**BY DYLAN APPOLIS**

For an East London primary school, chatting with Pope Francis on a video link that brought together the pontiff and pupils from five schools around the world was a memory of a lifetime.

"This was a life-changing experience not only for me and the school, but for the 12 boys who took part as well," said Aubrey Pepler, deputy principal of Selborne Primary School in East London.

The pupils could barely conceal their excitement when their school was one of five schools invited, and the only school from Africa, to have a conversation with Pope Francis in a Google Hangout session.

Google Hangout is an instant messaging and video chat platform.

The service was inspired by the Redemptorist of St Mary’s parish in California, which selected the five schools.

Mr Pepler told The Southern Cross that his school’s involvement came about through its contact with the head of Google South Africa, Karen Pepler, who has visited Selborne Primary to “see what we have achieved as we have gone Google.”

The invitation to participate was issued by the Google Hangout project in California, which also told the five schools.

Mr Pepler said he worked with the school’s headboy, asking him “to send me a list of Grade 7 boys he would recommend.”

The confirmation of their participation came in the form of a package of camera and video equipment, to use for the virtual hangout session, sent from the United States via courier.

The Google Hangout project started at 16:45 with all the schools logged in simultaneously.

The session lasted 15 minutes and was conducted in Spanish. The public could view the hangout session via YouTube.

Part of Selborne’s team was Grade 6 learner Christian Zacapa, who is fluent in Spanish and spoke on behalf of the school.

Hanging with pope a ‘life-changer’

A screen-grab of 13 students from Selborne Primary School in East London putting their questions to Pope Francis on Google Hangout in an event that brought together five schools from across the world to chat with the pope through the Internet video conferencing facility.

The list of questions included: what the pope did in his spare time, whether he had met Nelson Mandela, what he would do if he had complete control over his citizens, and his opinion on whether humanity has been separated from God.

Teagan Bok from Selborne Primary said not only did the session represent an opportunity to learn, but also to put the school’s name on the map. “My question was where he grew up and what his best memories of childhood are,” he said.

“This is huge, I don’t think the boys even realise how big this is. This was also the first hangout session ever done by Pope Francis. It was most definitely a massive success for my school,” Mr Pepler said.

During the session, Pope Francis recalled a time when his mother came, I stayed in class and the teacher called my mother. My mother came, I stayed in class and the teacher stepped out, then they called for me. “My mom was really calm. I feared the worst,” he said. After getting him to admit to his wrongdoings, his mother told him to apologise to the teacher.

The pope said he apologised and remem-bered “to send a note to the teacher.”

Mr Janvier Yaméogo from the council, who visited South Africa this month, commended a service like JOY as a good example of how modern media can be constructive.

The family, schools and culture have to work together for the well-being of the child, he said. People have to “rebuild this village in order to educate a child”.

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The JOY service focuses on educational or communications which said: “Media and advertising have two options: either to help humans grow in their understanding and practice of what is true and good, or to be a destructive force.”

Mr Janvier Yaméogo from the council, who visited South Africa this month, commended a service like JOY as a good example of how modern media can be constructive.

Fr Russell Pollitt, the new director of the Jesuit Institute, said: “I love Twitter and Facebook but I also know that no medium has as much integration as SMS.”

The list of questions included: what the pope did in his spare time, whether he had met Nelson Mandela, what he would do if he had complete control over his citizens, and his opinion on whether humanity has been separated from God.

...
Bricks saved for building of Hurley centre

BY DYLAN APOLLIS

WHEN Durban’s Emmanuel cathedral parish centre was demolished last year, 500 bricks were saved from the rubble and are now being used to build a coffee bar in the new Denis Hurley Centre. "We saved 500 bricks in order to create a link between the old and new centre,” DHC coordinator Paddy Kearney said.

The bricks found in the coffee bar come from the 108-year-old building, which housed St Augustine’s School before it was the parish centre. Cast-iron air vents are also being incorporated into the coffee bar, and carved wooden handrails from the old parish centre’s staircases will be used for the triangular atrium on each of the three upper floors of the centre.

After the building of the DHC began, it soon became apparent that the construction would be far more expensive than anticipated. “At the time we had R80.7 million needed for construction,” Mr Kearney told the Southern Cross. “We will also need a further R3 million for the fittings, furnishings and equipment.

The DHC will provide care for the poorest and most vulnerable people, provide education and training, facilitate employment opportunities, and build community in one of the most diverse and challenging neighbourhoods of inner-city Durban.

“It’s our intention to carry on engaging with the legacy of the late Archbishop Denis Hurley, continuing his vision of humanity as a community serving humanity,” Mr Kearney said. Hundreds of bricks are being sold by St Augustine’s past pupils to help raise funds for the construction work.

The bricks and vents have been sold for R100 each to boost the fundraising drive. Most bricks have been sold to people who have migrated to Australia, New Zealand and Canada, with the proceeds being used in charge of the brick-selling project.

Construction began on August 1 and is expected to be completed in October 2015. The DHC will be officially opened on November 9, 2015, the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Archbishop.

To buy one or more bricks or air vents at R100 each, please contact Daphne Goad on 084 606 6151 or Ekkle Evans on 084 637 7568. The names of those who buy bricks will be listed on a plaque in the coffee bar.

