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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 66, Number 4

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

APRIL 27, 2011

## Called to Serve....

For the *North Country Catholic's* annual Vocation Issue "Called to Service," Bishop LaValley asks some critical question in is "Follow Me" column.

*"When was the last time that you told a young lady in your parish that you*

*thought she should consider a vocation to the consecrated life?*

*"How long has it been since you mentioned to that young man in church that you thought the Lord might be calling him to be a priest and that you thought he*

*would make a good one?*

*"In your personal prayer do you ask the Lord to open the heart and mind of your daughter/son to respond generously to the Lord's invitation to serve the Church as a sister, brother or priest?"*

These are appropriate

questions to reflect upon as we mark World Day of Prayer for Vocations on Sunday, May 15, Bishop LaValley wrote.

This week's *NCC* features vocation reflections about the priesthood, religious life, diaconate and marriage.

## VOCATION OF MARRIAGE

### 'More than Cinderella'



Seth Conklin and Amanda Miner are planning to be married Oct. 1 at St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid. As part of their wedding preparations, the couple has given a great deal of thought to the vocation they are to embrace. "When you enter into the sacrament of marriage in the Catholic Church, not only are you saying 'yes' to each other as a couple, you are saying 'yes' to the Church as a community. We are the Church. The Church is the Body of Christ," Amanda said. "The most important wedding planning that any Catholic couple embarks on is spiritual preparation. For we are truly preparing ourselves to be a reflection of the Holy Family on earth."

FULL STORY, PAGE 20

## Religious life: 'more are listening'

St. Joseph Sister Mary Gregory Munger, vocation director for the Sisters of St. Joseph, sees signs for great hope in her work.

"The pendulum is swinging," Sister Gregory says of interest in consecrated life.

She is not focused on numbers like 'how many new inquirers or how many postulants do you have?'

It is not really about numbers, she told the *NCC*. "God is not calling any more people (to vocations in the Church); more people are beginning to listen."

FULL STORY, PAGE 9

## Deacon lives faith every day

Deacon Ron Pominville's great faith and love for people means his life as a

permanent deacon is a perfect fit

FULL STORY, PAGE 10

## FOLLOWING THE CALL TO SERVE AS PRIEST



Thomas J. Higman, left, a parishioner of St. James Church in Carthage and seminarian at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary will be ordained a deacon May 28 at St. James. He is shown above with Bishop Terry R. LaValley, Father George F. Maroun, pastor in Carthage and Father John J. Cosmic of Deferiet who will vest the deacon at the ordination. Higman reflects on his last weeks as a lay man in an article on page 4.

**IN CHRIST OUR HOPE:** Motto of diocesan vocation director... p. 6

NORTH  
COUNTRY  
CATHOLICBox 326  
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669  
USPS 0039-3400BISHOP TERRY  
R. LAVALLEY

President

MSGR. ROBERT L. LAWLER

Vice President

SR. JENNIFER VOTRAW, SSJ

Secretary-Treasurer

MARY LOU KILIAN

Editor/

General Manager

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

## To pray... and to ask!

In last week's *NCC*, we presented a rather disconcerting diocesan map with 40 red circles, identifying the communities of the North Country which could expect resident pastors ten years from now as the number of available priests continues to decline.

This week, we move in a more optimistic direction with our annual vocation issue.

While acknowledging the challenges ahead, our diocese certainly hasn't given up in despair.

Bishop LaValley has appointed a full-time director of vocations, Father Bryan D. Stitt, and the fruits of his efforts can already be seen.

This year, there are three young men studying for the priesthood: in September, we can expect that number to double – at least.

In the world of women religious, Sister Mary Gregory Munger, vocation director for the Sisters of St. Joseph, sees an encouraging trend.

She told the *NCC* that she is seeing a greater willingness

among young women to listen to God's call.

Sister Gregory and Father Stitt have been working together as a "vocation tag team" during the past year. They presented a session at the diocesan Youth Rally and also spent a month at each of the two Catholic high schools.

Bishop LaValley reminds us that Father Stitt and Sister Gregory should be able to depend on *all* of us to foster vocations in our families.

What should we do?

It seems that our most important responsibilities are to pray for vocations and to ask for them.

Father Garry Giroux, pastor in Brasher Falls and North Lawrence, was one of the people we talked to this week about the subject. His observation: "I have never experienced a young person being insulted because I suggested they possessed qualities that indicated the presence of a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated religious life."

That sounds like a good place for the rest of us to start!

Mary Lou  
Kilian

## Funeral for deacon's wife

The Funeral Mass for Kathleen Brousseau, wife of Deacon Frederick Brousseau, will be offered on April 26, at 12 noon at St. Andrew's Church in Norwood. Calling hours will be at the Buck Funeral Home, 7 Park St., Norwood on Monday (4/25) from 2-4 and 6-8. A complete obituary will appear in next week's *North Country Catholic*.

## Welcome Spring

Enjoy the renewal of spring with a subscription to the *North Country Catholic*, the newspaper for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

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## CHURCH: A FAMILY OF FAITH

## Peace and Mercy of the Risen Lord

May 1

By Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ

Director of Evangelization

"They devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the communal life, to the breaking of bread and to the prayers" (Acts of the Apostles 2:42). The early Christian community gathered together as a family of faith to pray and to worship together. They read Scripture together and shared their faith. The Christian values, faith, and traditions were kept alive through their witness and practice of love, justice, mutual respect and prayerful concern for each person. The Christian community grew because they showed how they loved one another.

This welcoming spirit as a family of faith is vital in the life of the parish. Every member of the family wants to feel that he/she belongs. New members e.g. those who have just come into the full life of the Catholic Church and the new Confirmandi want to feel they are part of the parish family.

They long for the experience of the same peace, the "shalom" that the Risen Lord gave to His disciples on that Easter evening when He greeted them with "Peace be with you". The disciples were locked in by their fear of the Romans. Jesus' presence comes through the locked door to unlock their unbelief with His words of peace. Jesus not only gave this greeting once, but twice, to emphasize the importance of living in harmony with one another. The Hebrew meaning of "shalom" is the inner experience of being restored to wholeness—the well-being of being in right relationship with God. The risen Lord offers the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles to transform their hearts from doubt to faith, from fear to courage, from tepidity to joy. It is the gift to begin to see and to believe and to acknowledge Him as "My Lord and My God" as Thomas did. By communicating His spirit, the risen Lord enables the disciples to continue His own mission which He had received from His Father. Jesus "breathes" on them His Spirit for their mission. He communicates to them the life of the Spirit, for the disciples, in turn, will pass on the life-giving power of the Spirit of Jesus to others who come to believe in Him.

On this "Divine Mercy" Sunday, the Good Shepherd offers His mercy and compassion. Through the waters of Baptism, the family of faith received a new birth in the Spirit. Through the blood of Christ the family of faith has been redeemed. It is the poem by Jessica Powers that speaks so well of the mercy of God:

## The Mercy of God

*I am copying down in a book from my heart's archives the day that I ceased to fear God with a shadowy fear.*

*Would you name it the day I measured my column of virtue and sighted through windows of merit a crown that was near?*

*Ah, no, it was rather the day I began to see truly that I came forth from nothing and ever toward*

*nothingness tend, that the works of my hands are foolishness wrought in the presence*

*of the worthiest king in a kingdom that never shall end. I rose up from the acres of self that I tended with passion and defended with flurries of pride;*

*I walked out of myself and went into the woods of God's mercy, and here I abide.*

*There is greenness and calmness and coolness, a soft leafy covering from the judgment of sun overhead, and the hush of His peace, and the moss of His mercy to tread.*

*I have naught but my will seeking God; even love burning in me is a fragment of infinite loving and never my own.*

*And I fear God no more; I go forward to wander forever in a wilderness made of His infinite mercy alone.*

—Jessica Powers

FOLLOW ME

# We're all called to be vocation directors!

When was the last time that you told a young lady in your parish that you thought she should consider a vocation to the consecrated life?

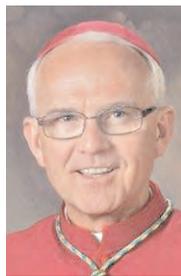
How long has it been since you mentioned to that young man in church that you thought the Lord might be calling him to be a priest and that you thought he would make a good one?

In your personal prayer do you ask the Lord to open the heart and mind of *your* daughter/son to respond generously to the Lord's invitation to serve the Church as a sister, brother or priest?

Have you told your son or grandson that you would be proud of him should he consider the priesthood?

Have you ever mentioned to your daughter what a

tremendous gift it would be to your family if she chose to become a religious sister?



Bishop Terry R. LaValley

These are appropriate questions to reflect upon as we mark World Day of Prayer for Vocations on Sunday, May 15.

Pope John Paul II, in his exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, reminded us years ago that the Church, you and me, our families, are responsible for the birth and development of vocations.

That's where they come from: us.

We can devise and implement creative diocesan programs that promote Church vocations (and we must), but vocations can come from only one source: *our homes, our families, our parishes.*

Personal, family, and parish encouragement are essential ingredients in the

fostering of vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life.

The Diocese of Ogdensburg is blessed with a very fine priest who serves as our Diocesan Vocations Director, Father Bryan Stitt. In reality, however, each one of us is called to be a vocations director.

While there are many elements in today's society that make it especially difficult for a young person to commit his/her life as a consecrated religious or priest, the greatest force we possess to support such a life-altering decision is the power of prayer.

I encourage you, if you don't already, to add a special intention for vocations to your personal daily prayer and include it among your petitions at Mass.

It would be a precious gift to our Church if you could spend a dedicated hour for vocations and for our seminarians, at least once a

month, in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, hopefully during your parish's Holy Hour for Vocations

**Vocations can come from only one source: *our homes, our families, our parishes.***

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews challenges the early Christians (and you and me) to: *"Persevere in running the race that lies before us, while keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus."* (Heb. 12:1-2)

We keep our eyes fixed on Christ with a disciplined prayer life, regular celebration of the sacrament of Penance and faithful participation at Holy Eucharist. These are the means for fostering one's personal vocation in Christ.

When we all strive to meet this challenge daily, no matter what our walk in life might be, the Body of Christ

is being built up and vocations to the consecrated life and to ordained ministry are nurtured.

Our own joyful witness of our particular vocation is an excellent means to reawaken in many young people the desire to follow in the Lord's footsteps.

Our own lively faith is the best tonic to be applied for a growth in Church vocations.

Pope Benedict XVI recently told a group of bishops: *"The world needs God and will therefore always need people who live for Him and proclaim Him to others."*

As pastoral planning continues in our parishes, we will rely more and more on the particular gifts that those who are living the vocation of the married and single life bring to our family of faith.

Let us continue to pray for one another as we embrace and proclaim Jesus' call:

*Follow Me.*

## THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

— PRAYER SUGGESTION —

Eternal Father, we lift up to you these and all the priests of the world. Sanctify them. Heal and guide them. Mold them into the likeness and holiness of your Son, Jesus, the Eternal High Priest. May their lives be pleasing to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen <small>(With ecclesiastical approval)</small>	Mass Rosary Fasting Day Offering Eucharistic Adoration Offering of Sufferings Divine Mercy Chaplet Or whatever the Lord inspires you to offer Him
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15 POPE BENEDECT	16 MSGR. HARRY K. SNOW VF	17 REV. BRYAN D. STITT	18 REV. RICHARD S. STURTZ	19 REV. RAYMOND J. WERTMAN	20 MSGR. PAUL E. WHITMORE	21 REV. LEO A. WILEY	22	23 REV. JOHN R. YONKOVIG	24 REV. RICHARD P. ZUK	25 REV. PHILIP T. ALLEN	26 REV. ANDREW J. AMYOT	27 MSGR. JOSEPH G. AUBIN	28 REV. PIERRE AUBIN MSC	
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1425 Washington Street  
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- + enjoy the support that comes from living in a community of shared prayer and ministry?
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*Seminarian Thomas J. Higman looks ahead to his May 28 ordination*

# Preparing to become a deacon

By Thomas J. Higman  
Seminarian of the Diocese of Ogdensburg

It's rather hard to believe, but just one month (and a day) from the publication of this *North Country Catholic*, I will be laying face down in front of the altar at my home parish, Saint James Church in Carthage. The intercession of all the heavenly hosts will be invoked as I prepare to be ordained a deacon for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Wow, if this isn't a humbling thought, I don't know what is!

