Dear Brothers and Sisters of the Archdiocese of Regina.

Since the founding of our country, it has been against the law for someone to take another person’s life, including to help someone commit suicide. A recent ruling of the Supreme Court of Canada has changed that by striking down the laws prohibiting physician assisted suicide in Canada.

The court has stated that any “competent adult person who (1) clearly consents to the termination of life and (2) has a grievous and irremediable medical condition (including an illness, disease or disability) that causes enduring suffering that is intolerable to the individual in the circumstances of his or her condition” has the legal right to physician assisted suicide.

Despite its very great importance, I believe you will find this ruling unhappily full of imprecise words. What does one mean by “competent adult person” or “grievous medical condition”, or “enduring suffering?” Such an elite group as the Supreme Court of Canada should be capable of better than that. We are talking about giving permission to take the life of another human being! I mention this as one of several criticisms that have been leveled at this ruling. You may find these in the public media as well as the Catholic media. Indeed, a recent column in the Regina Leader Post argues that in recent decisions of the Supreme Court we “find a court seemingly detached from any intellectual moorings whatever.”

Intellectual moorings are extremely important, but so are spiritual and moral moorings. We are, after all, human beings. As Catholics, this ruling comes into direct conflict with the teachings of our Church and with our spiritual and moral convictions about the dignity of every person and the sacredness of human life. These convictions are not simply “private beliefs,” they are the standards by which we live our lives. To assist someone to take their own life is “a murderous act.”

We all find it difficult to see people suffer at any time in life, especially those we love. At the end of life, it can be particularly difficult to see anyone afflicted with great suffering. So, why is suicide, or helping someone else to commit suicide, not acceptable for us?

As Catholic Christians, we believe that each of us is responsible for our life before God, because it is God who has given it to us. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life. We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for God’s honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners, of the life God has entrusted to us. Taking one’s own life, therefore, is not an acceptable option to deal with the burdens of human life.

Do we have an obligation to do away with all human suffering? Every person reading this letter knows what pain and suffering is. Pain and suffering are part of every person’s life and will be wiped out only when there are no more people on this earth. As people of faith, we deal with suffering and we confront the reality of suffering with a hope that strengthens us. We are confident that all suffering ends when we leave this world and enter into the “new heaven and the new earth,” where God himself will be with us and will wipe every tear from our eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more. (Rev. 24) This gives us hope, a deep and consoling hope, as we face the sufferings we need to deal with in this life. Is this not a more satisfying and more human than the logic that says the best way to eliminate suffering is to eliminate the sufferer?

In the Salve Regina, a favourite prayer of Catholics, we “send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears!” Heaven on earth – life without suffering – is an unfounded fantasy. We live, then, with the real world and its reality of pain and suffering that can sometimes be “intolerable”.

But in this “valley of tears,” we base our Christian life on Jesus’ command that we must “love one another.” This command of Jesus means that we must work for our neighbour’s good. The elderly and the sick are particularly vulnerable. As such, care for them must be a priority for Christians.

As people of faith we believe that we must accompany those
ARCHBISHOP BOHAN’S RESPONSE... CONT’D

approaching death. We must help ease their suffering and comfort them by all means possible. The Supreme Court in its ruling presumed that the choice before people was either unendurable suffering or suicide. Is it not strange that no mention was made of another way already at hand: effective, compassionate and comforting palliative care? “This includes relief of pain and other distressing physical symptoms, together with assistance in responding to the spiritual, emotional and family needs at end of life. It is extremely important that we continue to affirm the worth, value and dignity of each with compassion and many acts of kindness.”

The Canadian Medical Association has referred to assisted suicide as a “therapy.” Again…very strange! Therapy surely means taking action to better a person’s life, not to end it. Palliative care is therapy. Killing someone is not.

As Catholics we have always believed that suffering is not only something we painfully endure, but also something that has power for good. This comes from our fundamental belief that Jesus’ suffering and death saved us. Jesus teaches us that there is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for someone else. Through his own intolerable suffering, through this act of “no greater love,” Jesus saved all of us from a future which held only eternal death for us. Jesus’ suffering and death gave us fullness of life forever. In Jesus we learn that suffering and sacrifice are able to redeem. Ask parents, ask physicians, ask teachers, ask friends, ask anyone who loves someone.

The horrors of war are filled with the sacrificial heroism of people who deliberately gave up their lives, often in great violence, pain and personal suffering, to save their comrades. This moves us and strengthens us. Suffering, sacrifice and courage have the power to enable others.

What if Terry Fox had been given the option of suicide and decided that, rather than face the ravages of cancer, he would get a doctor to end his life? Despite his debilitating illness, he set out to run across Canada in his Marathon of Hope which inspired and encouraged and motivated thousands of people to face the painful challenges of life with courage and hope. And it still does now, all these years later.

