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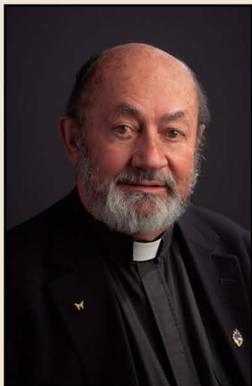
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# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

JAN. 8, 2020

## FATHER FLYNN RETIRES



Father Francis J. Flynn retired effective Jan. 1, 2020. At the time of his retirement, he was pastor of St. Elizabeth Church in Elizabethtown, St. Philip of Neri Church in Westport, and St. Joseph's Church in Essex. Bishop Terry R. LaValley has named Father Patrick A. Ratigan administrator of the three churches.

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## CHRISTMAS SERVICE



MICHAEL CAUGHEY/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

**Bishop Terry R. LaValley works with Knights of Columbus Council 258 in Ogdensburg and volunteers to serve meals on Christmas as part of the annual community Christmas celebration. Around 450 meals were served free of charge by the Knights and volunteers.**

## Working to prevent suicide

The Veterans Affairs' suicide prevention coordinator is networking with faith-based organizations to assist veterans and those suffering from depression.

On November 15, Dr. Joseph Hunter, PhD, LCSW, Veterans Affairs' suicide prevention coordinator, spoke at the VFW in Plattsburgh. Dr. Hunter, who works at the Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany, said the organization is working on developing a faith-based program locally with the hope of expanding it nationally.

In an interview with the NCC, Dr. Hunter shared that veterans are twice as likely to die by suicide than the general population.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

# Pope starts year with apology, prayer for peace

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis began the New Year with an apology for losing his patience the night before with a woman who grabbed his hand and yanked him closer to her while he was greeting people in St. Peter's Square.

To get away, the pope had slapped her hand and gave her a very serious scowl. A video of the incident went viral on Twitter.

Reciting the midday Angelus prayer Jan. 1, Pope

Francis was talking about how God's offer of salvation in Jesus is "not magic, but patient, that is, it involves the patience of love, which takes on inequity and destroys its power."

Then, briefly departing from his prepared text, the pope said that "love makes us patient. We often lose our patience; me, too, and I apologize for my bad example last night."

Returning to his text,

Pope Francis said that in gazing upon the Nativity scene with the eyes of faith, "we see the world renewed, freed from the dominion of evil and placed under the regal lordship of Christ, the baby lying in the manger."

The church marks Jan. 1 as both the feast of Mary, Mother of God, and World Peace Day, he said, urging Catholics to pray for peace and to recognize their responsibility to work for

peace.

For the 2020 celebration of World Peace Day, he said, the focus was on peace as a "journey of hope, a journey which proceeds through dialogue, reconciliation and ecological conversion."

"Jesus is the blessing of those oppressed by the yoke of slavery, both moral and material," he said. "He frees with love."

To those who are enslaved by vice and addic-

tion, the pope said, Jesus bears the message that "the Father loves you, he will not abandon you, with unshakable patience he awaits your return."

Jesus opens the doors of fraternity, welcome and love to those who are victims of injustice or exploitation; pours "the oil of consolation" on the sick and the discouraged; and opens windows of light for prisoners who feel they have no future, he said.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

## It's always felt like my spiritual home

Every time I walk into that building, I'm inundated with memories, emotions and a feeling of connectedness. It's always felt like my spiritual home.

Yet, as I worshipped and sang in St. Joseph's Church in Bombay on Dec. 29, I was also inundated with sadness. Bishop Terry R. LaValley was celebrating the final Mass in the tiny country church, my tiny country church.

I was baptized in that church. I received First Communion in that church. My



Darcy L.  
Fargo

husband and I were married in that church. In that church, I learned the tenets of my faith and found community with which I could share it. I can tell countless stories connected to that church – stories of the profound lessons learned and stories of the antics of the youth choir with which I sang as a teen.

While St. Joseph's hasn't been my home church since 2002, I've had numerous opportunities to return and sing with the church's music ministry. Every

time I did so, I felt like I returned home to familiar faces and a place of warmth, a place where I came to know the Lord.

It's heartbreaking to lose a spiritual home. I'm acutely aware of the circumstances that necessitate such church closures, but it still hurts. I shed tears, and I would guess I'm not the only one who did so.

While I process my sadness, I also move forward with hope. St. Joseph's Church may have closed, but the Church is much more than that building. The Church is the body of Christ – the outstanding peo-

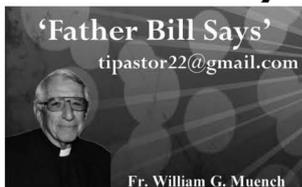
ple I have come to know around the diocese (and others I don't know around the world), people who are working to grow in their love of the Lord and to share that love with those around them. The Church is the people who serve others, seeing Jesus in those in need. The Church is the sacraments, which we are blessed to still have available to us.