A few weeks ago, the NCC asked me to consider a few thoughts in preparation for my ordination to the diaconate, and for this I am truly grateful.

It's not often in life that we have formal opportunities to stop and reflect about the work of God in our lives and share this with others.

While considering the growth of my vocation, the first thing that comes to mind is that age old theological axiom - "grace builds on nature." While I've certainly given God a lot of 'nature' for His grace to build upon in these last few years, I suspect that's not what the question really has in mind!

Instead, I can really see how the grace of God has been at work in my life throughout these last seven years, and even before then.

People will often ask me, "When did you first know you wanted to be a priest?" and I'll usually respond that I can't really remember a time when I didn't want to be a priest!

And, it's true - ever since I was a young I've really felt called in one way or another to the priesthood.

To place one concrete beginning to this, I'd have to say it was when I was first began serving Mass at St. James.



Thomas Higman, who will be ordained a transitional deacon May 28 at St. James Church in Carthage, is shown with his parents, Mary and James Higman. In this reflection on his preparation for ordination, Higman says that his parents have had the greatest influence on his vocation.

Learning how to serve at Mass and assist the priest helped me to develop a real love for the Mass, and to recognize how the priest in a real way is God's instrument in bringing His gifts to others.

It was here that I began to hear a call to do exactly this in my own life.

Throughout grade school, and high school this only continued. The only problem was that I didn't quite know how to respond to it all! It's here I suppose that I transition to the next thought I've been asked to consider: the many influences I've had in my life encouraging my vocational discernment, and their role in helping me respond.

First and foremost I must say it's been the influence of my family - in particular, my parents, Jim and Mary - who have had the greatest influence on my vocation.

I can't ever remember a time when my Mom didn't tell us [my brother Mike,

and me] that she and my Dad pray on a daily basis that, no matter what we do in life, they only want us to "be happy."

It is my hope that all parents will offer this prayer for their children every day because praying for someone's happiness literally means praying for one to follow the will of God completely and totally. This is the only way to be truly happy!

Secondly, it has been the men on the front lines and in the trenches. so to speak. who have influenced me - the priests themselves who God has placed in my life.

Beginning first with the Augustinian Friars, and then priests of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, God has placed men who courageously witness to faith, hope, and love in my life.

Again, ever since I was young, I can remember seeing first-hand how happy our parish priests were - and feeling called to their

way of life.

It was, and still is, by their example and witness, that I have learned to pray, and 'please God' be an effective minister of God's grace to the many people I hope to serve.

One priest in particular reminded me during a challenging moment in seminary discernment - that each day I must pray to "fall in love with Christ, and his Church.

On ordination day that priest - Father John Cosmic - will vest me as deacon for the very first time.

For witnesses like this and countless others, I can never be too grateful.

Ordination day, and the preparations for it, is bringing a great deal of excitement. Yes, it's an excitement for that day, but more importantly, its excitement for the vocation to which God is calling me.

On May 28th, by the grace of God, I will begin my life as minister of his Gospel

and a servant for his people.

As I mentioned earlier, recognizing how the priest truly is God's instrument in the work of the Sacraments has brought me great joy. By this ordination, God will set me aside for this important work of his.

While the priest and deacon are never to be seen as mere functionaries in the mechanical work of the Church - it is through this important work that God's love is made visible through his Sacraments.

With this regard, I am most excited to be part of this as a deacon through administering the Sacrament of Baptism to children, witnessing the love between couples in the Sacrament of Marriage, and bringing the message of the Gospel to others through preaching and teaching.

Finally, I encourage all who are reading this article, and are considering God's call to service as a priest or consecrated religious to "be not afraid". As I began my seminary training this became my daily encouragement.

The soon-to-be Blessed Pope John Paul II would often say this to the young people of the world, but even more so, God says this to each one of us in a resounding way through the quiet of prayer, and the reception of the Sacraments.

When people truly seek happiness by following the will of God in their lives, they find new freedom from the lure of this world. They discover who they truly are as disciples of the Lord and find the ultimate purpose and meaning in their lives.

Please know of my daily prayers for each of you, and please continue to pray for me in these last days of preparation, that God who has begun the good work in me and continues to sustain it each day, will one day bring it to fulfillment!

# ST. JOSEPH VOCATION SOCIETY

## Diocese of Ogdensburg



Artwork from St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg  
(Photographed by Betty Steele)

Dear Friend in Christ,

Since the days of the Holy Family in Nazareth, St. Joseph has cared for the Church. The strong protection he gave his young wife and his foster son show the depth of Joseph's love and fidelity. Through the ages, St. Joseph has continued to be the protector and patron of the Universal Church. So it was that in 1998 St. Joseph was chosen as the patron of the Vocation Department of the Diocese of Ogdensburg. As we ask for Joseph's prayerful protection of the holy vocations of our young people, we know that his example of strength, faithfulness, and purity will inspire our current generation.

The St. Joseph Vocation Society has been created to help focus our attention on the cause of vocations—despite the negative influences of our contemporary society. As we honor him, we promise to pray with St. Joseph that the call given by God may be faithfully and attentively heard by the young people of our diocese.

Love is at the heart of the St. Joseph Vocation Society. Members of the Society join together in prayer and sacrifice for the men and women of our diocese being formed as priests and religious. It is a true participation in the grace of the prayer our Savior made the night before He died, the prayer in which He begged the Father that we might be completely one as They are one...in Love. The interdependence of all the Christian vocations is clearly seen in the Vocation Society as married and single lay persons pray with and for priests and religious for an increase in vocations. They keep particular focus on prayers for the perseverance of those in formation at our seminaries and religious communities and for the holiness of those already professed and ordained.

Ours is an age of great hope and, with the prayers of St. Joseph, one of great confidence in the boundless mercy of God to provide richly for the vineyard He is bringing to the Harvest of salvation. By signing the detachable portion of this card and returning it to us, you are officially enrolled as a member of the St. Joseph Vocation Society. There are no dues or meetings, only the promise of your prayers.

As a member of the Society, you will benefit by a daily remembrance in the Masses and prayers of our priests, seminarians and religious who are members of the Society. A prayer calendar will be sent to you once a year listing the names of our seminarians and those religious from our diocese who have yet to make their final profession of vows. Each will be listed adjacent to a particular date to be remembered in prayer. Keep the remaining portion of the card in your prayer book or in some other convenient place, to remind yourself of your commitment of prayers. With your prayerful support, we look forward to an increase in numbers and devotion of those who are willing to dedicate their lives completely to the service of the Lord and His Church.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Father Douglas Lucia  
Director of Seminarians

Father Bryan Stitt  
Vocations Director

### DAILY PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

O JESUS, I pray for Your faithful and fervent priests; for Your unfaithful and tepid priests; for Your priests laboring at home or abroad in distant mission fields; for Your tempted priests; for Your lonely and desolate priests; for Your young priests; for Your dying priests; and for the souls of Your priests in Purgatory.

But above all, I recommend to You the priests dearest to me; the priest who baptized me; the priests who absolved me from my sins; the priests at whose Masses I assisted and who gave me Your Body and Blood in Holy Communion; the priests who taught and instructed me; and all the priests to whom I am indebted in any other way, (especially...). O Jesus, keep them all close to Your heart and bless them abundantly in time and in eternity.

### PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

God our Father, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I ask You to bless and strengthen the spiritual renewal and vitality of all religious so that Your Church may shine more resplendently and bear witness to Your presence in our world today. In particular, inspire many men and women to respond to Your Son's call to "Come, follow Me" as members of communities living the religious life according to the mind of the Church. I ask this in Jesus' Name. Amen.

### DAILY PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

Heavenly Father, Your divine Son taught us to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into His vineyard. We earnestly beg You to bless our Diocese and our world with many priests and religious men and women who will love You fervently and gladly and will courageously spend their lives in service to Your Son's Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We pray that their lives may be always centered on our Eucharistic Lord; that they may be always faithful to the Holy Father; that they may be devoted sons and daughters of Mary, our Mother, in making You known and loved; and that all may attain Heaven. Bless our families and our children and choose from our homes those whom You desire for this holy work. We ask this through the intercession of St. Joseph and, as always, in Jesus' name. Amen.

### PRAYER FOR ST. JOSEPH'S INTERCESSION

O God, Who in Your unspeakable providence chose blessed Joseph to be the spouse of Your most holy Mother, grant we beseech You, that we may deserve to have him as our intercessor in Heaven, whom we venerate on earth as our protector. Who lives and reigns world without end. Amen.

### THE ST. JOSEPH VOCATION SOCIETY

As a member of the St. Joseph Vocation Society, I pledge to:

- 1) Offer a daily prayer for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and to the religious life.
- 2) Offer a daily prayer for an outpouring of grace upon the priests and religious serving our Diocese.
- 3) Make a Holy Hour each week (in church or, if necessary, at home) for an increase in vocations in our Diocese, for the perseverance of the seminarians now studying for the priesthood and for the men and women in formation at religious communities.
- 4) Attend Mass once a month (illness excusing) for these same intentions.
- 5) Offer a share in any sufferings I may experience for an increase in vocations in our Diocese and for an increase in zeal, fervor and grace for our priests, deacons and the religious men and women serving our diocese.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please fill out the form below and send to:**

St. Joseph Vocation Society, Diocese of Ogdensburg, Office of Vocations  
PO Box 369, Ogdensburg, NY 13669

Dear Father Lucia and Father Stitt,  
I wish to become a member of the St. Joseph Vocation Society. As a member of the Society, I commit myself to offering the following for an increase in vocations in our Diocese, for the perseverance of the seminarians now studying for the priesthood, and for an outpouring of grace upon the priests, deacons and religious serving our Diocese:

- 1) a daily prayer for vocations
- 2) a daily prayer for priests, brothers and sisters.
- 3) a weekly Holy Hour (at home or in church)
- 4) a monthly Mass
- 5) a share in any sufferings I might endure.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

# In Christ our Hope

By Fr. Bryan Stitt  
Diocesan Vocation director

How do people close their letters or emails? When I was taught to write letters in school, we learned to use "Sincerely" or "Yours truly." Others of a more religious bent will use "Yours in Christ."

But in 2008 Pope Benedict XVI visited the United States. The theme of his Apostolic visit was "Christ our Hope." Ever since, that is how I have been closing most of my letters: "In Christ our Hope."

This habit became all the more appropriate when I began serving as the full-time Vocations Director for the diocese last June.

In a world with a lot of darkness, godlessness and despair there is hope. What's more, that hope has a name: Jesus Christ. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (Jn 1:5).

In a particular way, I'm afraid that people need this hope in the area of vocations.

Ten years ago when he was visiting me at seminary, Father Timothy Soucy said: "Paranoia is the unfounded belief that someone is fol-



Father Bryan Stitt, diocesan vocations director, second from left is shown at a recent dinner with seminarians, and young men considering a calling to the priesthood. Father Stitt notes that, while there are only three men currently studying in the seminary this year, he expects that number to more than double next year.

lowing you. 'Clerical paranoia' is just the opposite—it is the belief that no one is following you."

And he concluded that he was so happy to visit the seminary because it helped him realize that "clerical paranoia" is also unfounded.

He realized this because

he had hope.

Vocations Directors joke among themselves that everyone asks us one question: "So, how many do you have this year?" It's an understandable question. We all want people to discern what God is calling them to do with their lives—what's

more we want more men to enter the seminary to discern if God is calling them to the priesthood.

I am happy to point out that while we only have three men currently studying in the seminary, we will more than double that next year. I can't give concrete

numbers because our applicants still do not have final approval from the diocese. (The application process is long and thorough and will be completed in the next couple weeks.)

However things are looking very good for this coming year.

What's more there is a bigger reason that I don't like simply giving the number of applicants when someone asks how things are going in the "vocations world." That is because there is much more going on than just shuffling a certain number of men into the seminary.

These days we're helping people understand what it means to discern a calling; we visit all the Catholic Schools and lead retreats for the public school students; we plan trips to the seminary; retreats are held for discerners; small groups are getting together for regular discernment evenings; our bishop is being heroically supportive of the vocations work; and (as you have seen from his own article) we are all looking forward to Tom Higman's diaconate ordination next month.

All of these things remind us that there is hope for the future.

And we are to live in that hope - In Christ our Hope.

## Priests share some tips for promoting vocations

While Bishop LaValley has assigned one priest - Father Bryan D. Stitt - as the full-time vocation director, every priest of the diocese works to encourage young people to consider priesthood and religious life.

