

The New Freeman

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SAINT JOHN — Bishop Christian Riesbeck, CC of the Diocese of Saint John leads parishioners in a Holy Hour prior to mass on the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), Sunday, June 6 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Saint John. During his homily, the bishop took the opportunity to encourage anyone who has distanced themselves from the practice of Sunday mass to come back. Story page 2. (Natasha Mazerolle photo)



OTTAWA — Tabitha Ewert is legal counsel for the pro-life organization We Need a Law. On June 2, MPs voted against a private member's bill that would have prohibited doctors from knowingly performing sex selective abortions. Story page 10. (Photo arpacanada.ca)



KAMLOOPS — A child's red dress hangs on a stake near the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School June 6, 2021. The remains of 215 children, some as young as three years old, were found at the site in May in Kamloops, British Columbia. Dr. Hamilton, an Anthropology professor at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, worked from 2013-15 identifying residential-school-related grave-sites across Canada. Story page 3. During Holy Hour and mass June 6 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Saint John, Bishop Christian Riesbeck, CC of the Diocese of Saint John offered moments of prayer and solidarity for Indigenous communities with respect to this discovery. Story page 3. For Pope Francis' reaction, see story, page 9.



VATICAN CITY — Christians can rest assured that in moments of trial, suffering or even sin, Jesus is interceding for them before God, Pope Francis said during his June 2 General Audience. Story page 8. (Paul Haring, CNS photo)

Clergy changes for 2021 can be found on page 12 of this issue.

'You are missed,' says Bishop Riesbeck

By NATASHA MAZEROLLE
Correspondent

SAINT JOHN — On June 6 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Saint John, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, Bishop Christian Riesbeck, CC of the Diocese of Saint John, took the opportunity to encourage anyone who has distanced themselves from the practice of Sunday mass to come back.

"Every Sunday — indeed every time we gather for mass we come together as God's family to worship and give thanks, that's what the word Eucharist means: thanksgiving," Bishop Riesbeck said. "What is it that brings us back every week to celebrate the mass? Sure, we may be attracted by the music, the preaching, the fellowship, or the beauty of the liturgy. But ultimately, it's that we witness and participate in a miracle...and have a real encounter with the living God — one that is deeply personal."

At mass "we are nourished by the word of God and the bread of life," Bishop Riesbeck went on to say. "Jesus' own body and blood, where we receive the grace and strength we need to keep journeying towards our heavenly goal."

Having an encounter with the living God in the Eucharist changes each person. "As we unite ourselves to Jesus and one another through Holy Communion, we become transformed just like the bread and wine are changed, and truly, really and substantially become the Body and Blood of Jesus," Bishop Riesbeck said.

"It stands to reason that the more we unite ourselves to Jesus — the one who is love — in prayer, especially in the prayer of the mass (the highest prayer we can offer, and the source and summit of all Christian life), the more we become like him and are able to respond generously to his commandment of love, bringing peace, justice and love to a world that is starving for God and his love."

While many Catholics have distanced themselves from the practice of Sunday Mass for various reasons, the pandemic has kept significant numbers of faithful away

from Churches over the past year. Bishop Riesbeck took the opportunity to speak directly to those people, issuing a personal invitation for them to return. "I encourage you to come back — you are missed!" he said. "God is just waiting to lavish his mercy and grace upon you. No livestream mass can replace the real thing, the real gift of being able to commune with our Lord in the Eucharist, and to have an in-person encounter with him."

Speaking of the tender love God has for each person, Bishop Riesbeck said, "he so desires to nourish us, to console us, and to strengthen us for our journey to heaven with the grace we need to face and overcome any challenges. As things open up again and we return to all kinds of other public activities, going to restaurants, stores, and friends and family gatherings, and as people get vaccinated, it's time to come back to mass."

Calling the celebration of Sunday Mass, "the most important thing Catholics do all week" Bishop Riesbeck said, "if more people really understood what was happening here at mass every week, our churches would not be able to hold all the people that would flock to them every week, even post-Covid."

Bishop Riesbeck concluded his homily with an expression of gratitude for the gift of the Eucharist. "We give thanks to God for the most awesome gift of all — Jesus, who gives himself to us completely, and invites us to render him our hearts, to surrender our lives completely to him, so that we can find our consolation and strength in him, especially in these challenging times."

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

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Bishop offers moments of prayer and solidarity for Indigenous communities

By NATASHA MAZEROLLE
Correspondent

SAINT JOHN — As news this week of 215 unmarked burial sites at the Kamloops Residential School in Kamloops, B.C. settled deeply in the hearts of Canadians and filled each person with grief, Bishop Christian Riesbeck, CC, of the Diocese of Saint John led two significant moments of prayer, expressing sorrow at these tragic events and affirming his solidarity with the Indigenous people of our diocese.

On Wednesday June 2, the weekly diocesan rosary (livestreamed via Facebook Live, Diocese of Saint John) was offered for the intention of the children who lost their lives at the former Kamloops Residential School and the Indigenous communities who are deeply affected by this tragic discovery. Bishop Riesbeck echoed the words of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) statement for the National Meeting on Indian Residential Schools in 1991, “We are sorry, and deeply regret the pain, suffering and aliena-

tion that so many experienced. We have heard their cries of distress, feel their anguish, and want to be part of the healing process.”

He went on to share the words of Pope Benedict who, in a 2009 meeting with the Assembly of First Nations in Canada, “expressed his sorrow at the anguish caused by the deplorable conduct of some members of the Church,” and offered “sympathy and prayerful solidarity, and pray that all those affected would experience healing, and [eventually] move forward with renewed hope.”

Speaking from the heart, Bishop Riesbeck offered some words of his own. “I am sorry, and I am deeply aggrieved by the suffering that this recent revelation has caused the families and the communities who are close to these children, especially from the Tk’emlups te Secwepemc First Nation,” he said. “I cannot even begin to imagine the trauma that is stirred up in residential school survivors every time we hear of such horrific revelations. We pledge our prayers, our accompaniment, and our support to you, and to all those who are suffering deeply in these days.”