A protester at a march through Cape Town in August against the war on Gaza calls for prayers. The bishops of South Africa have called for a week of prayer for peace in the Middle East, starting on September 21.

September the month to fight human trafficking

BY DYLAN APOLLIS

HUMAN trafficking is a growing concern across the world. South Africa is both a destination and transit point for trafficking, which also takes place within its borders.

With this in mind, the Edmund Rice Network of South Africa’s (ERN SA) social justice and advocacy desk has launched its first Human Trafficking Advocacy Month in September.

Working with the Christian Brothers’ and affiliated schools nationwide, the advocacy desk is co-ordinating various activities aimed at raising awareness of the devastat- ing reach of human trafficking, especially that of children.

It is assisting school students in organising and implementing advoca- cy activities to voice their disap- proveal of human trafficking.

“The activities will not only raise awareness of the realities of human trafficking among learners, parents, staff and local communities, but they will also act to empower them in their rights for political expression and social advocacy,” desk coordinator Jessica Dewhurst said.

For the first week of September the programme focused on introduc- ing Human Trafficking Advocacy Month and raising money for a rele- vant organisation through the sale of green pieces of fabric, which students will be encouraged to tie somewhere on their school grounds to act as a re- minder of the month’s intention.

In weeks two and three, the learners are assisted in the creation of posters, hosting a relevant guest speaker, signing petitions and writ- ing protest letters to influential gov- ernment personnel. The learners’ involvement in these activities is in- tended to provide them with skills and knowledge of their social rights, responsibilities and abilities to make a positive change.

The month will end with a public display against human trafficking. The social justice and advocacy desk is encouraged by the enthusi-asm of young people nationwide to stand up and advocate for victims of human trafficking.

SA to pray for Middle East peace

BY STUART GRAHAM

DIOCESES across South Africa will hold a week of prayer for peace in the Middle East and for the “suffering people of Gaza” from September 21. The week of prayer will include a collection in all dioceses to support a children’s home in Gaza, to be sent through the Catholic patriarch in Jerusalem.

“At the last plenary session of the bishops of the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference, it was decided to express our solidarity with the suffering people in Gaza,” said Bishop José Luis Ponce de León of Mamat采购, Swaziland, on his blog (bluabei.blogspot.co.za).

“Let us commit ourselves by sup- porting a week of prayer for peace to be held in all our dioceses and by taking up a collection in our parishes in September to support a children’s home in Gaza, to be sent through the Catholic patriarch in Jerusalem.”

The Commission of Justice and Peace has prepared a pamphlet offer- ing guidelines for the week of prayer and knowledge of social realities, which will be available in high and low resolution from bluabei.blogspot.co.za.

Pretoria Archbishop William Slattery said whether perpetualiated by Israel or by Palestine, the use of violence would “never bring a solu- tion to the problems of the Holy Land”.

“We call on the leaders of Pales- tinian and Israeli people to stop the war and to cease the violence—to stop killing each other,” he said.

“We call upon them, in the name of the God of Love, to both—to cease with the collaboration of the international com- munity—to commit themselves to respect their common and funda- mental dignity and rights and to dis- alogue, to real negotiations and the building of a lasting peace.”

The week of prayer will start with a prayer for peace by Pope Francis, which was composed for the meet- ing with Palestinian President Mah- moud Abbas and then-Israeli President Shimon Peres in the Vati- can in June.

On Day 2 (September 22) the re- gion’s faithful are asked to pray for the region’s youth, On Day 3 for refugees and the displaced, On Day 4 for peace and security, On Day 5 for humani- ties’ school grounds to act as a re- minder of the month’s intention.

Theological meeting in Nairobi

FATHER Anthony Egan SJ of the Jesuit Institute, Ntando had been invited to attend the Rice Network of South Africa’s (ERN SA) social justice and advocacy desk is encouraged by the enthusiasm of young people nationwide to stand up and advocate for victims of human trafficking.

WITHIN and Outside the Church at the Service of Ecclusia in Africa” in Nairobi was designed themes as varied as becoming the Church of the New Testament, small Christian communities, African spir- ituality, African independent Churches, and Christian unity.

Ft Egan spoke in a session exam- ining some of the crises besetting Africa which call for a response be- yond rhetoric pasted in pastoral letters, communiques and post-syn-odal documents. Sr Munro was part of a panel addressing the theme of Ecclesia in women of Africa.

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St. Kizito Children’s Programme (SKCP) is a community-based response to the needs of orphans and vulnerable children, established through the Good Hope Development Fund in 2004 in response to the Church’s call to reach out to those in need. Operating as a movement within the Archdiocese of Cape Town, SKCP empowers volunteers from the target communities to respond to the needs of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) living in their areas.

The SKCP volunteers belong to Parish Groups that are established at Parishes in target communi- ties. Through the St. Kizito Movement, the physical, intellectual, emotional and psycho-social needs of OVCs are met in an holistic way. Parish Groups provide children and families with a variety of essential services, while the SKCP office provides the groups with comprehensive training and on-going support.

In order to continue its work, SKCP requires ongoing support from generous donors. Funds are needed to continue the movement as volunteer training and support, emergency relief, school uniforms and children’s excursions. Grants and donations of any size are always appreciated. We are also grateful to receive donations of toys, clothes and blankets that can be distributed to needy children and families.