Two priests told the *North Country Catholic* about some of their efforts.

### Father McGuinness

Father J. Roger McGuinness, pastor of St. Joseph's in West Chazy, and former diocesan vocation director, discussed of his efforts:

- I always pray for vocations and encourage the peo-

ple to pray - at every Mass, because I believe in the power of prayer

- I bring up the subject of priesthood and religious life to young people.

In every parish I've been in, I've taught Confirmation class. This is a chance for the students to see and listen to a priest, to see what I do. For many, it will be the last time in their lives that they interact with a priest, given our culture.

When I spend time with them as their teacher, they become more comfortable being around priests.

- I involve young people in

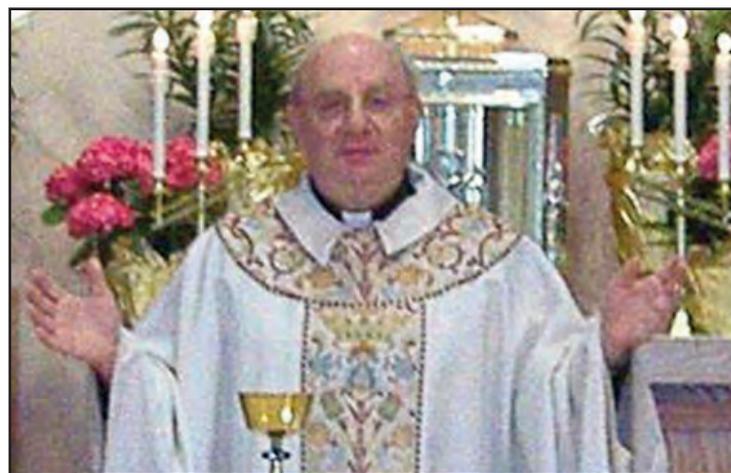
the life of the parish so they can see that the faith community is comprised of young people, old people and those in-between.

I ask them to help at parish events such as the harvest dinner. We feed 1200 people at this dinner and need all the help we can get!

- We have two parish groups which meet weekly - bible study and a book club on the spiritual classics.

This gives me a chance to make parishioners aware of the needs of the church and encourage their efforts in building vocations.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Although he completed work as the diocesan vocation director in 1985, Father J. McGuinness, pastor in West Chazy, has continued to actively promote vocations in every parish in which he has served.

# Priests

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

• I encourage as many young people as possible to be altar servers. We have a good number who continue serving after high school and also who become Eucharistic ministers.

• I “throw them in the car” and take them wherever I go – to the hospital, for example, so they can see what a priest does, Monday through Friday. I also feed them when they are hungry!

• I give several missions and retreats in different parts of the diocese through the year and I always devote part of the week to young people. I schedule a special time to meet with them and give them a chance to think about their future.

• I invite our diocesan seminarians to come to speak to our young people – I believe in “selling the product by showing the product!”

## Father Garry Giroux

Father Garry Giroux, pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Brasher Falls and St. Lawrence Church in North Lawrence, shared some of his efforts in vocation promotion in his parishes and on college campuses:

• I annually preach on vocations in the parish and encourage the intention of vocations for parishioners' prayer. Weekly Eucharistic Adoration is held and one of the principal purposes is intercession for an increase in vocations to priestly and consecrated life.

I also like to highlight native vocations from the parish and remind parishioners of the commitment and service of religious sisters and parish priests who previously ministered in the parish.

The discussion and presentation of vocations to

priestly and religious life is always a part of the parish's Christian Faith Formation program.

Vocational promotion materials are present around the parish buildings

• From my perspective, the basis for a pastor's initial perception of a potential vocation to priesthood or consecrated life in a young person is the priest's witnessing of a consistent participation of a young woman or young man in the liturgical life of the parish.

The regular presence of a young person in the parish provides the opportunity for the pastor to get to know them a little from casual conversations after Mass. Eventually, the pastor broaches the subject of a potential vocation with the young person.

The time between the initial contact and the subject

of vocation could be a matter of weeks, months or even years. But I have never experienced a young person being insulted because I suggested they possessed qualities that indicated the presence of a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated religious life.

• Over the years I have encouraged young people, whom I invited to consider a vocation, to participate in some aspect of the local Church's ministries and outreach. This gives the young person an opportunity to experience a ministry first hand, to see 'how it might fit.' It also provides an opportunity for the priest to gauge the young person's aptitude and attitude for a ministerial life.

• If the young person is interested in pursuing the possibility of a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated

religious life, I invite them to consider meeting on a regular basis to discuss the spiritual life. I begin this process by using St. Francis De Sales' *Introduction to the Devout Life* as a basis for our discussions and their reflection.

• Over the years, 10 of the young men with whom I have worked have gone on to seminary to discern their vocation. Of these, four have been ordained priests and one is still in formation in the seminary.

Of the young women with whom I have discussed religious life, four women have entered religious communities of sisters, none has remained in the convent.

The success lies in the proper discernment of God's will for each person—whether or not they remain in seminary or convent.

To know where God calls one to be is to find peace.

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# Divine Mercy Sunday to be observed across the diocese

Catholics across the Diocese of Ogdensburg will celebrate the Feast of Divine Mercy with parish devotions on Mercy Sunday May 1.

The devotions originated in the late 1930's by St. Faustina Kowalska, a Polish nun who said she had a vision of Jesus in which he asked for devotions to divine mercy on the Sunday after Easter.

As Archbishop Karol Wojtyla of Krakow, Poland, the future Pope John Paul II opened the nun's sainthood cause.

As pope, he beatified her in 1993, canonized her in 2000 and declared the Sunday after Easter to be Divine Mercy Sunday.

St. Faustina, a member of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Poland, spent 13 years of her life performing the ordinary duties of cook, doorkeeper, but was known for her prayers and sacrifices for sinners.

In 1931, St. Faustine had a vision of the risen Christ with two rays issuing from his pierced heart: a pale ray representing the water that makes souls righteous and a red ray representing the blood that is the life of souls. As reproduced in paintings, this image also bears the words, "Jesus, I trust in you."

In her diary, she left instructions for a novena to begin on Good Friday and end on the second Sunday of Easter with specific prayers and intentions for each day.

The Divine Mercy Devotion consists of making a novena by praising the Chaplet of Divine Mercy beginning on Good Friday; celebrating the Feast of Mercy, being merci-

ful to others, placing complete trust in Jesus, making a good confession and receiving Communion on the Feast of Mercy Sunday without mortal sin.

Further information about Divine Mercy Sunday is available online at [www.divine-mercysunday.org](http://www.divine-mercysunday.org)

The schedule for the local observances - all scheduled for May 1 - follows:

## Saranac Lake

Divine Mercy Sunday will be celebrated at St. Bernard's Church. The program will feature the chanted chaplet, evening prayer, benediction and confessions with Father Mark Reilly officiating.

## Plattsburgh

Msgr. Dennis Duprey will preside at the Divine Mercy observance at St. Peter's Church. The schedule follows: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 12:15 p.m. to 3; Sacrament of Reconciliation in the chapel 1:30 p.m. to 2:30; Video "Tell All Soul's About My Mercy" at 12:30 p.m. and "Extreme Mercy" at 1:45 p.m.; Chaplet of Divine Mercy and Prayer Service begins at 3 p.m.; Blessing of Religious objects will take place after the service.

## Malone

Divine Mercy Sunday will be celebrated at Notre Dame Church beginning at 11 a.m. The schedule follows: Noon to 3 p.m. the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for individual adoration. Confessions will be heard from 1 p.m. to 2:50. At 3 p.m. Devotions for Divine

Mercy Sunday will begin. The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy will be sung and there will be Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. All are welcome to join in any or all of the above times. Further information is available from Father Joseph Giroux, Malone Catholic Parishes Office, (518) 483-1300.

## Watertown

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church will hold a Divine Mercy Sunday Celebration at 3 p.m. There will be Exposition of Blessed Sacrament, Singing of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, & Special prayers for Healing your family tree, Blessing of the Divine Mercy image (you may bring your own Divine Mercy picture to be specially blessed) and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Further information on how to prepare for Mercy Sunday is available from Judy at 315-783-7349 or 315-788-2388.

## Houseville

The Feast of Divine Mercy will be celebrated at St. Hedwig's Church beginning at 2 p.m. Participants will listen to a tape by Sister M. Caterina Esselen of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy entitled "Receive an Ocean of Graces on Divine Mercy Sunday; 3 p.m. Vespers, Homily, Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Divine Mercy Chaplet (sung) and Benediction. A pot luck sipper will follow in the church hall. Further information is available from Mary Ann at 348-6260

## Ogdensburg

St. Mary's Cathedral will be hosting Divine Mercy Services at 3 p.m. Participants will pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet during this service.

## Bishop LaValley's Schedule

**April 28** – 9 a.m., Mass and Visit to St. James School in Gouverneur; 7 pm.. Confirmation for St. Augustine's, Peru; Holy Name, AuSable Forks; St. Matthew's, Black Brook; St. Margaret's, Wilmington; Catholic Community of Keeseville; and Catholic Community of St. Philip and St. Joseph, Willsboro at St. Augustine's Church.

**April 29** – 10:50 a.m., Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg; 7p.m., Confirmation for St. Augustine's, North Bangor and St. Mary's, Brushton at St. Augustine's Church.

**April 30** – 11:00 a.m., Confirmation for St. Edmund's, Ellenburg and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Churubusco at St. Edmund's Church; 5:30 p.m., Confirmation for St. Mary's of the Lake, Cumberland Head and Our Lady of Victory, Plattsburgh at St. Mary's of the Lake Church.

**May 1** - 8:30 a.m., Confirmation for St. Ann's, Mooers Forks and St. Joseph's, Mooers at St. Ann's Church; 3p.m., Confirmation for St. Mary's, Ticonderoga; Sacred Heart of Jesus, Crown Point; Our Lady of Lourdes, Schroon Lake; St. Joseph's, Olmstedville; St. Patrick's, Port Henry; All Saints, Mineville; St. James, Lake Pleasant; St. Ann's, Wells; St. Elizabeth's, Elizabethtown; and St. Philip of Neri, Westport at St. Mary's Church.

**May 3** - 11 a.m., Committee on Assignments at the Bishop's Residence in Ogdensburg; 7p.m., Confirmation for St. Mary's, Potsdam and St. Patrick's, Colton at St. Mary's Church.

**May 4** - 4:30 p.m., Gathering with deacons and wives at St. Raphael's Parish Center in Heuvelton.

## Rest in Peace

*This week marks the anniversary of the deaths of the following clergymen men who have served in the Diocese of Ogdensburg*

**April 27** – Rev. John J. Fedigan, O.S.A., 1908; Rev. Michael F. Ambrose, 1934

**April 28** – Rev. J. A. Larose, 1967

**April 29** – Rev. Peter Mullen, M.M., 1999

**April 30** – Rev. Michael W. Holland, 1906; Rev. Louis Grenier, M.S.C., 1958

**May 1** – Rev. Joseph J. Halde, 1891; Rev. Edward P. Burns, 1985

**May 2** – Rev. Jean Marie Royer, O.M.I., 1905; Rev. Joseph M. Blais, 1948; Rev. Leon LaPorte, 1954; Rev. Burchard Murray, O.S.A., 1966

**May 3** – Rev. Cormac Walsh, O.F.M., 1977

## Protecting God's Children

**The Diocese of Ogdensburg** has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration online is required in order to participate. Participants may pre-register at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) by selecting the registration button and following the directions. All employees and volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities with minor are required to participate in this training. Further information: Atonement Sister Ellen Donahue, phone, 315-393-2920. ext. 403. Upcoming programs:

**May 4** - 4 p.m. Holy Ghost Parish Center, Tupper Lake,

**May 12** - 6 p.m., St. Francis of Assisi, Constable

**May 16** - 6 p.m., St. Alexander's, Morrisonville

## To Report Abuse

**If you have a complaint** of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact: **Episcopal Vicar for Clergy** - Rev. James Seymour at 315-393-2920 or the **Victims Assistance Coordinator** - Terriane Yanulavich, 7061 Rt. 9, Plattsburgh, NY 12901-0310; Tel. 518-561-3100; Fax 518-561-3003; e-mail: [aycsn@westelcom.com](mailto:aycsn@westelcom.com)

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Vocation director for Sisters of St. Joseph says 'the pendulum is swinging'

# Sr. Gregory: more 'beginning to listen to call'

By Kevin Mastellon  
Staff Writer

**WATERTOWN**-- Sister Mary Gregory Munger, vocations director for the Society of the Sisters of St. Joseph, for the past three years, is optimistic about her challenging work.

