



NEWS ARCHIVE:

## Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

Editor: Kiply Lukan Yaworski, Communications  
Phone: 306-242-1500; Toll Free: 1-877-661-5005  
communications@saskatoonrcdiocese.com



the 13 sisters representing seven of the eight congregations who were honoured at this year's provincial convention, part of an ongoing acknowledgment of the contribution of religious orders to the development of health care in the province.. (One group could not send anyone – The Sisters of Providence of Montreal)

## Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan annual convention considers “Grace of Age

By Sandy Normand

“The Grace of Age” was the theme of the 68th Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan (CHAS) convention held Oct. 24 and 25, 2011 in Moose Jaw.

More than 180 delegates from across the province gathered to receive spiritual enrichment, professional affirmation and the opportunity to be engaged in how all play a significant role in the “grace of age.”

Keynote speakers provided a wellspring of perspective and challenge about how we perceive aging, how many of our stereotypes are socially constructed and the unique challenges related to aging in this time and place.

Sr. Elizabeth Davis of the Sisters of Mercy presented an invitation to advocate for a new understanding of aging, to promote age-friendly communities and health care places, to encourage the development of a spirituality of aging and to help society move from the “dark age of aging” to the “new age of aging.”

Monsignor Charles Fahey, Professor of Aging Studies (emeritus) of Fordham University, New York, described how society – in particular North American society has never before encountered the reality of the “the third age.” The growth in the number of older persons challenges every structure of society, he said.

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“In developed countries we see the emergence of four and even five generational families. Honour your father and your mother. Which ones? How long should older persons work?”

Fahey explored the realities of a second wave of a “demographic revolution” and drew particular attention to how the Church and those involved in health care must not only continue to draw upon rich traditions but integrate them with contemporary understandings and realities, to assure the well-being of older people and society as a whole.

Micheline Pare, author and creator of the “Congruent Compassionate Approach,” brought information designed to empower professionals and family caregivers, showing ways to link our sacred stories and use them as teachable moments for and with upcoming generations.

Five workshops were featured during the convention, addressing a range of issues and resources.

Delegates were invited to situate ministry to the sick and the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick within the healing ministry of Jesus in one of the workshops.

In another, First Link was showcased as a resource promoting a person-centered approach to care. In a third session, stories were shared from those who have lived and are living through the aging process while confined to a modern health care facility.

Other delegates were engaged to employ tools to better communicate with parents and siblings about difficult topics and provide resources for better self-care. Finally, the opportunity to provide a global perspective of hospice palliative care was delivered, as two very different cultures - Canada and China - were explored.

Throughout the convention, delegates listened to vignettes describing the work and ministry of eight of the many founding religious congregations that contributed to Catholic health care in the province.

Highlighted this year were the Sisters of St. Martha, Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception of Pembroke, Sisters of St. Joseph of Peterborough, Sisters of St. Joseph of Pembroke, Daughters of Wisdom, Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception, Sisters of Providence of Vincent DePaul, and Sisters of Providence of Montreal.

As a tribute to their many years of service and ministry, bouquets and thanks were offered at the banquet and awards ceremony to 13 sisters representing their respective congregations. Only one of the eight orders, the Sisters of Providence of Montreal, was unable to send a representative.

Also receiving recognition at the awards ceremony was this year’s Moola Free Award recipient, Dr. Intheran Pillay of St. Joseph’s Hospital / Foyer d’Youville in Gravelbourg. Pillay was recognized for excellence in palliative care and for demonstrating commitment and leadership in exemplary ways.

This year’s Mission Award recipient Janet Loiselle is also from Gravelbourg, and was recognized by her peers for her contributions to Catholic health care in the province. As well, Maureen Preston of Saskatoon received honorary membership for her many years of service, providing nursing care.

The convention concluded with celebration of the Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick ceremony. Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen was the main presider. Parish priests of Moose Jaw also came to concelebrate. Music ministry was provided by Bobby Williston and his Grade 8 class from Sacred Heart School in Moose Jaw.