The Church unifies us with Christ, our real spiritual home. I offer prayers for the parishioners of St. Joseph's in Bombay and for all the faithful who no longer have lost their church buildings of choice.

## My Christmas story: The Good Samaritan

Today, I want to share with you my decision to make Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan my Christmas story this year. Recently, I have noticed a real concern among Catholic writers and speakers that I find personally very challenging. They seemed to be writing right to me. Among other things, they continually challenged me to wonder if the people I minister to are truly dedicated to Jesus and his message.

I know you realize Christmas is our celebration of the incarnation of our Savior, Jesus Christ. In faith, we firmly believe Jesus became a member of this human race, of our human race. You and I belong to a sacred race; Jesus was one of us. We are a blessed people; Jesus was one of us. Jesus came to guide us and to teach us what it means to be the people of God. Jesus' ministry was to come among us to teach us. His message transformed our world. That message is that God loves us. We are a loved people. As disciples of Jesus, our vocation is to help others recognize how passionately



Fr. William G. Muench

God loves us all. We are called to bring this message of love and peace to our part of the world.

Jesus showed us how when he told the parable of the Good Samaritan. And for that reason, I decided to use Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan my Christmas story. I am certain that you know the story well.

In Luke's Gospel, the incident begins when a scholar of the law, a Jewish lawyer, asks Jesus the question, "what is the greatest of all the commandments?" There are many commandments and rules in traditional Hebrew law. Jesus gave this man an answer that continues to be important to you and me – the two great commandments: "Love God above all things and love you neighbor as yourself." In the Gospel story of St. Luke, this lawyer then asks Jesus, "Who is my

neighbor?" Jesus answers him by telling a story, the parable of the Good Samaritan. You know it, don't you?

A man is traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho. On the way, he is attacked, robbed and badly injured. Jesus' story says that he was left half dead. Remember this is Jesus' parable, his carefully crafted story to teach us. A priest on his way to Jerusalem to go to the temple to pray sees the man but passes by. He is anxious to get to prayer. Then a Levite – also on his way to Jerusalem to go to the temple – passes by. Then along comes a Samaritan. He treats the man's wounds, takes him to a nearby Inn, pays to have him cared for and promises to stop by in days to cover any extra expense. An important part of the story is that Jews did not like Samaritans. In fact, they discriminated against them. Yet, this Samaritan is the hero of Jesus' story.

Jesus asks the lawyer which one was the good neighbor. The lawyer is in a bit of a quandary. He realizes that the Samaritan treated

the man kindly, but he knew he was a Samaritan – a people he did not like and discriminated against. However, he honestly answers: "the one who treated him with mercy?" Jesus closes the experience by saying, "Go and do likewise." Will this be the year that we start treating others for their goodness and stop be blind judges?

We have begun a new year. There is always something special with a new year. It's a time for a new spirit of conversion. It's a time to consider how I can become a better person, how I can truly make my world a better place. I decided this year that the message of the Good Samaritan was exactly the challenge that must touch us all. I can only imagine how wonderful our world would be if we all could honestly and openly treat others with the love and care demonstrated by the Good Samaritan. The Good Samaritan noticed that someone needed help, and he did something.

So, a Happy New Year to you all – a new year with many challenges.

# Father Flynn retires; Father Ratigan appointed

Father Francis J. Flynn retired effective Jan. 1, 2020. At the time of his retirement, he was pastor of St. Elizabeth Church in Elizabethtown, St. Philip of Neri Church in Westport, and St. Joseph's Church in Essex.

Father Flynn was named pastor in Elizabethtown and Westport in 2012, taking on the responsibilities as pastor of the Catholic Community of St. Philip Neri and St. Joseph in Willsboro in 2015.

Bishop Terry R. LaValley has named Father Patrick A. Ratigan administrator of the three churches.

Father Ratigan retired effective June 26, 2019. At the time of his retirement, he was serving as pastor at St. Bernard's in Saranac Lake and the oratories of St. Paul's in Bloomingdale and St. John of the Wilderness in Lake Clear.

He was appointed to that position in 2014.

## FATHER FLYNN

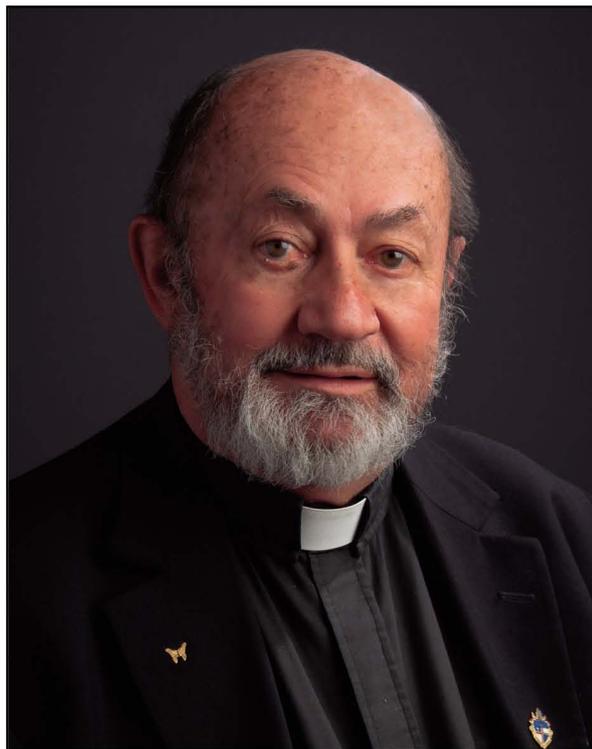
A native of Massena, Father Francis J. Flynn was born Nov. 1, 1944. He studied for the priesthood at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers and at the North American College at Rome.