She looks back at the history of her community and even further back to the humble beginnings of the Sisters of St. Joseph in LePuy, France in 1650 and looks to the future with hope.

"The pendulum is swinging," Sister Gregory says of interest in consecrated life. "It is not really about numbers. God is not calling any more people (to vocations in the Church); more people are beginning to listen."

She meets regularly with women interested in finding more in their lives, perhaps a consecrated life.

"They are full of hope," she aid. "They want a life in community, a prayer life, a Eucharist centered life. They want to pray the Rosary with others, pray the Liturgy of the Hours; attend Mass every day.

"They have been formed at a young age," Sister Gregory said. "and now have a foundation of faith to direct them."

This year Sister Gregory and Father Bryan Stitt, diocesan vocation director, teamed to visit schools throughout the North Country.

"It worked really well," Sister Gregory said. "We would meet with the young children together and then split them up for conversations about vocations for women and for men."

She was most enthusiastic about their approach to high school age students.

"We spent a full week at Seton Catholic (Plattsburgh) and at Immaculate Heart Central (Watertown) High Schools," she said. "That gave us time to really meet the kids...to have lunch with them...be around...pray with them. Let them get to know

## History of SSJs in diocese

The Sisters of St. Joseph arrived in the Diocese of Ogdensburg in 1880.

The first sisters came from Buffalo to Watertown at the invitation of Bishop Edgar Wadhams to staff a school at Sacred Heart Parish. There were four sisters in the little community in the first few months.

Later in the decade several of the sisters departed to form a new community in Michigan.

Sister M. Josephine Donnelly stayed in Watertown. The community's history tells us "Sister Josephine recognized the spiritual needs of Watertown and envisioned the tremendous possibilities for good and remained in Watertown. She is considered by some to be the foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Watertown. She was made superior of the Watertown community in 1889.

The Sisters of St. Joseph grew slowly but steadily founding schools and doing social service work in many parishes throughout the diocese."

us. It worked really well."

National studies forecast the most interest in religious vocations will occur among fourth grade and eleventh grade students.

"That's what we found as well," Sister Gregory said. "We also see quite a few women in their 20's and early 30's. These are the ones searching for fulfillment in their lives.

"Their faith is strong," she said. "It has been nourished in school and at home and continues to grow in their parish. We find that parish priests, pastors, are wonder-

fully supportive of individuals who feel they are hearing a call."

"I encourage young women to go to college and maybe work for a while before answering their call," Sister Gregory said. "Each woman is different but some may need to stretch a little, see what life is like before making a commitment, like marriage, to a life-long partner, in this case, Christ."

The road to final vows as a Sister of St. Joseph is much like other communities. There is a year of discernment, a year as a postulant, a canonical year of preparation and first vows and then three to five years before final vows.

Sister Gregory recommends the life. She is a perfect advocate for vocations since she will celebrate a jubilee of her vows this year.

"God is fair," she says. "Whatever He needs us to do, we will respond and He will provide."

Sister Gregory points to her community's mission statement to demonstrate that confidence: "We are a community of women religious who have generously and freely responded to the call of the Holy Spirit and the challenges of the Gospel to lead a life dedicated to the love of God and the service of the dear neighbor."

"Pray," she concludes. "We are called the hounds of heaven for the prayers we send to God. We pray for the dear neighbor and serve him in our spiritual and corporal works of mercy."

She did not say it but a reporter could almost hear Sister asking, "pray for us, too and for those who are thinking of joining us."



PHOTO BY KEVIN MASTELLON

St. Joseph Sister Gregory Munger has been working as vocation director of the Sisters of St. Joseph for the past three years. She told the *North Country Catholic* that she believes that more young people are beginning to listen to the call of religious life.



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# Permanent deacon lives his faith every day

By Michelle Beagle  
Staff Writer

**LOWVILLE** - He said to them "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." (Mt 4:19)

Such was the call Deacon Ronald J. Pominville of St. Peter's Catholic Church headed in 1994.

Deacon Pominville is a humble man who lived in Detroit, Mich., and later moved to Upstate New York with his family. While in Detroit he attended St. Bridget's and, in the North Country, Father Leo's School in Croghan.

His parents were his first mentors in the Catholic faith, he said. He has fond memories of being woken up in the dark of night to attend adoration at two in the morning at St. Bridget's. The quiet and solitude of sitting with his family in adoration of the Holy Eucharist brought him peace.

The experience was very moving, he said, and he wishes more churches today would offer opportunities for adoration. He himself provides a holy hour at St. Peter's in Lowville every first Thursday with recitation of the rosary and benediction.

Deacon Pominville was always taught by Catholic sisters while growing up and was instructed by the Franciscans in Croghan. Today, he said, the Franciscans still hold a special place in his heart.

## Faith and family

He grew up serving at Mass, praying the rosary, attending Lenten services and Stations of the Cross, reading the bible, and reciting a blessing before meals.

As a youth and as an adult, family has been an integral part of his life and the source of his strong faith, he said.

Deacon Pominville and his wife, Ann, have two children; Jackie and Michael, six grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

The deacon said that one of his greatest joys in ministry was being able to baptize one of his grandchildren.

In the secular world he worked as a product manager for the AMF bowling pin division. In that capacity he often had to fly overseas to various plants, and on each flight he would ask Jesus to guide the flight and have a safe journey.

On one such trip Pominville took a photo of a

cloud formation and when it was developed it looked like an angel.

For Deacon Pominville, it was a natural progression in his faith journey to take the steps towards ordination as a deacon. His love for people and the Holy Eucharist helped propel him forward, and the seeds of faith had been planted throughout his growing years.

## Becoming a deacon

He and his wife participated in the rigorous training sessions of the diocesan Permanent Deacon Formation Program, never missing a session of the five-year program. The training was held at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg, an arduous commute during the snowy North Country winters.

The dedication paid off with his ordination in October 1999.

His duties as a deacon are varied. His schedule is quite packed from performing funerals, marriage ceremonies, baptisms, sick calls to nursing home and hospital, providing the Holy Eucharist on first Fridays to shut-ins and conducting Tuesday morning prayer and communion service at 7 a.m. at St. Peter's.

He also hosts the Holy Hour the first Thursday of the month at St. Peter's, Divine Mercy Devotions the first Sunday of the month at St. Hedwig's, Stations of the Cross, and a year round *Why Catholic* group.

In 2008 a parishioner approached Deacon Pominville and asked if he would be interested in presiding over the Divine Mercy devotion at St. Hedwig's.

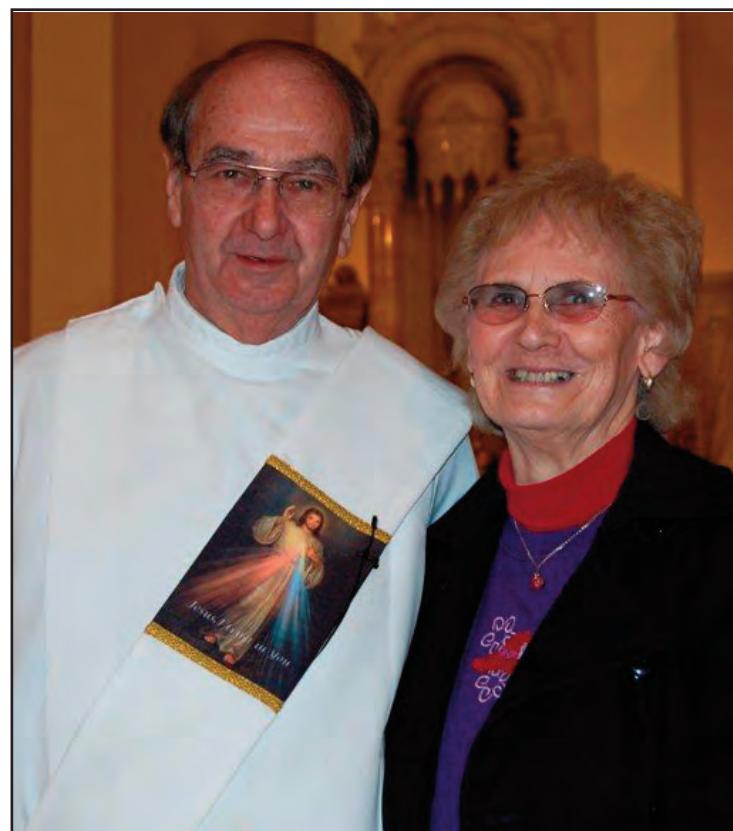


PHOTO BY MICHELLE BEAGLE

Deacon Ron Pominville of St. Peter's Parish in Lowville is shown with his wife, Ann. In this article, Deacon Pominville reflects on the growth of his faith and his ministry as a deacon.

Always willing to assist where he can, he said he would look over the literature. After reading about Saint Faustina and her diary he made the decision to assist with the service and has been doing it ever since. He fell in love with the devotion and the message of God's mercy, he said and finds singing/saying the chaplet very peaceful and moving.

As a deacon, he has assisted with Mass in non-traditional settings. When St. Peter's was being renovated in 1999/2000, Mass was held at the Town Hall Theater in Lowville from October to Easter. Deacon Pominville had to arrive early to set up the stage (literally) for Mass.

## The basics and balance

When asked about where he sees the church today, Deacon Pominville believes it needs to return to the basics - the importance of adoration of the Eucharist, saying the rosary, and family prayer.

It is the Holy Eucharist that helps Deacon Pominville find

the strength to attend to the many varied duties he carries out.

His faith is evident in his daily activities in how he interacts with others and conducts his affairs.

He says that balance is the key and often difficult to obtain. "You must have an understanding family," he said. "For instance you can be at a birthday celebration or 4th of July picnic when you are called away for a parishioner in need. If the family does not understand that would make his vocation difficult."

Also needed is the balance to find the time for morning and evening prayers, he said. As a deacon like a priest morning and evening prayers are said daily. It may be time for the prayers and the lawn may need mowing or a sink clog fixed and then discipline and balance come into play.

Asked if he had a choice would he still be ordained, Deacon Pominville - With a smile on his face - said, "definitely."

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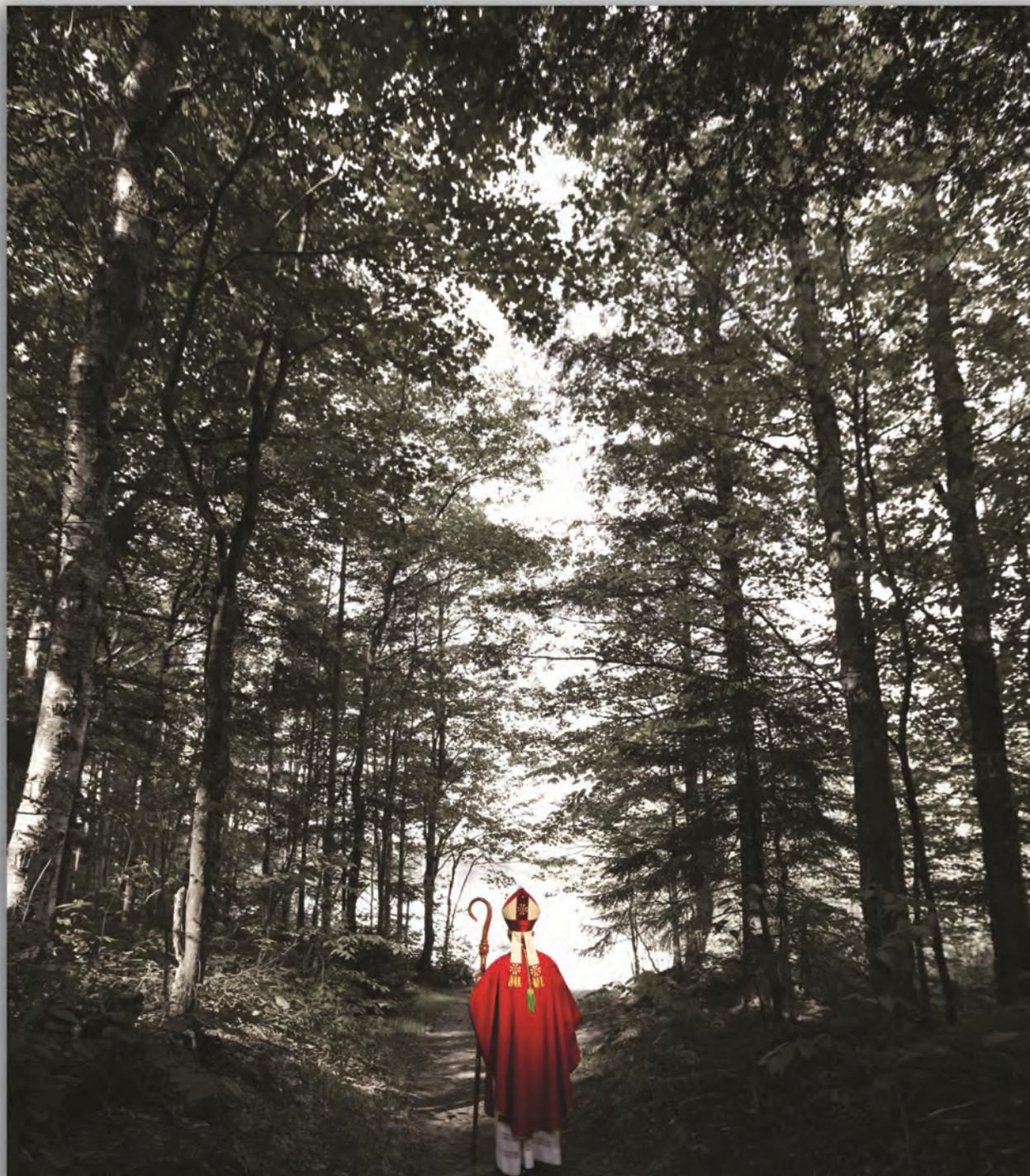
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Photo by Kurt Gardner  
Adirondack Mountain Productions

