

Finding light in the darkness

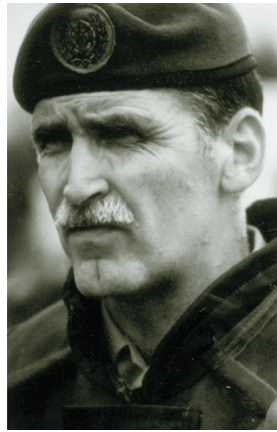
This year's Catholics in Public Life conference, to be held Friday, May 28 and Saturday, May 29 at St. Jerome's, is already causing a generous bit of excitement. The keynote speaker will be retired Lieutenant-General Romeo Dallaire, author of the acclaimed memoir *Shake Hands with the Devil* (HarperCollins, 2003). "The initial reaction has been extremely enthusiastic," says Doug Letson, one of the conference organizers.

The event is being offered jointly by the Waterloo Catholic District School Board and St. Jerome's University. Friday night's lecture is open to the general public and is certain to attract an overflow crowd. The conference, for which Friday's lecture is the thematic introduction, is expected to draw 70 to 80 people.

Dallaire is known as a compelling speaker. Catholic by upbringing and a career soldier, his world was shattered when he went to Rwanda in 1993 as commander of a small United Nations peacekeeping force. He blames the UN and its member countries for turning a blind eye to the genocide of the following year, when some 800,000 minority Tutsis and Hutu moderates were slaughtered. Many of the victims—killed, raped, used as human minesweepers and roadblocks, and as soldiers—were children. The experience left Dallaire suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, and has since propelled him into a campaign to save children from being used in war.

The keynote address will deal with the difficulties of confronting tragedy and injustice, and the role one's faith plays in finding hope in desperate situations. That theme will provide a focus for the rest of the conference.

Saturday morning's conference will explore Friday night's theme as a panel of three people bring their own practical experience to the




Lieutenant-General Romeo Dallaire will speak at the Catholics in Public Life conference in May.

questions raised by Romeo Dallaire's reflections: How do you deal with evil, injustice, and loss of hope in the course of your public responsibilities? What are the solaces? How does a Catholic orientation influence your public response? Hence the panelists: Philippe LeBlanc, OP, a specialist in social justice issues, has been the Dominican Order's representative at the UN for many years;

David Mensah is an Anglican priest with first-hand experience of life in the slums of Africa; Donna Ward is a doctor at Grand River Hospital who specializes in palliative care.

Later the conference participants will break up into focus groups—a new feature for the annual event—related to the parish, the school, and the community.

The deadline for registration for the two-day conference is May 21. Seating is limited and admission to the Dallaire talk is by ticket only, but conference registrants are guaranteed a ticket for Friday night. Registration for the conference and requests for tickets are being handled by the Waterloo Catholic District School Board, not by St. Jerome's. More information and a downloadable registration form are available at www.wcdsb.edu.on.ca. Or, for tickets and information contact Margo Jones by e-mail: Margo.Jones@rdo.ca, or by phone: (519) 578-3660, ext. 332. 

Art and Spirit Festival 2004

The second annual Art and Spirit Festival takes place June 24–26 at St. Jerome's. This year's event celebrates the relationship between the visual arts and spirituality, with discussions, art showings, and opportunities to mingle with artists. The four featured visual artists are Gerry Squires, a landscape painter; Ted Rettig, a sculptor; Catherine Paleczny, a textile artist; and Rene Meshake, an abstract painter. Highlights of the event include a dialogue hosted by CBC host Michael Enright and performance art by Lesley Millard and Isabella Stefanescu.

For more information, contact Melinda Wilson at: sjufest@uwaterloo.ca (519) 884-8110, ext. 283



academic year before I attempt to land a position on the continent."
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'69 Sr. Barbara Frank (BA '69, History), a former principal of St. Mary's Elementary school in Elora, writes that she is now retired and living in Maryhill, Ontario. She keeps busy with volunteer pastoral work; she also does some supply teaching.

'70 Paul Hunt (BA '70, English) moving ever further east, first to Oshawa, then Montreal, and finally, in 1981, to Halifax, where he graduated from Dalhousie with an MBA in 1984. "I have spent most of my career in the health care sector and now run a consulting company (Medisphere Inc.) that represents various pharmaceutical and surgical supply companies throughout

Atlantic Canada," he writes. He and his wife Judy have two grown sons. "I still play oldtimer's hockey and golf as often as I can," Paul says.
huntclub@accesswave.ca

'77 In December 2002 Matt Wever (BA '77, History, MA '82, Recreation & Leisure Studies) received an EdD (Doctorate of Education) in Educational Leadership from Saint Louis University. Matt is now the director of health club and fitness centers at the Jewish Community Centers of St. Louis. They are a busy family, with older son Jason a sophomore at the University of Southern California (USC), younger son Justin a sophomore at Chaminade College Preparatory School, and wife Marcia opening a contemporary Pilates studio in St. Louis. Even so, "I miss all my friends and acquaintances from SJC," Matt writes.
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