Every one of our lives is a struggle to overcome adversity. We look for people around us who take up the battle and so give us courage. People who were dragged into the destruction of addictions and who fought to become clean or sober. Soldiers who came back from war severely incapacitated and damaged and who rebuilt their lives through heroic effort. And on and on. As Catholic Christians, we believe that we can join our suffering to that of Jesus himself and by doing so we can direct our pain to a powerful good rather than letting ourselves be destroyed by it.

This does not mean that we seek suffering or glorify it. Indeed, we are called to combat it through efforts like good palliative care. But we recognize that suffering is an inevitable aspect of being human, and that the only way to finally eliminate suffering would be to eliminate humanity. Jesus has showed us a better way. We can suffer with and for one another, thereby bringing hope into the most hopeless situations. This is the literal meaning of “compassion,” to suffer with the other, not to eliminate them.

We can never judge other people and their decisions in difficult and crushing circumstances. We can only make our own commitment to follow the call and example of Jesus as best we can. In our current situation, I call on Catholics to work for the relief of suffering through the promotion of palliative care, but also to bear with one another in all our sufferings so that we can show the world a truly human answer to the problem of suffering. We have always before us the words God spoke to us through Moses: “I have set before you, life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him.”

May God bless you, my dear brothers and sisters, and stir up in you the fire of the Holy Spirit. And may the Gifts of the Holy Spirit comfort and strengthen you as you bear fruit for God from day to day.

Yours sincerely in Christ,
Most Rev. Daniel J. Bohan, Archbishop of Regina

Wascana Rehabilitation Volunteer Retires after 24 years

“It’s been my privilege to have been a Catholic volunteer at Wascana Rehabilitation Centre for 25 years” says Lorraine Levere. “I found it very rewarding to participate in the services and to help bring some Spiritual Care and comfort to residents. The other volunteers and porters are a great asset. I would recommend anyone interested to volunteer for the various duties there. It is time well spent and many friendships are formed”.

Pictured above are the Friday group of volunteers that Lorraine worked with along with the number of years they each have been volunteering:

Back Row: Karen Ziegler (chaplain), Bonnie Thomas (10 years), Ron Thomas (10 years), Dave Hartnell (20 years), Harvey Friess (17 years).
Middle Row: Sr. Alvina Marie Charlebois (5 years), Maureen Wild (41 years), Loretta Heineman (8 years).
Front Row: Lorraine Levere (24 years), Lynne Rieben (7 years), Don Doom (24 years).
SYNOD ON FAMILY PREPARATIONS

Language is one of the issues that should be considered when representatives of the world’s Roman Catholic Bishops gather in Rome October 2015 for the Synod on the Family. The language the Vatican uses, needs to be written in a way that is understandable by the people. This was one of the issues that came up during an Archdiocesan Workshop held to discuss questions arising from the Extraordinary Synod on Marriage and the Family held in Rome last October.

An invitation to take part in the workshop was sent to all Archdiocesan parishes. The world’s Roman Catholics were asked to discuss what came out of the last Synod and to send their further suggestions to Rome in time for the next Synod in October 2015.

“We’re not here to solve problems, decide on what’s right or wrong or take a vote,” said Salkeld in his opening remarks. Our role is to give feedback to the bishops, to give them something to think about. “The Pope wants to hear what is going on in the lives of the people of God.”

The 24 registered participants were divided into four smaller groups and discussed each of the four questions that were condensed from the document that resulted from the Extraordinary Synod: How to better identify the reality and diversity that exists within the culture and within the Church; How to bring about pastoral conversion on marriage and family life to assist them to become what they are; How best to transmit the Church’s teaching on marriage, family and sexuality as truly good news and What paths of action should the Church take to engage and practically support families?

A plenary afternoon session heard reports from each of the groups on each question. Language, in all its variety, nuances and meanings including inter-generational language seemed to receive much attention. The discussions ranged between the Eucharist, “is it just for good Catholic boys and girls or do we all come to the sacrament as sinners needing food for our spiritual journey” to the role of women in the Church, lay vocations, the tension between what the Church teaches and marriage values.

The process, according to Archdiocesan Theologian Dr. Brett Salkeld who moderated the workshop, is to produce a report that will go to Archbishop Daniel Bohan who will forward it with his remarks to the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops (CCCB). The CCCB will then develop a report from what it receives from all Canadian Dioceses and forward it to Rome in time for the October Synod. Salkeld said the timeline is short and a workshop was considered the best and quickest way to proceed.

World Day of Prayer in Moose Jaw

Church of Our Lady and St. Joseph’s Parishes joined with other congregations to observe World Day of Prayer on March 6. The focus of this year’s event was “The Bahamas” and Trinity United Church was decorated to reflect a Bahamian theme as the prayers and music rose in praise. The Gospel passage read spoke of Jesus washing his disciples’ feet. The gesture was adapted for the service to wash hands instead – as depicted in this photo where Major Rosena Halvorsen of the Salvation Army washes the hands of Rosalie Marcil of Church of Our Lady.

Bob Newton New To Pioneer Village

Regina Pioneer Village has a new Roman Catholic Pastoral Care/Volunteer Coordinator. His name is Bob Newton. His professional career was in marketing and public relations. He has worked in both public and private sectors.

