

## THE POPE AND SEX

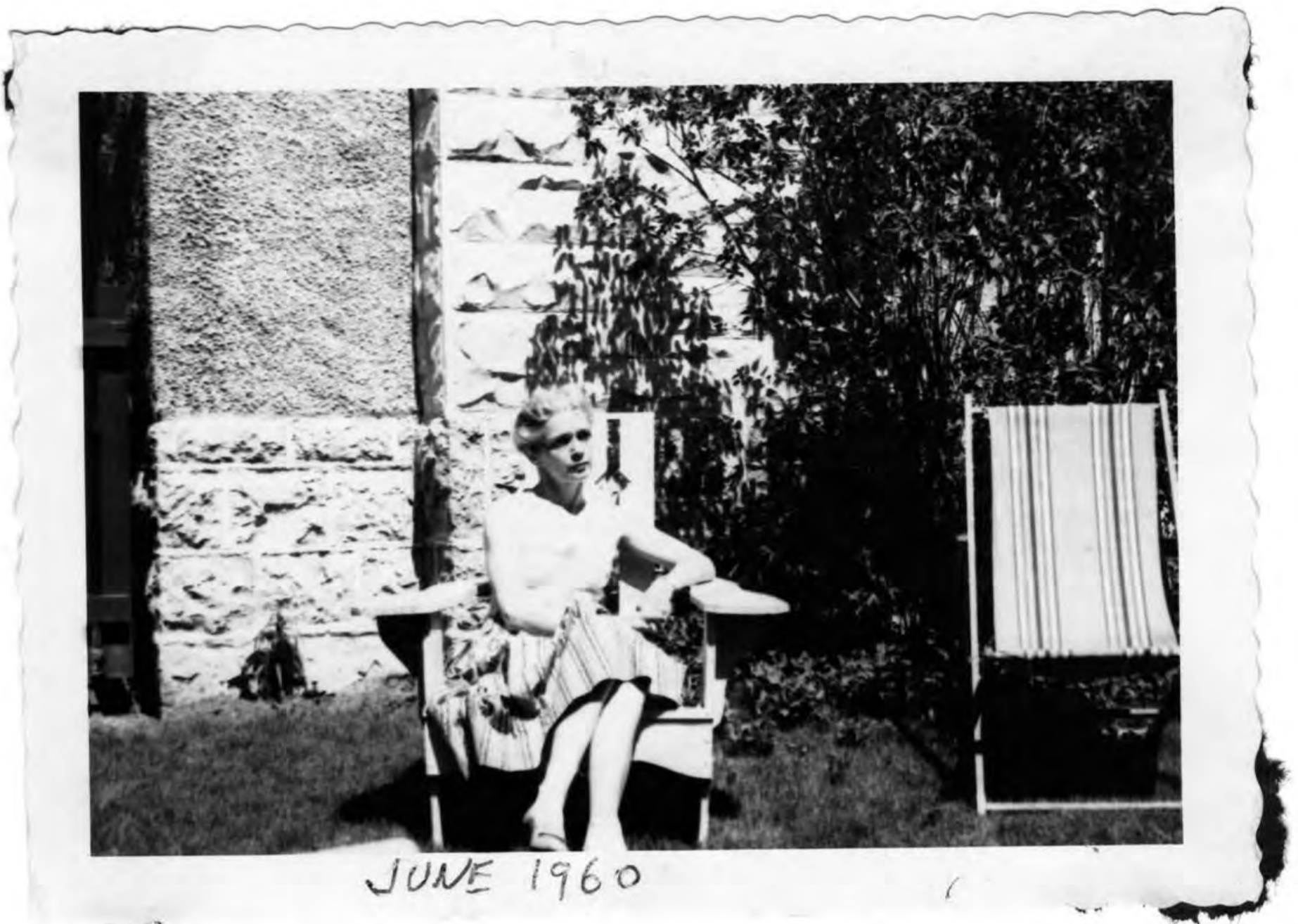
Pope Francis catches the eye of the world's Catholics with his musings on birth control, **IN3**



# INSIGHT

> HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

## Into the darkness



INGRAM FAMILY PHOTO

Jay Ingram's mother, Doris, no longer knew her husband of 70 years, Ralph, when he wrote her a love letter when he was 90 and she was 88.

Science writer and broadcaster Jay Ingram strives to understand the disease that likely afflicted his mother

JENNIFER WELLS  
FEATURE WRITER

Jay Ingram sends along a photograph of his mother, Doris, circa 1960. The photographic setting is eloquent and appropriate, for there Doris sits, contemplative and alone, on a summer's day.

She's not truly alone, of course, for someone takes the photo, perhaps Ralph, her husband, who decades later would pen a love letter to his wife after she had begun her creeping descent into dementia. So the photograph uncannily suggests distance as well as introspection.

Ralph Ingram was 90 when he wrote his *billet-doux* to his wife. Doris was 88. "It was actually pretty intimate," Jay Ingram says of the letter, discovered after his father died. "More intimate at the age of 90 than I thought they ever were. So that was a revelation to me, because I started thinking, you know, I've carried an image of what they were like. Well, maybe it's completely off."

Doris Ingram no longer knew Ralph Ingram when she passed away in 2006. Did she die of Alzheimer's,

by far the most common form of dementia? It's likely, posits Jay Ingram, a science writer and broadcaster who explores what he calls the anatomy of the disease in *The End of Memory: A Natural History of Aging and Alzheimer's*. By the time of Doris's death, he writes, she was "bedridden and unaware."

Despite his family's experience, Ingram's journey is not a personal one. "As a science person I really didn't know much about the science of Alzheimer's. Where did it come from? What's really going on the brain? How well do we understand that?"

The statistics provide an obvious and dramatic spur to investigation. There's lots to choose from.

A study funded by the Alzheimer's Association and published in 2013 crunched data from the Chicago Health and Aging Project. Looking out to 2050, researchers predicted that a new case of Alzheimer's disease will emerge in the United States every 33 seconds. That would mean close to one million cases per year.

NEURONS continued on IN4

> LITERARY AFFAIRS

## Michel Houellebecq's uncanny timing

His novel about a near-future Islamic France hit bookstores the day of the Charlie Hebdo attack

ALLAN WOODS  
QUEBEC BUREAU

Say what you will about Michel Houellebecq, France's most famous and controversial fiction writer, but his timing is impeccable — although a little uncanny.

Houellebecq's novel *Soumission*, about the election of an Islamic government in France, had not been on the shelves for more than a few hours on Jan. 7 when Chérif and Saïd Kouachi forced their way into the Paris offices of the satirical weekly newspaper Charlie

Hebdo to — in their words — avenge the Prophet Muhammad. Recurring crude caricatures of him in its pages had drawn the ire of Muslims around the world and inspired the most radical among them to action.

The late-morning rampage, as all now know, killed 12 people and kicked off a terror spree that led to the deaths of five other innocents.

Ahead of the release in France of *Soumission* (available in French in Canadian stores this week), he was being touted as a literary provocateur — a debauched and

sex-obsessed racist whose Islamophobia had finally reached its summit.

The new book is set in a dystopian France of 2022, a country being pulled apart by political and religious strife and in which the populace elects a charismatic Muslim Brotherhood candidate as president to block the ascendant, extreme right-wing Front National. Backed by docile political and cultural elites, the country of *liberté, égalité et fraternité* becomes one of sharia law and polygamy in the course of 300 pages.

HOUELLEBEQC continued on IN4



MARTIN MEISSNER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
French author Michel Houellebecq, accused of Islamophobia — again.



