

PRACTICING GRATITUDE

To be grateful for the good things that happen in our lives is easy, but to be grateful for all of our lives-the good as well as the bad, the moments of joy as well as the moments of sorrow, the successes as well as the failures, the rewards as well as the rejections-that requires hard spiritual work. Still, we are only truly grateful people when we can say thank you to all that has brought us to the present moment. As long as we keep dividing our lives between events and people we would like to remember and those we would rather forget, we cannot claim the fullness of our beings as a gift of God to be grateful for.

Let's not be afraid to look at everything that has brought us to where we are now and trust that we will soon see in it the guiding hand of a loving God.

Henri Nouwen

For further reflection:

“But Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is being done, the saving of many lives.’” Genesis 50:19,20

Your response:

Practicing gratitude isn’t easy. What helps you?



ST. EUGENE’S VISION

Excerpts from address of Pope Francis to Oblate General Chapter, September 2016:

At the beginning of its history, your Congregation endeavoured to rekindle the faith that the French revolution was extinguishing in the hearts of the poor of the countryside of Provence and overwhelming many ministers of the Church. Over the course of a few decades, it spread into the five continents, continuing the journey that was started by the Founder, a man who loved Jesus passionately and the Church unconditionally.

Today you are called to renew this twofold love, commemorating the 200 years of your religious Institute’s existence. This Jubilee you are celebrating, by joyful and providential coincidence, forms part of the Jubilee of Mercy. And indeed, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate were born from an experience of mercy which the young Eugene had experienced on a Good Friday before Jesus crucified. May Mercy always be the heart of your mission, of your commitment to evangelize the world today.

The Church, along with the entire world, is experiencing an age of great transformation, in the most diverse of fields. It needs men who carry in their hearts the same love for Jesus Christ that lived in the heart of the young Eugene de Mazenod, and the same unconditional love for the Church, which strives to be an ever more open house. It is important to work for a Church that is for everyone, a Church that is ready to welcome and to accompany! The work to be done in order to achieve all of this is vast; and all of you also have your own specific contribution to offer.

Your missionary history is the story of many consecrated people, who have offered and sacrificed their lives for the mission, for the poor, in order to reach distant lands where there were still “sheep without a shepherd”. Today, every land is “mission territory”, every human dimension is mission territory, awaiting the proclamation of the Gospel. Pope Pius XI called you “specialists of difficult missions”. The current field of mission seems to expand every day, embracing the poor again and again, the men and women bearing the face of Christ who ask for help, consolation, hope, in the most desperate situations in life.

Therefore there is need of you, of your missionary courage, your availability to bring to everyone the Good News that frees and consoles. May the joy of the Gospel shine forth firstly on your face, making you joyful witnesses. Following the example of the Founder, may charity among you be your first rule of life, the premise of every apostolic action; and may zeal for the salvation of souls be a natural consequence of this fraternal charity.

It is necessary to seek adequate evangelical and courageous responses to the questions of the men and women of our time. For this you must look to the past with gratitude, live out the present with passion and embrace the future with hope, without allowing yourselves to be discouraged by the difficulties you encounter in the mission, but instead to be strong in faithfulness to your missionary vocation.

As your religious family enters its third century of life, may the Lord allow you to write new pages that are as evangelically fruitful as those of your brothers who have borne witness, sometimes even with blood, to that great love for Christ and for the Church.

A new heart I will give you, and a

NEW SPIRIT

I will put within you. Ez. 36:26a

END OF LIFE ISSUES

A DISCUSSION

An ethical reflection and response

Thursday, January 18, 2018

7:00—9:00 p.m.

St. Joseph’s Parish Hall

Resource Person:

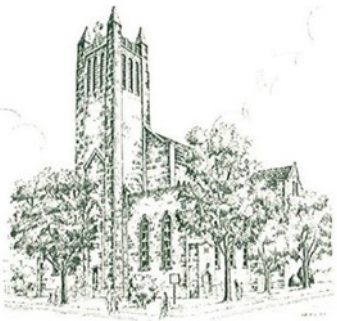
Rev. Mark Miller, C.Ss.R.