Bob and his wife Bonnie have been members of Holy Child and Resurrection parishes since they moved to Regina in 1980. When Father Joe Balzer was Pastor at Holy Child they taught baptism classes and helped out at Baptisms for many years. Bob served on pastoral council at Holy Child and recently at Resurrection Parish.

This year Bob and Bonnie will celebrate their 35th wedding anniversary. They have two daughters. The oldest, Melissa, is married and lives in Nova Scotia and works with Sport Nova Scotia. She is expecting the birth of their first grandchild. Their youngest daughter Rachel is a Grade 6 teacher with Regina Catholic Schools.

Bob is a big fan of both the Boston Bruins and Seattle Seahawks. He enjoys the game of backgammon, playing cards, reading, photography, cooking, building model aircraft, wine making and listening to music, the old fashioned way with vinyl record albums on a turntable. Bob also enjoys a once a week date night with Bonnie where for the last four years they have taken stained glass classes.

Bob brings an outgoing personality and compassion for the elderly to the Pastoral Care Coordinator.

Bob Newton New To Pioneer Village
Dealing with transgender children is not a sexual issue, it’s an identity issue, said Catholic Ethicist Reverend Mark Miller C.Ss.R in a symposium address March 20 to about 75 participants in Holy Rosary Cathedral Hall, “and it’s not easy.” The audience was comprised of Catholic School Board officials, teachers and administrators from southern Saskatchewan Catholic school boards.

Miller was the keynote speaker in the first of two symposiums sponsored by the Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards’ Association (SCSBA) in advance of a document the SCSBA will issue as support for all Saskatchewan Catholic School Boards. The second was scheduled for March 24 in Saskatoon.

Besides Miller, Evangelical Lutheran Pastor Reverend Carla Blakely, a long time advocate for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) people, gave a lively and sometimes humorous description of her journey to become a Lutheran pastor and the discrimination she encountered. Blakely said she is heterosexual, married with three daughters and became an advocate for Transgender people while working with a Lutheran Bishop in Latin America.

Miller described what he called four moral principles in dealing with transgender issues: the need to listen; identity is something not easily laid down; the principle of uncertainty, “We don’t know what we’re doing and we have to be flexible” and acceptance, “It’s not our job to judge.” We need to see them as God’s children, said Miller.

Blakely described the challenges not only dealing with children but their parents and particularly the parents of other children. She also distributed a glossary of acceptable words to use noting that the language is rapidly changing. She introduced a three-person panel who shared their life experiences. Leo Keiser is the executive Director of the University of Regina Pride Centre and a public speaker on Trans wellness and Queer issues. Laura and Pat Budd have been married 24 years and have two boys, 21 and 12. Five years ago Laura came out as a woman and the two described their transition from fear, to tolerance, acceptance and support from their small rural community. Both are active in their community. “What we have together is love, acceptance and respect,” said Pat.

Regina Archbishop Daniel Bohan said he was generally pleased with the symposium. “It took it out of the context of theoretical and it made me aware that we are dealing here with people in their lives and we have to find a way to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to them and to help them benefit from that as well.”

A group of 12 artists working in a variety of mediums tell the story of the life of Christ from birth to death in the exhibition of their work at Luther College Chapel, University of Regina. “I needed to take a break,” said ceramic artist Louise Tessier, in an interview with the PM, “and I came across the writing of Father Thomas Stanley, a Society of Mary priest who wrote a text connecting scriptural verses to plants and flowers.” Tessier decided to curate an exhibition featuring his writings and through her connections with the Saskatchewan Craft Council invited 12 artists to create works describing significant events in the life of Christ. The result is a display of jewelry, wall hangings, paintings, ceramic, clay, stained glass and wood works each depicting an event in Jesus’ life. The feature work is 15 ceramic panels contained in Fijian Mahogany frames hanging on the wall opposite the chapel entrance behind the altar.

The first panel is the title, The Garden Way of the Cross and the remaining 14 depict the familiar Stations of the Cross but Christ is not in the panels. The entire work is based on the scriptural writings of Father Thomas. The ceramic tiles are Tessier’s work.

The exhibition has been seen in various locations across Western Canada, but mostly in the Prairie Provinces and in several U.S. States.

The Catholic Estate Organizer is a free resource to all Catholics to help record and share important information with your legal professional and your loved ones after your passing. Carefully managed estate plans are a way to live a life of stewardship of the gifts that you have received from God.

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May ... Leave a Legacy Month
Giving Life to Our Love

by Christina Attard, Development Director
Archdiocese of Regina

Every time that I walk into a Catholic parish anywhere in the world I am touched by the love and care that was put into building that church. Each building is a legacy created by the faithful people who pulled together through adversity to establish and construct the parish. I am reminded of the many priests, deacons and lay people who dedicated their lives to serving the community in order for it to become a life-giving place for everyone who entered through the doors.