Former lieutenant governor of New Brunswick and current chancellor of St. Thomas University in Fredericton, Graydon Nicholas, who along with his wife Beth leads a decade each week in Maliseet, was instrumental in organizing this rosary. “Somebody asked me the other day, ‘Graydon, what can we do?’” Mr. Nicholas said. “And I said, ‘I think we can pray.’ We can pray and petition our Blessed Mother and ask that Jesus bring consolation to many who are affected by what happened.”

Mr. Nicholas assembled Indigenous leaders from the Eel Ground, Elsipogtog and Tobique First Nations in New Brunswick to lead each decade in either Mi’kmaq or Maliseet. Rosary participants were deeply moved, and Bishop Riesbeck said, “it is a consolation to be leading this rosary together with our Indigenous brothers and sisters, who are understandably profoundly impacted, and with whom we stand in solidarity.”

While there were no residential schools in our province, many Indigenous peoples in New Brunswick were sent along with others (continued on page 7)

‘Mass grave’ narrative misses need for answers

By TERRY O’NEILL
The B.C. Catholic

KAMLOOPS — When the Chief of the Kamloops Indian Band announced on May 27 that researchers had located the remains of 215 children in unmarked graves near the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, she said the discovery confirmed what she and her people had long known, that many children had died while attending the residential school.

“We had a knowing in our community that we were able to verify,” Rosanne Casimir stated in a news release, explaining that ground-penetrating radar had been used to locate the graves.

Indeed, as National Post’s Tristin Hopper wrote in response to widespread expression of “shock” and “disbelief” in the wake of the news, the existence of such graveyards was never a secret. “Communities and survivors knew the bodies were there, as did any investigation or government commission that bothered to ask,” he wrote.

The landmark Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC] was one such body that did ask, and in 2015 reported that its research showed that, of the 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Metis children who attended Canada’s Indian residential schools, about 4,000 perished, and many were buried in unmarked

graves near the schools. “It was a rate of death driven by far higher levels of malnutrition, disease, and abuse than the norm at the time in white schools,” the TRC reported.

The TRC report drew on the labours of many investigators and consultants, including Dr. Scott Hamilton, a professor in the Department of Anthropology at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, who worked from 2013-15 identifying residential-school-related gravesites across Canada.

His full, 44-page written report *Where are the Children buried?* was published online only following Chief Casimir’s announcement. Dr. Hamilton said in an interview with *The B.C. Catholic* that he believes his study provides important detail and context for a public grappling with the implications of the Kamloops news.

Of particular concern to him is the fact that many news reports described the Kamloops gravesite as a mass grave, a term most often used to describe sites associated with war crimes or massacres in which people all killed at one time are buried en masse in a site that is then hidden.

In fact, deaths at residential schools accrued year over year, with “wild fluctuations” that probably reflected periodic epidemics, Dr. Hamilton said. The high death rates continued until the middle of the 20th century, when they finally fell to match those in the general population.



Dr. Scott Hamilton

Dr. Hamilton said the “mass grave” description “misses the point with the residential school story,” a story that unfolded over more than a century ago and in which appalling conditions led to high death rates due to disease, the most devastating of which was tuberculosis.

Deceased students were often buried in simple graveyards near the schools because federal authorities provided no funding to send the bodies home or to conduct proper burials. The result, Dr. Hamilton told *The B.C. Catholic*, was that the children were interred in de facto “pauper’s graves” with simple wooden crosses that have deteriorated and disappeared over the decades. His report found no evidence that school officials intended to hide the graves.

Communicable diseases were a primary cause of poor health and death for many (continued on page 7)

Sacrifice with hope: body and blood of Christ

It is truly amazing to see the sacrifices parents make for their children. They set aside their own wills for the sake of these children. Parents sacrifice their lives, their resources, their wishes, their dreams for their children. And it happens, not just for their children, but also for their grandchildren and down through the generations. There can be only one ultimate reason for such sacrifice.....love.

Instances of this same sacrificial love appear in countries all around the world. We see it in places such as Myanmar and Belarus, in Columbia and Venezuela, in Russia and Hong Kong as people risk life and freedom for the sake of their shared rights and a voice in governance. They speak for the common good with a willingness to sacrifice for one another and the common good.

In the midst of the pandemic, we are all called upon to sacrifice for the common good as well. We need to observe restrictions, limit our on our normal gatherings and accept vaccinations. These are sacrifices for the common good. The measures protect us from the virus. But, more importantly we accept them for the sake of one another and the protection of all.

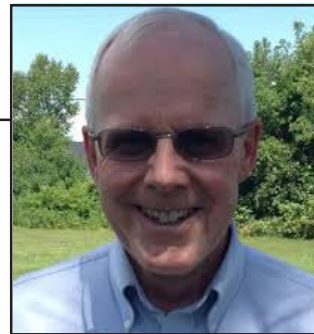
On many levels, sacrifice is a part of being human. It is an expression of mutual care, concern and love. It takes us into the realization that we are more than individuals. We are always part of a community, many communities, and we live not only for ourselves, but for one another. Thus, to make sacrifices for the common good is to be human. It is to bring promise and hope to all humanity. Whatever sacrifice we make, it has a goal — it expresses love for another.

The Feast of the Body and Blood of Jesus the Christ draws us to find meaning in the sacrifice Jesus made through the cross. Through this we recognize that it was not a one-time event, long ago. Like all sacrifice, it looks to the future and it does so, not with mourning, but with hope. The sacrifice of Jesus cross is an expression of love for all humanity.

In the Old Testament Book of Exodus we are given the story of Israel's journey of liberation. In faith they discovered this was God's

Our sacred stories

Father JOHN JENNINGS



work for them, God's gift. They were to know they were a covenant people, a community, special to God. They were drawn together by the shared blood of sacrifice. The symbolic sacrifice was an expression of their gratitude for the love God had showered upon them (Exodus 24:3-8).

The meal that Jesus shared with his friends at Passover was a meal of gratitude for God's love. The sacrifice it represented as the bread was broken and the wine was shared spoke of Jesus's own sharing of not just his physical body and blood, but his whole embodied life. His life was not just for the gathered disciples, but for all humanity, brought together as the People of God in every place and every age. Mark's Gospel describes this broad covenant with all humanity in the sharing of the cup. As he puts it: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many" (See: Mark 14:12-16, 22-26).

