



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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Justice and Peace concerns discussed during “Be Doers of the Word” gathering

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

Fifty-six representatives of 20 Saskatoon and district parishes gathered Sept. 24 at St. Paul’s Cathedral hall to discuss how to “Be Doers of the Word,” walking in justice and peace in the world.

Guest speaker Rev. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, who is serving as pastor of Holy Spirit in Saskatoon this year while Rev. Ken Beck is on sabbatical, shared anecdotes of his time as a missionary in Brazil, when he wrestled with fears about standing up for the landless, and how he learned to love liberation theology. “Courage is fear that has said its prayers,” he said of what he learned from his experiences.

DeMong encouraged his listeners to think about what issues keep them awake at night, and to begin taking action in those areas – members of the group cited the suffering of children, hunger, war, health, and the environment as issues of concern.

DeMong noted one area that keeps him awake – environmental damage and climate change. He described how learning about the adverse environmental impact of air travel has prompted him to make a drastic lifestyle change and take the bus to places like Vancouver, Montreal and Texas, instead of flying. He also spoke about the need for the diocese to show the kind of leadership in environmental construction that the Vatican is demonstrating (*see related article, below.*)

At the request of Tony Haynes, coordinator of the diocesan Office for Justice and Peace, those present then listed a wide range of justice and peace activities and initiatives being undertaken by parishes and groups in the community.

The gathering heard that several parishes are fundraising for the Station 20 West project to build a community facility in Saskatoon that will house medical and other services and a much-needed grocery store in the city’s core neighbourhood.



Left to right: Carol Zubiak of the diocesan justice and peace advisory committee; Tony Haynes, director of the diocesan Office for Justice and Peace; and Rev. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, guest speaker.

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One representative reported that his parish is working to build up a spirit of community and is trying to get to know newcomers, including people of different nationalities and ethnic origins; as well as to ensure the make-up of parish council reflects the community.

Another parish is directing the proceeds of its fall supper to social justice initiatives. Holy Family parish is holding a fair trade sale and has decided that all the coffee, tea and sugar used in the parish will be fair trade products.

Several parishes have volunteers who are helping with prison ministry in the diocese, and several parishes are collecting t-shirts, socks and underwear for inmates.

Members of St. Francis Xavier parish are working with other denominations in the Nutana neighbourhood to learn more about homelessness and housing needs in the area.

At St. Patrick parish, “did you know” items about justice and peace issues are regularly placed in the bulletin. As well, when food drives are held for the Food Bank or for the emergency food pantry at Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, St. Patrick’s promotes the effort with the words “give us this day our daily bread,” in the hopes that this will touch people’s hearts, said parish representative Carol Zubiak.

Issues such as human trafficking, welcoming immigrants and refugees, and environmental concerns are among the other areas being addressed within parishes, the group heard.

For St. Mary’s parish in the downtown core, justice and peace is not a committee, but a way of life, said a St. Mary’s representative. Whether it involves serving coffee and sandwiches at the rectory’s back door; the connections made in the community by the parish nurse; or support for the CWL Clothing Depot – it is justice and peace that is being lived out, she said, thanking the diocesan Office for Justice and Peace and other parishes for all that they do to help. “Whether you know it or not, you are making a difference,” she said.

Representatives of St. Theresa parish in Asquith reported on efforts to support the Food Bank, the Friendship Inn and the CWL Clothing Depot. Acknowledging the rural parish’s contributions, Tony Haynes, noted that the issues and problems listed by the group do not belong to the city alone. “These things don’t stop at the boundaries of Saskatoon,” he said. “We’re in this together.”

Before adjourning, the group decided to take action and write Premier Brad Wall, asking about his plans concerning the future of nuclear development in the province.



Questions raised about environmental features of new Cathedral and Catholic Pastoral Centre

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

At a recent gathering sponsored by the diocesan Office for Justice and Peace, guest speaker Rev. Lawrence DeMong, OSB, raised the question of environmental factors and energy efficiency in plans for a new Cathedral and Catholic Pastoral Centre in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatchewan.

DeMong was addressing some 56 representatives from 20 parishes at an evening of discussion entitled "Be Doers of the Word" Sept. 24.

Saying the diocese should show the kind of leadership that the Vatican has demonstrated in incorporating renewable energy sources and energy efficiency in its buildings, DeMong cited local researcher and scientist Rob Dumont who, along with fellow Catholic Jim Moorhead, has been lobbying for the new Cathedral and Catholic Pastoral Centre to be built to the highest Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified standard.

The Cathedral and Catholic Pastoral Centre is an "iconic building" for the diocese, and as such, there is a lot of symbolic value in making it an example of environmental excellence, said Moorhead. The independent certification of the LEED process would provide outside recognition of environmental stewardship, he said. "It is LEED certified or it is not – there are no half measures," Moorhead said.

Dumont noted that energy efficiency and insulation should be a high priority in a building projected to be in use for over a century in the harsh climate of Saskatchewan. "The word stewardship comes to mind – how are we using our resources here on earth to further the kingdom? Particularly from the very top now we have leadership being shown in this from the Vatican," said Dumont.

The Cathedral and Catholic Pastoral Centre building committee has decided not to pursue LEED certification, in part because of the added costs associated with the certification process, says building committee chair Jim Nakoneshny.

"There were a great many features which needed to be incorporated within a limited budget," says Nakoneshny. "As the largest single construction project in the history of the diocese, it was very important not to over-extend ourselves financially. Some of the items that we wished to include within the design ultimately had to be left out or modified in order to accommodate others."



In designing the new Cathedral and Pastoral Centre for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, the building committee has consistently taken a thoughtful and balanced approach throughout the design process, says Nakoneshny.

“Being a cathedral, our first responsibility is to create a building which both supports and enhances the liturgical and pastoral experience of our Catholic community. Those considerations must always take precedence in the development of the design.”

Ultimately, Nakoneshny says, the design was based upon a balance of considerations, including sustainability. “Our design team includes LEED certified professionals and engineers who have helped to develop energy saving construction methods. Designing buildings to suit the extreme climate conditions of Saskatchewan is done as a matter of course in their professional practices,” he said.

“This includes the use of highly efficient heating and cooling systems, windows and insulation,” he notes. “It also factors in features such as ensuring that all of the offices and main gathering areas receive large amounts of natural daylight.”

He points out that the building also includes three large solar-electric windows as part of the design. The large stained glass windows in the front façade include specially designed photo-voltaic cells which will enable the glass to collect solar energy and generate electricity for night-time illumination. “This will be one of the largest solar art-glass installations of its kind in North America,” adds Nakoneshny.

With a \$28.5 million fund-raising campaign nearing completion, the Cathedral and Catholic Pastoral Centre project has recently gone to tender. Plans call for construction to be complete within two years.