In Canada, our society recognizes May as Leave a Legacy™ month. As stewards of the faith, this is a good time to reflect on how we can share life with others by creating a charitable legacy for our Church that will help others to know God’s love for them.

As a young adult, my husband and I chose to designate a gift in our will for our Catholic Archdiocese at the time of our passing. For us, this is a way of recognizing that everything we have is received as a gift from God. It’s one way of acting as stewards of those gifts and offering something in gratitude for the life that we received.

In this insert, you will read stories of other Catholics who are finding unique ways of giving life to their love for others through charitable gift planning. Most have included bequests in their wills. I hope that these will be inspiring to you as you consider the form that your legacy for others may take.

GIVEN IN MEMORY

By Marianne Gordon, Secretary/Pastoral Assistant
St. Lawrence Parish, Maple Creek

In the spring of 2012 the parish community of St. Lawrence, in Maple Creek began a renovation of the sanctuary of their church. The plan was simple enough - remove the wall separating an old choir space on one side and a false mahogany wall on the other; add some lighting, remove an overhead screen, some minor electrical work and have the interior of the church repainted. With volunteer labour from parishioners this work was easily and economically accomplished, however with the removal of walls and opening up the sanctuary it became necessary to replace the flooring.

As our church was originally constructed in the mid 1960’s the possibility of matching flooring was impossible. The area to have new flooring was extensive and the budget simply did not allow us to proceed any time soon. We would have to be content to have a portion of our sanctuary floor remain as bare plywood until the money could be raised.

The following year, we rejoiced when, at our annual general meeting it was revealed that a very generous donation was made. Dennis Jones, a parishioner from the Tompkins area donated the needed funds in memory of his recently deceased aunt Katharine Larkham.

Dennis spoke of his aunt with great fondness. He explained how she had been a registered nurse who came to Canada and began her career in Quebec. She loved to travel and eventually moved to the Gull Lake area in the southwest corner of the province. She was the Matron of the Gull Lake hospital for a period of time and also spent some of her nursing career in Maple Creek. Dennis remembers coming to Maple Creek to visit her and attending Mass here. He has fond memories of the parish priest at the time, Reverend Roger Lemieux- who became a close friend. Dennis told us that his aunt was a faithful member and a strong supporter of the parish in Tompkins prior to its closing and eventual decommissioning. As the years past, Katharine's health failed, and eventually she moved into the long term care facility in Maple Creek. By then, Dennis had become a regular attendee of Sunday Mass in our community as well. Although Katharine was no longer physically able to attend Mass, the parish community did not leave her spiritual needs unmet.

Each week our parish priest, along with a group of faithful members, gather at the care facility, bringing together those Catholic residents for the celebration of Mass. After Katharine died, Dennis wanted to remember and honour his aunt for her faithfulness to her parish.

A substantial donation was bequeathed to the community of St. Lawrence in her name, and Dennis suggested that we use the money to complete the renovation work on our sanctuary. The open and bright sanctuary provides a beautiful, sacred place to celebrate Mass and surround the Blessed Sacrament, as well as grateful memories of a donation made to celebrate the faith and commitment of a loved one. Our parish family is deeply honoured to have been given this opportunity to complete the renovations but also share this story.
Hope for a Fresh Start
The Life and Legacy of The Honourable Wm. Frank Gerein

On the morning of November 9, 2014, Saskatchewan bade farewell to Wm. Frank Gerein, one of our most distinguished judges. Frank was seventy-five and had served the community since 1964 as a lawyer, and then a judge.

Frank’s legacy in our Catholic family of faith goes beyond his accomplishments as a legal professional. Frank’s life was shaped by his certainty that one serves God and society best when one serves others. He held to the view that true service began by listening to, and valuing others. One of his favourite prayers includes a plea for God’s help to appreciate that no matter what words we hear from someone else the message is, “Accept the person I am, listen to me”. He did exactly that at home, at work, and in the community. He helped countless people through listening and acceptance, then he helped them further by doing what he could to ease the burdens which kept them from becoming the people they were meant to be.

The Gerein family chose to remember Frank at his funeral by directing gifts in lieu of flowers to the Archdiocese of Regina Annual Appeal. The generous response from those who knew and loved Frank was overwhelming and over $2,975 was raised!

When Archdiocesan Development Director Christina Attard spoke with Frank’s family, they asked to have the gifts directed to the organization, Friends on the Outside which is funded by the Annual Appeal each year. Friends on the Outside offers friendship, support, hope and encouragement to inmates and former inmates, their families and friends.

As the Gerein family shared, “We feel very proud to know that Frank’s legacy in the community will help to extend a forgiving hand to those who need it most through Friends on the Outside. We are moved by the generosity of those who knew him.”

Ruth Robillard, Director of Friends on the Outside offered these words of gratitude: “we are extremely grateful to the family and friends of Frank Gerein for their generous donation to Friends on the Outside. This gift will help us to continue to build relationships and bring hope to an average of more than ten people at a time transitioning back into society and dozens of people still in prison who have been lost and forgotten.”