Father Flynn was ordained in December of 1969 at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. In 1970, he received an STL degree from the Gregorian University in Rome.

Father Flynn's first assignment was as an assistant pastor at St. John's in Plattsburgh.

In 1973, he joined the Ogdensburg Peruvian Apostolate, serving in Mollendo, Peru, until 1981.

Upon his return to the United States, Father Flynn was associate pastor at St. Joseph's in Malone. In 1982, he was named pastor in Lake



Father Francis J. Flynn

Clear and campus minister at Paul Smiths College.

Father Flynn left the diocese in 1984 to work with the Maryknoll order for two years. Upon his return, he was assigned to North Bangor where he served as pastor until 1995 when he was assigned as parochial vicar at St. Augustine's in Peru.

For several months in 1996 he took part in a sabbatical program in Jerusalem.

Upon his return in June 1996, he was named pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Campus Parish in Potsdam. In 1999, he was named pastor in Bloomingdale and Gabriels where he continued in campus ministry at Paul Smiths College and served as a part-time prison chaplain at Camp Gabriels until moving to Constable in 2002. There, he served as pastor of the Catholic

Community of Constable, Westville and Trout River until 2012.

## FATHER RATIGAN

A native of Saranac Lake, Father Patrick A. Ratigan was born Jan. 4, 1955. He served in the U.S. Army from 1972 to 1975.

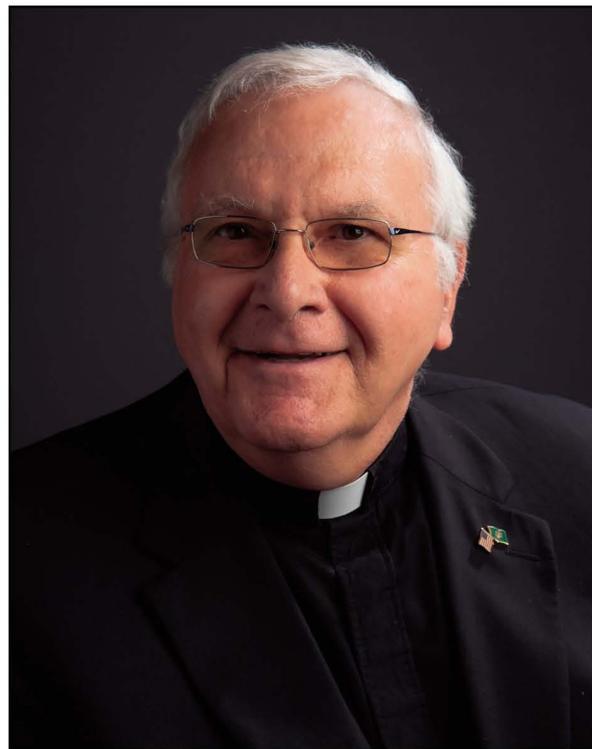
Father Ratigan attended Wadhams Hall and the North American College in Rome.

He was ordained by Bishop Brzana on Sept. 24, 1983 at St. Bernard's Church, Saranac Lake.

He has served as associate pastor at St. Mary's Cathedral, as parochial vicar of St. Alexander's Church, Morrisonville, and at Sacred Heart Church, Massena.

Father Ratigan served as a U.S. Army chaplain from 1988-2005, including one-year deployments to both Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom.

His military assign-



Father Patrick A. Ratigan

ments included Fort McClellan, Alabama, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Fort Meade, Maryland, Fort Stewart, Georgia, Fort Hood, Texas, Fort Shafter, Hawaii, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, two one-year assignments in South

Korea, and a one-year assignment in Egypt, as well as deployments to Haiti and throughout Central and South America.

He was named pastor in Brasher Falls and North Lawrence in 2005, and appointed pastor in Adams and Henderson in 2010.



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# Preventing suicide with faith-based assistance

By Mary Beth Bracy  
Contributing writer

The Veterans Affairs' suicide prevention coordinator is networking with faith-based organizations to assist veterans and those suffering from depression.

