TORONTO — Pope Francis was elected in 2013, he declared, “A good Catholic meddles in politics.” The potential upcoming national election would be the second national vote for Catholic Conscience, but the first where it tries to help Catholics beyond the Greater Toronto Story page 2. (Michael Swan photo)

FREDERICTON — On Sunday, April 18, Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Fredericton welcomed faithful from Fredericton and beyond to the first Latin Mass held in the parish. This will be a regular weekly mass. Story page 3. (TNF file photo)

SAINT JOHN — A local lay apostolate has developed an online program that will help faithful of the Diocese of Saint John seek Jesus more deeply in the Blessed Sacrament. Thirty-three days to Eucharist Love is an e-mail-based personal retreat that prepares people to consecrate themselves to the Eucharist Heart of Jesus. Story page 6. (Kalen Grondin K-lens photography photo)

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis has called for a global prayer marathon for the entire month of May, praying for the end to the pandemic. Story page 8. (CNS photo/Donatella Giagnori, pool)
Catholic Conscience gets set for next election
By MICHAEL SWAN
The Catholic Register

TORONTO — Right out of the gate, when Pope Francis was elected in 2013, he declared, “A good Catholic meddles in politics.” Eight years on, the young, non-partisan organization Catholic Conscience is ramping up its meddling to encompass all of Canada.

“We’re preparing for the scenario where there is a (federal) election this year,” Catholic Conscience executive director Brendan Steven told The Catholic Register.

It would be the second national vote for Catholic Conscience, but the first where it tried to help Catholics beyond the Greater Toronto Area think through their vote. Mr. Steven is making sure the organization is ready by updating its website (catholicconscience.org), launching a two-day series of webinars for political candidates and policy leaders and beefing up its outreach to new Canadians in the pews.

“We think about politics as a very competitive, adversarial sort of system. But ideally it’s a forum where different perspectives, different interests come together and synthesize new approaches with the truth that they bring to those conversations,” Mr. Steven said.

“Our Church, especially in the next election, will be saying, ‘How do we bring Canadians — Catholic and non-Catholic — together in thinking deeply, in moral and spiritual ways, about the future of our country.’”

Catholic Conscience’s first run at a national election was in 2019, when it staged a typical, pre-COVID event — hundreds of Catholics together in the Toronto Convention Centre to hear candidates from every party answer specific questions about their party’s political commitments. Since then the organization has branched out to stage voter engagement campaigns during recent British Columbia and Saskatchewan provincial votes.

COVID-19 has helped the Toronto-based organization become more national.

“The advantage of COVID is that it has forced us online in a big way,” Mr. Steven said. “But also in a way that allows us to reach new audiences.”

Given the huge influence immigration has on Canada’s ever-shifting Catholic population, Steven and his volunteer team is also putting a lot of thought into what first-time voters, new-to-Canada, might be looking for when trying to decide how to cast that first ballot. Translating Catholic Conscience’s platform summaries for every party into languages other than English and French is an emerging priority, Mr. Steven said.

“A lot of those political tools are not as easily accessible for folks who are new immigrants,” he said. “A lot of folks coming in are Catholics, often devout Catholics.”

Catholic Conscience wants to be there for them when they’re deciding how to vote — helping them to decide without telling them what to decide.

“Community-based organizations, including faith communities who have relationships of trust in their communities, can play a valuable role in demystifying the voting process and providing non-partisan information to help people make informed decisions,” John Beebe of Ryerson University’s Democratic Engagement Exchange said in an e-mail. “This is particularly important at a moment when social media is spreading misinformation and disinformation.”

But the big change this time out will be Pope Francis’ encyclical Fratelli Tutti. Mr. Steven calls it “a watershed moment for our mission.”

“Fratelli Tutti is beautiful because it really gives us a vision of the political vocation, where it is just acting out of the love of God and love of neighbour that we experience in our everyday lives,” Mr. Steven said. “But it’s lived out in this grander sense, at the political level.”

Pope Francis’ vision of politics as an expression of love stands in stark contrast to the cynicism and suspicion that dominates contemporary political culture, said Regina archdiocesan theologian Brett Salkeld.

Nothing about the cynicism that dismisses politics and politicians as sleazy, self-interested, manipulative and money-driven is likely to produce a functioning democracy, Mr. Salkeld points out.

Fratelli Tutti comes from a pope who is aware of the morally corrosive effects of out-of-control social media use — the ways in which it amplifies mendacity and steamrolls over contemplation — and a culture that seeks competition at every turn.

For Pope Francis, the process of dialogue describes our political struggle for truth.

“The process is the Catholic part,” said Mr. Steven. “When we charitably have conversations around politics with one another, then other people have the opportunity to introduce perspective to us that we haven’t considered.”§
Fredericton parish celebrates first Latin mass
By NATASHA MAZEROLLE
Correspondent

FREDERICTON — On Sunday, April 18, Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Fredericton welcomed faithful from Fredericton and beyond to the first Latin Mass held in the parish.

The Latin Mass community has been gathering monthly for masses in Saint John for several years. The desire for a more stable and frequent gathering prompted Bishop Christian Riesbeck, CC of the Diocese of Saint John, to appoint Reverend Dr. Michael McGowan, pastor, Our Lady of Fatima Parish as spiritual advisor to the Latin Mass Community of the diocese on January 12, 2021. Under his pastoral care, the Latin Mass was moved from Saint John to Fredericton, and will be celebrated weekly at Our Lady of Fatima Parish.

A large crowd was in attendance for the first Latin Mass at the parish which touched many, including Jamey Guerrero of Fredericton. “One huge thing that stuck out for me was the number of young people at that mass. The average age of the congregation was about 30 years old. This is not a mass of the older generation. This is a mass of people who seek beauty and truth,” he said.