*A family that prays together...*

## Keeseville family growing together in Lenten tradition

KEESEVILLE - Keeseville diaconate aspirant, John D. Lucero, Jr. knows full well that "a family that prays together, stays together."

Over the past four years, he has led Stations of the Cross during Lent for the Roman Catholic Community of Keeseville. From the beginning, he wanted younger parishioners to be part of it.

When Lucero began offering this traditional Lenten

practice, he invited two sisters Miranda and Mirissa O'Neill to help him.

They didn't hesitate in accepting the offer and volunteered to part of this solemn practice of remembering the Passion of Christ.

They would carry the crucifix and candle as they visited each Station of the Cross and read aloud the meditations.

When they first began to

help, Miranda and Mirissa were in the fifth and sixth grade.

Now, they are in high school and have stayed faithful to the ministry.

This year, their younger brother Aaron, who is now in 6th grade got involved and began to help his older sisters. Now, he also carries a candle and has become part of this family observance.

Their mother, Nicole O'Neill is a teacher and assistant in the Religious Education program and she is proud of them. She hopes they will continue doing it as a family tradition.

This year, two newcomers have been welcomed into the group and are now part of the Stations of the Cross: they are Joshua Owens and Michaela Gallo.

Lucero continues to invite the young adults not only in our parish but the surround-



John D. Lucero, Jr., a deacon aspirant from the Roman Catholic Community of Keeseville has organized Stations of the Cross in his parish during Lent for several years and has made a concerted effort to include young people in the ministry. Three members of the O'Neill family were joined by two other teens this year. Above, front, from left are Miranda O'Neill, Lucero, and Aaron O'Neill; back, Michaela Gallo, Joshua Owens, and Mirissa O'Neill.

ing area to get involved and learn more about their faith, especially the traditions that older Catholics grew up with and the younger ones may not know.

He hopes this practice will

continue to grow even more over the next few years.

"There's another saying: 'A church with no children has no future,' he said. 'We're doing what we can to change that.'"

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## DEACON ASPIRANTS



PHOTO BY KEVIN MASTELLON

Twelve men currently studying in the permanent deacon formation program for the Diocese of Ogdensburg are shown during a recent weekend at Wadhams Hall. From left are, Paul White, Elizabethtown; Henry Leader, Gouverneur; Daniel McGrath, Waddington; Joel Walentuk, Alexandria Bay; David Wells, Heuvelton; Brian Neureuther, Plattsburgh; John Lucero, Keeseville; Donald Wilder, Watertown; Guy Javarone, Watertown; Patrick Donahue, Cape Vincent; Lawrence Ambeau, Adams and Anthony Pastizzo, Ogdensburg.

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Quest for God's love, wisdom must never stop, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Never stop searching for God and being open to receiving his love and wisdom, Pope Benedict XVI said. "Driven by love, God has set out toward us" in order to "meet the unrest of our hearts, the unrest of our questioning and seeking," he said April 21 during the chrisM Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. "That restlessness for God, that journeying toward him, so as to know and love him better, must not be extinguished in us," said the pope in his homily. Presiding over the first of two Holy Thursday liturgies, Pope Benedict blessed the oils that will be used in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, ordination and the anointing of the sick. Deacons carried the oils in large silver urns to the main altar while catechumens, youths preparing for confirmation, the sick and deacons about to be ordained in the Diocese of Rome wheeled small tables carrying large, artistic urns, which also contained sacramental oils. In his homily, the pope said the human heart is always restless "because whatever is finite is too little." However, people must be careful that desire for more is channeled toward God, not earthly things and the quest for self-sufficiency, he said. He asked that Christians understand that loving and knowing God is never over. "Let us remain constantly on a journey toward him, longing for him, always open to receive new knowledge and love," he said.

## Veteran of pro-life movement sees 'mood change' in on abortion

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Joseph Scheidler, regarded by many as the "godfather of the pro-life movement," sees the mood shifting in the United States on the abortion issue and predicts pro-lifers eventually "will prevail." He said: "There is a mood change in the country. A lot of our legislators are actually getting backbone and they are beginning to stand up for the rights for the unborn." The president and founder of the Chicago-based Pro-Life Action League, Scheidler made the comments in a recent telephone interview with Catholic News Service. In Chicago in early April, more than 400 people paid tribute to him at an evening banquet organized by Citizens for a Pro-Life Society. Scheidler, along with his wife, Ann, and their son, Eric, listened to several speakers tell stories, share humorous anecdotes and offer words of praise for his decades of pro-life activism. "The polls now show that the majority of people call themselves pro-life. There has been a lot of media exposure with Planned Parenthood and it has exposed a lot on abortion. It's becoming more and more of a negative thing than it was in 1973," Scheidler told CNS, referring to the year of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision. The recent focus on the Planned Parenthood Federation of America has occurred as a result of the budget debates on Capitol Hill and demands from pro-life groups that the organization no longer receive federal funding. A resolution to amend federal appropriations bills for the current fiscal year to exclude any funding for Planned Parenthood or its affiliates passed in the House April 14 but failed in the Senate later that day.

## In unprecedented TV appearance:

# Pope answers questions about faith, suffering, war

By John Thavis  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- In an unprecedented TV appearance, Pope Benedict XVI answered questions posed by Christians and non-Christians about global conflicts, inter-religious relations and human suffering.

One of the most moving questions came from a 7-year-old Japanese girl who lost friends in the recent earthquake and tsunami and who asked: "Why do I have to be so afraid? Why do children have to be so sad? I'm asking the pope, who speaks with God, to explain it to me."

In his response, pre-recorded and broadcast on Italian state television Good Friday, April 22, the pope assured the girl that one day she would understand better that "this suffering was not empty, it wasn't in vain, but behind it was a good plan, a plan of love. It is not chance."

He said he had the same questions about why some people suffer so much while others live in ease.

"And we do not have the answers but we know that Jesus suffered as you do, an innocent, and that the true God who is revealed in Jesus is by your side," he said.

"Be assured, we are with you, with all the Japanese children who are suffering. We want to help you with our prayers, with our actions, and you can be sure that God will help you," he said.

The pope, seated at his desk in the Vatican, spoke in Italian as he responded one by one to the questions, which were posed on-screen by the people who submitted them.

An Italian mother appeared holding her comatose son, who has been in a vegetative state for two years, and asked whether his soul was

still there. The pope responded: "Certainly his soul is still present in his body." He compared it to the situation of a guitar with broken strings that can no longer play.

"I am also sure that this hidden soul feels your love deep down, even if unable to understand the details, or your words. He feels the presence of love," he said. Those who pass hours with a loved one in such circumstances engage in a true act of love, he said.

"I encourage you, therefore, to carry on, to know that you are giving a great service to humanity with this sign of faith, with this sign of respect for life, with this love for a wounded body and a suffering soul," he said.

A Muslim woman in Ivory Coast, after blessing the pope in Arabic, lamented that the generally good relations between Christians and Muslims in the African country had been aggravated by the recent fighting there.

The pope responded that he had sent an emissary, Cardinal Peter Turkson, to try to mediate the conflict. He added that the Christian message was one of nonviolence, as exemplified by Jesus' words and deeds.

"This is what shows us the true face of God, that violence never comes from God, never helps bring anything good, but is a destructive means and not the path to escape difficulties," he said. Christ invites all sides to renounce violence "even if they feel they are right," the pope said.

A question from Iraq asked what the church can do to help Christians remain in the country, in the face of violence and discrimination. The pope said their desire to leave was understandable, and that the solution lay in dialogue and the rebuilding of Iraq's internal harmony.

"This is the problem, that the society is profoundly divided, torn, there is no longer the awareness that 'In our diversity we are one people with a common history, where each has his place.' This awareness needs to be rebuilt," he said.

Asked to explain the creed's statement that Jesus descended into hell after his death and before his resurrection, Pope Benedict said this should be understood as a "soul's journey" into humanity's past, and not as "a geographical or spatial trip."

Another questioner asked what kind of life the resurrected Jesus experienced. The pope said it was impossible for us to define the "glorified body" of the resurrected Christ, but that it was clear that he was "beyond the laws of biology and physics."

"He is a real man, not a ghost, and he lives a real life, but a new life that is no longer submitted to the death," he said.

A final question asked whether the pope was prepared to renew the consecration of the world to Mary. The pope answered that such a consecration has already been performed, and that now is the time to "internalize this act" in the lives of each Christian.

"I think that the great public act has been made. Perhaps one day it will be necessary to repeat it again, but at the moment it seems more important to me to live it, to make it real," he said.

The TV program, "In His Image," is a Catholic perspectives show that normally airs on Sundays.

Its 80-minute special on Good Friday was originally supposed to include three questions, but the number was increased to seven because of the great number of questions submitted by viewers.

Rome, world prepare for beatification of Pope John Paul II

# The countdown continues!

By John Thavis  
Catholic News Service

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** - As the countdown continued for the beatification of Pope John Paul II, church and civil authorities put the finishing touches on logistical plans to handle potentially massive crowds at the main events in Rome.

Meanwhile, Vatican officials were heartened at the massive response to online projects designed to make the beatification a universal experience.

Pope Benedict XVI will celebrate the beatification Mass in St. Peter's Square May 1. Because no tickets are being handed out for the liturgy, no one really knows how many people to expect.

Estimates range from 300,000 to 1.5 million, and crowd control barriers will be set up for blocks around the Vatican.

Immediately after Mass, the faithful can pray before Pope John Paul's unopened casket, which will be set in front of the main altar in St. Peter's Basilica. The veneration is expected to continue most of the day.

A large crowd is also expected for the prayer vigil April 30 at the site of Rome's ancient Circus Maximus race-track, where Pope Benedict will make a video appearance. Rome church officials have organized that event to underline the strong connection between the Polish pope and the Diocese of Rome.

The French nun whose healing was accepted as the miracle needed for Pope John Paul's beatification will share her story with pilgrims at the prayer vigil. Sister Marie-Simon-Pierre, a member of the Little Sisters of the Catholic Motherhood, had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and believes she was cured in 2005 through the intercession of the late pope.

The morning after the be-

atification, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican secretary of state, will celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving in St. Peter's Square. That liturgy, too, is expected to attract tens of thousands of people.

While the size of the crowds remained a mystery, Vatican officials said their online initiatives had already taken the beatification to groups and individuals around the world.

For example, the Vatican's special beatification Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/vatican.johnpaul2](http://www.facebook.com/vatican.johnpaul2) has had more than 6 million visits and has gained nearly 50,000 followers.