In this story, a simple act – naming the Archdiocese in the obituary and funeral plans – has created a wonderful gift of love and compassion for others! Please consider your own legacy by recording your wishes for a gift to the Catholic church in lieu of flowers in your funeral and estate planning.

Oksana Kishchuk was born and raised in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. She is currently in her first year studying Public Affairs and Policy Management at Carleton University in Ottawa. Oksana first became involved in the world of Philanthropy in 2007 when she began fundraising for a trip overseas to Kenya. Upon her return from Kenya in 2011, Oksana was inspired to create a better world. Since then, Oksana has been involved in fundraising over $200,000 for a boys secondary school with friends as well as taken action locally through the Youth Advisory Council at the Saskatoon Community Foundation where she served for 5 years in the Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning (YELL) program with the Saskatoon Social Board. Oksana has won many awards for her philanthropic work including the Outstanding Youth in Philanthropy Award, and a finalist for Canada's Top Teen Philanthropist. Oksana’s main message is to educate others, whether that is providing the resources for someone to go to school and empower themselves or teaching others about the ways that they can “be the change” in their communities, both locally and globally.
Those who grew up on the farm in Saskatchewan, like Maureen and Louis Toth did, remember that in the 1920s and 1930s, there was never much to go around. But somehow, there was always just enough to share even a little bit with others.

For their families, the Catholic faith was always central to everything that they did. They gave to support the Church and they always shared more with others than they thought they could afford.

Maureen was lucky enough to attend school and become a nurse. Louis received his degree in Engineering from the University of Saskatchewan. They were married, had four children and both enjoyed long careers. Both were known as volunteers in their parish communities.

When Christina Attard, Archdiocesan Development Director, spoke with Maureen this year on the anniversary of Louis’ passing in February 2014, she shared some reflections about how the Lord was at work throughout their lives and their marriage. Maureen reflected that though they started out like most young families with virtually nothing, Louis always challenged her to live their family life according the values that they’d both learned from their parents about giving. In Maureen’s words, “even when I truly thought we couldn’t afford to give away anything at all, Louis would remind me that when you give out of love for our Lord, you will never do without!” For her, she came to see that through their many years of marriage that God had always provided in abundance for all of their needs.

Before Louis passed away, he and Maureen decided to include a donation in their wills to the Catholic Archdiocese of Regina and their parish. This gift will allow them to include bequests to their children and grandchildren as well as offer financial support to their Catholic family of faith.

“Louis and I both felt that we have been blessed with a wonderful family and God has given us so much. So now we feel it is our responsibility to give back. This is why we decided to leave a legacy which includes the Archdiocese of Regina and other charities in our will. Every little bit counts.”

The Toths chose to model the example of good stewardship that they saw in the lives of their parents. They did their best to live as Catholics who could trust in the Lord’s abundance and their bequest to the Church will make it possible for future generations to hear the Good News of the Gospel which guided and brought so much
Sister Still Walking With the Dead

Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ, did not experience poverty as a child or young adult but she now spends most of her time living and working among the poor in New Orleans and as a spiritual advisor to inmates on death row. It was in this latter capacity that she came to Regina, March 5, as this year’s Nash Lecturer, named after the first President of Campion College, University of Regina, Reverend Peter Nash S.J.

Resting an elbow lightly on the lectern in the University of Regina Education Auditorium, Prejean described her journey as a nun with the Congregation of St. Joseph (CSJ), first as an elementary and high school teacher in New Orleans and her transformation to her current ministry as an internationally recognized voice against the death penalty. Her book, Dead Man Walking which describes her experience accompanying inmates to their execution, was made into a movie, stage play and opera. The movie, starring Sean Penn as inmate Patrick Sonnier and Susan Sarandon as Sister Helen, was nominated for four Oscars with Sarandon awarded the Oscar for best actress.

She then told a story of what she called “sneaky Jesus one and two” that explained how she became an internationally recognized voice opposed to the death penalty.

She was asked if she would write to an inmate on death row. She agreed and over time the relationship grew. Sneaky Jesus one, said Prejean. Next came a visit with Sonnier in death row. “I was scared,” she said, “all those clanging doors behind me as I walked further inside.” And then she saw his face. “I thought, my God, he’s a human being.” Sneaky Jesus two. It was supposed to be a short visit. “You know, pour Jesus grace over him and leave,” she joked. It turned into a two hour visit. “The best gift we have to give each other is our presence,” she said and expanded it to include parents, children, grandparents, friends. She said she was outraged at Sonnier’s crime, the rape and killing of a 16-year-old girl and her boyfriend but “the Gospel of Jesus is reconciliation.” She became Sonnier’s spiritual advisor and accompanied him to his execution in the electric chair and that began her ministry opposing the death penalty. She admitted to what she called her biggest mistake; not meeting with the victim’s parents until a week before the execution. She now is part of and meets with advocacy groups for homicide victims families.