Describing the beauty of this ancient form of worship, Mr. Guerrero said, “with the Latin Mass, there is a reverence to it that directs all your attention to God. All your senses are at work: the smell of the incense, the sounds of the bells and choir (and all the babies), the beauty of the mass itself.”

Mr. Guerrero explained that celebrating the liturgy in a language many do not understand helps him to be more mindful of what is taking place, and “encourages me to prepare myself to enter into the mystery of the mass and to reflect on what is happening on the altar.”

Parishioner Tony Kennedy is grateful to have the Latin Mass offered on a regular basis at Our Lady of Fatima, and for the leadership of Rev. Dr. McGowan. “The Latin Mass serves to remind me that ‘God is God, and I am not’; while Fr. McGowan gives me renewed hope in the fatherly role of our priests,” he said.

Many people travelled from Saint John to attend the Latin Mass, including Moira Bossé. “We are truly grateful for the pastoral accommodation Bishop Riesbeck has provided in requesting that Fr. Michael McGowan offer the traditional Latin Mass, which, if persons have not yet experienced, they should plan to attend at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Fredericton,” she said. “What can one say...it is the most sublime mass of the ages and is always and forever our perfect prayer.”

For his part, Rev. Dr. McGowan was pleased and encouraged. “The first Latin Mass at Our Lady of Fatima was absolutely beautiful — so many young families,” he said. “The schola was excellent with beautiful music. In one word, the mass was heavenly.”

The Latin Mass takes place every Sunday at Our Lady of Fatima parish at 12:30 pm. For more information or to register, please email olfatima@gmail.com.

Natasha Mazerolle is a correspondent for The New Freeman. She can be reached at natasha@maz-family.com.

SAINT JOHN — The Saint John Chapter of New Brunswick Right to Life recently welcomed its new executive at the annual general meeting on April 24. (L to r) Vita Kipping, Gilda Castillo, Christina Kipping, Helen LeBlanc, Connor Vienneau and Owen Boyle. (Natasha Mazerolle photo)

Saint John Chapter of NB Right to Life holds AGM
by NATASHA MAZEROLLE
Correspondent

SAINT JOHN — Approximately 20 people were in attendance at the annual general meeting (AGM) for the Saint John Chapter of New Brunswick Right to Life (NBRL) on Saturday, April 24, 2021 at the Diocesan Centre in Saint John.

Members gathered to hear about the organization’s efforts over the past year, and to hear how the chapter continues to move forward with the work they do to promote the dignity of life. Executive Director Heather Hughes began the meeting with warm greetings from Fredericton via phone.

President Vita Kipping spoke about the Saint John Chapter’s activities during these challenging times, noting that all charities have needed to adapt during the pandemic and that NBRL is no different. Some of the events the local chapter has organized included a showing of the movie Unplanned, a Right to Life Mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in November presided over by Bishop Christian Riesbeck, CC, of the Diocese of Saint John (and livestreamed via their Facebook page), and fundraisers including ‘Bottles for Life’ and the sale of Memorial Cards.

Following the election of officers for the new term, First Vice-President Helen LeBlanc presented the treasurer’s report. Noting that the numbers are lower than last year due to the pandemic, Ms. LeBlanc informed members that NBRL staff have all reduced their hours to help make up for this shortfall.

(continued on page 11)
An Easter People in the midst of the world of creation

Even beyond the Feast of Easter, we are an ‘Easter People’ living an incarnational faith in the midst of our world. At the centre or core of our faith lie two great mysteries: the Incarnation and the Resurrection. These two great truths stand at the centre of our creeds: I believe... In Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,... was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven... (Apostles’ Creed).

Two particular passages of our Christian scriptures capture these two key tenets of our faith. The significance of the Incarnation is proclaimed in the Gospel of John: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life” (Jn.3:16). Fundamental to our Christian faith is that God loves us. Right from the very beginning, from the very act of creation, God has expressed this love in life-giving (Genesis ch.1). The Incarnation is a wondrous proclamation of God’s continuous and unconditional love. God has entered into our humanity sharing life with us in the person of Jesus the Christ. The community of love we see in the Trinity has overflowed into our humanity.

The centrality of the Resurrection is expressed in Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians: “If Christ has not been raised, then our proclamation [of the Gospel] has been in vain and your faith has been in vain... If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1 Cor.15:14, 17). To believe in the Resurrection is to believe in the unconditional love of our God. The Risen Jesus, is the full expression of God’s compassionate love. Even death cannot erase, hinder or halt it.

It is not without significance that John’s Gospel for this Sunday in the Easter season focuses on the image of the Good Shepherd (Jn.10:11-18). Like the disciples who witnessed to the Resurrection, it draws us into the relationship or communion we share with the Jesus of our faith. Like the disciples too, the image of the Good Shepherd reveals the close bond we hold with this Jesus.

While many of our churches, our gathering places, are dominated by the crucifix behind the altar, occasionally we come upon a few which express the meaning of the sacrifice on the Cross, that is the sign of God’s constant, life-giving love in the Resurrection.

In the Easter event of the resurrection, there is an assertion that this steadfast love of God has a capacity to do something remarkable. The disciples came to recognize that Jesus who has laid down his life for them has been raised to new life. Such is the love that God has for us, that it has the capacity to transform death into life. The risen Jesus becomes of the revelation of this life-giving love in the midst of all humanity.

It is no accident that the earliest Christian artistic representations of Jesus were as the Good Shepherd. John’s Gospel reveals how wide is this compassionate love of God: I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.

As Jesus lays down his life for his disciples, it is for a much broader circle — for all humanity. The life-giving love of God is to reach to the ends of the earth. This is truly Good News for all, for we all share the bond of God’s love as Easter People.

Our sacred stories

Father JOHN JENNINGS

Good Shepherd reveals the close bond we hold with this Jesus.