Our Eucharistic celebration as a community of God's people today and every Sunday is an expression of our gratitude to the God who loves us constantly. It is both a meal shared by a community of believing Christians and a sacrifice in which we renew our covenant relationship with God and with one another as God's people. We are in so many ways, the new Israel, trekking as the People of God in our own deserts. Like them we have assurance of God's continuing presence with us. May we bring love and hope to all humanity.

Father John Jennings, retired priest of the Diocese of Saint John and St. Thomas University, reflects on the previous Sunday readings with the intent to be a form of on-going adult faith formation. He can be reached at: jennings@stu.ca. §

Catholic and faith groups call on Senate to approve Bill C-15 as an act of reconciliation with Indigenous Canadians

By BRIAN DRYDEN
Canadian Catholic News

OTTAWA – Catholic and other faith communities under the umbrella of the Faith in the Declaration coalition are calling on the Senate to quickly approve a federal bill that would give the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples legal standing within Canadian law "as a critical step" towards reconciliation with Canada's First Nations.

And as Catholic and other faith communities ramp up their lobbying efforts to ensure that Bill C-15, which was approved by MPs by a vote of 210 to 118 in the House of Commons on May 25, senior federal cabinet ministers appeared at a senate committee on May 31 to make the same plea.

Federal Justice Minister David Lametti, who spoke just days after a mass grave of 215 children was discovered at a Kamloops residential school site in B.C., told the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples that adopting the UN Declaration known as UNDRIP within Canadian law will be a step towards reconciliation with Canada's First People's as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commis-

sion (TRC) in Canada.

The TRC wrapped up in 2015 and made adopting the principles of the UN declaration within Canadian law one of the key recommendation of its final report.

"This can help structure future collaborative discussions so that we can move forward with mutual respect," said Mr. Lametti, who expressed his anger at hearing about the mass grave discovered at the former residential school site during his presentation to the Senate committee.

Catholic and other faith communities have been vocal in their support for enshrining UNDRIP within Canadian law and have been vigorously lobbying MPs and senators to support Bill C-15.

"We urge the Senate to pass this legislation before the 2021 Summer recess," said a letter co-signed by Catholic religious orders and organizations including the Federation of Sisters of St. Joseph of Canada, numerous Jesuit organizations, Development and Peace/Caritas Canada and the Toronto Diocesan Council among others.

"We see Bill C-15 as a critical step toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples," the letter from the Catholic organizations said.

(continued on page 10)

Home

Home is more than a house or a place on a map. It's a place in the heart, the place where you most want to be at the end of the day. The metaphorical idea of home can help us sort out many things, not least how sex connects to love.

Sex can never be simply casual, purely recreational, something which does not touch the soul. Sex always touches the soul, for good or for bad. It's either sacramental or harmful. It's either building up the soul or tearing it apart. When it's right, it's making you a better person and when it's wrong, it's making you less of a person. Metaphorically, when it's right, it's taking you home; when it's not, it's taking you away from home. Sex is designed by God and nature to take you home. Indeed, it's meant (metaphorically) to be your home. If you are going home after sex, something is very wrong. This is not, first of all, a moral judgment, but an anthropological one on behalf of the soul.

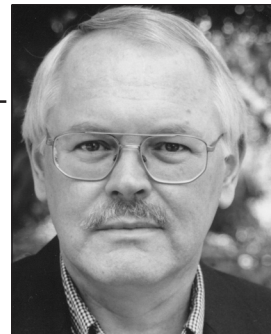
The soul, as we know, is not some invisible spiritual tissue floating inside our bodies. A soul cannot be pictured imaginatively, but it can be grasped as a principle. As we see in the insights of philosophers like Aristotle and Aquinas, the soul is a double principle inside us. It's the principle of life (of all our energies) and it's the principle of integration (what holds us together). This may sound abstract, but it's not. If you have ever been present with someone who is dying, you know the exact moment when the soul leaves the body. Not because you see some spirit float up from the body, but because one minute the body is alive, an organism, and the next minute it is inert, lifeless, dead, and beginning to decompose. The soul keeps us alive and the soul keeps us glued together.

If this is true, and it is, then anything meaningful we do, anything that touches us at any depth, affects our soul, both its fire and its glue, either weakening them or strengthening them. Sex is no exception. Indeed, it's the preeminent example. Sex is powerful and that's why it can never be simply casual. It is either building up the soul or tearing it down.

Thirty years ago, teaching a night course at a college campus, I assigned my class a book of essays by Christopher de Vinck, *Only the Heart Knows How to Find Them – Precious*

In Exile

RON ROLHEISER, omi



Memories for a Faithless Time. These essays are simple reflections by the author on his life as a young husband and father. They are warm, not unduly romantic, aesthetically crafted, and devoid of sentimentality. They make a strong case for marriage, not by making any apologetic arguments in its favour, but simply by sharing how marriage can make for a home, a calm place of mutual solitude that can take us beyond that overpowering restless search that besets us at puberty and drives us away from parents' home in search of our own home. Marriage and the marriage bed can bring us home again.

At the end of the semester, a student in the course, a woman in her late twenties, came into my office to drop off her term paper. She was carrying de Vinck's book and she shared this: *This is the best book I've ever read. I grew up without a lot of religious or ethical guidance and I have slept my way through a couple of Canadian provinces; but now I know what I really want. I want what this man has! I want the marriage bed. I want my sex to take me home, to become home.* Her insight merits repeating, not least today in a culture where sex is often divorced from marriage and home.

Earlier in my teaching and ministry, when I was still working more with young people who were sorting out what love means and who they might choose to marry and try to spend their lives with, the question often arose: how does one recognize the kind of love on which you can build a marriage? It is a crucial question because love is not an easy thing to read or gauge. We can, and do, fall in love with all kinds of people, often with people who are all wrong for us, people we can enjoyably flirt with or have a honeymoon with, but with whom we could not share the rest of our lives.

What kind of love can you build a marriage on? It needs to be the kind of love that takes you home. You need a strong sense that with this other person you are at home because a marriage is quite different from a honeymoon. You go home from a honeymoon. In marriage, you are at home.

So too with sex. It's meant to be something that takes you home and is your home rather than something from which you go home.