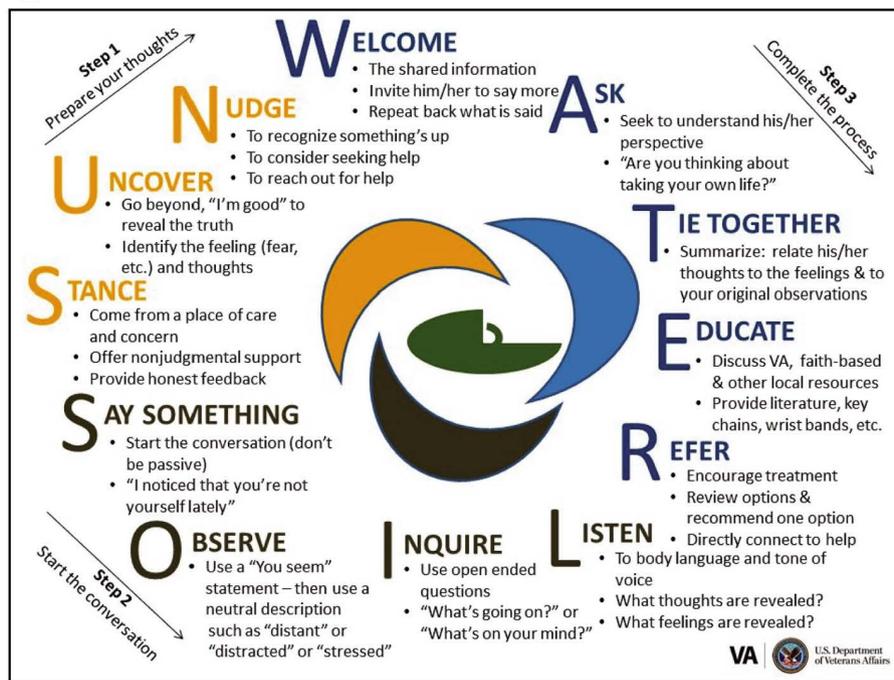
On November 15, 2019, Dr. Joseph Hunter, PhD, LCSW, Veterans Affairs' suicide prevention coordinator, spoke at the VFW in Plattsburgh. Dr. Hunter, who works at the Stratton VA Medical Center in Albany, said the organization is working on developing a faith-based program locally with the hope of expanding it nationally.

In an interview with the NCC, Dr. Hunter shared that veterans are twice as likely to die by suicide than the general population. Since 64% of all gun related deaths are suicides, the VA passes out free gun locks. As suicide is usually an impulsive act, placing a lock on a gun requires people to stop and think before going through with suicide.

When speaking to groups, Hunter invites them to spread the word about the VA's initiatives to at least 20 people, since 22 veterans die by suicide every day. If 20 people who attend trainings reach out to 20 other people, and they reach out to 10, then 4,000 people will be reached.

The majority of veterans who die by suicide live in rural areas.

"Only about half the veterans who are eligible for VA care are actually getting care," Dr. Hunter explained. "Many of them would definitely benefit. We know that being service connected, which means if you have an in-



OFFICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Dr. Joseph Hunter recently presented a graphic highlighting the SUN, WATER, SOIL method of suicide prevention. The graphic is available as a wallet card through the office of Veterans Affairs.

jury while in the military whether mental or physical and getting care for that from the VA is a protective factor. I mean, it's a buffer against suicide."

VA programs are helping veterans get connected to free care and receive financial stipends.

"And so for those reasons, my supervisor said that maybe we can do something with faith-based organizations," Dr. Hunter said. "They are naturally dispersed and nationally helpers and potential helpers with us. The training the VA does is called SAVE."

Dr. Hunter envisions more of a "train the trainer model." The VA holds centralized trainings at local veteran service agencies.

They train faith-based organizations in suicide prevention and give them a video to share. They also teach the SUN, SOIL, and WATER strategies. The VA

has developed a "wallet card," which may be cut out to use as a resource to help those who may be suffering from depression and/or considering suicide.

Hunter also does trainings at colleges to share warning signs with students and college Resident Assistants.

The suicide rates for younger veterans, especially women are rising. Faith-based organizations and groups are encouraged to contact the VA for trainings. They provide free resources for attendants to share with their congregations. Contact Hunter for more information.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 10 to 34 year olds, and the fourth leading cause of death between 35 to 54 year olds. In 2017, 47,000 people in the U.S. died by suicide. According

to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, there were more than double the number of suicides than homicides. New York suicide rates have increased by nearly 30%, almost as high as the national rise, between 1999 and 2016.

According to the study "Suicide in NY: Which counties have the highest and lowest rates," Essex, Hamilton, and Lewis counties have some of the highest suicide rates in the state.

For help and/or resources please contact:

- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, available 24 hours a day, at 1-800-273-8255. (Press 1 for Veterans or service members. The crisis line also has a text option: 838255

- The National Catholic Partnership of Disability also has a Council on Mental Illness and resources for those who are suffer-

## Talking about suicide

By Mary Beth Bracy  
Contributing writer

Noelle Garcia, a nationally renowned Catholic speaker and musician, teaches extensively about suicide.

"Suicide is very common at this point," she said. "Most people have lost somebody or they themselves have suffered or know somebody who is affected."