By BRIAN DRYDEN
Canadian Catholic News

OTTAWA — An effort to have the courts overturn Quebec’s controversial Bill 21 has failed, even though a Quebec court did rule that some aspects of the law that infringe on language rights must be scrapped by Quebec’s government.

In a 242-page Quebec Superior Court ruling released early April 20, Justice Marc-André Blanchard ruled that the Quebec government does have the power to require government employees not wear any religious symbols while they are at work. The restriction means that public workers such as teachers and police officers must dress in a secular manner when they are working in an official capacity.

Most of organizations and the legal teams behind the legal challenge that was launched against Quebec’s secularism law Bill 21 said they were reviewing the ruling and would comment on the decision after that review. As of 1 pm April 20, the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM), Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) and a university student involved in the case had yet to comment. Montreal’s English language school board was also one of the groups challenging the law, but its challenge to the law was more successful.

The Quebec court ruled that Bill 21 does not apply to English schools because of existing minority language rights that are covered under Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The CCLA and the NCCM joined forces immediately after Quebec’s Bill 21 became law and were the first groups to launch a legal challenge to Bill 21, a bill that has been severely criticized both in Quebec and across Canada by religious groups, human rights organizations and some politicians for infringing on the religious freedom of Canadian citizens. After the CCLA and NCCM launched their court challenge, other challenges were filed including by the largest English language school board in Quebec. All those cases were merged into one multi-faceted case at Quebec Superior Court.

Many human rights and religious groups have been calling on the federal government to get involved in the legal challenges to (continued on page 5)
Our heart is stronger than our wounds

Ten years before his death in 1996, Father Henri Nouwen was beset by a depression that nearly broke him. While in treatment, he wrote a very powerful book, *The Inner Voice of Love,* in which he humbly and candidly shared his struggles and the efforts it took to overcome them. At times, he felt completely overwhelmed by his wounds and obsessions and was on the edge of drowning, of collapse, when the only thing he could do was cry. Eventually though he found again his inner strength and emerged resilient, ready to re-enter his life with renewed energy. Remarking on what he learned from this inner collapse and his eventual return to health, he writes that, in the end, *our hearts are stronger than our wounds.*

That’s a powerful affirmation of a hard-earned truth; but is it always true? Are our hearts always stronger than our wounds? Do we always have the resources deep down to overcome our wounds?

Sometimes yes, as in the case of Fr. Nouwen; but sometimes no, as we see in the broken lives of so many. Sometimes, it seems wounds overpower the heart. Perhaps one poignant example can serve to illustrate this. There is a sad, tragic, haunting line in the well-known song, *I Dreamed a Dream,* from the popular musical, *Les Miserables.* The story told in *Les Miserables,* as we know, is based on Victor Hugo’s classic book by that title which tells a series of stories about how poverty and oppression can break the hearts, backs, and lives of the poor. One of Hugo’s characters, Fantine, is a single mother, abandoned by the man she loves and nursing a broken heart. She is also struggling to provide her daughter with the basic needs of life, struggling with a job and working conditions that are ruining her health, and struggling with sexual harassment from her boss that culminates in her unfair dismissal from her job. At a certain point, it’s too much, her health breaks, she collapses, and in her dying farewell sings out a lament that suggests that our hearts aren’t always stronger than our wounds; but sometimes *there are storms we cannot weather.* Sometimes the heart cannot weather the storm and collapses under the weight of its wounds.

Upholds most of Bill 21

(continued from page 4)

Bill 21, but so far the federal government’s position has been to stay out of the Quebec court cases while holding out the possibility of getting involved if those cases eventually end up in Canada’s Supreme Court.

Both the CCLA and NCCM said previously that they know the court fight against Bill 21 could go on for years, and that they were prepared to fight the law for however long it takes.

“We know this has the potential to go all the way to the Supreme Court, and we could be looking at a long battle of five-to-seven years,” a statement on the CCLA website said, adding “and we will fight this to the very end.”

It is expected that at some point in the future the issues surrounding Quebec’s Bill 21 will eventually end up at the Supreme Court.

Who’s right — Fr. Nouwen or Fantine?

I suspect they both are, depending on one’s circumstance, inner health, and emotional resources. An old adage says, *whatever doesn’t kill you, makes you stronger!* True enough, providing it doesn’t kill you. Sadly, sometimes it does. Sometimes what weighs us down does kill us. I suspect that everyone reading this has had a first-hand experience of someone you knew and loved breaking down and dying, either by suicide or some other collapse of this sort, due to a broken life, a broken heart, a broken psyche, a wound that overpowered his or her heart.

Thus, when we look at the truth of Fr. Nouwen’s affirmation that our hearts are stronger than our wounds and the (seeming) antithetical truth that sometimes our wounds can kill the heart, we need to add a further truth which embraces both sides of this: *God’s grace, forgiveness, and love are stronger than our wounds, our collapses, our failures, and seeming despairs.*

Sometimes in our struggles we can access the inner strength buried below our wounds which will enable us to rise above them and walk again in health, strength, and enthusiasm. However, sometimes our wounds so paralyse the heart that we can no longer access the strength that lies deep within us. In this life, that kind of brokenness can look and feel like a terminal collapse, a sadness for which there is no healing, a despair, a wasted life. However, whenever a collusion of bitter circumstance and mental fragility break someone, when a person’s heart is no longer stronger than his or her wounds, we can take refuge in a deeper truth and consolation, namely, the strength that lies within God’s heart: *God’s grace, understanding, and love are stronger than our wounds, our collapses, our failures, and seeming despairs.*