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

Sunday's Liturgy

June 13, 2021

Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: Ezekiel 17.22-24
I will make high the low tree.

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 92.1-2, 12-13, 14-15 (R. 1)
R. Lord, it is good to give thanks to you.

Second Reading: 2 Corinthians 5.6-10
*Whether in the body or away from it
we make our aim to please the Lord.*

Gospel: Mark 4.26-34
The smallest seed becomes the greatest of all shrubs.

Father Ron Rolheiser's column *In Exile* is sponsored by
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Saint John principal speaks about the mission of Catholic education

By NATASHA MAZEROLLE
Correspondent

SAINT JOHN — On June 3, 2021, Judy Burnham, principal of Divine Mercy Catholic School (DMCS) in Saint John, gave a keynote speech to the Canadian Catholic School Trustees' Association (CCSTA) on the occasion of their Annual General Meeting. Cardinal Thomas Collins of the Archdiocese of Toronto was also featured as a keynote speaker.

As the principal, and one of the original founders of DMCS, Ms. Burnham was invited to speak about the joys, challenges and rewards of being immersed in the mission of Catholic education over the last twenty years. Ms. Burnham used the scripture John 21 to set the tone for her talk. "You know the story...[the apostles] fished all night and caught nothing," she said. "About to give up, someone on the shore, whom they didn't recognize, hollered out, 'Cast out on the right side.'"

Noting that it must have seemed like such an outrageous thing to say, Ms. Burnham said, "but for some reason they obeyed and caught more fish than they knew what to do with!"

Ms. Burnham noted that one of the Apostles — John, the youngest, and the one Jesus loved — recognized in this strange request that the stranger was actually Jesus. "John just stood looking at the Stranger on the shore saying, 'It is the Lord.'" she said. "Who else would ask the impossible of us? Who else would cause us to feel compelled to obey such a request? Who else takes everyday experiences, like catching fish, and performs the miraculous? It's got to be the Lord."

Ms. Burnham went on to tell story after story of how the Lord seemed to be asking the impossible, but with faith and trust with him provided far more than they ever could expect. "Over 20 years of working in a Catholic School, with no assistance from the government, seeing countless outrageous expectations of us and an equal number of miraculous results, I find myself standing in my boat, looking at the stranger too and saying, 'It is the Lord.'"

Of those early years when she, then a homeschooling mother of seven, was asked by a group of parents to be the principal of a new endeavour to the early years of DMCS that involved much prayer, sacrifice, and watching the Lord work in huge ways to bring the school to reality she said, "we didn't know much about what we were doing, but we sure recognized that this was a 'catch' being hauled into our boat. Of that, there was no doubt."

Knowing from her years of youth ministry working with thousands of high school students throughout the Diocese of Saint John that, "young people do not go for watered down faith," she said that "even though the Truth of the Gospels was challenging in the world they were growing up in, they welcomed in and wanted nothing less."

She allowed this knowledge to guide and shape her, deciding that the wisdom of the Church would not be shied away from at DMCS. "If Jesus called himself the truth, and if we are to welcome him into every part of the school, then his teachings would not be quashed or diluted."

Ms. Burnham shared that over the years many children have come to the Catholic faith at DMCS. "From our very first year to present we have welcomed over twenty students (and even some parents) into the faith," she said. "Just last week we had three of our middle school students baptized in our own chapel in front of the whole school at mass. Now, having received First Reconciliation, they joy-

fully received their First Communion last weekend."

Ms. Burnham exhorted her colleagues to remember that, "it's not so much that we Catholic schools have a mission (posted at the entrance of our schools), but that we *are* a mission. A light in the darkness; a beacon to those who are hungry and looking to fill the emptiness of their souls; a safe haven for the broken and lost; a place where Jesus' name can be glorified, and our precious faith can be passed on."

Acknowledging that they have difficult days like anyone else she said, "at those frustrating times when we as teachers are being stretched to the limit and meeting opposition at every turn, we can still say, 'it is the Lord.' Because he allows those times to help us grow in virtue (patience, kindness, perseverance). He gives us an opportunity every day to look in the eyes of our students and see him."

She concluded by praying that all schools that bear the name Catholic will listen for the stranger's voice, obey his commands, and create a space where his lambs can be safe and fed on his word. "Although he is the unseen guest in our schools who silently and mysteriously weaves our everyday lives, he wants each one of us to be able to stand up in our boats, gaze at the stranger on the shore, and say with John, 'it is the Lord.'"

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



Judy Burnham

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Prayer and solidarity

(continued from page 3)

from neighbouring Atlantic provinces to a former residential school in Nova Scotia.

"We are grieving like everyone else, believe me this is very difficult," Mr. Nicholas said. "I know what it's like to lose a child, because my wife and I lost our oldest son in the summer of 2019. No parent wants to see their children die before them, we're no different than anyone else. And for these children, these infants who died, who were taken to Heaven at such a young age, it's so very sad for us all."

Mr. Nicholas believes in the power of prayer to help move forward. "It's in prayer that we are united to each other, but it's also in praying the rosary that we petition our Blessed

'Mass grave' narrative

(continued from page 3)

Aboriginal people during the 19th and early 20th centuries, Dr. Hamilton wrote in his report.

"Some children might have contracted disease at home prior to attending school, but others were likely infected within crowded, often unsanitary and poorly constructed residential schools," he wrote.

He also noted in his report that, since the early residential schools operated at a time of high death rates and were associated with missions located close to reserves, "the mission cemeteries likely contain both the bodies of local school children and other community members."

He also wrote that, in some areas, it is likely that the remains of teachers and their own children, nuns, and priests will also be found in school-related cemeteries.

None of the remains in Kamloops has been identified.

Dr. Hamilton wrote that the late 19th century was a time of "comparatively undeveloped health care, with epidemiologically vulnerable Indigenous populations coming into sustained contact with Euro-Canada newcomers."

Patterns of illness and death within the schools likely mimicked those on reserves, "but the crowded and generally poor living conditions within the schools may have exacerbated the problem."

The Kamloops discovery "didn't surprise me, sadly enough," he said in the interview. "But what surprised me in the years since I was last involved in this file was that there was lots of talk, lots of 'we shall' in 2015. And as an outsider looking in, I don't detect a lot of substantive action." §

Mother to help us."