If you would like to find out more about St. Kizito Children’s Programme, or if you would like to make a donation, please contact Wayne Golding on (021) 782 7941 or 082 301 9385.

Email info@stkizito.org.za. Donations can also be deposited into our bank account:

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Row over sale of Holy Family land

BY STUART GRAHAM

A BITTER battle is brewing between the Holy Family Sisters and the governing body of the Holy Family College in Parktown, Johannesburg, over a proposal to sell a third of the school property to an office park developer.

While principal Mark Potterton said the sisters are acting “unscrupulously” by proposing to sell one of the school’s playing fields, Holy Family Sister Sheila Mary Wapae said the land belongs to her congregation, and theirs to sell.

“It is prime land and the sisters are keen to make a buck,” MrPotterton said.

“They are the owners. We are the users. But in the way they have gone about this is the problem,” he said.

Mr Potterton said the sisters had approached the school for a “consultation” which he said amounted to, “Wear and tear to tell you what we are going to do.”

Holy Family, previously known as Parktown Convent for Girls, was founded in 1905.

The Southern Cross...

Fatima fest coming to Stellenbosch

THE annual Fatima Festival will be held in Stellenbosch over the weekend of October 18-19. Started by the then large Portuguese community of Stellenbosch in 1987, the festival has grown into one of the major annual events on the Stellenbosch social calendar. It has also spread throughout the Western Cape, and is celebrated at a number of venues.

It takes place a week before another big event, the annual Blessing of the Fishing Fleet ceremony in Cape Town.

Though still retaining a strong Portuguese flavour, with busloads of Portuguese fans coming from other parts of the province, the Fatima Festival embraces all communities.

Communities in Kayamandi, Clocovere and Idas Valley have also raised funds for this year’s festival, which is being organised by St Nicholas’ parish.

The festival has a religious grounding and includes a street procession on the Sunday morning from 11.00.

For further information contact Rory Cruickshank at 073 603 1605 or Michelle Jonis at 082 474 1298.

The Southern Cross...

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BY SARAH MACDONALD

Ireland’s new primiate: I’m a servant, not CEO

THE new Irish primiate of All Ireland has pledged to be a “servant leader” whose aim is to bring the Irish Church through a process of “humble renewal”.

Archbishop Eamon Martin, 52, has succeeded Cardinal Sean Brady as primiate of All Ireland, a leadership role that covers the 26 dioceses in the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland. For nearly 17 months, Archbishop Martin had served as Cardinal Brady’s coadjutor in Armagh, and his succession is a figurative and honorary position as primiate of All Ireland, a leadership role that covers the 26 dioceses that make up the Irish Republic and as primiate of All Ireland, a leadership role that covers the 26 dioceses including the Catholic Church in Northern Ireland. (Photo courtesy Irish Bishops’ Conference)

BY JONATHAN LUXMOORE

Libya’s Catholics ‘trapped’

CATHOLICS in Libya have been described as “trapped and protected”, local church officials said, in a situation that seems likely to continue into the future.

“I know of no other vocation which touches so many moments in a person’s life,” Bishop Choby said. “In a way, it is singularly focused, the priesthood has as its centre, the mystery of redemption, which is the dying and the rising of the Lord.”

Bishop Magro added that ordination of Fr Carmona as he faced death “reflects the Pascal Mystery. That is how our own lives are transformed in the death and resurrection of Jesus.”

Although Fr Carmona was unable to receive Holy Communion during his ordination, Bishop Choby told those gathered to witness the sacrament. “There’s much lawlessness now, and who can we turn to for help? We won’t know till we know who’s governing. Until the United Nations does something, it’s those with weapons who’ll dominate and rule here,” Fr Baranquel explained.

Tripled was captured in late August after fighting by the Dawn of Libya militia group forced the government and parliament, elected in June, to flee to Tobruk, near the Egyptian border.

Church property was being guarded and Catholics had been cautioned not to travel because of roadblocks set up by the Islamists, he said. “To whom are we accountable, and how can we turn to for help? We won’t know till we know who’s governing.”

“They are in a very fast world with accepted Cardinal Brady’s resignation, he said it was a “travesty” that a God-fearing people would be forced to witness the ordination earlier, Bishop Magro added that the ordination of Fr Carmona after the seminarian was rushed to the hospital the first week of September, was made plans to travel to San Antonio to ordain him immediately because of the emergency.

“The joy and satisfaction in adoring the sacrament of holy orders is a high point in the life of a person’s life,” Bishop Choby said. “In a way that is singularly focused, the priesthood has as its centre, the mystery of redemption, which is the dying and the rising of the Lord.”

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Pope appoints 14 couples to join bishops in synod

BY CAROL GLATZ

MORE than 250 participants, including 14 married couples from around the world, attended Pope Francis’ extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the family.

In addition to 114 presidents of national bishops’ conferences, 13 heads of Eastern Catholic churches and 25 heads of Vatican congregations and councils, the pope appointed 26 synod fathers to take part in the October 5-19 synod.

Almost all of the 26 papally appointed voting members are from Europe. Of these, none of the 14 cardinals, 18 bishops and four priests appointed by the pope is from Northern Europe or other English-speaking countries.