What sets Christian faith apart from most other religions (as well as from all prosperity gospels) is that Christianity is a religion of grace and not primarily of self-effort (important though that is). As Christians, we don’t have to save ourselves, don’t have to get our lives right all on our own. Indeed, nobody ever does. As St. Paul says so clearly in his farewell message in Romans 1-8, none of us ever get our lives right on the basis of our own strength. That’s also true in terms of overcoming our wounds. All of us are weak and break down sometimes. However, and this is the point, when the storms of life overpower us, when we reach down for strength to withstand the storm only to find out that the storm is stronger than we are, we need then to reach still deeper and there we will find that God’s heart is stronger than our brokenness.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com

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Lay apostolate draws people to Eucharist Heart of Jesus
By NATASHA MAZEROLLE
Correspondent

SAINT JOHN — A local lay apostolate has developed an online program that will help faithful seek Jesus more deeply in the Blessed Sacrament. Thirty-three days to Eucharist Love is an email-based personal retreat that prepares people to consecrate themselves to the Eucharist Heart of Jesus. It is a series of teachings developed by Father Peter Stephen, KHS [Knights of the Holy Sepulchre] and retired Diocese of Saint John priest. The retreat is delivered over 33 days — following the method set forth by Father Michael Gaitley’s 33 Days to Morning Glory, a self-directed retreat for Consecration to Mary.

It includes rich commentary on the mass which has been inspired by some of the biblical, liturgical, and theological insights from St. John Paul II, Bishop Fulton Sheen, Dr. Edward Sri, Dr. Brant Pitre, and Dr. Scott Hahn.

Raylene Barnhill of Cambridge-Narrows worked with Fr. Stephen to develop this initiative. Like Fr. Stephen she is firmly convinced that the renewal of the Church depends on devotion to the Eucharist. “We know the Church is in crisis, and we believe it’s a crisis of faith,” she said. “We feel that if people re-whelmed and long to receive the Eucharist, they need to provide a platform where people can work with them up to the Holy Spirit. You’re not take in the information as they will, and leave go. You invite people and leave them free to out expectation. “We need to have landing pads for people who are searching, a lot of people it just makes sense,” Ms. Barnhill said. “I like them, then they have to go to mass. That’s the wonderful thing about the faith as I’ve gone through this, and so have many others. “I’ve learned more about the faith than I’ve ever known the Eucharist was God present to us, that is really integral in drawing people to Catholic.”

Ms. Barnhill hopes that growing in love for the Eucharist will draw people to spend time with him in Eucharistic Adoration. “In keeping with the bishop’s [Bishop Christian Riesbeck, CC of the Diocese of Saint John] request for adoration, we felt strongly about that too,” she said. “We need to be putting ourselves before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament asking him to show us how to renew the church and how to keep it solid.”

Ms. Barnhill shared that Fr. Stephen presented his teachings to her in the fall, and together they decided to break it into 33 chunks. About 60 people signed up for the first 33-days to Eucharistic Love, which took place in the fall of 2020.

“The Lord is doing all of it, we’re just trying to be his instruments,” Ms Barnhill said. The second 33-days, is to begin May 3, will prepare participants to make a consecration to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus in time for the Feast of Corpus Christi, the Solemnity of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus, June 6.

“It’s about really coming to know Christ in the Eucharist,” Ms. Barnhill said. “We know him in the scriptures, we know him in the Gospel and through the saints, but let’s really get to know him in the Eucharist and put ourselves before him.” So far close to 90 people have signed up.

The self-directed retreat takes place by email. “It just so easy to do, and with Covid it just makes sense,” Ms. Barnhill said. “I like the idea of people receiving something in their mailbox, we are united as a group of people even though we don’t know one another.”

She stressed that this is an invitation without expectation. “We need to have landing pads for people who are searching, a lot of people are searching and there has to be a place to go. You invite people and leave them free to take in the information as they will, and leave the work up to the Holy Spirit. You’re not responsible for the outcome, you’re just responsible for the invitation.”

Participating in the first 33-days has been a true blessing not only for Ms. Barnhill but many others. “I’ve learned more about the faith than I’ve ever known the Eucharist was God present to us, that is really integral in drawing people to Catholic.”

Budget 2021: Good or bad? Time will tell
By BRIAN DRYDEN
Canadian Catholic News

OTTAWA — Billions of dollars will be poured into some of the key priorities of faith and social justice groups as the federal government has opened the spending taps in its budget unveiled April 19.

But exactly how that money will be spent and its impact on Indigenous reconciliation, transitioning to a greener economy, providing child care and helping charities survive the economic devastation of the pandemic is open to debate.

Along with forecasting a deficit of $354 billion for the 2020-21 fiscal year and $154.7 billion for 2021-22, the minority Liberal gov-

ernment is promising to continue to support Canadians and businesses financially with ongoing pandemic financial supports.

“This budget is about finishing the fight against COVID-19. It’s about healing the wounds left by the COVID-19 recession. And it’s about creating more jobs and prosperity for Canadians in the days — and decades — to come,” said Minister of Finance Chrystia Freeland.

Ms. Freeland unveiled in her first budget as finance minister a plethora of spending initiatives, many focused on environmental concerns that have been at the forefront of demands by environmental and religious organizations to address climate change. In the budget, $101 billion in new spending was earmarked over three years to help transition to a green economy, the “just transition” some organizations have been calling for.

While the many “green” aspects of the budget are being applauded by Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ), the government could and should have gone further down that road, said Karri Munn-Venn.

“Investments in clean transportation, energy efficiency, adaptation and mitigation and resilient agriculture are all key,” said CPJ senior policy analyst Ms. Munn-Venn.

“Unfortunately, by coupling these measures with extensive supports to the oil and gas sector it becomes clear that the federal government has yet to grasp the severity and urgency of the global climate crisis or the

(continued on page 11)
QUEBEC CITY — Police have seized large quantities of altar wine in the province of Quebec, creating a situation where buying a bottle is nearly impossible.

