

THE ARCH

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Saskatchewan Catholic Bishops' response to Physician Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia

It has now been two years since the Supreme Court of Canada overturned the existing laws against physician assisted suicide (PAS) and euthanasia. During these past two years, alongside Catholic dioceses and organizations across the country, and often joined by other Christian communities and religious traditions, we have sought to express and articulate the reasons for our opposition to PAS and euthanasia.

- In July of 2015 and March of 2016 we issued pastoral letters arguing that eliminating a life is not an appropriate response to suffering; pressing for improved access to palliative care, including proper pain and symptom management, offering real choices that reduce suffering, rather than end life; and calling for the conscience rights of individual healthcare workers and healthcare institutions to be protected.

- In striving to articulate our opposition to PAS and to educate our own faithful in this regard, we established a committee made up of representatives from Catholic health organizations and from our respective dioceses and eparchy. This committee has assisted us in engaging the faithful in political advocacy; in bringing ecumenical and interfaith partners together to write a joint statement in support of palliative care and the protection of conscience rights in the spring of 2016, and sending an interfaith delegation to the provincial legislature with our message; and preparing materials to promote a Catholic vision of care for the dying, including the brief videos on palliative care and long-term care.

- The five Bishops of Saskatchewan are the sponsors of Emmanuel Care, the Catholic Health Ministry in our province; Emmanuel Care has worked with the staff in Catholic facilities on policy which unequivocally states that our Catholic facilities will not provide PAS. This public work, alongside private advocacy and relationship-building, has led to strong support for finding a way forward where Catholics and other faith-based affiliate healthcare providers will have conscience protection in our province.

- Our dioceses have worked hard to provide opportunities with Catholic ethicists and leaders to form our pastors, lay leaders, and faithful regarding both Catholic teaching as it relates to developments in our society. To read these documents click on Archbishop's Letter, on the Archdiocesan web page or



copy and paste the following URL addresses into your search bar:

1. http://saskatoonrcdiocese.com/sites/default/files/pastoral_letter_re_legalization_of_assisted_suicide_and_euthanasia.pdf
2. http://saskatoonrcdiocese.com/sites/default/files/bishop/letters/pastoral_letter_march_2016.pdf
3. http://ecumenism.net/archive/docu/2016-06-21_

saskatchewan-interfaith-statement-on-freedom-of-conscience-and-palliative-care.pdf

4. <https://vimeo.com/193720740> and <https://vimeo.com/193720005>

Now, at this critical time of implementation of PAS in our health system, we have felt it appropriate to publish three new texts, each with a different purpose and audience. First, we have written a Pastoral Letter on 'Living Through Our Dying', addressed to our brothers and sisters in faith and all people who have the gift of life. Our aim with this letter was to initiate a dialogue with our culture, recognizing that many struggle to see our opposition to PAS as an expression of compassion. We wanted to articulate what we stand for (more than what we oppose), to recognize the challenge of placing our trust in God, and to extend the invitation to hope that our faith offers. Secondly, we have written a Pastoral Reflection on 'Jesus: The Word Who is Life', which situates the Paschal Mystery as the foundation of our understanding of the meaning of human dying. It is intended to be formative catechesis primarily for our own faithful, but it may well be of use to our Christian brothers and sisters as well. Finally, we have written Pastoral Guidelines, addressed to priests, deacons and the Catholic faithful, intended to give support and guidance to those ministering to people facing the end of their lives. It was our hope to write guidelines which would equip those in ministry to follow Jesus faithfully, while extending his invitation of faith and life to those tempted to choose the circumstances of their own death.

Sincerely,

Most Rev. Donald J. Bolen, Archbishop of Regina
Most Rev. Murray Chatlain, Archbishop of Keewatin-Le Pas
Most Rev. Bryan Bayda, Bishop of Prince Albert
Most Rev. Albert Thévenot, Eparchial Bishop of Saskatoon

Farewell Fr. Guenette

Armand Leo Guenette was born to Jean-Baptiste and Eva (Marion) Guenette on September 21, 1926 in St. Boniface, Manitoba. He was the youngest of eight children. When he was four, the family moved from La Broquerie to Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan. He attended school with the Sisters of Jesus and Mary and then went on to College Mathieu with the Oblate Fathers.



After graduating from College Mathieu in 1949, Armand entered the seminary in St. Boniface, Manitoba. He was ordained into the priesthood on June 14th, 1953. Father Guenette served many parishes and missions in southern Saskatchewan including Willow Bunch, Dollard, Hodgeville, Gravelbourg, Gull Lake and Swift Current. In 2006 Father Guenette retired and returned to his hometown of Gravelbourg. Even in retirement he continued to serve the parish by celebrating weekly Masses at the Pioneer Villa and daily Mass at the Chapel at the Foyer d'Youville. He continued to celebrate Mass at the Chapel up until his health no longer allowed him to do so.