Similar pages have been opened at the [www.pope2you.net](http://www.pope2you.net) site aimed at younger audiences and on the Vatican's YouTube channel. They offer photos, tributes, key quotes and video highlights of Pope John Paul's pontificate. The beatification events will be live-streamed at many of the sites, ensuring worldwide participation.

"Six years have passed since John Paul's funeral, and the world of communications has changed greatly, with many more online opportunities available to the church," said Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, who was coordinating several of the Internet efforts.

"Moreover, John Paul II was much loved by the younger generations who use the new media. He is a figure who adapts well to the Web, because he left us with a wealth of images and spoken words that one is happy to see and listen to again in their original context," he said.

The Diocese of Rome has also launched a multilingual beatification website that offers the diocesan-approved prayer asking for graces of Pope John Paul in 31 languages, including Chinese, Arabic, Russian and Swahili.

The beatification date was

chosen carefully. May 1 is Divine Mercy Sunday, a day with special significance for Pope John Paul, who made it a church-wide feast day to be celebrated a week after Easter. The pope died April 2, 2005, the vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday.

May 1 is also Europe's "labor day" holiday, which meant the beatification events would not disrupt the normal business of Rome. Many Romans were planning to leave the city for the weekend, although church leaders said Italians would still be the biggest national group attending the beatification. Poles were expected to be the second-largest group, followed by pilgrims from Spain and the United States.

The Vatican has used the run-up to the beatification as a teaching moment about the sainthood process, emphasizing that Pope John Paul will be declared "blessed" not for his achievements as pope but for the way he lived the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love.

Church officials have announced that in the Diocese of Rome, where Pope John Paul served as bishop, and in all the dioceses of his native Poland, his feast day is to be inserted automatically into the annual calendar. Oct. 22 was chosen as the day to remember him because it is the anniversary of the liturgical inauguration of his papacy in 1978.

Other places can petition the Vatican to insert the Oct. 22 feast day into their liturgical calendar. Likewise, parishes and churches can be named after "Blessed Pope John Paul" in Rome and Poland, with other requests considered on a case-by-case basis.

Throughout the universal church, Catholics will have a year to celebrate a Mass in thanksgiving for the pope's beatification.

The Vatican has published the text of the opening



CNS PHOTO/PAUL HARING

Newly made bronze statues of Pope John Paul II are seen at Domus Dei artisan workshop in Albano Laziale, south of Rome, April 7. The workshop is making several large statues of the Polish pope for Italian squares as his May 1 beatification nears.

prayer -- formally the "collect" -- for his feast day Mass. The English text reads: "O God, who are rich in mercy and who willed that the Blessed John Paul II should preside as pope over your universal church, grant, we pray, that, instructed by his teaching, we may open our hearts to the saving grace of Christ, the sole redeemer of mankind. Who lives and reigns."

Following the beatification ceremonies, Pope John Paul's casket will be relocated to the Chapel of St. Sebastian in the upper level of St. Peter's Basilica. He had been buried in the grotto beneath St. Peter's, but the new resting place is more easily accessible to the steady stream of pilgrims who come to see the pope's tomb.

Not long after Pope John Paul's death, Pope Benedict

set him on the fast track to beatification by waiving the normal five-year waiting period for the introduction of his sainthood cause. Even so, church experts needed years to review the massive amount of evidence regarding the late pope, including thousands of pages of writings and speeches.

More than 120 witnesses were interviewed, and studies were conducted on Pope John Paul's ministry, the way he handled suffering and how he faced his death.

The Vatican took special care evaluating the reported miracle in France, and Vatican officials emphasized that no procedural shortcuts were taken.

The process was completed relatively quickly: six years and one month from death to beatification is a modern record in the church.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

# Blessed John Paul II: 'The Conscience of the World'

By Tony Magliano  
Catholic News Service

One of Christianity's most famous non-Catholics, the Rev. Billy Graham, said it well: "When future historians look back on the most influential personalities of the 20th century, the name of Pope John Paul II will unquestionably loom large in their accounts.

"Few individuals have had a greater impact -- not just religiously but socially and morally -- on the modern world. He will stand as the most influential moral voice of our time."

"The Conscience of the World" is the subtitle of one documentary about him. And very well put!

For Blessed John Paul did indeed prick our consciences. From the barbaric dismembering of unborn babies, to the selfish neglect of the poor, to the vengeance of capital punishment, to the raw brutality of war, Blessed John Paul was a thundering voice of conscience!

I first encountered him during his 1979 visit to Washington, D.C. But it was not exactly a private audience.

Standing within sight of the U.S. Capitol building, he boldly proclaimed to 175,000 of us: "We will stand up every time that human life is threatened. When the sacredness of life before birth is attacked, we will stand up and proclaim that no one ever has the authority to destroy unborn life!"

But Blessed John Paul not only stood up for the unborn, he stood up with equal zeal for all of suffering humanity.

In light of the dehumanizing slum conditions he saw during a pastoral visit to Brazil, he said: "The church



CNS PHOTO FROM REUTERS

In this 2000 file photo, Pope John Paul II lights the Paschal candle during Easter Vigil service in St. Peter's Square April 22. In messages during Holy Week, the pope called for a new world order based in peace and justice.

wants to be the church of the poor. ... To those who live with a certain well-being, for which they have the necessities, the church says: ... Think about the poor. ... Think about the ones who do not have what is needed, the ones who live in chronic want, who suffer hunger. ...

"Look around you. Does it not hurt your heart? Do you not feel the stings of your conscience for your surplus and abundance? ... Remember that a person's value is not measured by what is owned, but by what the person is. ...

"Only a socially just society, one that strives to be ever more just, has a reason to exist" ("A Justice Prayer Book, Reflections on the Scriptures by Pope John Paul II," [Catholic] Campaign for Human Development, 1987).

Unlike some Catholics, Blessed John Paul did not rank social justice, pro-life and peace issues. He linked them! In his encyclical "Evangelium Vitae" ("The Gospel of Life"), he wrote: "Where life is involved, the service of charity must be profoundly consistent. It

cannot tolerate bias and discrimination, for human life is sacred and inviolable at every stage and in every situation; it is an indivisible good."

Shortly after the United States' first war with Iraq, Blessed John Paul, who knew firsthand the devastation and brutality of war, pleaded: "No, never again war, which destroys the lives of innocent people, teaches how to kill ... and leaves behind a trail of resentment and hatred."

Former Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said, "The pope's basic position rests on this premise: War in the 21st century is not the way to resolve problems." In the modern age, the conditions justifying war are "so rare that they are almost nonexistent!"

His passionate concern was not just for the unborn, not just for the poor, not just for the condemned, and not just for the war-torn but for all who suffer from man's inhumanity to man.

Billy Graham was right. Blessed John Paul II was for sure "the most influential moral voice of our time!"

## SPIRITUALITY FOR TODAY

## The long loneliness

By Father John Catoir  
Catholic News Service

Dorothy Day wrote an autobiography called "The Long Loneliness." Even the saintly suffer from loneliness.

Billions of people down through the ages have tried to solve the problem of loneliness, each in his, or her, own way. Unfortunately, the results are often disappointing. St. Augustine described this human condition in simple terms: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee, O Lord."

**This nagging discomfort that we call loneliness is God's way of drawing us into his love, and once we are calmer and tuned into God's love, the opportunity for joy becomes real.**

To deal with the ache of loneliness, we have to begin by accepting the truth that loneliness is both a spiritual problem and a universal fact of life.

Metaphysical loneliness is the price we pay for being unique, essentially separate from every other being and totally different. The natural feeling of isolation is part of every life; once we accept this, the easier it becomes to deal with. Even those who are gifted with close relatives and friends suffer in one way or another from this form of emotional pain.

This is why human beings crave some kind of interaction with other human beings. This is why charitable giving and volunteering can ease the burden of isolation. Loving others is indeed the best way to calm your restless spirit.

This nagging discomfort that we call loneliness, however, is God's way of drawing us into his love, and once we are calmer and tuned into God's love, the opportunity for joy becomes real. Rejoicing in God's will goes hand in hand with enjoying his company.

The go-go world does not see this as a viable solution. Those who misdiagnose the problem begin looking for love in all the wrong places. Searching for sexual intimacy in order to overcome the feeling of loneliness is certainly understandable, but it doesn't really work in the long run.

It is common knowledge for everyone engaged in a 12-step program that appetites satisfied over and over again can take over a person's life. But pleasure can never appease the deeper hunger within, and a merely physical solution to loneliness can easily turn into sexual addiction, which itself is a misdiagnosis.

Unless we deal with loneliness as a spiritual problem, we won't be able to quiet the yearning of the soul. Prayer, then, is a real remedy for the problem of loneliness. (Trust me even if you don't understand it.)

Thankfully, we are not left alone to our own devices; we are not poor, helpless creatures. Even though we remain restless in our isolation, we know that the Lord abides in us!

For some people, loneliness can be tormenting. For most, it is merely an annoyance, a passing thing. But for those who love God, it is the springboard of prayer. Peace and joy come from the knowledge of God's love.

## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

## An Easter time focus on Divine Mercy of Jesus

Life will never be the same!

Just when the apostles, huddling in fear in the Upper Room, were convinced that their days with Jesus were over forever, He appears through locked doors.

It's beginning all over again!

They should have believed the women - and the two disciples who gave them that outlandish story about the Stranger on the road to Emmaus.

Now, here He is. "Peace with you. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them..."

Does He mean us? We're supposed to leave this safe hideaway and start preaching?

We really have no idea what went through the minds of the apostles fol-

lowing the Crucifixion, but we can imagine their fright and their disbelief at the rumors on Easter Sunday.

In any event, we know it took time for everything to sink in.

Between Easter and Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit would change them forever, Jesus appeared many times and in many places to convince them of the truth—that He had risen from the tomb, and, since He would return to the

Father, they were the ones who would do the leg work for the building up of the kingdom.

The first reading from the Acts of the Apostles shows how the crowd outside that spirit-filled house at Pentecost reacted to Peter's speech as the tongues of fire hovered over his head.

They quickly realized that

this Holy Spirit would come upon them, too, to make of them a unified community.

They would be bound together by their new faith in the resurrected Christ, the breaking of the bread, and the teaching of the apostles.

The second reading today is from one of Peter's sermons that show that not only Jews, but Gentiles, too, have been the chance for a new birth.

This new life will involve suffering and pain, but through perseverance will "attain the goal of your faith, the salvation of our souls".

Many people experience a definite letdown after Easter Sunday.

Attendance at daily Mass gradually shrinks back to the "normal", and we lose the enthusiasm generated by Lent. If we're really attentive to Scripture, we'll feel just the opposite.

The Easter Season is a most satisfying time to im-

MAY 1

Second Sunday of Easter

Divine Mercy Sunday

READINGS

Acts 2:42-47

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

merse ourselves in Scripture. From day to day, we just never know where the Risen Lord will "pop up"!

At one point, He even provides the food for a shore dinner.

Like the apostles, it takes time for everything to sink in to our minds and hearts.

For starters, we begin today with a focus on the Divine Mercy of Jesus.

Our late Holy Father established this devotion for the Second Sunday of Easter, as a result of the visions of a Polish saint, Blessed Faustina Kowalska.

In them, Jesus feels it is

time for the world to focus on His incredible mercy and spirit of forgiveness.

It makes special sense at the beginning of the Easter season.

Just consider! Jesus showed unexpected mercy in forgiving Peter his three-fold denial, in forgiving Thomas for his doubts, and in forgiving all the apostles for running away at His hour of need.

And while dying on the cross, He forgave those who had nailed Him there!

He forgave all whose sins caused His Passion and death.

Our only response to His love and mercy is by imitating it in our own relations with people.

We need to spread devotion to Jesus' Divine Mercy toward all in our sinful world.

Try to attend one of special recitations of the Divine Mercy chaplet on this Sunday.

## OUR READERS WRITE

## Praise for our young adults

I had the opportunity to attend the Mystery Players present "The Way of the Cross" at St. Mary's Church in Brushton. How touching; the young adults were excellent.

They made you feel as if you were actually there. The first time Jesus was whipped I held my breath and tears just streamed down my face.

I don't know if I can express enough how beautiful this was. And if there is any way possible, I wish every church could present this viewing to all their parishioners.

Again I can't tell you how in awe I

was when I left the church that night.

And I want a big thank you extended to Father Chris Looby for bringing them to us.

Praise our young adults. These people are very special and very needed to spread the word in such an awesome way.