On Sunday, June 6, the Solemnity of the Body and Blood of Christ, Bishop Riesbeck offered a second moment of prayer in the form of a Holy Hour that was livestreamed before the 10:00 am mass at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Saint John. "We offer this Holy Hour in a special way for those children who died in the former Kamloops Residential School," he said. "The discovery of these 215 unmarked burial sites has caused deep grief and sorrow to the families and communities, especially Indigenous peoples. We pray for them in a special way, and we pray for reparation as well, for the evils committed at all residential schools."

During his homily Bishop Riesbeck said, "it is important to acknowledge and continue to repent of the role that Christian communities, including Catholics, had in the government's policy of assimilation. It's estimated that 3,200 children died in residential schools, although some estimates are as high as 6,000, from disease, neglect, accident, and various forms of abuse."

Recalling the work of initiatives like the Our Lady of Guadalupe Circle (a coalition of bishops and priests, women religious, laity and Indigenous peoples committed to walking together on a path to reconciliation, for which Mr. Nicholas serves as a representative for the Knights

of Columbus) and the Canadian Catholic Indigenous Council (established by the CCCB to bring together Indigenous people and bishops) Bishop Riesbeck said, "we need to continue to build on these tangible initiatives."

Bishop Riesbeck encouraged everyone to be prayerful companions to our Indigenous brothers and sisters as they grieve and share their stories of pain and suffering. He recalled the words of St. Paul that, "if one member suffers, all suffer together with it" (1 Cor 12:26) and said, "this is especially true of residential school survivors who must often relive the trauma that is stirred up every time we hear of these horrific revelations".

Calling Jesus our greatest anchor Bishop Riesbeck said that, "in these storms or troubled waters...we need to stay close to him. We need him to guide us together, to bring us to unity in him, and to heal the wounds of broken humanity. Jesus is indeed close, and he can be found in the Holy Eucharist."

For more information about the CCCB Initiatives towards renewing and strengthening relationships with Indigenous Peoples across Canada, visit <https://www.cccb.ca/indigenous-peoples/>.

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

Explaining lost cemeteries

By The B.C. Catholic

In his report on burials associated with Indian residential schools, anthropologist Dr. Scott Hamilton of Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, discovered that not only did the federal government fail to develop a policy on how deceased students should be buried (other than to instruct school officials to spend as little as possible), but Ottawa also produced no plan for the maintenance of cemeteries after the schools closed.

Moreover, Dr. Hamilton discovered that while some graves and cemeteries associated with residential schools are known and maintained, "others are now unknown or incompletely documented in the literature, and may even have passed from local memory."

He found that many of the inactive and overgrown cemeteries cannot be easily identified. "Without formal documentation, it becomes more difficult to offer protection from contemporary or future land development," he wrote in his report, entitled *Where are the Children buried?*

"Even when considering presently known and maintained cemeteries, some graves may lie unrecognized after the decay and disappearance of wood grave markers and enclosing graveyard fences. This presents a serious challenge for identifying, commemorating, or

protecting unmarked graves and undocumented cemeteries."

His report, which was completed in 2015 but published online only following the news of the 215 graves in Kamloops, called for the development of strategies for documentation, commemoration and preservation of the cemeteries — strategies that should be led by the First Nations that are most affected.

He also recommended that additional information about cemeteries "must be sought" from survivors and other knowledge holders; collection and integration of archival data and local knowledge should proceed any potentially invasive technical inspection of a cemetery site; and information about the cemeteries must be made available to planning and regulatory agencies in order to enhance cemetery protection.

Looking back on his work, Dr. Hamilton said he spent hundreds of hours trying to find answers to where the deceased students were buried.

"It was often very frustrating, but it became very consuming. It's something that is important to me, but it is also something that I could do in my small way towards addressing pain and suffering that the kids who didn't get to go home [experienced], as well as those who survived the experience." §

Prayer is source of strength in darkest times, pope says at audience

By JUNNO AROCHO ESTEVES
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Christians can rest assured that in moments of trial, suffering or even sin, Jesus is interceding for them before God, Pope Francis said.

"Even if our prayers were only mutterings, if they were compromised by a wavering faith, we must never stop trusting in him," the pope said June 2 during his weekly general audience.

"Don't forget: 'Jesus is praying for me,'" he said. "In the moment of trial, in the moment of sin, even in that moment, Jesus with so much love is praying for me."

Arriving in the San Damaso Courtyard of the Apostolic Palace, the pope spent some time greeting pilgrims, blessing children and religious articles.

Continuing his series of talks on prayer, the pope reflected on how prayer was fundamental to Christ and his mission, especially when it came to choosing his disciples.

Recalling St. Luke's account of Jesus praying the day before he chose his disciples, the pope said that "judging from how those men were to behave, it would seem that the choice was not the best because they all fled, they left him alone before the Passion."

However, "it is precisely this — especially the presence of Judas, the future traitor — that demonstrates that those names were inscribed

in God's plan," he said.

Jesus' moments of prayer on behalf of his disciples, especially for Peter who would deny Christ, were an act of love that showed that even in times of failure, "the love of Jesus does not stop," the pope continued.

"Jesus' love and prayer for each of us does not stop, indeed it becomes more intense, and we are at the centre of his prayer." Pope Francis said. "We must always remember this: Jesus is praying for me; he is praying now before the Father and he is showing him the wounds he bore, so that the Father can see the price of our salvation; it is the love that he has for us."

Reflecting on other moments in the Gospels, including Peter's profession of faith and the Transfiguration, the pope noted that the "great turning points of Jesus' mission are always preceded by prayer."

Jesus, he added, "not only wants us to pray as he prays, but assures us that, even if our attempts at prayer are completely useless and ineffective, we can always count on his prayer."

Departing from his prepared remarks, the pope recalled a bishop who told him that during a time of great trial, he looked up in St. Peter's Basilica and saw Jesus' words at the Last Supper: "I have prayed for you, Peter."

"That gave him strength and comfort," the pope said. "And this happens every time any of us knows that Jesus is praying for him or her. Jesus prays for us. Right now, in this moment."§

Priesthood always involves closeness with the faithful, pope says

By CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis told a group of priests studying in Rome that if they do not want to be pastors, spending time with the faithful, they should request dismissal from the priesthood and concentrate on academics instead.