Father Guenette presided over countless wedding masses and baptisms over the years including many for family members.

Armand loved to travel. He made numerous trips to Jasper as well as the Columbia Ice Fields. He took many trips to California with his sister Rose. He also had a passion for cooking.

Armand began to suffer from poor health just over a year ago. It was then that he moved from the Villa to the Foyer d'Youville. As he demonstrated through all his life, he never complained about not feeling well and kept his witty sense of humour right to the end. He passed away peacefully in his sleep on January 4th at the age of 90.

Armand was predeceased by his parents Jean-Baptiste and Eva and his siblings Rose, Helene, Henri, Hector, Irene, Eugene and Edmond. He is survived by numerous nephews and nieces.

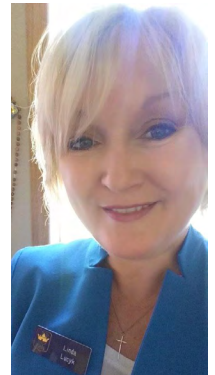
The family would like to thank the staff of the Foyer d'Youville for their care and compassion.

Prayer Vigil was held on Sunday, January 8, 2017 and Mass of the Christian Burial on Monday, January 9, 2017, at Our Lady of Assumption Co-Cathedral, Gravelbourg, SK, with the Most Reverend Archbishop Donald Bolen presiding at the Funeral Mass. Interment will take place at a later date.

Donations in Father Guenette's memory may be made to the Foyer d'Youville Foundation, Box 810, Gravelbourg, SK S0H 1X0.

Christ the King's Unique Ministry

No one is quite sure when it all began, but Christ the King Parish in Regina has developed and sustained a highly organized, well-trained ministry that involves 60 people who provide lay ministry services and visiting to about 260 sick and elderly people who live mostly in care homes within the parish boundaries.



There are 16 lay ministry teams, each with a commissioned lay minister, reader, and "hopefully" a musician," says Linda Lucyk, Parish Pastoral Care Coordinator, in describing the ministry to the *Prairie Messenger*. The teams provide weekly lay ministry services to all the care homes within the boundaries of Christ the King Parish. About 15 commissioned visitors bring weekly, and in some cases, bi-weekly communion to individuals who can't leave their homes. Every individual receives a card and/or a rosary. The cards and rosaries are placed on the walls in the homes and hospitals near patient beds. "They are a sign of our love for them; that God cares for them and they are a valuable part of our parish community," said Lucyk. She eschews the term 'volunteers' to describe her people. "They are part of a ministry!" she says emphatically.

"This is very unique that not only has Christ the King a parish to serve, but a whole parish of people who never come into the building, that we are committed to serve and it's a common mission that creates a lot of enthusiasm within the parish," said Lucyk. She is animated, and enthusiastic as she describes the various programs that support the ministry and how the parish, including elementary and high school students, are involved. "The pastoral leadership here is incredible; Father Antony Sathiadis (Pastor), our pastoral Council, they are all completely committed to this ministry." That kind of support allows her to produce various materials including special cards, rosaries, the parish calendar, prayer shawls, and recently, a hymnal/mass book with larger print organized in accordance with the seasons of the church year all with minimal or no cost. The students and a few adults who create the cards, the women who knit the prayer shawls, donate or use donated materials, Staples took the hymnal/mass book which she printed, bound the book, and encased it in plastic, for less than \$5.00 a book. She does create a budget which is approved by parish council, "but I try to find different ways to cover my costs." Prayer shawls contain a small card, Made with love by Christ the King Parish. They are blessed in conjunction with the Compassionate Healers Mass in October or the World Day of the Sick in February then distributed to people who "would benefit from the warmth, blessings and caring prayers the shawls represent," said Lucyk.

All participants receive special training in line with Regina Archdiocesan Protocols and the rules and regulations of the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Muslim Community of Saskatchewan

On behalf of the Catholic community, we wish to express our deep sorrow on recent tragic events in Quebec City, and to offer our condolences and prayers for your suffering community at this time. Earlier, His Holiness Pope Francis, expressed his own prayers for those who were killed and injured in Quebec, as well as their families, asking the Lord to bring them comfort and consolation in the ordeal.

We stand together with you and leaders of all faith communities in condemning violence, particularly violence in the name of God, whose name is peace. Violence profanes the name of God. Such inconceivable violence violates both the sacredness of human life as well as the respect due to a community at prayer and its place of worship.

