

The Parkdale Messenger
Weekly news and musings from
the little church moved by a Great Spirit

Toronto, ON

May 18th, 2018

No. 395

Worship this week:

PENTECOST

“Can Dry Bones Live?”

Rev. Doug McLeod

Scripture:

Psalm 104

Acts 2: 1-21

Ezekiel 37: 1-14

offer the pilgrimage as a way to encourage those who have made difficult steps to change their lives.

When fundraising started for the May 4-14 trip to Paris and Rome last fall, Vela was on probation for domestic violence. In order to go on the trip, she had to go to court to determine if she would have to serve jail time in order to waive the probation, allowing her to leave the country.

“I have a bad record,” Vela told CNA in an interview, explaining that in general, law enforcement “don't like when you don't do probation,” especially when the person has a history.

“If you've ever been in the system and you know anything about anything, they don't like that.”

Vela was selected in autumn of 2017, just months before the trip was scheduled; it was a gamble as to when a hearing could be scheduled and how close of a margin it would be between when

she got out and when she got on the plane.

However, when the day of her April hearing came, Vela said what happened in the courtroom was nothing short of miraculous.

Instead of sending her behind bars, the judge decided to drop the whole case against her and let her walk completely free, after hearing the testimony of Tanya Cangelosi, who has led homeless ministries for years and has organized the past five pilgrimages taking someone from the streets to Rome.

The judge, after hearing Cangelosi's conviction that an opportunity like the pilgrimage would inspire real change, began talking about people who changed his own life. Before tossing the case, he said the people he tried to make proud set the direction of his life and told Nina to never let Cangelosi down.

“It was unbelievable at first. I was totally blown away. I almost started crying,” Vela said, explaining that she had been prepared to go to jail, and was shocked by the judge's decision. “They let me go. They never do that.”

❖ **Calendar**

Wednesdays – (5:30 pm)
Homework Club.

Sundays – (12:00 pm) Theatre
group meeting.

Saturday, May 19th– (12:00 pm)
Knifty Knitters.

Tuesday, May 15th– (6:00 pm)
Free supper for the community.



❖ **Reflections**

A Miracle For A Homeless Woman

By Elise Harris

(Post and pic, May 16, 2018, www.catholicnewsagency.com)

Vatican City, May 16, 2018 / 10:56 am (CNA/EWTN News).- When Marina “Nina” Vela learned that she had been selected from the community of homeless people on the streets of Denver to go on an annual pilgrimage to Rome, she did not believe the trip would actually happen.

The process was stressful, and she had some stuff to take care of. Not only did she need to get her documents in order – including a passport and finding a missing birth certificate – but she also needed to clear up some trouble with the law.

Vela, 23, is the 5th person selected to go on pilgrimage to Rome through Denver Homeless Ministries (DHM), an organization working to provide opportunities to serve the homeless as both “equals and friends.” They

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In comments to CNA, Cangelosi said Vela was chosen for the pilgrimage by God's providence. "The Lord picked her, whether you believe in him or not, he picked her 100 percent."

"I knew on that level of the heart that she was supposed to go, so I had to do whatever it took," she said, voicing her conviction that Nina's life would change as a result of the pilgrimage.

Vela, she said, "didn't need all of that garbage in her record holding onto her and pulling her down. I thought that if she got off of all this, it would free her. And it did."

Vela was born in an apartment in Dallas and raised by her grandmother in Colorado, who has Alzheimer's. She started couch-surfing when she was a teenager, and eventually ended up on the streets, where she began experimenting with drugs and found herself in and out of jail.

Despite finding friends who valued her for who she was, Vela said she was consistently "oppressed" by men.

However, in a testimony she provided to fund-raise for the trip, Vela said she wanted to change her life and get off the streets. She said that she wanted to travel and eventually go to art school and start a family.

As an art lover, Vela told CNA that her favorite part about the trip to Rome was just walking through the streets and seeing the city.

"I think the city is so beautiful. I love how the ruins in the forum are combined with these old looking buildings. It's nothing like the United States. And the people are so interesting. It's a beautiful place."

She was also a big fan of St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museums, especially the Sistine Chapel. "That church was beautiful, so beautiful," she said, referring to St. Peter's.

Vela and Cangelosi also had front row tickets to the May 9 general audience with Pope Francis, meaning they got to shake his hand after the event ended.

Although she is not a believer, Vela said the pope is "a really nice guy" and "really sweet." He listened as she told him about her father, who considers himself spiritual but not religious, but who loves Pope Francis. Vela said she got a blessing and a rosary from the pope that she will give to her father.

This year the Denver Homeless Ministry pilgrimage was joined by Paul Spotts, who runs Catholic Young Adult Sports (CYAS), and 10 young adults from Colorado.

Cangelosi, who met Spotts through some of the CYAS events, said he approached her last fall saying he wanted to take a group to Rome, and that he wanted to invite a homeless person to travel with them. Cangelosi told CNA that she said yes because "I wanted Nina to experience being around people her age who are working and have graduated from college."

"Hopefully that is something that will stick in her mind in the future," she said, adding that having Vela with them was also "a life-changing experience" for the other young adults who came, since they had never really spent time with a homeless person before.

In her comments to CNA, Vela said that while the group dynamic was hard, she bonded with some of the people in the group and felt respected.

Now working at a coffee roaster, and with housing lined up for the future, Vela said she doesn't know what the future will hold, but is grateful to have had the opportunity to come to Rome.

❖ In the News

MISS PENNY NICKEL NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Please help Miss Penny and the Knifty Knitters, to send our kids to Camp next summer. For info.:

misspenny2006@gmail.com



HOMework CLUB

Book reports? Science? French? Scary? Too much? Donna Marshall is organizing the Parkdale Phoenix Homework Club. From 5:30 to 7:00 pm, free of charge, for grades 2-4. Call 647 631 9885 or email parkdalephoenix@gmail.com.

❖ Thank you to

- Ernie Wilmot for the flowers of the altar table.
- **All those who support our small food bank!**

For information or if you want to post something in The Parkdale Messenger, please contact us:

parkdale.messenger@rogers.com