Garcia presents at various conferences and venues, including for young adults.

In an interview with the NCC, Garcia talked about her Lighthouse Media CD "13 Reasons Why You Matter."

In your talk "13 Reasons Why You Matter," you mention the terrifying statistic about suicide being the second-leading cause of death for youth and young adults. Why do

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

ing at: <https://ncpd.org/>

- Dr. Joseph Hunter at 518-626-5329, Veterans Affairs' suicide prevention coordinator

- Maketheconnection.net has powerful videos for Veterans and their families. Veterans tell their stories about how they recovered from PTSD, drug addiction, etc.

- The VA.gov website has a place to chat with someone, one-on-one, and to do a survey for people who may be suffering from PTSD and depression.

# Talking about suicide

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

*you think that there is such an increase in anxiety, depression, and suicide today?*

There have been a lot of studies correlating the rise in anxiety to the rise in cellphone use and social media. That's something that pretty typically has been shown to cause changes in the brain, addictive behavior. Some of the SPECT scans [imaging used to measure brain function] have shown that there's no difference between somebody who's addicted to drugs and somebody who is addicted to their phone. And that's a little scary because most of us are glued to our cellphones. So the increased anxiety is correlated to that, I think that's addicting. I also think we are under the illusion of community because we have so many friends and followers and likes [on social media] that we aren't building authentic in person relationships, face to face eye contact conversations. And we know, even from infancy, how important relationship is in being able to thrive as a human being.

When it comes to suicide I think we don't know how to cope with pain and, for many people, it's not that they want to die but it's that they want an end to the pain. So I think, as Christian people, as Catholic people, we need to bring back the idea that there is virtue in suffering, there is hope, that the suffering is not the end; that while pain is a part of life – there are situations where we choose pain when we see the good that's going to be, but some people can't see the good – we have to ask how is this changing me, how is this helping make me more dependent on the commu-

nity, how can I get relief through medicine and therapy. Seeing the purpose to the pain, the purpose to the suffering, that it's not just this overwhelming sadness that's going to keep you down for the rest of your life, but that there's hope in the midst of that . . . It was redemptive suffering that helped me through my struggles.

*When I saw your CD, I thought it was going to attack the Netflix series "13 Reasons Why." One of the things I found very interesting is how you said that we shouldn't avoid discussing suicide with young people because they're already thinking about it.*

I mentioned it briefly [at a conference], but the adults said that she shouldn't be talking about this . . . The feedback from the kids [was that] I was the highest rated speaker, and they were like we've never heard somebody from the Church talk about this before, thank you for talking about this. So, we can't teach them the value of life just by assuming that they know it. We can't teach kids not to think about suicide, but what we can tell them is we are here for you through this. I never watched the series because parts of the previews and what I heard about it were too difficult for me to deal with because I had family members who had attempted suicide and I couldn't watch it, it was just too hard for me to watch. I was on the way to the airport one day, and I thought if that girl, that character, had 13 reasons why she decided to end her life, I can come up with 13 reasons why somebody matters, thirteen reasons why they're important. Don't consider suicide because of this and this and this,

but you matter because of this and this and this.

*You also talk about the stigma that comes from the term "mental" illness. How can we create a culture where everyone is treated with dignity?*

I think, in general, in society we value life based on its usefulness and how independent it is; we don't like to be dependent. We don't define dignity and life beginning at conception, and so it becomes very much based on our opinion of that person and that life. So, naturally, someone who is dealing with an illness, particularly an unseen illness like mental illness, is stigmatized and seen as broken. Someone who is suffering from mental illness is not always capable of asking for help or even asking for support, just a listening ear. So, when we look at the people in our closest relationships and we say "oh, I haven't seen this person in awhile," it really is incumbent upon us to reach out ourselves. I think that that will start to break somewhat of the stigma because people aren't isolated and having to mask their pain by trying to fit in with the crowd because we have taken it upon ourselves to allow them that vulnerability.

One thing that I mentioned that's from a book by Dylan Klebold's mother, (Dylan Klebold was one of the Columbine shooters, killers), and his mother wrote a book where in her research she's come across the term "brain illness" because [the] brain is part of the body . . . She likes the term brain illness to reduce the stigma of mental illness because mental is being kind of imaginary, or in the thought, but [brain] is an actual physical part of the body.

*What do you think that*

*parents and teachers or other individuals can do, especially those who work with young adults, to help them foster greater brain health or to help them in general?*

Establishing time to have fun together is super important, we don't do that, we're all so busy it's hard. Even thinking, oh my gosh, I need to find time to spend one on one with my child. My daughter asked me today if I would take her on a date, I have five kids and each one said, "take me on a date, take me on a date!" And I thought, oh my gosh, when am I going to have time, but that's the most important thing as parents and teachers is to build relationships. They will learn what they need to learn through that relationship, but the primary thing is spending time getting to know what are their strengths, what are their weaknesses, what are their dreams, and then to have a bigger picture dialogue. And even praying for each other, praying with each other, we don't do that as much as we should, other than going to Mass on Sunday. . . . I know a mom who asks her kids every day: "When did you see Christ today?" It's a simple question and it probably was awkward at first, but now they not only think of where did I see Christ but they are also looking for Christ throughout their day.