In his 2017 Message for Peace, Pope Francis says: "may we dedicate ourselves prayerfully and actively to banishing violence from our hearts, words, and deeds, to becoming nonviolent people and to building nonviolent communities that care for our common home. 'Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace.'"

We pray together with you that the God who is peace will bring you comfort and lead us together to walk in peace and solidarity. We are committed to working together with you, and all people of goodwill, towards peace, sharing in all efforts that unite us to our brothers and sisters of the Muslim faith.

In solidarity and peace,

The Catholic bishops of Saskatchewan

Archbishop Donald Bolen, Archdiocese of Regina

Archbishop Murray Chatlain,
Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas

Bishop Bryan Bayda, Eparchy of Saskatoon

Bishop Albert Thévenot, Diocese of Prince Albert

Very Reverend Kevin McGee, Diocese of Saskatoon

Chers frères et sœurs de la communauté musulmane de la Saskatchewan,

Au nom de la communauté catholique, nous voulons exprimer notre peine profonde face aux événements récents et tragiques qui ont eu lieu dans la ville de Québec, et vous offrir nos condoléances et prières pour les intentions de votre communauté qui souffre en ce moment. Plus tôt aujourd'hui, le Saint-Père, Pape François, a exprimé ses prières pour les victimes et les blessés de l'attentat dans la ville de Québec, ainsi que pour leurs familles, demandant au Seigneur de les reconforter et de les consoler durant ces épreuves.

Nous sommes solidaires avec vous et tous les représentants des groupes confessionnels en condamnant la violence, principalement la violence au nom de Dieu, dont le nom est « Paix ». La violence profane le nom de Dieu. Ce geste insensé viole la sacralité de la vie humaine et le respect d'une communauté en prière et de leur lieu de culte.

Dans son message pour la paix de 2017, le pape François a dit : « Puissions-nous nous consacrer en prière et en action à bannir la violence de nos cœurs, nos mots, et nos actions, pour devenir un peuple non-violent et construire des communautés non-violentes qui prennent soin de notre terre commune. Rien n'est impossible si nous nous tournons vers Dieu en prière. Tout le monde peut devenir un artisan de paix. »

Ensemble, nous prions avec vous que Dieu, qui est « Paix », vous reconforte et nous amène tous ensemble à marcher dans la paix et la solidarité. Nous nous engageons à collaborer avec vous et tous les gens de bonne volonté, pour amener la paix et nous unir à nos frères et sœurs de la foi musulmane.

En solidarité et paix,

Les évêques catholiques de la Saskatchewan

Archevêque Donald Bolen, archidiocèse de Regina

Archevêque Murray Chatlain,
archidiocèse de Keewatin-Le Pas

Évêque Bryan Bayda, Éparchie de Saskatoon

Évêque Albert Thévenot, diocèse de Prince Albert

Très Révérent Kevin McGee, diocèse de Saskatoon

Thinking Faith

Is a new audio podcast on the Archdiocese Website

Eric Gurash and Dr. Brett Salkeld discuss topics of concern to today's catholics.

Just click on the **Catholic Life** icon on the front page or go to:
<http://archregina.sk.ca/thinkingfaith>



Multi-Faith Saskatchewan Pledges Support

Interfaith community calls for love and unity. Recent events targeting the Muslim community have prompted Multi-Faith Saskatchewan and other interfaith groups to pledge their support to Muslims here in Canada and around the world.

"People of all faiths and indeed of no faith must reach out in love and harmony when any religious group is victimized for its beliefs," Multi-Faith Saskatchewan announced.

The organization was prompted to lend its support to the Muslim community after the recent shooting that left six people dead and 17 injured in an attack on a mosque in Quebec City. This incident follows actions in the U.S. where President Trump followed through on his threat to restrict entry to the U.S. by people from specific majority Islamic countries.

"We believe these are actions prompted by hate and intolerance and they have no place in civilized society. All faiths represent love for each other, harmony among people, belief in the Creator and respect for creation," the multi-faith group said. "Throughout history, individuals, leaders and even States have acted violently against religious groups in the name of religion. Such acts are not the will of a loving God but are acts driven by selfishness, greed, hate, ignorance and even insanity. We believe it is our duty to not only act with love and unity and respect but to speak out in support of any religious group or anyone who is the victim of such gross injustice. We strongly believe that all people should have the right and freedom to practice their faith without fear of religious discrimination, threat, abuse or violence."