On April 9, police officers seized sacramental wine from Bertrand, Foucher, Bélanger, Inc. in Montreal, Procure Écclésiastique, Inc. in Quebec City and Chandelles Tradition MB, Inc. in Saint-Constant.

Sandra Dion, spokeswoman for the Quebec City Police Department, said the wine was seized following an investigation. The seizures appear related to laws governing the resale of alcohol within provinces, although some distributors claim they are within the law and have licenses.

The altar wine available in Quebec comes from two Californian producers: Mont La Salle Altar Wines and Cribari Premium Altar Wines. However, since the Société des alcools du Québec (SAQ) — the provincial liquor board — does not sell these products, the wines had to be imported from other Canadian provinces. Although that was the practice for many years, police now says it’s illegal.

"Officers from the Montreal Police Department showed up with a warrant," said Alain Denis, general manager at Bertrand, Foucher, Bélanger, Inc., a store specializing in church goods. The warrant mentioned illegal possession and selling of alcohol. Chandelles Tradition MB did not return calls.

"This issue has been dragging on for 40 years," said Jacques Laroche, general manager and co-owner of Procure Écclésiastique, which had its entire stock seized.

"The SAQ, since at least the 1980s, has been trying to prevent the distribution of altar wine in Quebec," he added. "This forces parishes and religious communities to buy from other provinces."

Last December, the Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) warned permit holders that selling alcohol in other Canadian provinces is prohibited.

"I can confirm there has been no change to the terms of the sacramental wine appointment issued by the LCBO," an LCBO spokesman said April 22.

"Our suppliers have been told by the LCBO that they are no longer allowed to transit, even though the law allows them to do so," said Mr. Laroche. He cites Canada’s 1985 Importation of Intoxicating Liquors Act, which provides for exceptions for the importation of beverages for sacramental or medical purposes. "My main warehouse is in New Brunswick. My altar wine is imported into New Brunswick. We pay excise taxes. We have a license, we do it legally, transparently."

To regularize the situation in Quebec, the SAQ would have to grant licenses to import and resell altar wine directly or sell it itself.

"We applied for an altar wine license in 1997, but were denied. So we found another solution," said Mr. Laroche.

He considers the seizures "incomprehensible" and denounces the negative impact on religious freedom. He said the police actions seek "to prevent the practice of religious worship. I don't see what they're trying to do, other than cause trouble and interfere with a fundamental right. Currently, parishes in Quebec no longer have access to mass wine for worship."

Police are continuing their investigation. It is not yet known whether fines or charges will follow.

"The SAQ chose to become the supplier of altar wine," said Msgr. Murray.

The SAQ confirmed it is in contact with the bishops.

"We have reassured the (religious) authorities that we are analyzing our current stocks to determine if products that meet their specific criteria are currently available in our network," said Yann Langlais-Plante, public affairs spokesman for the SAQ.

Msgr. Murray believes the issue could be resolved quickly, since the SAQ may already have wines that could be suitable for worship, especially in its natural wine selections.

The Archdiocese of Quebec said it does not envision a shortage for now, as parishes still have stocks. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic "is reducing the need for mass wine these days," explained the diocesan director of communications, Valerie Roberge-Dion.

Mr. Vaillancourt is editor of Presence info, Montreal. §

QUEBEC CITY — This is a promotional photo for Mont La Salle Altar Wines produced in Napa, Calif. (CNS photo/courtesy Mont La Salle Altar Wines)
Pray, be poor, be close to the people, pope tells new priests

By CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The priesthood "is not a career, it is a service," Pope Francis told nine men just before ordaining them to the priesthood for the Diocese of Rome.

The service to which priests are called must reflect the way God has cared and continues to care for his people, a "style of closeness, a style of compassion and a style of tenderness," the pope told the men April 25 during his homily at the ordination mass in St. Peter's Basilica.

The mass marked the first time in more than a year that Pope Francis presided at a liturgy at the main altar in the basilica and the first time that more than a few hundred people were allowed in at the same time. Close to 1,000 people, mainly family and friends of the ordinands, sat socially distanced and wearing masks throughout the mass.

Rather than walking the entire length of the basilica, Pope Francis processed into the Mass from the Altar of the Chair, avoiding a situation where people would crowd together at the centre aisle to see him up close and take photos.

The new priests, who are between the ages of 26 and 43, include six Italians, a Romania, a Colombian and a Brazilian. Six studied at Rome's major seminary; two prepared for the priesthood at the Neocatechumenal Way's Redemptoris Mater Seminary in Rome; and one attended the Rome Seminary of Our Lady of Divine Love.

On the Sunday when the Gospel reading is about the good shepherd and the church celebrates the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, Pope Francis told the new priests that they must never forget they were called from among God's people to be shepherds.

"Be shepherds" like Jesus, he said. "Shepherds of the holy, faithful people of God. Shepherds who go with the people of God — sometimes ahead of the flock, sometimes in the midst of it or behind it, but always there with the people of God."

Pope Francis said that as he already had mentioned to the nine in the sacristy before Mass, "Please, steer clear of the vanity, the pride of money. The devil enters through the pockets. Think about this."

"Be like the poor, faithful people of God are poor," he told them. "Don't be climbers" seeking some kind of "ecclesiastical career."

Priests who become "functionaries" or "businessmen," he said, lose their contact with the people and "that poverty that makes them like Christ poor and crucified."

Closeness is key in the life of a priest, the pope said. First, they must be close to God in prayer. Then, close to their bishop, close to one another and close to their people.

"I suggest you make a resolution today: Never speak ill of a brother priest," he said. "If you have something against another, be a man, put on your pants, go and tell him to his face."