*Are there any other strategies you would recommend?*

Some schools . . . have started introducing time for meditation, a time with just quiet, to quiet the brain. The brain needs rest and we're not giving our brain rest at all when we are on our phones all night and checking it when we get a notification in the

middle of the night. Taking time to rest brains, I think, is really important. There is journaling. But also, if anxiety is debilitating where somebody cannot function, then I think they should definitely see a medical professional because it's possible either a medication is required or a dietary change.

*Are there any warning signs that people should look for with depression or possible suicide?*

The biggest thing is, from what I've heard and from what I've seen in my own family, is withdrawal. They are no longer interested in things that were fun and that they enjoyed anymore, a lot of self-deprecation. And then also if there is a sudden change and all of a sudden they're upbeat that's a big warning sign. I've heard that from psychologists and I've also seen it in our community. There was a boy whose girlfriend died by suicide and then, all of a sudden, he seemed to be doing great, he wasn't depressed anymore, and then a few days later he died by suicide. So, sometimes if there is a sudden switch – to all of a sudden they're really upbeat – we feel like that's great, they're not depressed anymore, but a lot of times it's because they've made the decision to end their life and their resolved with that. So, just being aware of sudden changes in behavior is important. Also, taking into account break ups and crises, especially with young people, but even with middle age people a job loss, those are all things where we really need to reach out and support them.

For more information on Noelle Garcia's ministry and materials visit <https://www.mqministries.net/>

## Environmental Stewardship

## A new chapter

As we began a new decade last week on New Year's Day, we reflect upon the many "mountains and valleys" we have experienced in these past 10 years. As stewards of our earth, we can celebrate the heightened awareness of our incredible role as caretakers of this intricate, fragile and amazing mysterious planet. We can be grateful for the many concrete ways we have grown in our ability of take care of it.

Despite our current efforts, they are not enough. Temperatures have risen significantly over the past 50 years. As a result, we are witnessing more extreme heat, wildfires, droughts, rainfall and wind events, and more severe hurricanes causing flooding and wide spread destruction in many places on the planet. While climate scientists recognize natural cycles of nature can cause changes, it takes over hundreds and thousands of years to make significant changes. Nearly all climate scientists attributed this radical change in the past 50 years mainly to human activities.

In Pope Francis' message to the world leaders on January 1, World Day of Peace, titled "PEACE AS A JOURNEY OF HOPE: DIALOGUE, RECONCILIATION, AND ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION," he called for a change in the way in which creation is often viewed.

"This journey of reconciliation also calls for listening and contemplation of the world that God has given us as a gift to make our common home. Indeed, natural resources, the many forms of life and the earth itself have been entrusted to us 'to till and keep' (Gen 1:15), also for future generations, through the responsible and active participation of everyone." (8) "For Christians it requires that 'the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.'" (9)

How we perceive creation — whether as an object simply there for our own use OR as a unique expression of God's goodness — will influence how we will treat it.

Take time this week to observe how you view and interact with the sacredness of Creation within and around you.

## Rest in Peace

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

**Jan. 8** — Rev. Michael Moris, 1893; Rev. Frederick C. Hatch, 1961; Msgr. Robert John Arquette, 1969; Rev. Leo McCarthy, O.S.A., 1975; Rev. Roland Gaulin, O.M.I., 1984; Rev. Anthony F. Pease, 1997; Msgr. Morris L. Dwyer, 2004

**Jan. 9** — Rev. James P. Santoni, O.M.I., 1890; Rev. Joseph Ferdinand Durin, M.S.C., 1897; Rev. Fred Commins, O.S.A., 1924; Rev. Joseph Edward Doyle, 1958; Rev. Jeremiah Albert O'Brien, 1974

**Jan. 10** — Rev. Christopher C. Poulin, 1904; Msgr. James O'Driscoll, 1913; Msgr. Frederick P. Di-viney, 1961

**Jan. 11** — Msgr. John Andrew Cotter, 1964; Msgr. Anthime D. Charbonneau, 1976; Most Rev. Walter P. Kellenberg, 1986

**Jan. 12** — Msgr. Francis Joseph Maguire, 1978

**Jan. 14** — Rev. John M. Neenan, M.S.C., 1879; Rev. Benedict Scharff, O.F.M. Conv., 1964; Deacon Francis Bradley, 2000

## Protecting God's Children

**The Diocese of Ogdensburg** has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults.

Pre-registration online is required. Participants may preregister at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org).