Some of the papal appointees include: Cardinal Walter Kasper, Belgian Cardinal Godfried Danneels, Swedish Cardinal Elio Sgreccia, as well as Jesuit Father Antonio Spadaro, director of La Civilta Catholic journal, and Msgr Paolo Pinto, dean of the Roman Rota, a Vatican-based tribunal that deals mainly with marriage cases.

However, among the non-voting members of 38 observers and 16 experts appointed by the pope, the majority are laymen and lay-women, including 14 married couples, and they are more geographically diverse, with several coming from Asia, Africa, Oceania and the Americas, as well as Europe.

Those attending who are part of the synod’s ordinary council include Cardinal Wifilid Napier of Durban.

Pope Francis will serve as president and Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri as the synod’s general secretary.

The theme of the extraordinary synod is: “The pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelisation,” and synod members will be called upon to find ways to improve the pastoral application of Church teachings, ways to explain it and to help Catholics live it.

Many of the 38 papally appointed observers and experts are lay and religious women and men active in family ministries and pastoral care, canon law and moral theology.

Those invited to attend include Steve and Sandra Conway, regional directors of the Rotaville pro-

St. Anthony’s Home

INTERNATIONAL

The Southern Cross, September 17 to September 23, 2014

Sistine chapel weather problem of more tourists

BY JUDITH HARRIS

THE “Francis effect” has spilled over into the Sistine Chapel, bringing a surge in visitors but also increasing risks to maintenance of what Antonio Paolucci, director of the Vatican Museums, calls “the world’s chapel.”

Prior to a 14-year restoration, completed in 1994, visitors to the chapel numbered about 3.5 million annually. That rose to more than 5 million in 2011. Since the March 2013 election of Pope Francis, whose weekly public appearances and readings of the Angelus have boosted turnout in St Peter’s Square, the number of chapel visits has climbed to up to 5.5 million, or 20,000 per day—and 30,000 on the last Sunday of every month, when admission is free.

Every 20 minutes, a group of almost 700 people is let into the room, which measures less than 560m².

So many visitors not only make the viewing experience less pleasant, they bring in perspiration and bacteria that threaten the survival of masterpieces by Ghirlandaio, Botticelli, Pinturicchino, Pengiago and, most famously, Michelangelo.

Recent accounts in the Italian press have complained that the chapel is now a “crowded train station” and warned that a “wall of human breath threatens ‘unimaginable’ living conditions on the painted surfaces. As one headline put it: ‘The enemy is you!’”

The problems are aggravated by the late 15th-century chapel’s peculiar layout, which resembles that of a fortress. The chapel has no interior entrance, and is entered through the Apostolic Palace, its high windows are permanently closed.

All this keeps the exchange of air to a minimum, accentuating the effects of pollution, including windborne car exhaust and dust, and of exterior humidity and abrupt changes in temperature.

One obvious remedy would be to reduce the number of visitors, but Ms Paolucci has vigorously opposed this, insisting the faithful have a right to see the room where cardinals have elected new popes for more than five centuries.

The present air-conditioning system, installed in the mid-1990s, was designed for only half the current number of visitors, so the Vatican is installing a powerful new system slated to be operative in October.

That is not the only new technology being introduced to assist in conservation.

To reduce the risk of heat damage from illumination, the Vatican is installing an advanced LED lighting system that, according to its manufacturer, will also slash energy consumption by 60-80%.

LED illumination has its critics. Because each LED light must be colour-adjusted for the surface upon which it is directed, colours can appear inconsistent.

Total cost for the 7,800 new LED lights and associated equipment was $20 million, almost half of it paid for by the European Union, the rest by private sponsors.

The Sistine Chapel in the Vatican Museums. Pope Francis’ election has boosted the number of visitors to the Vatican and also the Museums. To protect the Sistine Chapel, new air-conditioning and LED lighting systems are being installed. (Photo: Paul Haring/CNS)

Pope appoints 14 couples to join bishops in synod

Sheen cause suddenly suspended

BY MARK PATTISON

THE canonisation cause of US Archbishop Fulton Sheen has been suspended indefinitely, according to a statement issued by the diocese of Peoria, Illinois, where the archbishop was born.

“The process to verify a possible miracle attributed to Sheen had been going extremely well, and only awaited a vote of the cardinals and the approval of the Holy Father. There was every indication that a positive miracle would be certified and that a public audience with Pope Francis in 2013 would be scheduled for as early as the coming year,” the diocese said.

Archbishop Sheen, who gained fame in the 1950s with a prime-time television series called Life is Worth Living, died in New York in 1979.

The diocesan statement said the archdiocese of New York denied a request from Bishop Daniel Jenky of Peoria to move the archbishop’s body to Peoria.

Joseph Zwilling, communications director for the New York archdiocese, said Cardinal Timothy Dolan of New York “did express a willingness in exhuming the body without a directive from the Vatican Congregation for Saints’ Causes and family approval. The statement added that Archbishop Sheen’s “closest surviving family members” asked that the archbishop’s wishes be respected and that he had “explicitly stated his desire that his remains be buried in New York.”

