian term), Satan is "a central metaphor representing the pursuit of knowledge, personal liberation and rebellion against arbitrary authority," wrote Desjardins in an email to Boston.com journalist Christopher Gavin.

"Our Satan represents a Promethean hero..., bringing the light of knowledge to humanity in defiance of the ultimate tyrant." Hmm. And who might this ultimate tyrant be?

TST's activist endeavours include signing up to lead invocations at various city councils around the United States. I suppose my question is, if these Satanists are atheists, whom are they invoking? And why chant "Hail, Satan!" at the end of the invocation if the devil is just a symbol? That would be like praising an imaginary literary character in a very real (political) setting. Imagine: "Hail, Gollum!"

It's sad that Marriott hosted the convention. Perhaps their decision-makers didn't care or were afraid of being sued. I remember staying at a Marriott in Montreal during a hotel workers' strike. The picket line featured signs that read "At Least John Lennon Stayed in a Real Hotel" — but I digress.

Counter-activists and protestors to TST's public activities directly bypass and surpass human laws by affirming that "Satan has no rights." "Satanism isn't a religion, it's an attack on God." "One nation under God excludes Satanism." They make some good points. Either God exists and this is His world or He doesn't and it

isn't. Satan exists derivatively. No doubt, some members of TST are sincerely seeking truth, but they ain't gonna find it in their main inspiration: the ultimate deceiver, the Father of Lies. Satan even deceived himself by thinking he could be happy apart from God.

"The mission of the Satanic Temple is to encourage benevolence and empathy, reject tyrannical authority, advocate practical common sense, oppose injustice and undertake noble pursuits." And who gets to decide what is noble? I guess abortion is noble? The truth is that — contrary to what atheists claim — we cannot be good without God. First off, we wouldn't exist without God. And we can't know what's actually good without God. Finally, we don't have the courage, strength or grace to do good without God, or as my father used to say: "you can't even lift your little finger without God's help."

So what was the Archdiocese of Boston's response? A massive call for prayer and reparation, Eucharistic Adoration, rosaries, etc., but one prominent prelate actually advised only one strategy, that of praying quietly at home in order not to draw any more attention to SatanCon. Well, we can also do more when demonism shows up



**CULTURE
À LA CARTE**
SR. HELENA BURNS, FSP

under the guise of respectability. For those who must or feel called to stay at home and pray... fine. But tell that to the God Squad types who thankfully showed up in force to protest peacefully and pray publicly.

Let's pray for those who have fallen into the devil's traps. Let's love 'em and help 'em if we can. No one is beyond the hope of conversion while we're still alive and breathing (even Satanic priests have become Christian!)

I'm not afraid of Satan in the least. Satan is ridiculous. I'm only afraid of myself. Only I can send myself to hell, not Satan, not God. SatanCon or Satan's con? Long live Christ the King.

(Sr. Burns, fsp, is a Daughter of St. Paul. She holds a Masters in Media Literacy Education and studied screenwriting at UCLA. HellBurns.com Twitter: @srhelena-burns #medianuns)

The 'Jerusalem method' assures everyone wins

Many of us dislike going to meetings. Even more do we dread going to long meetings. For me, an hour and a half is the limit. Any longer and I may start looking for an excuse to sneak out the door.

From May 10 to 12, the First Reading at weekday Mass focuses on an extremely long meeting. However, because it was a meeting that had a profound effect on the future of the world, one should not have left early. It also appears that the participants in the meeting were thoroughly engaged. The participants were the leaders of the earliest Christian Church, and they left a model for a Christ-like way to hold a meeting.

The meeting is recounted in chapter 15 of the Acts of the Apostles and is today referred to as the Council of Jerusalem. Only one item was on the agenda — whether newly baptized Gentiles had to adhere to the traditions of the people of Judah, that is, whether Christian men needed to be circumcised.

The issue was crucial. Should Christianity remain a Jewish sect



THE MUSTARD SEED
GLEN ARGAN

with a high barrier to newcomers or should it be open to all? Choosing the latter option would open the possibility of Christianity having an enormous effect on the development of future societies, although no one knew that at the time.

Prior to the council "no small dissension and debate" took place in Antioch between Paul and Barnabas on one side and "certain individuals" on the other as to whether the non-circumcised could be saved. A delegation was sent to Jerusalem to discuss the matter with the apostles and elders.

On their way, they passed through the Phoenicia and Samaria where some Gentiles were converted to the new faith.