"Be pastors with the scent of your sheep, persons able to live, laugh and cry with your people — in other words, to communicate with them," the pope told the priests June 7.

The priests, who are studying at pontifical universities in Rome, live at the city's St. Louis of France residence.

The priesthood cannot be understood without its essential connection to "the holy people of God," the pope told them. "The ministerial priesthood is a consequence of the baptismal priesthood of the holy faithful people of God."

"If you think of a priesthood isolated from the people of God, that is not a Catholic priesthood," he said. A Catholic priest puts God and God's people at the center of his daily concerns, setting aside self-interest and "dreams of greatness."

"To put God's holy faithful people at the centre, you must be a pastor," he said.

A priest who would say, "No, I would like to be an intellectual only, not a pastor," would be better off asking for "a reduction to the lay state," the pope said. "But if you are a priest, be a pastor."

Obviously, there are many ways to be a pastor, he said, but all those ways involve being "in the midst of God's people."

During the ongoing year dedicated to St. Joseph, Pope Francis asked the priests "to rediscover the face of this man of faith, this tender father, a model of fidelity and trusting abandonment to God's plan."

St. Joseph is a reminder that "having faith in God also includes

believing that he can work even through our fears, our frailties, our weaknesses," he said. "We must not leave frailty aside: it is a theological place."

"My fragility, the fragility of each one of us, is a theological place of encounter with the Lord. The 'superman' priests end up badly, all of them," Pope Francis said. "The fragile priest, who knows his weaknesses and talks about them with the Lord, he will be fine."

To be the "apostles of joy" that the church and its people need, priests also must have a sense of humour, he said, and they must cultivate gratitude for being called to serve people and the church.



VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis arrives June 7, 2021 for an audience at the Vatican with priests staying at the St. Louis of France residence for clergy in Rome. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

Pope leads prayers for Indigenous children who died in Canadian schools

By CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis led hundreds of pilgrims and visitors in St. Peter's Square in a moment of silent prayer for the Indigenous children who died in Canadian residential schools and for their grieving families.

After praying the Angelus June 6, the pope told the crowd, "With sorrow I am following the news from Canada about the shocking discovery of the remains of 215 children, pupils at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in the Province of British Columbia."

"I join the Canadian bishops and the whole Catholic Church in Canada in expressing my closeness to the Canadian people who have been traumatized by this shocking news," the pope said. "This sad discovery further heightens awareness of the pain and sufferings of the past."

The Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation reported May 30 that using ground-penetrating radar an estimated 215 bodies had been found in unmarked graves at the site of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School.

The school opened in 1890 and, on behalf of the Canadian federal government, was run by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate until 1969. After that, the federal government took over the administration and ran the facility as a residential building for students at day schools. It closed in 1978.

Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which has been studying the residential-school system as part of a broader look at the treatment of the nation's Indigenous communities, has records of 51 children dying at the Kamloops school, according to information posted on the website of the Oblates' Lacombe province.

"At this point, there is not a clear explanation" as to why an estimated 215 bodies were discovered there, the OMI website said. "Clearly there is a significant discrepancy between their records and what was found by the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation. We will continue to work with the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation, through the RBCM (Royal British Columbia Museum), who curate our archives, in the search of understanding this distressing discrepancy."

The Oblates said that while the Anglican, United (Methodist) and Presbyterian churches ran some of the 130 Indian Residential Schools in Canada, more than 70 of them were run by Catholic orders with the Oblates administering the majority of them.

In 2015, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission called upon Pope Francis to visit Canada and make a formal apology to Indigenous survivors, their families and communities for the abuse suffered in Catholic-run residential schools.

During a visit to Bolivia in 2015, Pope Francis issued an apology to all the Indigenous peoples of the Americas for abuses suffered.

During a meeting at the Vatican in 2017, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau personally asked

Pope Francis to help Canadians "move forward on a real reconciliation" with the country's Indigenous people "by issuing an apology" on behalf of the Catholic Church for its role in harming their communities.

Mr. Trudeau, speaking to reporters June 4, complained that the Catholic Church had not acted swiftly enough and even seemed to be hiding information. "As a Catholic," he said, "I am deeply disappointed by the position the Catholic Church has taken now and over the past many years."

At his Sunday Angelus appointment, Pope Francis prayed that "the political and religious authorities in Canada" would "continue to work together with determination to shed light on this sad event and humbly commit themselves to a path of healing and reconciliation."

The discovery of the bodies, he said, shows a need to turn away from every form of colonization and instead "walk side by side in dialogue, mutual respect and recognition of the rights and cultural values of all the daughters and sons of Canada."

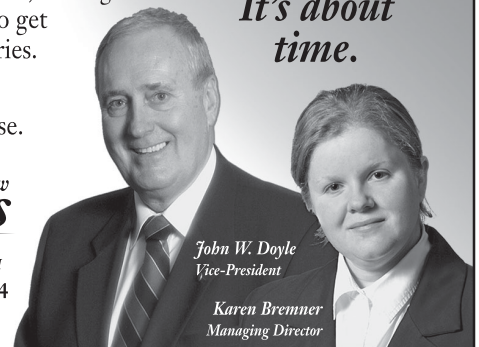
"We commend to the Lord the souls of all the children who have died in the Canadian residential schools," he said, "and we pray for the grief-stricken Indigenous families and communities of Canada."§

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MPs won't ban sex selection abortion in Canada

By BRIAN DRYDEN
Canadian Catholic News

OTTAWA — Just one-third of federal MPs are willing to ban female babies from being targeted for an abortion, but supporters of a private members bill that was snuffed out by a vote in the House of Commons June 2 vow to continue to try and convince Canadian lawmakers to put some regulations in place to protect the unborn.

"It was evident in the debates that while Canadians are having ongoing conversations about abortion, elected lawmakers seem unprepared for it. Most Canadians support common sense abortion restrictions, including a restriction on sex selective abortion. There can be nuance in restricting abortion in a way that many in Parliament do not yet acknowledge," said Tabitha Ewert, legal counsel for the pro-life organization We Need a Law.