She wrote Dead Man Walking detailing her experience and the book became an international best seller that has led to an international movement to have the death penalty banned. She has been spiritual advisor to several death row inmates and has accompanied at least a half dozen to their execution. She is convinced innocent people have been put to death and describes that in The Death of Innocents: an Eyewitness Account of Wrongful Executions.

Buddhist New Year

It was loud, colourful and happy and there were tables overflowing with traditional foods as Regina’s Buddhist community gathered April 12 for the first of a three-day New Year celebration. The auditorium in the l’Association Canadienne-Francais de Regina required extra chairs to accommodate the more than 150 who attended.

Buddhist communities in other countries celebrate New Year at different times of the year usually January or later but Dr. Chirangib Talukdar president of Jumma Buddhist association of Saskatchewan explained that the Buddhist community here always celebrates New Years in the second week of April. “We have cultural shows and exquisite cuisine,” said Talukdar. It seems almost every Buddhist family brought food, as the food table at the back of the auditorium wasn’t large enough to hold it all.

Guests were greeted at the building entrance by young men and women in traditional dress. Guests included Regina Archbishop Daniel Bohan, Saskatchewan Minister of Parks, Culture and Recreation Mark Docherty representing the provincial government, Regina Mayor Michael Fougere and Police Chief Troy Hagen.

The celebration began with Buddhist Monk Reverend Uttan Barua of the Jumma Buddhist Community. He was followed by Regina Archbishop Daniel Bohan who offered a prayer and expressed his appreciation for the diversity and culture the Buddhist community brings to Regina. Other invited guests followed with words of appreciation for the Buddhist community and what it brings to Regina.

Following the official greetings, it was time for the food which was plentiful and delicious. Appetites satisfied, the cultural entertainment began with various dance groups, young and not so young, performing to traditional music.

Reverend Barua said there about 150 Theravada Buddhist families in the Regina area. There is no temple in Regina but the community uses the Jumma Buddhist Community Centre of Canada at Fort Que’Appelle about 70 Kilometres North East of Regina in the Que’Appelle Valley. Barua said Theravada Buddhists come mainly from Burma, also known as Myanmar. Talukdar said many Buddhists from Bangladesh are also in the Regina community.
2015 - The Year of Consecrated Life

The communities have different names, have different charisms, some members wear identifiable clothing, others are indistinguishable from the general population but they have one thing in common; they serve God and the Roman Catholic Church in uncountable ways. And it’s a life-long commitment with retirement mainly a transition to a different level of service. They are the consecrated women and men of the Regina Archdiocese. Together they were recognized and thanked for their service at a special ceremony at St. Anne’s Roman Catholic Church. The event was organized by SARA (Sisters Association of Regina Archdiocese).

Rev. Peter Pham celebrated Mass with con-celebrant Rev. John Meehan S.J. Pham thanked the consecrated men and women who influenced him in his journey to the priesthood which began in North Viet Nam.

SARA President Sister Bernadette Feist, o.s.u. welcomed everyone. Sister Marilyn LeBlanc, RNDM, read the five invitations Pope Francis issued when he proclaimed 2015 as the Year of Consecrated Life. The invitations were repeated in a message issued by Most Reverend Paul –Andre Durocher, President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB): To be living witnesses to the joy of the Gospel, to be prophetic, to create communion, to go to the peripheries and to see God's will.

The congregations were engaged in education, working with the poor, pastoral work in churches, Aboriginal ministries in both urban and First Nations, working with refugees, volunteering and visiting in hospitals and senior care homes, providing accommodations for young people attending universities, chaplaincy, encouraging vocations and many more. “So much we have been given, so much we have to share,” said Sister Anastasia Young s.s.s. former Director of Pastoral Care for the Regina Archdiocese. Sister Alvina Marie Charlebois sfcc, is busy at several churches and the Wascana Rehabilitation Hospital; “I suppose someday I may settle down but right now I’m having too much fun,” she said.

The Year of Consecrated Life began November 2014 when Pope Francis issued his Apostolic Letter and will end in February 2016. The year is to be devoted to honouring and recognizing the women and men who have dedicated their life in service to God and the world.

Celebrating Sr. Bernadette Feist O.S.U. after 50 years of Religious Life

Bernadette was one of 12 children born at Loon Lake Sask. The first 14 years of her life were spent at a small school at Barthel, Sk. and when the school closed in Grade 9 she ventured off to Prelate, SK, a residential high school for young girls and a formation school for the Ursuline Sisters of Prelate, a teaching Order on the prairies. Bernadette’s 2 older sisters were already at Prelate, and had joined the Ursuline Order. One of her teachers in grade 6 had asked her to help teach catechism one day at Loon Lake (9 miles from Barthel). The experience was so much fun, she decided - being a teacher wouldn’t be so bad. Finishing high school at Prelate soon found her off to St. Paul's Ottawa and U of S, Saskatoon, for further studies and B.Ed. degree. In 1965 she made her first vows with the Ursulines.

From 1970 - 1978, she taught in La Loche SK amongst the Chipewyan/Dene nation and loved it. The North was home.