And so Multi-Faith Saskatchewan joins with Regina Multi-Faith Forum, Multi-Faith Saskatoon, Calling Lakes Interfaith Friendship Forum and other interfaith and intercultural and religious bodies in Saskatchewan to express wholehearted support for our Muslim sisters and brothers in this painful and difficult time. "We will continue to walk together for the values and beliefs we share."

The organization calls for all people whether or not they are members of a religious community to take the time to pray for the Muslim community or to speak out, to hold vigils, march, protest or do whatever it takes to show support for victims of religious intolerance and hatred.

For more information: Contact Dr. Amr Henni 306.585.4960 or email Rev. Mary Brubacher: mary.brubacher@rqhealth.ca



Regina Ahmadiyya Muslim Mosque a hit with Non-Muslims

Regina's recently constructed Ahmadiyya Mahmood Mosque stands out in east Regina surrounded by hotels, retail outlets and nearby residents all of which appear to welcome the Ahmadiyya Muslim community in their midst. "Even while it was being built, people from around here were bringing us hot meals," said Imam Zeeshan

Ahmed in an interview with the Prairie Messenger.

The local community also showed its support following the shooting in Quebec that occurred while that community was in prayer. "We had more than 200, mostly non-Muslims, when we opened the doors and invited everyone in," said the Imam, and non-Muslims continue to come he said; fewer numbers, but they come, and "some pray with us or pray on their own." He pointed out that often people staying at the hotels near the Mosque will come and ask for a tour, and he said, "We welcome all."

The Imam also commented that as far as he was concerned the Quebec shooting was not just an attack on Muslims, "It was an attack on Canada and the freedom and values that we all hold dear." His father had to take his family and flee Pakistan in 1990 because Ahmadis are persecuted and not allowed to practice their religion in that country. Because of this previous experience, he was particularly pleased with the welcome shown his community by people in Regina.

The Mahmood Mosque was officially opened in October, 2016, by the world leader of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at, Caliph Mirza Masroor Ahmad. "We were very humbled to have him here with us for our opening," said Imam Zeeshan Ahmed. His Friday homily that day was a live broadcast to over 200 countries by a satellite service TV crew that accompanied the Caliph from London, England.

Imam Ahmed specifically mentioned that Ahmadis are not part of the mainstream Zeeshan Ahmedam Muslim community. "We are a sect of Islam, and our motto is, Love for All; Hatred for None." The Imam is proud of the Mahmood Mosque which is the first and only purpose-built mosque in Canada. Other mosques are in re-purposed buildings. It was built over a two-year span entirely with volunteer labour. Ahmed said it cost the community \$1.2-million to build and it has a value of over \$10-million.

Archbishop Bolen Meets His Priests



Archbishop Bolen with his secretary Bernadette Gettis planning the schedule.

It was a new experience for most of the priests in the Regina Archdiocese. One that was very much appreciated, according to Reverend Danilo Rafael, chair of the Regina Archdiocese

Personnel Committee. He was referring to the interviews Archbishop Donald Bolen conducted with each priest in the Regina Archdiocese. "It was something I did shortly after being appointed Bishop of Saskatoon. It was well received so I began arranging interviews here in Regina in October", said the archbishop in an interview with the Prairie Messenger.



Vicar General
Reverend Lorne
Crozon

The interviews continued through December into

January until all 64 active priests had had an opportunity to meet with the archbishop in the Chancery office. Vicar General Reverend Lorne Crozon and Reverend Danilo sat in on the interviews at the invitation of Bolen. Reverend Crozon said, in speaking with the Prairie Messenger, that each priest was asked four questions: 1) How are you; 2) How are things in your parish; 3) How happy are you there; and 4) Would you like a transfer to another parish?

Archbishop Bolen was asked if any of the foreign-born priests who make up about half of the cohort expressed a desire to return home. He replied that most have the wherewithal to visit their homeland and have done so, and all have expressed satisfaction with being missionaries here and, he said, we are so blessed with the priests we have.

The retired priests were all visited in their homes. "Of course, I know most of them having grown up here and served as priest in the Archdiocese, so it was really getting reacquainted with old friends," said Bolen. "It was supposed to be a one-of thing in Saskatoon, but the response from priests was so positive we made it an annual occasion and I've suggested it could become annual in the Regina Archdiocese depending on the response. Reverend Rafael said all the responses he has received are positive and he was sure the priests would welcome an annual event to meet and talk with their Archbishop.



Personnel
Committee Chair
Rev. Danilo
Rafael,

Christ the King Ladies' Breakfast



Archbishop Donald Bolen used his personal motto - Mercy within Mercy within Mercy - to begin his talk to the Christ the King Ladies Prayer Breakfast held January 28 in the Church Hall. Bishop Don explained how he came to using this motto: "I was reading Thomas Merton's book The Sign of Jonas and this phrase comes near the end of the book," and he felt it appropriate in expressing his beliefs.