"This is clearly an issue that resonates with Canadians," said Ms. Ewert after only 82 MPs voted in favour of Conservative MP Cathay Wagantall's proposed Bill C-233, known as the Sex Selective Abortion Act, that would have prohibited doctors from knowingly performing sex selective abortions.

Ms. Wagantall and supporters of the bill argue that Canadians support such specific restrictions on abortion, but most MPs, and even the leader of the Conservative Party who was one of the 248 MPs to vote against Bill C-233, have made it clear in the debate surrounding Bill C-233 that there is no path forward at this time in the the House of Commons for any legal changes that would impede access to abortion in Canada.

"The debate around sex selective abortion is necessary and will continue. Women's rights cannot include targeting women before they are born. Sex selective abortion is antithetical to Canada's commitment to equality and needs to be prohibited as an unacceptable practice. Until MPs have the courage to prohibit this practice, it remains legal and will continue to happen in Canada," said Ms. Ewert.

"We look forward to when Parliament catches up to where Canadians are already at and accepts a prohibition on such an overtly sexist practice," she said.

While Conservative leader Erin O'Toole and some other high-profile Conservative MPs such as Alberta MP Michelle Rempel Garner voted against Ms. Wagantall's proposed bill, more Conservative MPs voted for the abortion restriction than voted against it, highlighting the split within the party between the party's leadership and what is called the social-conservative faction of the party and many of its elected MPs.

"Despite Erin O'Toole's emphatic pro-choice stance and commitment to vote against this bill, exactly two-thirds of his caucus voted in favour of it," said a statement from We Need A Law after the vote was held in the House.

As the debate in the House of Commons during second reading of Bill C-233 showed, any discussion of adopting laws in Canada related to abortion runs into a stone wall of opposition within the Liberal, NDP and Bloc Quebecois parties.

Liberal, NDP and Bloc MPs who spoke in the House on Bill C-233 dismissed Ms. Wagantall's proposed bill as a Trojan Horse attempt to chip away at existing abortion rights in Canada by the pro-life movement.

"The sponsor claims that this bill is to address sex-based discrimination (continued on page 11)

Bill C-15 an act of reconciliation with Indigenous Canadians

(continued from page 4)

"Call to Action #48 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission counsels all faith groups in Canada to formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms and standards of UNDRIP as a framework for reconciliation. In this spirit, our support for Bill C-15 is an expression of our commitment to reconciliation with humility.

"It is part of wider efforts to decolonize our minds and hearts, work against racism, and develop just relationships," the Catholic groups said. "Implementation of the Declaration is an important step in deepening the reconciliation process in Canada. We urge you to do your part by passing this legislation during the current session."

The federal Liberal government has made Bill C-15 a key piece of government legislation and Liberal, NDP and Bloc Quebecois MPs overwhelmingly supported Bill C-15 in the House of Commons, but most Conservatives MPs have been opposed because of concerns over what exactly "free, prior and informed consent" with Indigenous communities within the UN Declaration will mean in the future.

In his presentation to the Senate committee, Mr. Lametti said "free, prior and informed consent" is a process that can not be precisely defined but will "inform" all future discussions between the Canadian government and Indigenous communities.

According to the government's summary of Bill C-15, which is called *An Act respecting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, the Government of Canada must "take all measures necessary to ensure that the laws of Canada are consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and must prepare and implement an action plan to achieve the objectives of the Declaration."

The Catholic groups' letter urging Senators, who now must approve Bill C-15 for it to receive Royal Assent and become law, is in addition to a statement filed with the Senate by the Faith in the Declaration coalition that said Catholic and other faith communities in Canada are committed to reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous people to atone for past actions.

"Long journeys of accompaniment and solidarity with Indigenous communities have taught us the gift of relationship, revealed the profound resilience of Indigenous peoples and cultures, and confronted us with the damages wrought by denial of Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination," said the May 2021 submission to the Senate committee by the Faith in the Declaration coalition.

"These relationships have compelled us to acknowledge and lament the destructive role faith communities played in support of colonial structures of oppression," the statement to the Senate committee said. "In this journey we have come to know that decolonization and reconciliation require urgent action by all. Using reconciliation as a frame for renewed relationships between settler and Indigenous peoples is rooted in several New Testament texts (Matt 5:24; Rom 5:10; Cor 5:18; Eph 2:16.)."

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WALSH, MARY JOAN — It is with sadness that the family of Mary Joan Walsh announces her peaceful passing at home on June 1, 2021, in her 99th year. Born in Pictou, N.S. in 1921, Joan was the youngest child of Mary (O'Toole) and Edward McGrath. She spent her early years in Nova Scotia before meeting and marrying William (Bill) Walsh and subsequently moving to Saint John where the family lived in Fundy Heights and Quinton Heights before Joan and Bill's move to their retirement home on the Red Head Road.



Mary Joan Walsh

After raising her children, Joan held various jobs including working at Sears and Belton Hearing. Joan was a long-time parishioner at Stella Maris Parish and was active in Probus Club, the Catholic Women's League and the Mt. St. Vincent Alumnae and was a volunteer at the Catholic bookstore. She loved art, music, decorating, swims in the ocean, gardening, bird watching and playing bridge. As a much-loved wife, mom, grandmother, sister and aunt, Joan's family stories, quick wit and earnest spirit will be fondly remembered and greatly missed.

Joan was predeceased by her loving husband of 61 years, Bill, and her son James, and siblings Constance Baird, Edward, Gregory, Frank and Harold McGrath. She is survived by her son Paul, Saint John, and daughter Mary Jane (John Aubrecht), Halifax and her

grandchildren Michelle (Herman), Christopher (Suzy), Chelsea, Paula, Nicole, John-Vianney (Hannah) and Olivia. "Aunt Joan" is also survived by many loving nieces and nephews with whom she maintained close contact.

Arrangements were under the direction of Fundy Funeral Home, Saint John. Due to Covid-19, a Mass of Christian Burial and celebration of life will take place at a later date this summer. The family would like to thank the many care givers that assisted Joan over the past few years. Special thanks to Sue, Faye, Fay C. and Lisa for all your kindness, love and patience.