Upcoming sessions:

**Jan. 14** — 9 a.m., Sisters of St.

Joseph Motherhouse, Watertown

**Jan. 30** — 6 p.m., Wakefield Recital Hall, room C-224, SUNY Potsdam

## To Report Abuse

**If you have a complaint** of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terri-  
anne Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY, 12955

terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com  
Phone: Day: 518-651-2267, Night: 518-569-0612; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy at 315-393-2920

# Mass of Christian Burial celebrated for Deacon Yarchuk

A Mass of Christian Burial for Deacon Andrew "Andy" Yarchuk was celebrated Jan. 4 at St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church in Webster.

Deacon Andy, formerly of Watertown, passed December 26, 2019 in Rochester at the age of 92.

Deacon Andy was predeceased by his beloved wife Betty; sons, Andrew M. and David A.; and his siblings and his parents.

Deacon Andy is survived by daughters, Barbara A. Robbins (Deacon Mark) of Webster, and Mary A. Ciarkowski (Kevin) of Webster; a daughter-in-law, Jaye J. (Hanson) Yarchuk of South Carolina; 11 grandchildren and their children; and many nieces and nephews.

Deacon Andy was a 23-year veteran of the U.S. Army, serving as a paratrooper and engineer in the 11th Airborne Divi-



Deacon Andrew "Andy" Yarchuk

sion during WWII. After retiring from the army in 1967, he worked as a civilian heavy-duty mechanic at Fort Drum.

Along with wife Betty, he was an active member of Holy Family Church.

On October 4, 1981, he was ordained a Deacon in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg. After ordination, Deacon Andy was assigned to Holy Family Church, where he served for many years.

He also worked as a full-time hospital chaplain at the House of the Good Samaritan and later as a chaplain at Cape Vincent Correctional Facility from 1988-2001.

Deacon Andy was a 4th degree Knight in the Knights of Columbus, a member of the 3rd Order of St. Francis, and served in prison and Marriage En-

counter ministries throughout New York State.

He loved the outdoors, especially spending summers at the family cottage in Cape Vincent.

He enjoyed fishing, hunting and feeding any animals that were fortunate enough to pass him by.

In 2004, Andy and wife Betty moved to Webster to be with family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church, 783 Hard Road, Webster, NY 14580, or to the Sisters of Most Precious Blood, 400 Pratt Street, Watertown, NY 13601.

To share a memory of Deacon Andy or send a condolence to the family, visit [www.newcomer-rochester.com](http://www.newcomer-rochester.com).

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**Jan. 8** — 9:45 a.m. — Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by lunch

**Jan. 12-16** — NYS Bishop's Retreat at Our Lady of Florida Spiritual Center in North Palm Beach, Florida

## 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!

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## March for Life theme borrows page from suffragist centennial

**WASHINGTON (CNS)** – The March for Life, the annual march in Washington to protest legalized abortion in the United States, is tying itself in 2020 to the women's suffrage movement for the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. The theme of the march is "Life Empowers: Pro-Life Is Pro-Woman." Jeanne Mancini, head of the March for Life, remarked how two noted suffragists of their day, Alice Paul and Susan B. Anthony, were themselves staunchly against abortion. A video made to support the upcoming march, to be held Jan. 24, said the women called abortion "the ultimate exploitation of women." An unnamed woman speaking in the video said 30 million female babies had been aborted since the twin 1973 Supreme Court rulings in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* that legalized abortion virtually on demand. Mancini said speakers lined up for the pre-march gathering include Louisiana State Sen. Katrina Jackson, a pro-life Democrat who authored a bill in 2014 to require abortion doctors to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals.

## Fire drill at Mass? Parish would rather be safe than sorry

**SPRINGFIELD, Ore. (CNS)** – Everyone remembers fire drills at school. Many businesses do their best for employees by having emergency evacuations. But at Mass? Members of St. Alice Parish in Springfield recently showed how it's done. "Everyone was out in one minute and 42 seconds at the 9:30 a.m. Mass; that's 300 to 350 people with a number of young families," said Mike Whitney, one of the parishioners behind the drill. Other Masses did nearly as well. "I was thinking that for this first time that four minutes would be good, and we'd shave time off that in future drills," Whitney told the Catholic Sentinel, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Portland. "We were ecstatic." Parishioners impressed Merrill Harrison, Springfield's deputy fire marshal, as well. "Evacuation drills and early detection of an emergency are key to everyone's safety," he said. "The whole point is familiarizing people about getting out."

## USCCB president: 'Violence in the name of God is blasphemy' LOS ANGELES (CNS)

– Decrying the acts of religious violence that have taken place during the Christmas season, the president of the U.S. bishops declared: "Violence in the name of God is blasphemy." Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said: "The rise of anti-Semitic violence in this country and around the world must be condemned along with the ongoing persecution of Christians. Protecting religious freedom and freedom of conscience should be among the highest priorities of every government." Archbishop Gomez's remarks, in a Dec. 31 statement, were prepared with the Jan. 1 observance of the World Day of Peace in mind. He cited three incidents: the Dec. 29 assault on worshippers in a Texas church by a gunman, which left two congregants and the shooter dead; the Dec. 27 a stabbing rampage during a Hanukkah celebration in a rabbi's home in New York; and the Dec. 26 posting of a video by an Islamic State affiliate in Nigeria that showed the beheading of 11 Christians. "In our neighborhoods and communities, violence and cruelty are a sad and ordinary reality of daily life," Archbishop Gomez said. "Children in our country are killed each day in the womb and many of our neighbors do not have what they need to lead a dignified life. Our politics and cultural discourse are often marked by anger and a merciless and unforgiving contempt for others."