Fr. Mark Miller is presently the Provincial of the Redemptorists of Canada and is a Bio-ethicist. He worked for many years with the Saskatchewan Catholic Health Authority to develop ethical guidelines for health care. His information sessions are always informative, thought-provoking and compassionate.

Put the date in your calendar!

LIFE IS A GIFT

“Life is precious. Not because it is unchangeable, like a diamond, but because it is vulnerable, like a little bird. To love life means to love its vulnerability, asking for care, attention, guidance, and support. Life and death are connected by vulnerability. The newborn child and the dying elder both remind us of the preciousness of our lives. Let's not forget the preciousness and vulnerability of life during the times we are powerful, successful, and popular.” Henri Nouwen



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INTRODUCTION TO INDIGENOUS AWARENESS TRAINING

The Dialogue Circle for Renewed Relations, along with Kateri Native Ministry of Ottawa, is sponsoring an Indigenous Awareness Training Session as a follow-up to the programs we held last year in the parish.

January 20, 2018

9:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

St. Paul University (Room #L120)

This training will provide an introduction to culture, history, and contemporary issues impacting Indigenous peoples in an effort to better understand and build respectful relationships moving forward.

Facilitator: Ashley Keays, from the Indigenous Awareness Training Unit of the Ontario Provincial Police.

Please bring a bag lunch.



ASH WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 14
LENT BEGINS!

THIS LENT: “GIVE IT UP FOR THE EARTH:

Lent begins February 14 this year—it is not too soon to start considering how we will observe this season.
Ed.

By Leah Daly

Sometimes my adult faith journey gets stuck in a rut of routine and apathy. During these times, I find myself simply going through the motions of faith, work, and home life. Intentionality and genuine engagement slip away when apathy seeps in.

The antidote for apathy and disengagement, for me, comes through my work with high school students. Teenagers are waking up to the world in a way that is engaging and life-giving. Their emerging insight into their place in this world and their passions for diverse issues can be a real wake-up call. It reminds me to begin again as a novice to ecological and social justice movements. Each new semester and each new group of young adults in my faith-based educational community invites me again and deeper into the call to care for the common good and our common home. Working with high school students has given me renewed passion for ecological and social justice.

As Chaplaincy Leader at Immaculata High School last year, I engaged with my students and staff in the [*Give it up for the Earth!*](#) campaign last Lent. The focus on ecological justice from a faith perspective was an ideal way to engage youth in the disciplines of the Lenten season. They were able to grow into a more thoughtful and mature approach to fasting during the Lenten season of repentance and renewal. They were also able to deepen their awareness of and commitment to ecological justice by transforming their Lenten fasting into a compassionate response to the consequences of climate change on the earth and on vulnerable populations.

We kicked off the campaign on Ash Wednesday by making it part of our classroom prayer service. Students and staff were challenged to “give it up for the earth,” to give something up for Lent that put their care for God’s Creation into concrete action. The challenge in presenting the campaign to youth is that they don’t have as much control over their lifestyle choices as adults. We needed to empower them to find the ways that they can make positive environmental choices. We took inspiration from Pope Francis when he said, “everyone’s talents and involvement are needed to redress the damage caused by human abuse of God’s creation.”

Students can choose how they spend their fast food dollars and how they dispose of their garbage while in public. They do have some control over how they get around town, and they can offer to help out at home with groceries and meal preparation. Here are the suggestions we offered on Ash Wednesday:

Give up...

- disposable cups, straws, bottles, cans, shopping bags
- meat one day a week
- long, hot showers

Take up...

- walking or cycling
- repairing rather than replacing
- recycling or composting
- eating local fruit and veggies

For each week of Lent, we presented both an easy and a difficult challenge. These challenges got everyone thinking about their lunches, coffees, shopping, and travel habits. One weekly challenge was to commit to a “buy nothing” day. Student were encouraged to get their entire household on board. The challenge also included signing the postcard to our MP and Minister of the Environment and Climate Change Catherine McKenna. Her constituency office is just across the canal from Immaculata. It felt like an easy connection to let her know what kinds of commitments we were making as individuals and what we were asking her to do as an elected leader and cabinet member.

The campaign truly allowed us, as a school faith community, to engage in the spiritual discipline of fasting in a meaningful and life-giving way. The *Give it up for the Earth!* initiative provided more than an opportunity for putting political pressure on the government. It helped me to shape our journey through Lent. Our prayer, fasting, and giving was all connected to our care for God’s Creation.