CAVAN, MONICA HELEN — It is with heavy hearts that the family of Monica Helen Cavan announces her passing, which occurred on Friday May 28, 2021, at Bobby's Hospice. Born in Saint John, NB, she was a daughter of the late Hugh and Margaret (McTaggart) Cavan.

Monica is survived by her son Ryan Cavan, grandson Landen Cavan and boyfriend Laurie Roy all of Saint John; sisters, Ann Cliche (Bill), Joan Craft (the late Robert), Teresa Poirier (Derek) all of Saint John and Maureen Reid (Skeeter) of Alberta; several wonderful nieces and nephews, exceptionally close nieces, Lisa, Tammi, Julie and Amy. Great-niece, Breann and great-nephew, Josh and her Chunky Monkey, Miles.

In addition to her parents, Monica was predeceased by her brothers Hugh, Gerard, Stephen and her sister Rita.

Arrangements were under the care of Brennan's Funeral Home, Saint John. A Funeral Liturgy was held in Brennan's Chapel, Saint John. Interment took place in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Saint John. §

MPs won't ban sex selection abortion in Canada

(continued from page 10)

nation," Liberal MP Anita Vandenberg said during debate in the House on May 28.

"While I note that the offence is ostensibly aimed at doctors, I must point out that it would also criminalize women as parties to the offence. Make no mistake, Bill C-233 will limit a woman's right to choose by doing this," she said. "Criminalizing a woman for seeking an abortion is a violation of the fundamental rights of women in Canada, and it is just plain wrong."

Bloc Quebecois MP Christine Normandin accused supporters of Bill C-233 and Ms. Wagantall of "shamefully" using sexism as an excuse to roll back access to abortion in Canada.

"Unlike what some would have us believe, Bill C-233 does not seek to restore the balance between the situation of young girls and young boys. It is not a bill to combat sexism. It is anti-abortion legislation, period," Ms. Normandin said.

"It is a pretext, a roundabout way for the member to achieve her purpose, an attempt to reopen a debate that we hoped had been closed for several decades now," she said. "The member is shamefully using and hijacking the discourse on human rights to hide other intentions."

It is a charge that Ms. Wagantall and pro-life organizations such as We Need A Law dismiss as being out of touch with the views of the majority of Canadians, whether they are pro-life or pro-choice.

"As I have said many times during the course of this discussion, the vast majority of those who would like sex selection to be made illegal are in fact pro-choice," Ms. Wagantall told the House on May 28 during debate before the June 2 vote.

"They are not pro-abortion for any reason, but pro-choice. These facts should send a strong message to everyone in this House. We have a mandate from Canadians to act," she said.

Along with Ms. Wagantall, Conservative MP Kelly Block also conceded that most Canadians support women having access to abortions in Canada, but sex-selection is a different situation.

"It is also important to note that while a majority of Canadians support access to abortion, a majority of Canadians oppose sex-selective abortion," Ms. Block said. "The purpose of the bill is very clear. It is not intended to limit access to abortion ... it is being put forward to address the inequality that exists between the sexes in their earliest forms."

And in an Open Letter to MPs written by a board member of Canadian Physicians for Life (CPL), a doctor said Bill C-233 was "a unique opportunity in Canadian politics where all political parties can unite to expand women's rights and save Canadian lives."

But the CPL's Dr. Kiely Williams said that in monitoring the debate surrounding Bill C-233 in the House, she didn't understand the opposition to the bill.

"During the debate, many female Members of Parliament in particular professed that they could not support sex-selection abortion, but that they were also firmly committed to opposing any legislation which would prohibit this practice," Dr. Williams wrote to MPs.

"The Liberals and the Bloc Quebecois conceded that they do not support sex-selective abortion, yet they joined the NDP in opposition to this bill," Dr. Williams said. "As a physician and a woman, I asked myself how they could adopt such an irreconcilable position." §

Clergy changes for 2021

SAINT JOHN — The Most Reverend Christian Riesbeck, CC, bishop of Saint John, announces the following clergy assignments



Father Daniel Bastarache

effective August 4, 2021 unless otherwise noted. Those priests who have been appointed pastors will be dispensed from the requirement of Canon 527 that they be placed into canonical possession of their parishes and will automatically become pastor on August 4, 2021. At a later date, Bishop Riesbeck will come to each parish to celebrate a Mass of Installation for the new pastors.

Father Daniel Bastarache is appointed pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish (Miramichi East, Bayside, St. Margaret's).

Father Arockia Dass Chinnappan, HGN, is appointed associate pastor of St. Mark's Parish (Quispamsis).

Father Paul Doucet is appointed pastor of Good Shepherd Parish (Blackville, Doaktown, Howard, Renous).

Reverend Dr. Michael McGowan is renewed as pastor of Our Lady of Fatima Parish (Fredericton North).

Father James McQuade is renewed as pastor of Sts. Joachim and Ann Parish (Saint John East).

Father Stanislas Paulin is renewed as pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish (Rothesay).

Father Antonio Reyes is appointed associate pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Parish (Miramichi East, Bayside, St. Margaret's).§



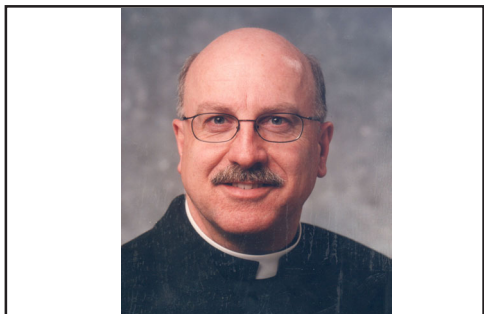
Father Arockia Dass Chinnappan, HGN



Father Paul Doucet



Reverend Dr. Michael McGowan



Father James McQuade



Father Stanislas Paulin



Father Antonio Reyes



SAINT JOHN — (Photo left) People across the country remembered the 215 children whose remains were discovered on the grounds of a former residential school in Kamloops, B.C. In communities across the nation, flags were flown at half mast and people have been creating various memorials using shoes, stuffed animals and orange ribbons throughout the week of May 31. At the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Saint John an orange sash was placed on the cross near the main altar to show support of the lost children. Orange flowers and pew markers were also placed throughout the church. (Submitted photo)