SINCERELY,  
MARY MARTIN  
BRUSHTON, NY

## God Thanks YOU!!

Dear Plattsburgh Prayer Warriors:

Well, the largest 40 Days for Life campaign ever is history - for now!

What an amazing 40-day journey we've been on, as 247 cities in nine countries prayed, fasted, stood vigil, and conducted outreach to end abortion in the cold, snow and rain. Together we will make abortion unthinkable!

You know that the pro-life movement is making headway when the government threatens to shut down unless taxpayers are forced to support Planned Parenthood. During these tough economic times, Americans don't want to bailout the profitable and disreputable abortion industry.

Recent polls reveal that an overwhelming majority of Americans - whether pro-life or pro-abortion - oppose the use of federal monies to support abortion.

In 2009, PP reported performing 332,278 abortions, 8,270 more abor-

tions than it performed in 2008. PP itself has recently made plain the centrality of abortion to its mission, mandating that every PP affiliate have at least one clinic performing abortion within the next two years.

Thanks to YOU for responding to the Holy Spirit this spring! These efforts have been richly blessed. 516 babies and their parents have been saved from abortion! It couldn't have happened without your help.

The next time someone questions what we do at PP you can answer them this:

What is a pro-life prayer volunteers. Our goal is to pray, peacefully for the pregnant women to choose life their babies. We believe women should be provided the truth about the baby growing inside them.

Our goals are NOT to intimidate, harass, and prevent men, women, and teens from taking care of their reproductive health. We do not judge nor do we condemn those regardless of their choice, we are here to help them. Before and after that life changing choice,

whether it be for life or for death, we are here. May God bless you this most Holy Week and may we look with hope towards the Resurrection of our Lord!!

ALL FOR HIS GLORY,  
NANCY BELZILE, MEV  
REGIONAL COORDINATOR FOR  
WWW.SILENTNOMOREAWARENESS.ORG  
WILLSBORO

## Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters from readers of the *North Country Catholic*.

•Due to space limitations, we ask that the number of words be limited to 300.

•We cannot accept letters which support ideas which are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

•Send letters to North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY, 13669 or e-mail to [news@northcountrycatholic.org](mailto:news@northcountrycatholic.org)

•Join the conversation!

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## AT THE MOVIES

# THE CONSPIRATOR

By John Mulderig  
Catholic News Service

Nearly 150 years after she became the first woman in U.S. history to be executed by the federal government, Mary Surratt - the titular character in the engrossing historical drama "The Conspirator" - remains a controversial figure.

Hanged in 1865 for complicity in the plot to assassinate Abraham Lincoln, lingering questions about Surratt endure. Chief among them: What exactly did this devoutly Catholic, pro-Confederate widow know about the conspiracy to shoot the president, and when did she know it?

Like everyone else at the time, young Union Army officer-turned-lawyer Frederick Aiken (James McAvoy) thinks he knows.

Arm-twisted into representing Surratt by Reverdy Johnson (Tom Wilkinson) - the Unionist senator from Surratt's home state of Maryland - Aiken is initially convinced of his unwanted client's guilt.

As the owner of the Washington boardinghouse where John Wilkes Booth (Toby Kebbell) and his co-conspirators - including her own son John (Johnny Simmons) - met to mature their nefarious schemes, first to kidnap Lincoln, later to slay him, Surratt (movingly portrayed here by Robin Wright) surely must have known - so the reasoning goes - what was being planned under her roof.

That's a view of the matter shared by Lincoln's powerful secretary of war, Edwin Stanton (Kevin Kline).

Determined to quell any future extremist acts on behalf of the moribund Confederacy - Lincoln's death came only days after Lee's surrender at Appomattox - Stanton pressures Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt (Danny Huston), the lead prosecutor at the military tribunal trying Surratt, to obtain a conviction by fair means or foul.

As he witnesses the ruthless legal maneuvering that results, Aiken begins to shift his views. His new, more sympathetic outlook leads

to friendship with Mary's daughter, Anna (Evan Rachel Wood). But it also threatens his social standing as a well-respected veteran, and alienates Sarah (Alexis Bleidel), his socialite fiancée who has faithfully awaited Aiken's return from service.

In recounting an episode with obvious implications for contemporary debates about the proper treatment of accused terrorists, director Robert Redford avoids heavy-handed politicking. Instead, his portrait of a protagonist admirably committed to the rule of law is made all the more effective by the fair assessment of those -- like Stanton and Holt -- with other legitimate priorities.

A similarly balanced approach characterizes the portrayal of Surratt's faith. Her Catholicism, symbolized by the rosary she carries with her in prison and to the scaffold, is shown to further enflame Northern public opinion against her. (It's appropriate to bear in mind, in this regard, that the bitterly anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant Know-Nothing



CNS PHOTO/ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS

Robin Wright and James McAvoy star in a scene from the movie "The Conspirator."

Party enjoyed some modicum of political success in the time leading up to the Civil War.)

The historical value of this impressive, predominantly fact-based recreation makes "The Conspirator" possibly acceptable for older teens, despite the elements listed below.

The film contains some

wartime gore, a realistic hanging and a couple of crude and crass terms.

The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults.

The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

## ALSO PLAYING



CNS PHOTO/WARNER BROS

Helen Mirren and Russell Brand star in a scene from the movie "Arthur." The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.



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## ADIRONDACK

## FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING

**Lake Placid** – Mercy Care for the Adirondacks is recruiting new volunteers and has scheduled a Friendship Volunteer Training Program.

**Date:** May 3 and May 10 (both afternoons required for training)

**Features:** Anyone in the Tri-Lakes area who is interested in becoming a Mercy Care Friendship Volunteer is invited to take the training in Lake Placid. New Volunteers, of all faiths, will join Mercy Care's 60+ Volunteers from Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake, and Lake Placid who are helping elders stay connected to their communities. Mercy Care's Friendship Volunteer Training Program is free of charge but pre-registration is required.

**Contact:** To request registration information, contact Sheila Schneck at Mercy Care by calling 523-5583. Mercy Care can be reached at 185 Old Military Road, Lake Placid, NY 12946, by calling Donna Beal, Executive Director, at 523-5581, or by e-mail at [dbeal@adkmercy.org](mailto:dbeal@adkmercy.org). For more information, visit Mercy Care's web site at <http://www.adkmercy.org>

## CLINTON

## 40TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

**Plattsburgh** – Champlain Valley Right to Life, Inc. is celebrating its 40th year with a buffet dinner and program.

**Date:** May 25

**Time:** 6:30 p.m.

**Place:** Emmaus Room at St. Peter's Church

**Cost:** \$20

**Features:** Dinner is by reservations only and tickets will be available May 1st. Bishop LaValley will be the guest speaker for the evening.

**Contact:** Call or text Betty Buffett at 518-535-6640 for reservations.

## BLESSED SACRAMENT ADORATION

**Keeseville** – The Keeseville Altar Rosary Society to sponsor Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

**Date:** Every Sunday

**Time:** 1 p.m. to 4

**Place:** Immaculate Conception Church.

## SMA AUCTION

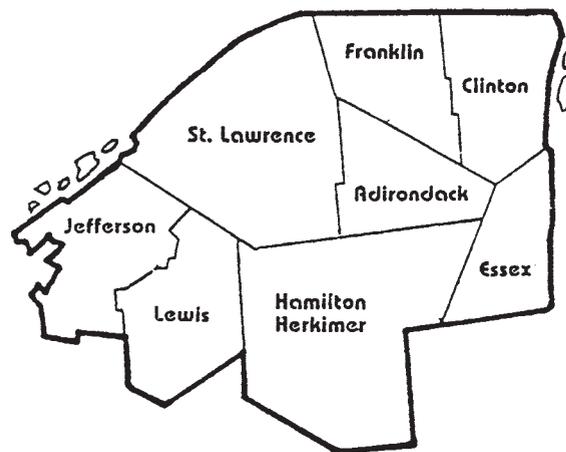
**Champlain** – St. Mary's Academy will be having an auction.

**Date:** April 29

**Time:** Preview at 5:30 p.m. begins t 6

**Place:** St. Mary's Academy Gymnasium

**Features:** New and used items: furniture, baby items, appliances, & more!  
Auctioneer: Steve Brodi



The **North Country Catholic** welcomes contributions to "Around the Diocese". Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

**North Country Catholic**, PO Box 326,  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669; fax, 315-394-0670;  
e-mail [news@northcountrycatholic.org](mailto:news@northcountrycatholic.org).

Items must be received in the **NCC** office by the Thursday before publication.

## SMA ZUMBATHON

**Altona** – St. Mary's Academy to have a Zumbathon.

**Date:** May 15

**Time:** 1:15 p.m. registration; 2 p.m. to 4

**Place:** Rainbow Banquet Hall

**Cost:** Adults, \$10; 12 and under, Free

**Features:** Sounds by Xtreme DJ Sounds Service. Raffles & more.

## EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

**Plattsburgh** – Eucharistic Adoration is held throughout the year every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

**Place:** St John's Holy Family Adoration Chapel, downstairs

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

**Theme:** Theme: "O Jesus, hidden in the Blessed Sacrament...with the trust and simplicity of a small child, I give myself to you today." (St. Maria Faustina)

**Contact:** For more information about spending a special hour with Jesus weekly, or becoming a substitute, please call 518-561-5083 or email us at [Sjohnsadoration@aol.com](mailto:Sjohnsadoration@aol.com)

## FRANKLIN

## CAMP BEDFORD OPEN HOUSE

**Lake Meacham** – Join other Boy Scouts, Venturers, and Explorers at Camp Bedford's open house and Beaver Day.

**Date:** May 7

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Place:** Located 23 miles south of Malone on US Route 30 (3/4 mile north of Meacham Lake State Campground access road).

**Features:** Cleaning up campsites, trails and other areas of the camp. Tour of the

camp including visiting a campsite. Have a chance to meet the staff and Gate Keepers. Enjoy lunch in the dining hall with a dish to pass and your own place settings.

**Contact:** Pre-Register the number of youths and adults that will attend by E-mail by May 1 with Cory Haynes: [clhaynes14@gmail.com](mailto:clhaynes14@gmail.com), 518-856-9656.

## JEFFERSON

## RUN ON THE RUNWAY

**Fort Drum** – Special fundraising walk is being sponsored by AAAA.

**Date:** April 30

**Time:** Registration begins at 6 a.m. race starts at 8 a.m.

**Place:** Wheeler Sack Army Airfield

**Cost:** 5k Run/Walk, \$5; 10K Run, \$10;

Kids under 5, free

**Features:** There is no pre-registration.

Prizes will be awarded for the top female male in each category, 15 and under, 16-25, 26-35, 36-45 and 45+. Open to Military and local community.

**Contact:** Debbie Lindeman 315- 774-1581 for more information.

## CHICKEN BARBECUE

**Evans Mills** – The St. Mary's Booster Club will be having a chicken barbecue.

**Date:** May 1

**Time:** 11 a.m.

**Place:** St. Mary's Parish Center

**Cost:** \$8 and take-outs are available

## LIFERIGHT MEETING

**Watertown** – Liferight of Watertown will hold its monthly meetings on the third

Wednesday of the Month.

**Time:** 4 p.m.

**Place:** 312 Sherman St.

**Features:** Liferight is a pro-life educational organization. The office has videos, books and educational materials which may be borrowed. Topics covered: infanticide, assisted suicide, euthanasia and chastity.

**Contact:** Phone 315-788-8480; website: [www.liferight.org](http://www.liferight.org).

## LEWIS

## RUMMAGE SALE

**Lowville** – The Altar and Rosary Society will be sponsoring a Rummage Sale.

**Schedule:** April 28 from 4 p.m. to 8 and April 29 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Place:** St. Peter's Church Hall

**Features:** There will be a luncheon starting at 11 a.m. on Friday. Members are asked to bring a dish to pass.

## SPAGHETTI DINNER

**Port Leyden** – There will be a spaghetti dinner sponsored by Boy Scout Troop 92.

**Date:** May 5

**Time:** 5 p.m. to 7

**Place:** Port Leyden Community Hall

**Cost:** Adults, \$6; Children, \$3; under 5, Free

## ST. PETER'S ANNUAL FESTIVAL

**Lowville** – St. Peter's Annual Festival has been schedule

**Date:** May 20-22

**Place:** St. Peter's Church grounds

**Features:** Ontario Amusement will provide Carnival rides. There will be a special Saturday matinee with unlimited rides for \$12 per person from 1 p.m. to 5. All weekend the festival will feature homemade food specialties including Shiskabob, Clam Chowder, Fried Dough, and more. Also "This-n-That", a Giant Bake Sale, and Games for all ages; including Bingo Friday evening at 7 p.m. The festival concludes on Sunday with a Chicken Barbecue with all the fixings. Take-outs will be available. Be sure to come early before the Chicken runs out! Don't leave too early; at 4 p.m. the drawings begin for cash prizes totaling \$2000.