Upon arriving in Jerusalem, the delegation told of such conversions but met resistance from Pharisees who wanted to remain faithful to the traditions. When the Apostles and elders met, "much debate" ensued. Peter then spoke of the Holy Spirit being given to Gentiles as well as to Jewish Christians. It is not human traditions that save, he said, but "the grace of the Lord Jesus."

Then Paul and Barnabas told of the conversion of Gentiles. Finally, James quoted the prophet Amos' declaration that it had long been God's plan to include Gentiles in the economy of salvation. James said he had decided not to set up barriers for those who were turning to God. That decision met "the consent of the whole Church."

A delegation prepared to go to Antioch to announce this decision. The letter sent with them again stated the decision to include Gentiles in the holy Church was

made unanimously. But not only was the decision a human one, it was one that "has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us."

The last step was for the delegation to announce the decision to the Church in Antioch where the people received it with much rejoicing.

Much in this account is worthy of note. This was no quickie Zoom meeting or even one run by Robert's Rules of Order. Instead, extensive debate took place on the topic both prior to and during the council. Paul and Barnabas did not send a written request to the elders but made the lengthy journey, interacting with people and the Spirit as they travelled.

Nor was the decision democratic. It was announced by one of the elders; even so the Church approved it unanimously. The previous opposition appears to have disappeared, and the leaders cannot be said to have ignored the will of the people.

Further, the decision was made in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. It was not a display of human

power but of prayer. How often do our Church meetings begin and perhaps end with a brief prayer but with little consultation with the Spirit as issues are discussed? For the leaders of the Council of Jerusalem to declare confidently that the decision seemed good to the Holy Spirit implies that it was made in an atmosphere permeated with prayer.

Finally, the decision was "received" by those whom it most affected. In this instance, they rejoiced. But what of cases where the reaction is negative? Is that not a call of the Spirit to reopen the debate until consensus is reached?

The Jerusalem method of discernment and decision avoids the polarization in Church and society which has become a plague today. It displayed mutual respect among people with sharply different views. And it ended not with winners and losers but with a consensus that produced rejoicing.

(Glen Argan writes his online column Epiphany at <https://glenargan.substack.com>.)

Funny? Maybe it is. Concerning? Definitely

Perhaps AI is going too far

Popping up on Twitter just before Easter was a funny photograph of Pope Francis looking super cool in a puffer jacket.

Or maybe not: not funny, not real, not an isolated incident.

Pope Francis fell prey to a deepfake, what Merriam-Webster defines as being “an image or recording that has been convincingly altered and manipulated to misrepresent someone as doing or saying something that was not actually done or said.”

On a lark, someone used Artificial Intelligence (AI) to make the Pope look like a rock star. For a short while, much of the world believed the image to be a genuine photograph.

But now that we know it's a fake, we must resist the temptation to shrug this off as a benign prank and see it for what it is: a deception with far-reaching consequences, the byproduct of a worrying trend in which the power of AI is taking off exponentially.

A branch of AI called machine learning is amassing more and more information from the Internet. Algorithms and statistical models gather and analyze this data to form increasingly sophisticated patterns from which computer systems can draw certain inferences. This process occurs without human programmers supplying the system with explicit instructions; in essence, the system is learning how to learn on its own.

The result? AI tools can now supply interactive answers to questions, conduct back-and-forth conversations with humans, write essays, compose photographs and artwork, and perform many other functions to produce outcomes that are virtually indistinguishable from what a human can create.

This “learning to learn” process has many profound implications. One area of concern is the quality of the data itself that underlies the machine learning process. There is no overarching regulation, oversight or accountability of the accuracy and ethics of information posted on the Internet, making it very difficult for the technology to distinguish between lies and the truth.

As Melissa Heikkilä writes in her December 2022 MIT Technology Review article: “Large language models are trained on



This AI-generated photo of Pope Francis drew plenty of attention to artificial intelligence. (Photo from Twitter)



CATHY MAJTENYI

data sets that are built by scraping the Internet for text, including all the toxic, silly, false, malicious things humans have written online. The finished AI models regurgitate these falsehoods as fact, and their output is spread everywhere online.”

False information, whether inadvertent or intentional, can result in injury or death, lead people astray and even perpetuate gender, racial and other types of biases. For instance, the image of Pope Francis in a puffer jacket sends the subliminal message that he, and by extension the Catholic Church, are adopting consumerism, celebrity and other worldly values that conflict with Christian teachings during a season, Easter, of great significance for the Church.

Even though people consciously know that the photo was fake, the residue remains: one cannot “unsee” an image.