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Pope calls for monthlong global prayer marathon for end of pandemic

By CAROL GLATZ
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis has called for a global prayer marathon for the entire month of May, praying for the end to the pandemic.

"The initiative will involve in a special way all shrines in the world" in promoting the initiative so that individuals, families and communities all take part in reciting the rosary, "to pray for the end of the pandemic," said the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization in a press release April 21.

"It is the heartfelt desire of the Holy Father that the month of May be dedicated to a prayer marathon dedicated to the theme, "from the entire church an unceasing prayer rises to God,"" it said.

The theme refers to the miraculous event recounted in the Acts of the Apostles (12:1-12) when all the church prayed for Peter, who was imprisoned until God sent an angel to free him, illustrating how the Christian community comes together to pray in the face of danger and how the Lord listens and performs an unexpected miracle.

Each day in May, there will be a livestream from one of 30 chosen Marian shrines or sanctuaries to guide the prayer at 6 pm Rome time (noon EDT) on all Vatican media platforms.

The pope will open the monthlong prayer May 1 and conclude it May 31, the council said.§

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May Prayer for Priests

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<tr>
<td>Weekly exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament: Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Saint John: Tuesday, 2-3 pm</td>
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<td>Our Lady of Fatima, Fredericton: Saturday, 1-2 pm</td>
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<td>St. Francis of Assisi, Lincoln: Wednesday, 8-9 am</td>
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<td>St. John the Baptist, Woodstock: Wednesday, 9 am with mass at 10 am</td>
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<td>St. Vincent de Paul, Oromocto: Friday, 8-9 am (except first Friday)</td>
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<td>St. François-de-Sales, Saint John: 6:30-7:30 pm</td>
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<td>Stella Maria, Blacks Harbour: Saturday, 9 am with mass at 10 am</td>
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- St. Rose of Lima 1-2 pm

- Rev. Mo. Brian Henneberry, vicar general

- For all priests who have served the Diocese of Saint John

- Rev. Douglas R. McNeill (Benediction & Confession)

- Rev. Mr. Kenneth Parker (Benediction & Confession)

- Rev. Msgr. Brian Melanson (Benediction & Confession)

- Rev. Dr. Marc Smith (Benediction & Confession)
Prayers said aloud lead the way to God, pope says at audience

By CAROL GLATZ
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Because prayer is a dialogue with God, people should not dismiss or be embarrassed by saying their prayers out loud or in a whisper, Pope Francis said.

"Vocal prayer is an essential element of the Christian life," and when Jesus taught the disciples how to pray, it was with a vocal prayer, the "Our Father," the pope said April 21 during his weekly general audience.

Continuing his series of talks on prayer, the pope reflected on the importance of speaking the words of prayers out loud rather than seeing prayer just as a mental exercise or form of meditation.

Too often, people think reciting a prayer is something only children or the uneducated do, but it is the way Jesus taught his followers to pray, he said.

"The words we speak take us by the hand. At times they restore flavour, they awaken even the sleepiest of hearts," they reawaken forgotten feelings and they "lead us by the hand toward experiencing God," he said.

"Pain is dangerous if it stays covered, closed up within us" as it can poison the soul, Pope Francis said.

"Together with other churches and faith communities, we have been cooperating fully with public health messages for more than a year now. At the same time, we have consistently impressed on (the) government that people of faith value highly their spiritual well-being and consider the public practice of their faith as essential — something which has not been sufficiently recognized in statute.

"It is highly disappointing then that, despite the reassurances of the taoiseach (Irish prime minister) to church leaders only two days ago that he understood the importance of faith and worship to the people of Ireland, this statutory instrument was introduced in a clandestine manner and without notice or consultation.

"We consider this to be a breach of trust," Archbishop Martin said.

His Archdiocese of Armagh straddles the border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. North of the border, churches have been reopened since late March. However, in the Republic, public worship remains online only.

Meanwhile, a case before the High Court challenging the ban on public worship is due to be heard April 27. Similar bans in nearby jurisdictions — including Scotland — have been found to be unlawful.

Head of Irish bishops calls new law on mass attendance 'draconian'

By MICHAEL KELLY
Catholic News Service

DUBLIN — The head of the Irish bishops' conference said the government's move to criminalize attendance at mass as part of COVID-19 regulations was a "potential infringement of religious freedom and of constitutional rights."

"The precise provisions are unclear and at first reading appear to be draconian, going further than the restrictions we have been cooperating with throughout the pandemic to date," said Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, Northern Ireland. "We shall be seeking legal counsel to advise on several questions concerning the extent of the statutory instrument."

He also said the bishops were seeking "an immediate meeting" with the government "and we request the suspension of this harsh and unclear statutory instrument."

Churches in the Irish Republic have been closed for public worship since December 26, but the government has claimed that this was just a matter of regulation rather than law.

However, on April 16, Health Minister Stephen Donnelly signed a new law — known as a statutory instrument — making it a criminal offense.

"We consider the publication of this statutory instrument, together with associated penal provisions, to be provocative and formally enacting a potential infringement of religious freedom and of constitutional rights," Archbishop Martin said.

People should be humble when seeing the elderly who unfailingly show their fidelity to the duty of prayer and who are "often the greatest intercessors of parishes," he said.

"They are the oaks that from year to year spread their branches to offer shade to the greatest number of people," he said. And even though they, too, must have faced moments of darkness and emptiness, they remain faithful to vocal prayer.

"It is like an anchor, one can hold onto the rope and remain faithful, come what may," he said.

"The words of a prayer get us safely through a dark valley, direct us toward green meadows rich in water and enable us to feast in front of the eyes of an enemy," as Psalm 23 teaches, he said.

The words can both reflect and shape feelings, helping feelings come to light, excluding and censoring nothing, the pope said.

"Pain is dangerous if it stays covered, closed up within us" as it can poison the soul, Pope Francis said.