A subsequent statement from the Peoria diocese said it had received a “shocking statement” from an attorney for the New York archdiocese saying the archdiocese “would never allow the examination of the body, the securing of relics or the transfer of the body”.

In a statement Bishop Jenky said that “clearly Archbishop Sheen’s wishes for his final resting place could not have anticipated that he would go through a canonisation process by his native diocese of Peoria, after it was turned down by the archdiocese of New York.”

However, “after further discussion with Rome, it was decided that the cause be referred back to be rejoled to the congregation’s historical archives,” the Peoria diocesan statement said.

If the Peoria diocese’s decision is final to suspend Archbishop Sheen’s cause then there is no cause for the Vatican congregation’s historical archives, Mr Zwilling said, “the archdiocese of New York would welcome the opportunity to assume responsibility for a cause currently suspended in an attempt to move it forward.”

Archbishop Sheen, after his years in the TV and radio limelight, retained a high profile by running the Society for the Propagation of the Faith out of New York City. His work was known throughout the English-speaking Church.

By the time of his death, he was a C.M. and was serving as Apostolic Visitor to the Islamic setting.”

The Sistine Chapel in the Vatican Museums. Pope Francis’ election has boosted the number of visitors to the Vatican and also the Museums. To protect the Sistine Chapel, new air-conditioning and LED lighting systems are being installed. (Photo: Paul Haring/CNS)

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Consider the cross

S""ommermacher is in his article on the hymn "How Great Thou Art" (August 20) de- ceiving his parishioners when he claims that a priest was inspired by a thunderstorm in 1855 to compose what is now a great hymn. It may be good, but it is not great. As for "Great Thou Art" (August 27), I think it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the vehemence of the hymn in moving to a meditative place of faith and adoration is much more gratifying and uplifting. It is a song that is not often sung in the homeland, but it has been in other countries for a long time.

Where are our church bells?

ATTENDED a funeral recently where in the funeral service was sung "When Morning Gilds the Sky", a real golden oldie. That it may be considered a mistake to claim that there is no longer a church in the village where the service was held is somewhat questionable!

A church must have bells and the bells of a church can perform a pastoral function. The second verse goes: Where there's a-born and dead in Christ, if the bells (Peals) over hill and dell/May Jesus Christ be praised/Oh hark to what it rings/ May Jesus Christ be praised!/It rings (May Jesus Christ be praised)! Are they rung in our churches at all? Or have they just been unmended or dozed off.

Bringing back the bells for the call to worship on Sundays and holy days. Even the much maligned church organ can lead to a society that hears and worships. I have experienced that God is the Ascendant One.

Peace is difficult

REGARDING Judith Turner's artic le "Can there be peace?" (August 27), I think it is difficult to forgive and especially to forget what people did to us. This is why peac e is not easy, because we do not commit to any peace itself.

The people who hurt me in my life have all promised peace with God. One is unable to forgive how good God can be.

I am in a shelter, barely making it, but much better than seven years ago. I have suffered poverty since I stood up against what I believed was wrong.

I am not sure I will ever understand God's revelation on that one.

How do you make peace with people who think they are un-teachable?

Jansen van Rensburg, Cape Town

I take the Eucharist with gratitude

A NUMBER of letters have been received expressing opposition to the practice of allowing Holy Communion to be given under both kinds. I have also had occasions of bearing witness in many forums and to my knowledge all will be made new with a view to the Church's presence and love. It is a place where we can let go of past and look forward with hope to the future.

The sacrament of reconciliation is indeed one of the Church's great gifts to the faithful. Properly conducted, by conessor and penitent, it is a grace which can heal all kinds of wounds.

Over time, alas, confession has been invested with an ambiguous reputation. By some it is regarded as an anachronistic obligation imposed upon us rather than as a means by which to restore and deepen one's relationship with God.

As a consequence it has come to be seen as an option extra in living the Catholic faith.

Pope Francis understands this. Earlier this year he broke with papal tradition by publicly going to confession and, in the words of Pope Benedict XVI, he demonstrated that "love and mercy for others cannot be separated from love and mercy for God".

The sacrament of reconciliation is a restorative mechanism: it is a means for the sinner in need of God's mercy. The burden of damaging.

It is a lesson even some adults have not learned. The relative stability of our society is in large measure due to the growth of the Church's social teaching and the development of the sacrament of reconciliation. Over time, alas, confession has been invested with an ambiguous reputation. By some it is regarded as an anachronistic obligation imposed upon us rather than as a means by which to restore and deepen one's relationship with God.

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Faith healing: More fiction than faith

Michael Shackleton

Gushel Brooks

To cut the wealth gap

Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical Caritas in Veritate, says that political action is needed to ensure that wealth is distributed equitably. As the Church and civil society, we must promote governance that treats the poor more fairly.

The Church's social teaching puts heavy responsibilities on a person (or nation) that has a surplus where others lack the basic necessities.

Successive popes have made that point. Leo XIII in Rerum Novarum (1891), Pius XI in Quadragesimo Anno (1931), St John XXIII in Pacem in Terris (1963) and Paul VI in Populorum Progressio (1967), and so on.