Another area of concern falls under the realm of plagiarism and violations of copyright and intellectual property. For example, educators are unsure how to navigate students’ increasing use of the conversational program ChatGPT to write essays. Indeed, a March 2023 Best Colleges survey reports that one in five of the American college students surveyed use AI tools such as ChatGPT to complete

their schoolwork. This form of cheating prevents the development of critical thinking, reasoning, planning and communication skills.

An anonymous person harnessed an AI tool to generate a fake song from the voices of musicians Drake and The Weeknd, which went viral and was pulled from platforms recently.

There have also been worries about the potential of AI to replace human workers. A Business Insider article quotes one worker as saying he uses ChatGPT to do 80 per cent of his job, enabling him to take on a second position at the same time unbeknownst to his employer.

These and many other ethical concerns have prompted a group of more than 1,000 industry officials, scientists and others to sign a March 22 open letter calling for “AI labs to immediately pause for at least six months the training of AI systems more powerful than GPT-4.”

“Should we develop nonhuman minds that might eventually outnumber, outsmart, obsolete and replace us? Should we risk loss of control of our civilization?” says the statement, which calls for a set of shared safety protocols for advanced AI design and development audited and overseen by independent outside experts.

Such rapid, unchecked AI development is bringing about results that violate core Catholic Church and Biblical teachings, including dignity of the human person, dignity of work and upholding the truth, which sets us free. Deception is becoming deeper, harder to detect and more integrated into our daily lives, which we must not allow to continue unabated.

(Majtenyi is a public relations officer specializing in research at an Ontario university.)

Abuse solution that includes the Church

BY LEA KAREN KIVI
Catholic Register Special

What happens to children sexually abused by priests as they grow older? Some, tragically, commit suicide. Some fall into alcoholism and drug addiction in an attempt to cope with the enduring pain caused by such profound betrayals of trust. Serial failed relationships, career catastrophes, depression and hopelessness often follow.

After decades of surviving such after-effects, one abuse survivor has risen out of the ashes to reach out to others still living amongst the ruins of their own lives.

In 1963 at age 11, Robert McCabe endured sexual abuse at the hands of a newly-ordained priest assigned to his boyhood parish in Scarborough, Ont. Decades of alcoholism followed, resulting in several failed marital relationships. At one point he found himself homeless, fighting rats for pieces of Kentucky Fried Chicken in a bin at the back of a restaurant.

Early one morning in December 2010, wondering what sort of booze to buy next, McCabe saw a vision of all the people he had loved in his life glaring at him with disgust. He then asked God to help him. Miraculously, instead of buying booze, he opted for a “pack of smokes” and went to a 12-step meeting.

In March 2019, after winning a civil lawsuit about his childhood abuse, McCabe used part of the money awarded to found the charity Recovery Speaking Initiative (RSI — recoveryspeaking.org). This foundation aims to provide support to people who have been sexually abused by anyone in a position of authority over them, whether the abuse occurred in school, sports, Church, the family or elsewhere.

Established in 2020, RSI has provided online peer-level support for men and aims to add a women's online group in the next couple of months. The group has other events planned online and in-person at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Guelph and Toronto for the week of May 14-20 within Sexual Assault Awareness Month. McCabe will be speaking at The Gatehouse in Toronto on May 17, and a number of new videos will be posted to RSI's YouTube (@recoveryspeakinginitiative) and

Facebook accounts.

In addition to providing online support, McCabe has spoken one-on-one with wounded souls and sometimes accompanied them to mediation or court sessions. His team has also sought to help people “in the pews” to heal from the secondary trauma that they have experienced by hearing about cases of clergy sexual abuse in the Church. Partnering with other organizations, he has worked with parishes in Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. Catharines and the Guelph area to help educate parishioners about abuse and to listen to the pain of parishioners themselves struggling to make sense out of the abuse crisis.

Not only at the parish level, but also at the episcopal level, McCabe would like to have discussions on how to bring about healing. He finds that the current adversarial stance pitting survivors against Church leaders isn't working. Although he admires and appreciates the work of SNAP and other survivor organizations, McCabe has adopted a different approach, declaring: “My solution includes the Church.” He believes Pope Francis truly wants to do

something significant on this issue and wants to help break down roadblocks to progress with “a seat at the table.”

In the longer term, McCabe

would like to set up a fund to help the many men and women who need clinical trauma counseling and can't afford to pay for it. Another need is for trauma-informed improvements to legal processes. Going through a trial can be terrifying. Having to speak about abuse to a complete stranger who doesn't have lived experience of abuse is extremely uncomfortable. He sees the need for an intermediary role between clients and their lawyers to help explain legal processes and to spot trauma overload on the part of a client.