In 1978 and 1979, the call came to help the Oblates at Lebret, with the First Nations missions in the Qu’Appelle Valley. Pondering, she sat on the grass outside - meditating - no answer. Then she went to Chapel to pray - no answer. Finally she talked to one of the Sisters, her friend said: “Where are you asked to go?” She answered: “Qu’Appelle” The Sister said: “What does that mean?” In her mind she translated “who calls,” and immediately said: “Yes” to going to Fort Qu’Appelle and in 1979 she said “hello” to the Valley. The Oblate Order who had begun the missions in Lebret and area returned to Manitoba in 1984 and the need to have someone work amongst First Nations was even greater. The Valley Native Ministry Program was begun in 1985, under the direction of the late Archbishop Charles Halpin, with Sr. Bernadette as the director. This program now included all First Nations communities in the Archdiocese, twenty-seven of them, adding on to the areas served previously by Lebrett and Fort Qu’Appelle. The program is still functioning today with many adaptations and revisions.

Sister Bernadette has enjoyed 44 years of ministry with First Nations Peoples. she has served several terms as chair of SARA of Sisters serving in the Archdiocese of Regina. She received “Cross Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice” on Jan. 5, 2010. Her favorite saying is “Lord, love a duck!” and her favorite scripture passage: 2 Tim. 1:13-14. “Keep as your pattern the sound teaching.”
Matt Dominguez is known throughout Saskatchewan and in Canadian Football League Cities as a gifted receiver who terrorized defenses during his five years with the Saskatchewan Roughriders. Wednesday, April 15, about 800 people attending the 45th annual Saskatchewan Prayer Breakfast at the Conexus Art Centre got to know him more intimately as he regaled the audience with humour, speaking about his faith journey.

Born in Texas, the eldest of six children, Dominguez said he was blessed with athletic ability which took him through high school and college where he achieved all-star/All American honours. After short stints with the Denver Broncos he joined the Saskatchewan Roughriders in 2003 and quickly became a fan favourite by surpassing 1,000 yards receiving in his first year. He signed with the New York Jets in 2004 but re-joined the ‘Riders after he was cut by the Jets after training camp. Persistent knee injuries kept from reaching his full potential and he retired in 2008. He and his family; wife Jennifer and children Matthew, Victoria and Marcel, chose to make Regina their home and he now owns and operates Better Homes and Gardens Real Estate Prairieview.

“I am a sinner and tried to make deals with God. You know, if You give me this, God I’ll give You that,” he told the crowd but quickly had them laughing as he described one of his sins as a liar; “I told people they looked good when they didn’t.” He talked about religion in his upbringing but said he “locked” it all out and was never really grounded. However, he always had this voice in his head that told him “Matt, this is wrong,” whenever he transgressed.

The change came when he was shooting baskets with a friend. “He asked me, ‘Matt, what would you do if you knew God was with you right now’. “That hit me as a powerful statement.” He was invited to attend chapel after practice with nine others and the change in his faith began then. “I knew I needed God’s forgiveness,” and here again he displayed his sense of humour. “Do you have any idea how hard it is for a guy with bad knees to kneel down and ask for forgiveness?” He showed some emotion as he described his wife Jennifer’s continued support in all that he has done. He knows now, he said, that the Lord is always with him when things get tough. “He promised He will be with you during these times and I know he is with me now.”
“Love is Our Mission... The Family Fully Alive.”

Is the theme of a World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia on September 22-27, 2015.

This meeting will call together people from all over the world.

If you would be interested in going as part of an Archdiocese of Regina group please contact Brett Salkeld by email: bsalkeld@archregina.sk.ca Check out their website: http://www.worldmeeting2015.org.

Pope Francis, in his World Youth Day Address to the Bishops of Brazil in July 2013 said, “It is very important to reaffirm the family, which remains the essential cell of society.”

SASKATCHEWAN YOUTH VISUAL ART PROJECT

An unframed painting titled Love Knows No Color by Saskatoon Nutana Collegiate Grade 12 student Joyce Kandakai took first prize in the fourth annual Provincial Youth Visual Art Project. The work is an acrylic on canvas that shows two young people, one black, the other white sharing an ice cream cone. Kandakai took home a $125 cheque, plus a certificate, plaque and medallion. The presentations took place April 11 at the MacKenzie Art Gallery where 14 of the art works were exhibited. They will be displayed at the North American Interfaith Network (NAIN) conference scheduled for July 11-22 at Luther College, University of Regina and are available as an exhibition to any high school that requests it. Multi-Faith Saskatchewan will exhibit the works at all its functions this year.

Janel Broqueza, a Grade 11 student from Melfort took 2nd prize and a cheque for $100, Grade 10 student Brooklyn Beavnet from Saskatoon’s Centennial High school took 3rd and a $75 cheque and Benson Lemaigre, Grade 11 from the Dene School, Clearwater River First Nation received a $50 cheque for 4th. The remaining six in the top 10 each received a $25 cheque. Regina’s Archbishop Daniel Bohan made the presentations to the first and second place artists, David Katzman, co-chair of the art program and Doreen Pankewich, President of the Eastview Rotary Club one of the major sponsors of the art project, awarded 3rd and 4th prizes.