The question of justice is also one of faith. The question in the Bible is this: How do we know that God could have chosen Minister Louisa as a vessel— as the claim—that to heal the sick and feed the poor? Was Jesus’ ministry not based on these very acts, and during the process of canonisation, are the miracles miracles or not the result of faith healing nature? It would therefore seem a little hypocritical of me not to accept that Minister Louisa could perhaps perform the very same "miracles", or would it?

It is a human right to seek animate and irrational help. It is far tougher to believe in an ethereal being seemingly disconnected from us, refusing to intervene in life’s little sorrows, illness, financial insecurity, crime and many other tragedies.

The belief in a loving God is shaken for every person at one point or the other; whether it is through the loss of a loved one, our own shortcomings or afflictions of a physical or psychological nature.

So if someone suanders along, claiming to heal illnesses and feed the poor, that seemingly absent God becomes real and present for many of us once more.

That is why I found myself alone in my scepticism of Minister Louisa; people yearn for a higher power that physically and materially intervenes in their lives.

Is there for me or many like her understanding this most valuable link in the human spiritual armour and in "exchange for some prayer or a small fee" provide evidence of that present God by cure, illness and out denying a request to stop you from getting that job that will ensure you to be staying at home from starvation.

The real truth is that the only evidence I have of her efficacy and those like her, are for a higher power of their originating. Yes it does not cost the people fortunes, travelling great distances, all to get a tragic end because "they did not have enough faith in God's healing power.

By claiming to be God’s vessel, people like Minister Louisa strip themselves of any culpability and place it on the shoulders of a desperate people wanting to do anything in search of a miracle or treatment.

It is not that miracles do not happen, it is that the demand and inadvisability of our belief and hope in miracles. It is that this makes the vast majority of faith healers seem ridiculous people with little or no sense.

Gushel Brooks is a presenter on Talk Radio 702 and Saps CallTalk, and on Radio Veritas. He also writes for The Daily Maverick.

Mphuthumi Ntbeni

Pushing the Boundaries

Traders on a stock exchange. In his column, Mphuthumi Ntbeni asks whether free market policies can operate under defective competition conditions. (Photo: Photo: Paulo Whitaker, Reuters/CNS)

any economist knows, governments do not produce an economy that creates jobs and raises living standards for all—that is the duty of the private sector.

Hence the government needs to issue penalties for domestic companies that sit on liquid cash above a certain percentage and make it compulsory for all companies that do business in South Africa to invest a certain percentage of their revenue back into the country’s economy.

South Africa has one of the weakest co-operative laws in the world, and even then these are not effectively implemented. That is why our CEOs can pay themselves obscene bonuses, and why big business collusion is common.

But the NDP does not talk about this, as it seems that the logic of free markets operate under defective competition conditions, for a start—a far cry from the ideal of ‘perfect competition and minute’. What is one to blame those who say the NDP promotes a neoliberal agenda?

Dr Individuals, through the NDP, should not shy away from actively getting our market forces for the benefit of its citizens. Sadly, the NDP is silent on all of this.

As for the Right, the Nobel Prize laureate for economics, it puts, “Progressive tax and expenditure policies”, which tax the rich more than the poor and provide systems of good social protection, “can limit the effects of inequality.” By contrast, programmes that give away a country’s re- evidence of GDP and well-being cannot improve inequality.”

All concludes by saying: “Inequality is the result of political forces as much as of economic ones. In a modern world, market policy sets and enforces the rules of the game.” And that "government can wield economic powers for redistribution including tax strategies and public education”.

If all sounds too “socialist” or “interventionist”, consider Pope Benedict XVI. He says in Veritatis Splendor: “A culture of justice based on the rule of law is a fundamental component of any economic order. For the laws of a market society, contrary to the claims of some economists, are not rules that are freely chosen by the market actors, but are commandments imposed on them by society.”

He also says that the NDP’s programme, if implemented, may freely foster a devotion to that other saint. The name in the parish register, however, is not changed.

Names given in baptism and confirmation are entered into the parish register and may not be altered afterwards. So, when one may prefer another saint’s patronage, the name whose name was chosen in confirmation, one may freely transfer a devotion to that other saint. The name in the parish register, however, is not changed.

Send your quotes to Open Door, Box 2572, Cape Town, 8000, or e-mail: opendoor@scross.co.za, or fax (021) 444 0277. Questions must be typed and may be edited for clarity. Only published questions will be answered.

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25, 35)

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PERSPECTIVES

The Southern Cross, September 17 to September 23, 2014

7

Open Door

Can I change my confirmation saint?

I have read online that taking a confirmation name is simply an act of personal choice, and not required by the bishops for the sacrament. Is it possible to later change one’s confirmation name? Is there any personal or spiritual affinity to a different saint arose?

Michelle Evert

JULIET asked Romeo: “What’s in a name?” She just could not believe that there was anything else, so she said: “That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet.”

For many a given name carries much more weight than just another random word. When we are christened and receive our Christian name in the waters of baptism, we are sealed with a very special identity. Christ claims us as his own. We belong to him and become answerable to him for our conduct in life. When he judges us, we can expect him to address us by that very personal name.

One’s confirmation name, religious name, sur-name or any other kind of title cannot match the priority of the baptismal name. This is why I found myself alone in my scepticism of Minister Louisa; people yearn for a higher power that physically and materially intervenes in their lives.