Sacred Scripture shows the human heart can be home to harmful or hateful feelings,

Archbishop Martin said.

Archbishop Eamon Martin of Armagh, Northern Ireland, is pictured at the Vatican. (CNS photo/Paul Haring)
Amoris Laetitia family portraits: Sometimes messy, but grace-filled

By CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Sometimes the Catholic Church has "proposed a far too abstract and almost artificial theological ideal of marriage, far removed from the concrete situations and practical possibilities of real family life," Pope Francis wrote in his 2016 exhortation, Amoris Laetitia.

And too often people thought that because the church had an ideal for the family, it meant the church was for ideal families only.

"Of course, there aren't any perfect families, and Pope Francis says this in effect in Amoris Laetitia." The reality of a man and a woman is an imperfect reality, but they can perfect themselves with the sacrament of marriage, with the grace of the sacrament," said Gabriella Gambino, undersecretary of the Dicastery for Laity, the Family and Life.

"Marriage is a vocation; it is a path of holiness, which is perfected day by day," she told Catholic News Service April 21.

Pope Francis opened the Amoris Laetitia Family Year March 19, encouraging people to read the document, strengthen their families and support other families who may be struggling.

Gregory K. Hillis, a professor of theology at Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky, has been posting tweets about his marriage and family life with the hashtag #AmorisLaetitia almost since the document was published.

Often the tweets are humorous, like from Palm Sunday 2017: "It took a mere 10 seconds for my children to begin using their palm leaves as swords this morning. #AmorisLaetitia." And, shortly after Easter this year: "Discount Easter candy purchased. Now to hide it from the kids #AmorisLaetitia."

"The tweets are a way for me to highlight that Amoris Laetitia is so much more than just about the issue of divorce and remarriage," the issue that attracted the most media coverage, he told CNS. "It is about the nitty-gritty of family life in a way that truly spoke to me as a father and husband."

With the tweets, "just like 'Amoris Laetitia,' I wanted to be honest about both the humorous and less-than-humorous aspects of family life," he said.

"Amoris Laetitia' spoke about families honestly and openly, and in a way that was refreshing," Mr. Hillis said. "The ideal is there, but the messy reality is also clearly recognized and honoured."

The coronavirus pandemic and its various lockdowns and periods of working from home and attending class virtually have put added stress on families, but also underlined just how essential family relationships are to health, happiness and survival.

Ms. Gambino and her husband have five children: a 23-year-old university student, an 18-year-old and 12-year-old triplets. They were all together, in the same apartment, during Italy's severe lockdown in March-May 2020.

The children attended school online and both she and her husband were working from home, but they did not have seven computers or even seven devices. The Wi-Fi would slow down and crash and, at the end of the day, all seven of them would be screen zombies.

"Like everyone, we were unprepared for this long period of living together without leaving the house" except to go grocery shopping, she said. "We all had to have a lot of patience."

"But looking back, it really was a strong moment of learning for both of us as parents and for our children. We had to learn how to be generous, for example, in sharing computers and everyday chores, which grew with everyone home for every meal — "all seven of us there for breakfast, lunch and dinner!"

The triplets became "exceptional cooks," she said. But as a mom, "at the beginning I had to learn to close my eyes" to the mess they created. "Now, instead, they have become very good, because I explained to them the greatest cooks leave the kitchen clean!"

The children understood the challenges of lockdown, she said, "but also the opportunity that it gave us to all be together and dialogue and play."

And, with two widowed grandparents living on their own, the children also stepped up to ease their loneliness, making sure they received a phone call from at least one grandchild every day.

In Amoris Laetitia, Mr. Hillis said, Pope Francis wrote repeatedly about "manifesting generous love as parents and spouses, and this pandemic year has challenged me to live out this calling to generous love more than ever before — not always, or even often, successfully."

The pandemic period has been "a year characterized by disorder and anxiety, but it's also been a year when we've come together as a family and spent more time together than ever before," he said. "That came with challenges, but it also came with tremendous grace."

Another lockdown discovery that Ms. Gambino and her husband are committed to continuing is "building community with other couples," something that began with friends on Zoom, not just as a "pastoral" exercise but as an opportunity to chat and to share.

"We discovered how vital it is to build a community with other families, especially when you are experiencing difficulties or going through a tough time," she said. "Talking with other families, sharing those challenges and ideas for dealing with them — it was a real breath of fresh air. This must continue through the parish."

Priests around the world showed concern for families by celebrating liturgies online, organizing Zoom meetings and sending family prayer suggestions to parishioners' homes, she said. But many of them also need to learn to welcome families as leaders in the outreach to other families — "to embrace 'family' as an ecclesial style" — with everyone pitching in, celebrating their different talents and caring for people in need.

"On this, there is still work to be done," Ms. Gambino said, because for so long, the priest was seen as the guide and he tried to "drag" everyone else along.

The Amoris Laetitia Family Year, she said, should help Catholics discover that the pope's document is about real families and has suggestions for how all Catholic families can be witnesses of the joy and beauty of marriage and family life — challenges and all.§
Saint John Chapter of NB Right to Life

(continued from page 3)

Taking a moment to acknowledge the Bottles for Life Fundraiser, which raised $1500, Ms. LeBlanc said, “I’m really proud of that. New Brunswick Right to Life thanks you for that.” Donations for Bottles for Life can be dropped off at the Golden Mile Redemption Centre, 35 Linton Rd, West Side Saint John, during operational hours, with the instructions that the donation goes to NBRL. Individuals can also email sjrighttolife@gmail.com for a volunteer to pick up bottles for donation.