With that explanation, the archbishop led into his talk about how God's love and mercy is at the core of our Catholic faith. He explained that the word that is often referred to in liturgies is the great love of God. "God is a God who embraces us with a great love and infinite mercy. He is willing to go to any length to get to us. That's THE Word, and it is at the heart of our Christian faith. Hope lies in God's inexhaustible energy. There is no limit to God's mercy" said the archbishop. "Mercy is at the heart of God."

Archbishop asked his audience, how they could take this forward. He suggested his own views of the Church, including that we need to preach and be transformed by God's mercy. He quoted Pope Francis who spoke often about God's mercy during the extraordinary Year of Mercy and referred specifically to Pope Francis' response when he was asked, who is Jorge Bergoglio, and he responded, "I am a sinner who has experienced God's mercy. God never tires of showing us his mercy. Eventually we are transformed by God's mercy."

The Archbishop repeated the thought, "Eventually we are transformed by God's mercy." He expressed to the ladies that this should make us a joyful people. Our parishes should be places of joy and mercy. If you are filled with mercy why wouldn't you be joyful?

Archbishop Bolen referred briefly to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the call to action and the harm done to Indigenous people. "Justice and mercy are not exclusive. Mercy causes us to work together to build community." He asked his audience to be receptive to other people's gifts as "We need to find God in our everyday lives as God finds us in our everyday lives."

The Christ the King Ladies Prayer Breakfast was an initiative of the parish's welcoming committee. Committee chair Annette Polasek said the event was the first of what the committee would like to be a series of events to bring the parish community closer together.



Archbishop Bolen Hosts "Brew Aware"



Brew Aware attracted students, alumni, staff and friends to a question and answer session with Regina Archbishop Donald Bolen. The event was held in the senior common room of Campion

College on January 29. It was billed as an open session with no subject limits, which Archbishop Bolen repeated in his opening remarks.

His opening remarks provided insight to his theological and personal interests; he is currently deeply invested in the Truth and Reconciliation process. He talked about his work in Rome with the Pontifical Commission on Council for Promoting Christian unity; his continuing interest and involvement in Ecumenism; his PhD journey and his thesis idea that never came to fruition - Anglican/Roman Catholic Dialogue – because his time was at capacity.

Archbishop Bolen told the informal group that Catholics are not very good at articulating our faith “although we are getting better at it,” he said, “it certainly is a challenge for us today to become articulate about giving the reasons for our faith.”

Archbishop Bolen is also interested in the answer to the philosophical question, “why did God create us the way we are.” Relationship between God’s revelation in Christ and fundamental human experience, prompted him to start asking, “why did God create us and the human condition the way he did.” “I had this academic idea that it would be wonderful to look at various aspects of human experience, starting with birth and drawing in all the disciplines and the Arts and Sciences. This is a rather vast project and no one has bothered to take it on,” which prompted one member of the audience to remark, we’re waiting for you.

Brew aware was created to bring together young people of the Regina Archdiocese in dialogue with the Archbishop “and to have a little fun,” said Deacon Joe Lang who was appointed to a Ministry to Youth at Campion College by the late Regina Archbishop Daniel Bohan. Deacon Lang works as a consultant with the Regina Roman Catholic School Division but his ministry is at Campion College. “I think it went well,” said Lang of the first-time event and he expressed a desire for something similar in the future. There was no charge for the event even though refreshments were available along with pizza and snack foods.



Facing marriage difficulties?



Retrouvaille.

... a lifeline for marriages



"Our Marriage was at a Breaking Point"

A few years ago Anastasia Winterhalt and Anthony McCarthy's marriage was at a breaking point. “I didn’t think I could possibly fix what was broken,” says Winterhalt. “We had no communication, I was ready to divorce my husband.” Winterhalt thought all was lost, that’s when her mother suggested she try Retrouvaille.

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

Retrouvaille has Catholic roots but the program is for everyone, regardless of religious affiliation, wanting a stronger marriage. It is based on an intensive weekend-long experience followed by 6 follow up sessions. The main emphasis of the program is on communication and rebuilding relationships.

McCarthy says Retrouvaille gave him a new language. “I was never much of a talker, especially when it came to the hard stuff. The program was intense but it got to the root of things,” he explains. “It’s given me the confidence to express my emotions with my wife and the rest of my family.”

Winterhalt and McCarthy are now trying to help other couples find their way back to a caring, passionate and loving marriage, as they have. They are the community coordinators for Retrouvaille Saskatchewan.