## BULLHEAD FEED

**Harrisville** – The Knights of Columbus Council #7733 will be sponsoring a Bullhead Feed.

**Date:** April 29

**Time:** 4:30 p.m. to 6:30

**Place:** Harrisville Fire Hall

**Cost:** Adults, \$11 for Bullhead, \$9 for Ham; Children 5-12, \$6; under 5, Free  
**Features:** Take-outs available.

## ST. LAWRENCE

## POTSDAM LIFE CHAIN

**Potsdam** – Stand United Pro-Life Northern NY at the Potsdam Life Chain.

**Date:** May 7

**Time:** Gather and get signs at 1:45 p.m., then Life Chain from 2 to 3

**Place:** Along Market and Main Sts.

**Features:** This will be a visual statement of pro-life witness that abortion kills children and our support for the sanctity of human life from the moment of conception. We will gather at the park across from the Roxy Theater on Main St. rain or shine.

**Contact:** Dan Paladin at 262-0222 or Chris LaRose at 403-8123

## K OF C BRUNCH

**Norfolk** – The Knights of Columbus will be sponsoring a brunch.

**Date:** May 8

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to Noon

**Place:** Visitation Parish Center; Take-outs available

**Cost:** Adults, \$6; Children under 12, \$4; Under 5, Free; Family, \$16

## EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

**Massena** – St. Mary's Church has scheduled Eucharistic Adoration every Saturday.

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

## NOVENA FOR MILITARY

**Ogdensburg** – Notre Dame Church is holding a weekly novena for the safety of U.S. military personnel

**Date:** Tuesday evenings

**Time:** 6:30 p.m.

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

## GUGGENHEIM CLEAN-UP

**Saranac Lake** – The annual clean-up weekend at Camp Guggenheim is set.

**Date:** May 13 at 5 p.m. to May 15

**Contact:** Dick Lynch of St. Joseph's Church in Dannemora, at 518-492-7583 or email [yesgrp7@aol.com](mailto:yesgrp7@aol.com) for more information and to sign up

## INTERNATIONAL ROSARY

Catholics of the Diocese of Ogdensburg are encourage to participate in a continuous praying of the Rosary throughout the world.

**Date:** May 1

**Time:** 2 p.m.

**Features:** praying 20 decades of the Rosary. The intention is: "That in the month of our Blessed Mother we will band together with the Pro-Life forces in the world."



**The Society For  
The Propagation Of The Faith**

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director  
622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669  
(315) 393-2920; fax (315) 394-7401  
mbrett@dioogdensburg.org

# Vocations: a mission to bring people to Christ

From the Director's Desk,  
Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ,  
Diocesan Mission Director

A Mission to bring people to Christ is how young men preparing for the priesthood at the Missionary Seminary of St. Paul in Nigeria define their future as priests.

This seminary has received support from the Propagation of the Faith / St. Peter Apostle from the day it opened its doors in 1977. It was founded those three-plus decades ago as a dream of the now-deceased archbishop of Abuja in Nigeria, Cardinal Dominic Ekandem. He envisioned a seminary in his homeland that would neither be diocesan nor regional. Instead, it would educate priests who would serve the Church Universal.

Today more than 100 young men are receiving support for their studies at this major seminary. The first ordination took place in 1985, and more than 200 young men have been ordained since that time. In the first year after ordination, these new priests serve within their homeland of Nigeria; the next year, they are "sent" on mission - to any of 14 countries, including nine in Africa.

Offered one student, about his call to study at this particular seminary: "It's our way of showing gratitude to the missionaries who helped us come to know Jesus. We are prepared to offer the same faithful witness to our Lord."

The goal of the Society of St. Peter then and now has been to invite individuals to support the education of candidates for the Catholic priesthood in the Developing World and to support the formation of men and women candidates for the Religious life in the Missions. In its first year, the Society of St. Peter Apostle sent help for some 2,700 seminarians in the Missions. Today, some 30,000 major seminarians, mostly in Africa and Asia, receive an annual subsidy of \$700 per student.

Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.  
[www.dioogdensburg.org/missionoffice](http://www.dioogdensburg.org/missionoffice)



## OBITUARIES

**Canton** – Donald F. Gilson, 90; Funeral services April 21, 2011 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Evergreen Cemetery.

**Carthage** – Marie E. (Lantigne) Mulvaney, 88; Funeral Services April 20, 2011 at St. James Church; burial in Lewisburg Cemetery, Fort Drum.

**Chateaugay** – Jean M. (Ryan) Grimshaw, 82; Funeral Services April 20, 2011 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

**Chateaugay** – Linda R. (Tacy) Trudeau, 63; Funeral Services April 20, 2011 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

**Hogansburg** – Mary Lou (Tarbell) Phillips, 60; Funeral Services April 18, 2011 at St. Regis Catholic Church; burial in Kateri Cemetery, Akwesasne.

**Lake Placid** – Bernard J. Ward Jr., 91; Funeral Services April 19, 2011 at the Uihlein Mercy Center; burial in Saratoga National Cemetery, Saratoga Springs.

**Lyon Mountain** – Dorothy (Rabideau) LaDuke, 89; Funeral Services April 20, 2011 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

**Moers Forks** – Michele L. Hemingway, 26; Funeral Services April 18, 2011 at St. Ann's Church.

**Moers Forks** – Marvin J. Meseck, 68; Fu-

neral Services April 19, 2011 at St. Ann's Church; burial in Whispering Maples Memorial Mausoleum, Ellenburg Depot.

**Morrisonville** – George Noel Cahill, 73; Funeral Services April 19, 2011 at St. Alexander's Church.

**Ogdensburg** – Helen C. (Cumiskey) Dana, 90; Funeral Services April 25, 2011 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Foxwood Memorial Park.

**Ogdensburg** – Irene E. Dodge, 88; Funeral services April 20, 2011 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Mansel G. Earl, 73; Funeral services April 18, 2011 at the Allen-Nichols Funeral Home; burial in Ogdensburg Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Ruth V. (Baxter) Roach, R.N., 81; Funeral Services April 20, 2011 at Notre Dame Cemetery; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

**Peru** – Carleton T. "Carl" Morse, 67; Funeral Services April 18, 2011 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in Peasleeville Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** – Ethel Elaine (Wood) Brown, 76; Funeral Services April 20, 2011 at St. John's Church; burial in St. Alexander's Cemetery, Morrisonville.

**Plattsburgh** – Gerald "Jerry" E. Pellerin,

82; Funeral services April 19, 2011 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Alexander's Cemetery, Morrisonville.

**Potsdam** – Gisela (Hassler) Gotsch, 87; Funeral Services April 26, 2011 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**St. Regis Falls** – Rose M. (Bishop) O'Neil, 82; Funeral Services April 18, 2011 at St. Ann's Church; burial in Fairview Cemetery, Dickinson Center.

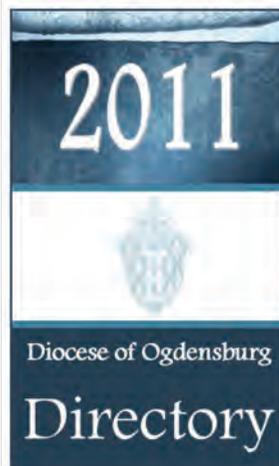
**Saranac Lake** – Frinda N. (Auringer) Smith, 73; Funeral Services April 20, 2011 at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home; burial in Pine Ridge Cemetery.

**Watertown** – Gerald K. "Jerry" Shannon, 80; Funeral Services April 21, 2011 at the Reed and Benoit Funeral Home.

### Prayer to Blessed Virgin

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful wine splendor of Heaven. Blessed Mother of the Son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the sea, help me and show me, herein you are my Mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. Oh, show me herein you are my Mother. Oh, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3x). Holy Mother. I place this prayer in your hands (3X). VF

## It's time to Order your 2011 Diocesan Directory!



The Official 2011 Directory of the Diocese of Ogdensburg includes detailed information about parishes, schools and other Catholic organizations.

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## YOUNG CATHOLIC VOICE

# So much more than Cinderella

By Amanda Miner  
Contributing Writer

With the abundance of cheesy "reality" wedding shows permeating the airwaves these days, it's hard to focus on the sacramental vision of marriage.

## Preparing for the vocation of marriage

I'm sucked in as easily as the next bride to these large budget, bridezilla, extreme-themed weddings. Every girl dreams of that beautiful wedding where the day revolves around her.

In reality though, the day revolves around God, and the couples' love for one another.

Something I always found beautiful is that Marriage is the only sacrament in which the couple performs the sacrament themselves.

A priest is there as a "witness" but the couple is the one carrying out the sacrament. What a beautiful example of how Christ uses marriage and family as a reflection of divine love and communion.

Some of the best advice that I received on planning a wedding was from a wise priest. He suggested that when things get crazy, between family members taking over, the budget collapsing and several other unexpected events, just take time away from it all as a couple.

Focus, he said, on what this planning is leading up to. Yes, it is leading up to a beautiful cele-



Seth Conklin and Amanda Miner are preparing for their Oct. 1 Wedding at St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid.

bration, but most importantly, its leading to a marriage.

The experience of planning a wedding has really opened my eyes to many things, some good, some sad.

Many couples these days feel it is their "right" to be married in a Catholic Church, something owed to them because their family is Catholic and it's "tradition."

The understanding of marriage as a sacrament has flown out the window.

## The engagement period is a beautiful time of intimate reflection and preparation of hearts and souls to be united as one in Christ

A Catholic Church has dissolved into a kind of "backdrop" to a wedding and the focus is all on the party afterward.

When you enter into the sacrament of marriage in the Catholic Church, not only are you saying "yes" to each other as a couple, you are saying "yes" to the Church as a community. We are the Church. The Church is the Body of Christ.

The engagement period is such a blessing. Not just because it takes time to fill out invitations, order flowers and pick out the perfect dress, (these are all important and sometimes stressful things, as my fiance Seth knows) but because it is a beautiful time of intimate reflection and preparation of hearts and souls to be united as one in Christ.

With this in mind, the most important wedding planning that any Catholic couple embarks on is spiritual preparation. For we are truly preparing ourselves to be a reflection of the Holy Family on earth. I'm ready and excited for the challenge and I ask engaged couples, "Are you?"



## Forming Priestly Vocations

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

Since 1791 St. Mary's Seminary has been training men for the priesthood. Seminarians today come from dioceses across the country, including the Diocese of Ogdensburg. The men studying here are a sign of hope for the future of the priesthood. We invite those considering a vocation to visit the seminary.

Please join us in praying for priestly vocations.

Rev. Thomas R. Hurst, S.S.,  
President-Rector

St. Mary's Seminary & University  
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Baltimore, MD 21210

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# Pope: church must offer more support for vocations

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Catholics must be more courageous in highlighting and fostering vocations, Pope Benedict XVI said.

"Every Christian community, every member of the church needs consciously to feel responsibility for promoting vocations," especially in an era when God's voice "seems to be drowned out by 'other voices' and his invitation to follow him by the gift of one's own life may seem too difficult," he said in his message for the World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

Those who experience a clear call to priestly or consecrated life need encouragement, support and the

possibility of feeling "the warmth of the whole community as they respond 'yes' to God and the church," he said.

## Message for World Day of Prayer for Vocations

The day of prayer will be observed May 15..

The 2011 theme is "Proposing Vocations in the Local Church."

In his message, Pope Benedict said proposing vocations on the local level means "having the courage, through an attentive and suitable concern for vocations, to point out this chal-

lenging way of following Christ which, because it is so rich in meaning, is capable of engaging the whole of one's life."

The local church needs to become "more sensitive and attentive" to helping children and young people grow in their relationship with Christ through prayer and the sacraments, become more familiar with sacred Scriptures, be generous and loving toward others, and "understand that entering into God's will does not crush or destroy a person, but instead leads to the discovery of the deepest truth about ourselves," he said.