Ms. LeBlanc then made a presentation about the Wall of Support, which honours loved ones with a donation in support of the cause for life. A donation of any amount will purchase a name plate, which can be inscribed however the donor wishes. “There are some dear people represented on the Wall of Support — strong pro-life members. It’s a good way to honour a loved one,” Ms. LeBlanc said. Donations may be sent to the Chapter with the details to be put on the plaque by emailing sjrighttolife@gmail.com.

The annual diocesan Pro-Life collection, held on the second Sunday of Advent, which this year was December 5, collects funds from diocesan faithful in support of various organizations that assist women dealing with unplanned pregnancies, and educate and advocate on behalf of the most vulnerable members of the province. Ms. Kipping announced donations in excess of $17,000 which Bishop Christian Riesbeck, CC, of the Diocese of Saint John, presented to the Saint John Chapter of NBRL following mass on April 24.

Beth Crouchman, past president of Saint John Chapter NBRL and past president of the Board of Directors NBRL was in attendance to assist with the election of officers and offered her regards to members. “I’m really pleased with the executive, and pleased to see so many gathered here today,” she said. “It blesses me.” Following the meeting members were provided lunch and invited to watch a presentation from the Pro-Life Summit by public speaker and pro-life activist Jonathan Van Maren. Individuals wishing to view the video may contact the chapter via email above for the link and password.

Natasha Mazerolle is a correspondent for The New Freeman. She can be reached at natasha@maz-family.com.

Budget 2021

(continued from page 6)

Despite the far-reaching nature of the budget, and despite the vast challenges that the pandemic presents to Canadian society, it’s hard to see where the budget has any direct impact on the charitable sector.

Budget 2021

(continued from page 6)

devastating ramifications of inadequate action.”

Also promised in the budget was $30 billion over five years and $8.3 billion per year after that for a national child care program, $18 billion towards “safer” and “healthier” Indigenous communities, $17.6 billion towards other “green recovery” efforts, $3 billion over five years to help improve long-term care and $2.5 billion for housing units for vulnerable Canadians.

The Liberals have been promising to bring in a national day care system for decades, but what they propose is disappointing to religious think tank Cardus, which has been advocating for a flexible system for parents and not a one-size fits all government system as is currently in place in Quebec. The proposed system “is structurally opposed to equity for all families. All families will pay for the plan, but only families who choose or can access the type of care the federal government favours receive the subsidized benefit,” Cardus said in a statement after the budget was released.

“Families know how to make the choices that work best for them. Federal policy should maximize the flexibility of families to make varied choices across the country.”

However, the CPJ’s socio-economic policy analyst Natalie Appleyard praised the child-care program, to be created with the help of the provinces, saying, “Long-awaited and critical investments towards the goal of $10-a-day child-care fees are to be celebrated.” Also included in the budget is a temporary Community Services Recovery Fund of $400 million for Canada’s charitable sector, which has been hard hit financially by the pandemic. However, that support falls short of what many in the charitable sector have been asking for.

Budget 2021

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Father Salmon a missionary on the go
By QUINTON AMUNDSON
The Catholic Register

FORT ST. JAMES, B.C. — People well acquainted with Father Frank Salmon, OMI, know connecting with him via phone, especially during warmer months, is a bit of a difficult proposition.

That’s because the Oblate missionary is fully immersed in serving and conversing with people of the Binche Whut’en, Nak’azdli and Tl’azt’en First Nations bands that live around Fort St. James, B.C.

Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, Fr. Salmon hops on his bicycle and tours the area and stops to have socially-distanced, face-to-face conversations.

The pastor of Our Lady of Snows Parish in the Diocese of Prince George would tell you that he doesn’t have a pre-planned design of his activities whenever he leaves the parish for these outings.

“I say a prayer to myself whenever I leave the house to start the day,” said Fr. Salmon, who has been in Fort St. James since 2002.

“Fr. Salmon’s willingness to surrender to God’s will, and his desire for social interaction, are two of the reasons Catholic Missions In Canada (CMIC) has tapped him as this year’s missionary recipient of the St. Joseph’s Award. The 75-year-old will be feted in a ceremony led by Cardinal Thomas Collins during CMIC’s virtual Tastes of Heaven Gala April 29.

Since being ordained at St. Jude’s Parish in Vancouver over 48 years ago, Fr. Salmon has devoted the vast majority of his years of service working with First Nations peoples in Duncan,

Fort St. James and along the west coast of British Columbia.

Fr. Salmon’s mother “couldn’t decide if she would name me after Francis of Assisi or Francis Xavier, so she named me after both of them.” He’s learned from each.

“Xavier did real work in India and in the missions, and he made a real effort to learn the culture of the people he was speaking to by doing the mass in their language and, to some extent, their tradition. His and the Jesuits’ effort to learn culture really impressed me. One of my contributions was to learn the culture.”

Interestingly, just like Xavier, Fr. Salmon toured different parts of India to serve the Lord. He credits that experience over four decades ago as formative for his life now.

Fr. Salmon modelled Francis of Assisi by not growing anxious about where his next meal would come from. He said he exhibited this spirit in Duncan, during his time with the coastal missions and now in Fort St. James.

Fr. Salmon received a great taste of how impactful his 48 years of missionary service has been during a Zoom celebration to celebrate his 75th birthday earlier this year.

Each of the dozens of guests delivered a two-minute tribute. The greeting from Louis Frank, who mentored Fr. Salmon during his time with the Ahousaht on Vancouver Island, was special. Fr. Salmon said the relationship melded into a brotherhood between the two. Frank expressed that sentiment.

“We are more than friends, we are more like brothers. I always appreciated that you accept us as we are and at the same time invited us to be part of your way of life and way of prayer without giving up any of our ways.”

It’s all about having the time now to make choices that make sense for you and make it easier for your family. It takes very little time to leave them your wishes, leaving you all plenty of time to get on with making memories.

That’s why we think preplanning makes sense.