The next Retrouvaille Weekend will be held on April 28, 2017 with post sessions from 1 – 5pm. May 6th, 13th, 27th, June 3rd, 10th and 17th.

Anthony & Anastasia are open to sharing their story and explaining more about the Retrouvaille process.

Anastasia (306) 716-6982 or awinterhalt@hotmail.com

Anthony (306)716-6983

**For more information on Retrouvaille:
Restoremarriage.weebly.com**

Archbishop Don to Develop Ecumenical Group for Social Justice

by Frank Flegel

Regina's Archbishop Donald Bolen is considering bringing together local groups working in the areas of poverty, homelessness, immigration, racism, "where we can encourage each other and possibly look for new partnerships working together in the service of the common good."

It is an idea he came away with from a meeting of grassroots organizations and social movements working for social change. The meeting was held in Modesto, California and attracted more than 700 people including about 20 Catholic Bishops and other church leaders. Attendance was by invitation only. It was co-sponsored by the Vatican's Dicastery for Integral Human Development; the U.S. Bishop's conference Catholic Campaign for Human Development; and PICO (People Improving Communities through Organizing), an American network of faith-based organizations. It was part of a series of gatherings partly organized by the Vatican, bringing together leaders of popular movements.

Pope Francis, in a special message to the California meeting thanked the organizers and the host bishops for organizing the meeting and for their work. "It makes me very happy to see you working together towards Social Justice. How I wish that such constructive energy would spread to all dioceses because it builds bridges between peoples and individuals. These bridges can overcome the walls of exclusion, indifference, racism, and intolerance," the Pope said in his message.

"What impressed me was the way in which groups working on different social issues had a common set of values at heart and even those who weren't Catholic, or even Christian,

were deeply connected to what we know as Catholic Social Teaching, and the values of Catholic social teaching." He came away with a strong sense of a common task uniting many different fields of work in the service of the common good, and he decided to see if something similar could be brought together for the same purpose in the Regina area, on a much smaller scale. "It fits in with Pope Francis' teaching on Social Justice and the Church's teaching on Ecumenism, both of which I strongly support," said Archbishop Bolen in speaking with the *Prairie Messenger*. He will, however, first discuss this project with the Regina Archdiocese senior leaders team before approaching other groups with the idea.

Archbishop Bolen received the invitation to attend the California meeting from the Vatican's Dicastery for Integral Human Development. Bolen related that a highlight of the meeting was a speech by San Diego Bishop Robert McElroy, who noted that U.S. President Donald Trump was the candidate of disruption, and now we all must become disrupters: "We must disrupt those who would seek to send troops into our streets to deport the undocumented, to rip mothers and fathers from their families. We must disrupt those who portray refugees as enemies, rather than our brothers and sisters in terrible need. We must disrupt those who train us to see Muslim men and women and children as sources of fear rather than as children of God. We must disrupt those who seek to rob our medical care, especially from the poor." Bolen noted that while the U.S. context differs from our Canadian context, there are parallels, and we certainly also face challenges in terms of homelessness, migration, poverty and racism.



2016 Archdiocesan Annual Appeal Raised

\$1,280,000

Thank You!

Cuernavaca Project - Mexico 2017

by Joan Rink – Project Coordinator

The Cuernavaca Project, for more than 25 years, has been assisting villagers in the Cuernavaca region of Mexico create a better life. The goal is to improve the standard of living for the people through community development projects that create self sustainability. This January a group of 10 adventurers went to Huaypan, Morelos, Mexico to assist the villagers. The group included Debbi Bulych, Tracy Carrol, Brady Antel, Debbie Dittrick, Randy Franke, Beckey Franke, Jim Hall, Dale Stoudt, Thalia Rink and Joan Rink (group coordinator).

The mantra of the Cuernavaca Project for the last four years has been "We're going to build a school." With the



grateful to be part of the project. For me standing in the middle of "our" land and seeing the mountain to the left, the

One of the single mothers said, "When this is finished, there will be work. Please remember me!" How soul satisfying to know that our agricultural school will not only provide work but also teach skills so they will have jobs. Their reliance on their men going North to work will lessen.

Much work still needs to be done. Fund raising will continue so that the building can continue. More information can be found on Facebook Cuernavaca Project 2013 and the website www.cuernavacaproject2013.ca



purchase of land in April, we were ready to build. This group of fearless people journeyed to Mexico to begin the task. First came the puzzle of fitting rocks in a pattern to be set in concrete for the foundation. After making 428 adobe bricks, walls began to go up. The locals were wondering what these "white people" getting burnt in the sun could accomplish but were impressed with the amount of work completed, by hand, by the Regina Archdiocese group. Unbreakable bonds were formed illustrated in the last days of the project by the locals who said in halting English 'thanks friend'.