Citizens for Public Justices has launched *Give it up for the Earth!* for 2018. Think about ways that your community can use this campaign. Learn more at cpj.ca/for-the-earth.

Leah Daly has been engaging young people in faith-based social justice education and activism as a Chaplaincy Leader with the Ottawa Catholic School Board since 2002 and is currently working at St. Mother Teresa High School.

WORLD DAY FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

Letter of Pope Francis for World Day for Migrants and Refugees, which is celebrated January 14 this year.

Dear brothers and sisters!

“You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God” (*Leviticus* 19:34).

Throughout the first years of my pontificate, I have repeatedly expressed my particular concern for the lamentable situation of many migrants and refugees fleeing from war, persecution, natural disasters and poverty. This situation is undoubtedly a “sign of the times”. We need to express the Church’s concern for migrants, displaced people, refugees and victims of human trafficking.

Every stranger who knocks at our door is an opportunity for an encounter with Jesus Christ, who identifies with the welcomed and rejected strangers of every age (*Matthew* 25:35-43). The Lord entrusts to the Church’s motherly love every person forced to leave their homeland in search of a better future. This solidarity must be concretely expressed at every stage of the migratory experience – from departure through journey to arrival and return. This is a great responsibility, which the Church intends to share with all believers and men and women of good will, who are called to respond to the many challenges of contemporary migration with generosity, promptness, wisdom and foresight, each according to their own abilities.

In this regard, I wish to reaffirm that “our shared response may be articulated by four verbs: *to welcome, to protect, to promote* and *to integrate*”.

Considering the current situation, *welcoming* means, above all, offering broader options for migrants and refugees to enter destination countries safely and legally. This calls for a concrete commitment to increase and simplify the process for granting humanitarian visas and for reunifying families. At the same time, I hope that a greater number of countries will adopt private and community sponsorship programmes, and open humanitarian corridors for particularly vulnerable refugees.

The second verb – *protecting* – may be understood as a series of steps intended to defend the rights and dignity of migrants and refugees, independent of their legal status. Such protection begins in the country of origin, and consists in offering reliable and verified information before departure, and in providing safety from illegal re-

cruitment practices. This must be ongoing, as far as possible, in the country of migration, guaranteeing them adequate consular assistance, the right to personally retain their identity documents at all times, fair access to justice, the possibility of opening a personal bank account, and a minimum sufficient to live on. When duly recognised and valued, the potential and skills of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees are a true resource for the communities that welcome them. This is why I hope that, in countries of arrival, migrants may be offered freedom of movement, work opportunities, and access to means of communication, out of respect for their dignity. *Promoting* essentially means a determined effort to ensure that all migrants and refugees – as well as the communities which welcome them – are empowered to achieve their potential as human beings, in all the dimensions which constitute the humanity intended by the Creator. Among these, we must recognize the true value of the religious dimension, ensuring to all foreigners in any country the freedom of religious belief and practice. Many migrants and refugees have abilities which must be appropriately recognised and valued. Since “work, by its nature, is meant to unite peoples”, I encourage a determined effort to promote the social and professional inclusion of migrants and refugees, guaranteeing for all – including those seeking asylum – the possibility of employment, language instruction and active citizenship, together with sufficient information provided in their mother tongue.

The final verb – *integrating* – concerns the opportunities for intercultural enrichment brought about by the presence of migrants and refugees. Integration is not “an assimilation that leads migrants to suppress or to forget their own cultural identity. Rather, contact with others leads to discovering their ‘secret’, to being open to them in order to welcome their valid aspects and thus contribute to knowing each one better. This is a lengthy process that aims to shape societies and cultures, making them more and more a reflection of the multi-faceted gifts of God to human beings”.^[16] This process can be accelerated by granting citizenship free of financial or linguistic requirements, and by offering the possibility of special legalisation to migrants who can claim a long period of residence in the country of arrival. I reiterate the need to foster a culture of encounter in every way possible – by increasing opportunities for intercultural exchange, documenting and disseminating best practices of integration, and developing programmes to prepare local communities for integration processes.

+Francis