Is there for me or many like her understanding this most valuable link in the human spiritual armour and in “exchange for some prayer or a small fee” provide evidence of that present God by cure, illness and out denying a request to stop you from getting that job that will ensure you to be staying at home from starvation. The real truth is that the only evidence I have of her efficacy and those like her, are for a higher power of their originating. Yes it does not cost the people fortunes, travelling great distances, all to get a tragic end because “they did not have enough faith in God’s healing power.

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COMMUNITY

Nineteen members of St Anne’s parish in Mpophomeni, Durban archdiocese, were baptised. They are pictured with Franciscan Sisters Francina and Innocencia, catechists and Fr Jude Fernando TOR (back left).

Holy Angels parish in Bez Valley, Johannesburg, started a monthly liturgy for children from Grades R to 4. Catechists (from left) Shanelle Behari, Hailey Buikes and Ntlhande Rathangane are pictured with the children at the first session.

The Catholic Women’s League of Our Lady of Fatima parish in Durban North attended a retreat weekend at Coolock Retreat House in Melville, South Coast. The theme was Mary and Martha. (From left back) Marie Bates, Lucy Venter, Jenny Davis, Christine Schoombe, Liz Newberry, Eileen Chapson and Nancy Ah-Chuen. (Front) Margaret Larkins, Carol Price, Elizabeth Norton-Amor, Carol Lind, Gabi van der Merwe and Toti Bremner.

The staff and youth of Salesian Institute Youth Projects in Cape Town held a special service at Sacred Heart church in Green Point, Cape Town, to launch the bicentenary year of the birth of St John Bosco. During the service, which comprised readings, singing and a short talk by Fr Jeff Johnson, the youth also brought forward various symbols reflecting Salesian spirituality—a map of the Salesian presence in the world, a picture of Don Bosco, a candle, bible and the official bicentenary logo.

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Mgr Jock Baird gives Brigid and Deacon Harvey Moon of St John the Evangelist parish in Fish Hoek, Cape Town, a nuptial blessing on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary.

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Send your photos to pics@scross.co.za with information about the event and names of the people in the photos.

The Zimbabwe-South Africa (ZimSA) unit of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur held their annual assembly at the Ave Maria Pastoral and Development Centre in Mooketsi, Tzaneen. One of the days was spent at a diversity workshop held together with the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. Twenty-six sisters from ten countries attended the workshop facilitated by Paul Graham from Johannesburg.

Easter Pilgrimage to Lourdes
Led by Father Allan Moss OMI
01-09 April 2015

Pilgrimage to Fatima, Garabandal, Lourdes, Dozulé, Liseux and Paris
Led by Archbishop Buti Tlhagale OMI
10-23 May 2015

Pilgrimage to Italy-Shroud of Turin, Passion Play in Sordevolo, Milan, Rome, Verona, Venice
Led by Father Victor Phalana
09-21 June 2015

Holy Land Pilgrimage
Led by Father Christopher Townsend
31 August -09 September 2015

Pilgrimage to Fatima, Lourdes, Rome and Assisi
Led by Father Robert Mphiwe
07-19 September 2015

Contact: Tel: 012 342 7917/072 637 0508 (Michelle)
E-Mail: info@micasatours.co.za

MICASA TOURS

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Our Lady of Fatima Dominican School in Durban North celebrated its 60th jubilee by arranging pupils into the school badge and the numeral 60.
Tribal beliefs went hand in hand with the practice of witchcraft and sorcery. The tribes believed that these practices could bring about both good and evil outcomes. In some cases, these beliefs were so powerful that they led to the persecution of those who were suspected of engaging in such activities. For example, the Mphaphuli family was targeted by people who believed that they were involved in witchcraft. This led to the Mphaphulis being driven from their home and left with nothing but the clothes they were wearing.

In this context, the story of Benedict's life and the challenges he faced become even more poignant. Benedict was a man who believed in the power of faith and the importance of the church. He was determined to bring the message of the gospel to the people of his region, even in the face of great danger. Despite the threats he faced, he continued to work tirelessly to build schools and hospitals, and to help those in need.

The story of Benedict's life is a testament to the power of faith and the importance of perseverance. It serves as a reminder that even in the face of great adversity, the human spirit can overcome all obstacles. The investigation into Benedict's life and work continues, and there is hope that one day he will be recognized as a saint. In the meantime, the people of South Africa continue to be inspired by his example, and to draw strength from his steadfast belief in the power of faith.
When COLLEEN CONSTABLE moved from the Western Cape to Gauteng, she had to find a church in which to attend Mass. In Centurion, she found one that enriches and excites her.

It is St. Paul who stated in Romans 12:3-5: ‘I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think, but to think soberly, each according to the measure of faith that God has appointed. For as in one body we have many parts and all parts do not have the same function, so we though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.” (The African Bible)

I find relevance of these biblical verses in the spiritual community of Maria Regina parish in Centurion. I attended my first Mass with this parish community on Pentecost.

After Mass that Sunday, I felt overjoyed as I heard of the sudden loss of their beloved parish priest. An integrated community faces. A mixed feeling that highly did not happen overnight. But it is a process which, given our historical background, most probably did not happen overnight. But it was a step they took to become a true integrated congregation.