Entries from Saskatoon’s Centennial Collegiate and Regina’s St. Luke between them produced nine entries, five from Centennial and four from St. Luke. Centennial had three in the top ten and St Luke students who last year took first and second, had two in the top 10. Last year artists from St. Luke were judged first and second.

The Provincial Youth Visual Art Project is a Multi-Faith Saskatchewan project that is open to Grade10 - 12 students in all Saskatchewan high schools that teach the visual arts. Its theme is: a Celebration of Art, Faith, Spirituality; Saskatchewan Youth Working through Visual Arts for Peace, Unity and Care of the Earth. It began in 2010 and continues to grow and attract entries from around the province. Regina and Saskatoon provide most of the entries and others came from as far north as the Dene School on the Clearwater River First Nations, Melfort and Borden, Saskatchewan. Krishan Kapila, who helped found Regina Multi-Faith and Multi-Faith Saskatchewan and is the co-chair and brainchild behind the art project said he is very pleased with this year’s entries and looks forward to the program accepting more art work next year.
Called To Make A Mess
by Frank Flegel

The My Generation Archdiocesan 2015 Youth rally held here March 21-22 attracted 155 Grades eight to 12 youth who spent two days listening to motivational speakers, attending liturgies, performing community services and generally just having fun. Most attendees seem to be newcomers. “I don’t think I recognized 90% of the kids this year,” said Archdiocesan Youth Coordinator Michelle Braden.

The Rally Band, put together specifically for the rally, kept the energy going between sessions with upbeat music that encouraged participation.

The theme this year, Make a Mess, came from Pope Francis’ challenge to youth attending 2014 World Youth Day in Brazil. Attendees to the MyGen Rally were greeted with a life size cutout of Pope Francis when they entered O’Neil High School where most of the activities took place. Speakers emphasized the theme and it was carried over into some of the community service projects that are a feature of the annual gathering. This year groups went to four senior care homes where residents were entertained with songs and skits, sorted food and packed baskets at the Regina Food Bank, did some painting, and cleaning at other charitable organizations and made 75 litres of soup that were taken to the YWCA womens’ shelter.

Archbishop Daniel Bohan engaged the youth during his homily at the closing Sunday mass, asking for responses to what they heard in the Jeremiah scriptural reading. Several responded they heard “written on our hearts”, others said they heard “they shall be my people.” The Archbishop said all of those things are personal and “that's why you go to mass on Sunday,” but, he continued, recognizing that youth often find mass boring, “and sometimes that’s right. The music will be led by a bunch of old people some over 30,” he said getting a reaction from the crowd. “And sometimes the priest will give a crappy homily,” again getting a reaction. “But none of that can prevent us from entering into Mass and finding deep in our souls that we are face to face with God who says to us ‘I love you, you are mine, I am your God, what do you need in your life’,”. And sometimes, he said, the hymns and homily will be good “and your experience of being in the presence of God will be beautiful.”

The youth were helped and guided with 65 youth leadership volunteers, members of the Knights of Columbus, Catholic Womens’ League and chaperones.

Michelle Puts it this Way....

They came to make a mess! The right kind of mess…. They came to clean up those messes in their lives which are destructive. They came to pray for those messes which are beyond our control. The My Generation Youth Rally held in Regina this past weekend had young people from all around the diocese in attendance. 150 young people in grades 8-12, along with 75 young adult volunteers, the support, hospitality and sponsorship of the Regina Catholic School Division, a number of enthusiastic Knights of Columbus Councils serving behind the scenes and some dedicated CWL ladies who prayed tirelessly over the course of the weekend all gathered to celebrate the calling of the young church.

Inspired by Pope Francis’s charge to the young people at World Youth Day in Rio, to go home “and make a mess in the dioceses”, participants were called to look at those places in our churches, homes and schools, that the “status quo” needs to be challenged.

They came together as a community and played ridiculous, messy games. They enjoyed inspiring talks, prayed, laughed, sang, danced and served. One of the highlights of the weekend was the 20 service projects that the groups were a part of on Saturday afternoon. They brought youthful joy and enthusiasm to the food bank, inner-city daycares, senior’s homes, the Marion Center, Special Olympics, Transition House, women’s shelters and much more! Upon their return, there was a steady stream of storytellers who took to the microphone and shared those encounters that had touched them over the course of the service adventures.

Our communal prayer over the course of the weekend was for an awareness to truly “see” those in front of us with the eyes of Christ. We prayed for the courage to do “difficult things”…. to be world changers. We prayed for the grace to be JOY-FILLED servants. And most of all we asked the Holy Spirit to empower each one of us with a resolve to go to those people and situations where we are needed. As we left, each of us was challenged to respond with a resounding “I Will Go…. Send Me!”