The most often heard word during our time there was 'amazing'. Amazing families, amazing work, amazing experience, everyone in the group was

river to the right and watching the frame go up for a greenhouse that covers an acre of land warmed me to my toes. There is a freshness and tranquility in this space.



Deacon Joe Lang meshes faith and humour in his ministry

BY ASHLEY MARTIN, REGINA LEADER-POST



Joe Lang knows all the children's classics. Itsy Bitsy Spider, check. Alice the Camel, check. ABCs/Twinkle Twinkle/Ba Ba Black Sheep, check. (He performs those three in sequence, "same tune, different song.")

Strumming his guitar and singing in a cheerful voice, Lang led a singalong for the "holy people" at Jean Vanier School one day last month. It's a place he says he doesn't

get to often enough.

Through his day job as a religious consultant with Regina Catholic Schools, and as a Catholic Church deacon, outreach is Lang's call of duty. When I get the chance and the opportunity, I just listen to kids' stories. That's the biggest thing, sit and listen," said Lang.

Part therapist, part problem-solver, Lang is a support to teachers and students who need an ear. He's a resource to answer their questions — about faith, family or otherwise.

He can speak from experience: A deacon isn't necessarily unmarried, like a priest or a bishop. Lang and his wife Rae-Lynn have four children, ranging in age from 15 to 24. He credits his "angel" of a partner for supporting him in "the equivalent of 18 full-time jobs."

"His preaching — including about the challenges and joys of being a parent, of family life — has a more immediate ring to people," said Archbishop Donald Bolen, who has known Lang for 25 years.

Lang's is a "practical" faith, Bolen added, "rising out of the challenges of family life and serving others in the complexities and challenges of their lives."

Not all of Lang's time is as a pseudotherapist, though. He helps prepare liturgies and music ministry in schools. And sometimes that means a simple concert. In the advent to Christmas, he carolled with children and seniors, and returned to Jean Vanier School for another, more festive, singalong.

The children are upbeat when Lang visits, bobbing their heads to the music, ringing bells, clapping clappers and shaking shakers. Most can't sing along — only three of the students are verbal at this school for kids with intensive needs. But the adults can. So at one point, with none of the school's staff playing chorus, Lang joked, "I'm singing a solo. That's not good."

Lang is a funny guy and self-described as a bit "over the top sometimes." He can take a joke as well as he can make one. He's a fast talker, alternately soft-spoken and boisterous. He incorporates humour into prayer, but in "a

very appropriate way," said Dean Schwebius, principal at St. Michael Community School. Sometimes it's a little edgier — something like "Dear Lord, help us not burst into flames."

"I'm always sort of listening, like 'what's he going to say next?'" said Schwebius. Lang's humour is no accident; it helps make him relatable. "I want people to have a positive experience of a guy with a collar on," said Lang — although he only wears his neckpiece on formal occasions.

"He will come out with the corniest things and definitely makes you laugh," said Stephanie Molloy, campus minister and director of pastoral studies at Campion College, where Lang's diaconal ministry is based.

"He's so friendly and upbeat that he certainly gives (students) a feeling of approachability. ... He can joke around with them and he can talk with them at a deeper level also."

"He's a big, imposing guy," said Schwebius, "but really he's a softie and he's a nice person to deal with, and I think that humour helps to put people at ease and makes him more approachable and relatable to the kids."

Humour is not solely beneficial to Lang's work with other people, though. "When you deal with pastoral situations that can be a little overwhelming, you need a trust in God and a sense of humour to help keep things in perspective," said Bolen — although Lang "probably shares his humour a little more than many of us do."

Lang's faith was probably unavoidable, being the son of two strong Catholics. John and Dorothy (Dot) Lang took their children to church "through hell and high water, whether we were in a four-ton grain truck plowing through a snowstorm or driving behind the snowblower to get out." His parents' dedication told him there must be "something going on here. I don't know what it is or what it means, but obviously for my folks to be that devoted to it, to understanding, to be part of it, it's a huge thing, right?" But Lang never wanted to be a priest, as much as Dorothy wanted him to be. "Even when I was engaged and we were married, 'When are you going to be a priest?'"

As a kid, "I wanted to be a starship captain," he joked.

Growing up, he and his three siblings made money taking care of cattle, selling eggs and cleaning grain bins.

He wanted to be a farmer, but his parents discouraged it. So Lang studied computer programming for five days back in 1980. Not cut out for it, he moved back to the farm and got a job with the PFRA in Indian Head, then worked for SaskTel.