I am inspired by how integrated Maria Regina parish has become: I am in awe of the journey the community has travelled to reach this space where they are truly one spiritual family.

I have observed that many of our churches are still disintegrated: carrying the hallmarks of the past. We continue to worship in our traditional churches where we live in our residential areas that still lack full integration of cultural groups.

Now I am blessed to experience a true reflection of an integrated parish: the beauty of parishioners from various cultural backgrounds, sitting next to each other. They become a perfect reflection of integration of different cultures: a modern reflection of St Paul’s “…so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individual parts of one another.”

I pray that the parish of Maria Regina will grow from strength to strength and become an example for many parishes across the country. We can be one.

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Servants of the Holy Childhood of Jesus

Are you called to join us to love God, in praising Him in Prayer and serving Him, as we care for people in need, especially children?

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Pope mourns death of missionary sisters

JOHANNESBURG: In memoriam
Sr Lucia Pulici, 75, and Olga Raschetti, 82, were found dead in their mission residence in the capital of Burundi, spiritual leader Fr. Michael Foley of the southern cross told The Southern Cross (September 17 to September 23, 2014) in an interview.

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Pope Francis has mourned the deaths of three Xaverian Missionaries of Mary, who were murdered in two separate attacks in their residence in Burundi.

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WE need to learn how God operates; and it is not quite like the way we operate. Next Sunday’s readings are all about God’s way. The first reading and the psalm talk about “the way” or “path” of God, while the second reading speaks of Jesus’ way, and the gospel about two different “ways” of responding to God’s invitation.

Leekie starts with a complaint from the Israelite exile in Babylon about “the way of the Lord”, which, in the words of children down the ages, “isn’t fair”. The response is that it is the “way” of the “house of Israel” that “isn’t fair”; but “when the wicked man turns away from wickedness... and does justice and righteousness, he shall save his life.”

The gospel speaks of two sons of a farmer, the older one taking more than his share, and the younger one giving his share to the poor. The older son then reflects on how he has demeaned himself, and the younger son on how he has been generous. There is no mention made of any forgiveness here. The younger son reflects on his actions and how he feels about himself. The older son reflects on how he has been selfish. No one is asked to respond to the gospel here. There is no invitation to change, just reflection.

The reading and psalm talk about “the way” or “path” of God, which the Philippians (for which we should understand ourselves) have been operating in, in various ways.

Accept God’s generosity

My youth had both its strengths and its weaknesses. I grew up on a South African farm, and in Canadian prairies, a second-generation immigrant. Our family was a large one and the small farm we lived on gave us enough to live on, although we often went without. There were never any extras. We were never hungry or genuinely poor, but we lived with fragility. We were given what we needed, but rarely anything extra. You got just one portion of food, and at times that might not be enough. You could end up with a sense of scarcity rather than of abundance and an inclination towards stinginess rather than generosity.

A mindset of scarcity rather than of abundance debilitates us in several ways.

It tends to leave us standing before life’s abundance too timid to celebrate life with any exuberance. Life is too equated with fragility and you are forever haunted by guilt in the face of life’s goodness, and especially before any experience of luxury, not unlike the discomfort felt by Jesus’ disciples when they face aprodigious woman lavishly anointing Jesus with expensive perfumes.

Inside a mindset of scarcity there is the perennial temptation to falsely ideologically suffer and poverty and have them replace grace and abundance as God’s real gift to us. More crippling still is the fact that you are the God of my salvation.

God is then asked to “remember your mercy and your steadfast love, for they are from of old”, and, by contrast, to forget “the sins of my youth... for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.”

The singer insists that God is “good and upright”, and “makes sinners see the error of their ways.” He “shows the way to the oppressed in justice, and teaches the oppressed his way.”

A constant emphasis on God’s “way” is a reminder that God has not changed, or acted unfairly. God is unchangingly benevolent.

The second reading likewise speaks of how God operates, in stark contrast to the way in which the Philippians (for which we should understand ourselves) have been operating. There have been quarrels there, and so he is asked to “not have the same mind, the same love, united in spirit.”

This is the way of reminding them that there has been “squabbling and empty-headedness” of which they need “in humility to think of each other as superior, not looking for your own interests, but for the interests of others.”

Deeper than that, however, he reminds them that “there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation of love, any solidarity in the Spirit, any mercy or compassion.”

Then he goes into the well-known, and much-loved, hymn to Christ’s self-emptying, and its astonishing result. That is how the Evangelist and we are to learn to operate, so that “every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”.

But that’s not the God whom Jesus incarnates and reveals. The gospels rather reveal a God who is prodigal beyond all our standards and beyond our imagination. The God of creation, that is, the God who is not grant forgiveness?”

The anxiety expressed here is not, I believe, triggered by a need for power, or the very sincere fear that we have to be rather scrupulous in handling out God’s mercy, or that we shouldn’t be handing out cheap grace. And, underlying that fear, I believe it is the unconscious notion that God too often acts from a sense of scarcity rather than of abundance, and that God’s mercy, like our own resources, are limited and need to be preserved very sparingly.

But that’s not the God whom Jesus incarnates and reveals. The gospels rather reveal a God who is prodigal beyond all our standards and beyond our imagination. The God of creation, that is, the God who is not grant forgiveness?"