Finally, McCabe encourages survivors to work together to determine what they want from the Church. Lists of credibly accused priests alone won't solve the issue. They need to ask themselves, “What is the depth of damage done to my soul?” and determine what can assist in its healing.

(Lea Karen Kivi is president of Angela's Heart Communications Inc.)

‘What is the depth of damage done to my soul?’

Pembroke diocese celebrates its 125th anniversary

A small community that has yielded great faith, says chancellor

BY SUSAN KORAH
Ottawa Correspondent

The Diocese of Pembroke, spanning two provinces, with 60,000 Catholics within its borders, marked the 125th year since its establishment.

Bishop Guy Desrochers was to celebrate a special Mass of Thanksgiving at St. Columbkille Cathedral May 4, with special guests, including two of the

diocese's former bishops.

One of the few dioceses in Canada that spans two provinces, Pembroke covers parts of Ontario and Quebec and has a rich history, with a multicultural heritage and some unique institutions.

May 4 is 125 years to the day since Pope Leo XIII signed a decree creating the new diocese with Bishop Narcisse Lorrain as its first bishop.

"It is a cause of great joy to celebrate 125 years as a diocese," said Desrochers in a release. "Bishop Lorrain planted the seeds of the Gospel, and this celebration gives us the opportunity to give thanks and realize that the



Above, Bishop Narcisse Lorrain and the diocese's clergy mark the establishment of the Pembroke diocese in 1898. At right, Bishop Guy Desrochers holding the crosier of founding Bishop Narcisse Lorrain (Top photo courtesy Diocese of Pembroke, at right, by Armando Prini, St. Francis Studio)



missionary work of the Church continues."

"Our Lord spoke of the kingdom as a mustard seed and that's exactly how I think of the movements of the Holy Spirit in Pembroke diocese," said Fr. Ryan Holly, chancellor of the diocese. "Much of our history is composed of small communities yielding great faith. We are blessed with communities such as Madonna House and the Cormac Pilgrimage to St. Ann's Shrine. These apostolates serve many beyond the borders of our diocese and remind us that the Church is always young."

The Diocese of Pembroke has a wide territorial span that covers both sides of the Ottawa River. Its patron saint is St. Columbkille (Columba), and the Cathedral is named after him.

Mass is offered in English and French at several churches.

One of the churches, St. Mary's in the hamlet of Wilno — built by Polish and Kashub settlers — offers Mass in Polish. The people of Madawaska Valley in particular seek to maintain their Kashub heritage. (Kashubs are a West Slavic ethnic group that speaks a language closely related to Polish.)

Set on top of Shrine Hill, the original church burnt down in 1936 but was rebuilt. The church contains two religious icons, a replica statue of Our Lady of Sianowo, Queen of Kashubia, and

a picture of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Queen of Poland.

The diocese is also home to the Madonna House Apostolate in Combermere, Ont. Founded by Catherine Doherty as a community of men, women and priests, Madonna House attracts people from around the world.

Raised by deeply religious Russian parents, Doherty had a strong sense of responsibility to the poor and was painfully aware of the injustice of the economic and social conditions oppressing many of them. She moved to Combermere in 1947, and soon established Madonna House. From Combermere, members of the community are assigned to field houses around the world, linking

the training centre in Combermere to the universal Church.

The Shrine of St. Ann in Cormac, Ont., has also been a place of pilgrimage and intercession to Good St. Ann. For over 83 years, pilgrims from Ontario, western Quebec and northern New York have been journeying to Cormac to seek the intercession of St. Ann, mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus. The feast of St. Ann is celebrated annually on the last Sunday of July. In recent years, groups of the faithful have developed a walking pilgrimage as a spiritual preparation for Pilgrimage Sunday.

This year's pilgrimage to St. Ann's Shrine will take place on July 30.

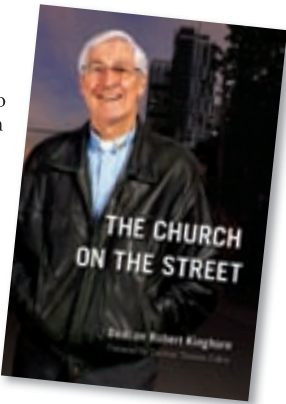


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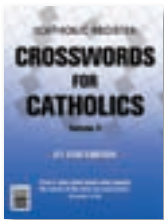
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