After an education degree at the University of Saskatchewan and an eight-month stint teaching in Fort Saskatchewan, Alta., where his wife was learning to be an occupational therapist, Lang realized his place wasn't in a classroom either.

He decided to study theology, as Father Joe Balzer had suggested. A master's of divinity later, Lang was working as a pastoral assistant and learning to preach from Bolen.

Deacon Joe Lang cont'd

He was ordained in 1999 as a deacon, one of three clergy positions within the Catholic church.

He and Bob Williston "were already living out the role of the deacon," said Bolen. So even though the church was divided on whether to install permanent deacons, Archbishop Peter Mallon went ahead with it.

"In some sense, by their lived examples they set us on the path we're on now," said Bolen, "where we have moved towards a permanent diaconate."

"In essence, (deacons are) married clergy," said Lang. Originally they were the "hands and arms and feet and eyes and everything of the bishop in the community." The word itself is derived from "service," which Lang does, sharing the gospel, assisting priests and bishops, and doing charity work, which includes helping the "spiritually poor." Some of his duties overlap with those of priests — preaching, dismissing a congregation, and presiding at weddings, funerals and baptisms.

His family and his day job mean Lang can "minister in places that bishops and priests can't often reach," said Bolen.

With a wife and four kids, it's easy for him to put himself in a person's shoes if they're having problems at home. People end up talking to him if they "need a different ear," said Lang. And sometimes, they end up throwing him hard questions.

In schools, students try to stump him. "They want to pin you and see if you're going to be super judgmental, see if you're going to be one of the stereotypes of the Catholic church that they see on TV," said Lang. "What does church think about X-Y-Z?" That X-Y-Z is often a controversial issue, like "how come church hates gays?" With a quick and emphatic "we don't," students are caught off guard, which sparks a conversation. "Everyone's a child of God and we accept them all, and that's always been my basis."

The church is a very multifaceted thing," he said slowly. "The church is still growing in its understanding of human sexuality and stuff, and understanding scripture and understanding its traditions. "There's people that have issues, but the church I think is really speaking with the voice of Christ. ... We're called to love everybody."

"He fits into the Jesuit model of that 'we're all in this together' kind of collaboration and finding God in all things," said Molloy, who shares Lang's passion for justice.

Lang is a firm believer in living his faith and serving others. It's no person's job to pass judgment. "It's about being people, not doing things," said Lang. "If you're just a church of people who do things just to check off the checkbox of, 'Yeah, I went to church on Sunday; yeah, follow the 10 commandments; I'm still a jerk at work, but I'm doing all the right stuff.' It's all about the heart right?"

In his work at Campion, Lang is particularly called to work with international students, sexually diverse students and indigenous students.

"The church has always been and always will be a church for

Diaconate Candidates Installed



Our nine candidates for the Permanent Diaconate in the Archdiocese of Regina were officially installed as Lectors by Archbishop Donald Bolen at Holy Rosary Cathedral on Sunday, February 12 at the 7:00 pm Mass. While our candidates have been in formation since the Fall of 2014, this installation is the first liturgical step on the road towards their ordination as Permanent Deacons. As their four-year process of formation continues, please keep them and their wives and families in your prayers.

(Pictured (left to right): Back: Deacon Barry Wood, Center Row: Arron Polk, Dr. Brett Salkeld (Formation Director), Norbert Gaudet, Kevin Harty, Denis Ziegler, Front Row: Dave Hudy, Lamont Dyck, Eric Gurash, Harper Boucher, Dave Hagel)

the poor, for those who are on the outside, for the outcasts, the marginalized," said Lang. "The love of God isn't just for those who think they deserve it."

If posed the question, "Why can't I get married in the church?," Lang explains the church is evolving from tradition.

"We come from a church that used to throw people out of the Catholic cemetery when they committed suicide ... (Change) takes time. This is a fairly new issue that we've had to deal with, so there's huge polarization going on."

That's not to say he's not frustrated by it too. "Whatever church you're from, there's your faith, then there's your experience of the faith, and sometimes the two work well together, and sometimes you don't know what you don't know." That belief earned him his nickname, the Freakin' Deacon, because "sometimes you get so frustrated you just freak out."

Lang likens scripture to construction: "You don't build a house by putting down the footing and that's the end of the story." You need to evolve and adapt as you go.

"We need to look at it and try and understand what's really being said, what's really being asked of, rather than jumping to conclusions or using it as a stick to beat somebody with."

It's why he always hears people out.

"I listen to their stories first and see what's going on. I'm not going to impose anything, at least I hope I don't."

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