# Ecological sin: Talk of update to catechism sparks debate

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** – Pope Francis' announcement that the Catechism of the Catholic Church would be updated to include a definition of "ecological sin" sent Catholic Twitter into a frenzy.

Reactions ranged from praise for how seriously the church was taking the obligation to care for creation to cynicism or even outrage over the church's involvement in what many considered to be a highly politicized issue.

"This 'create a sin' is absurd," one person tweeted.

Another Tweet argued that "harming people is a sin but not 'harming the common home' as if the environment were a being."

If the wording of the catechism change "is vague or broad," the tweet continued, it will do nothing "except foster politicized interpretations."

Ecological sin was discussed at length during Synod of Bishops for the Amazon in October, and several members of the synod called on the church to deepen its theology in a way that would help people recognize such sins.

In their final document, synod members proposed that the church define ecological sin as "an act of commission or omission against God, against one's neighbor, the community and the environment."

Nearly three weeks after the synod, Pope Francis told members of the International Association of Penal Law that there were plans to include a definition of ecological sin in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

The "Twitterverse" often

reacts to news with sarcasm, and the mention of "ecological sin" was no exception. One tweeter surmised that a change in the catechism would mean considering "how many extra squares of toilet paper a Catholic can use before it becomes a sin."

"Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been two weeks since my last confession. I turned on the AC four nights, I used 9 pieces of single-use plastics, I forgot to compost, I gunned the engine twice, I ate imported fruit and neglected to recycle aluminum cans 6 times," another Twitter user tweeted.

Theologian Celia Deane-Drummond, director of the U.K.-based *Laudato Si'* Research Institute, told Catholic News Service in late November that ecological sins "are in one sense simple to understand, but in another sense complex, since they are in between the category of natural evil and moral evil."

"Those natural disasters that happen, for example, with greater frequency due to climate change, can, at least in part, be attributed to human activity," Deane-Drummond said.

While some argue that sins against creation in general cannot be equated with sins against other human beings, Deane-Drummond said ecological sins "join together human suffering and those of other creatures," based theologically "on a doctrine of creation."

"The story of Genesis portrays the fall of humanity as a breakdown of relationships between

God, each other and the natural world. Everything, as Pope Francis says dozens of times, is interconnected," she told Catholic News Service.

"It is therefore not surprising and completely in keeping with many centuries of Christian thought for ecological sins to be part and parcel of what it means to sin," she added. "That is, both direct and indirect harms to other creatures and other people that are related to our human activities."

Talking about "ecological sin" is not unprecedented, Deane-Drummond said, pointing to the Common Declaration on Environmental Ethics, a joint statement signed in 2002 by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople and St. John Paul II.

The degradation of the environment and its natural resources, the statement said, is not an issue that is "simply economic and technological; it is moral and spiritual."

"A solution at the economic and technological level can be found only if we undergo, in the most radical way, an inner change of heart, which can lead to a change in lifestyle and of unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. A genuine conversion in Christ will enable us to change the way we think and act," the document stated.

"This idea has been around for some time," Deane-Drummond told CNS. "What Pope Francis has done is to find a way to embed it more firmly in the church."

## CLINTON

**ALL YOU CAN EAT BREAKFAST**

Altona – An all you can eat breakfast to be held.

**Date:** Jan. 12

**Time:** 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**Place:** Holy Angels Church Hall

**Cost:** Adults, \$10; Children 6-12, \$5; under 5, Free

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**

Peru – St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus Council 7273 to have a spaghetti dinner.

**Date:** Jan. 18

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

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

**Cost:** Adults, \$9; Children 6-12, \$4; 5 and under, Free

**Features:** Take-outs are available. Helps fund Coats for Kids, Kids Day Out, Youth Programs, Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest and More.

**MARCH FOR LIFE**

Washington D.C. – Plattsburgh bus to Washington D.C. for March for Life.

**Schedule:** Bus to leave St. Peters at 7:45 p.m. on Jan. 23 and it will return to Plattsburgh on Jan. 34

**Cost:** \$30

**Contact:** Deacon Randy Smith 518-566-6229.

**PANCAKE BREAKFAST**

Treadwell Mills – The Knights of Columbus will hold a pancake breakfast.

**Date:** Feb. 2, March 1 & April 5

**Time:** 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Place:** St. Joseph's Parish Hall

**Cost:** Adults, \$8; Children 6-12, \$4; 5 and under, Free

**CHARISMATIC PRAYER GATHERING**

Morrisonville – A Charismatic Prayer Gathering is to be held.

**Date:** the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month.

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

**Place:** St. Alexander's Church

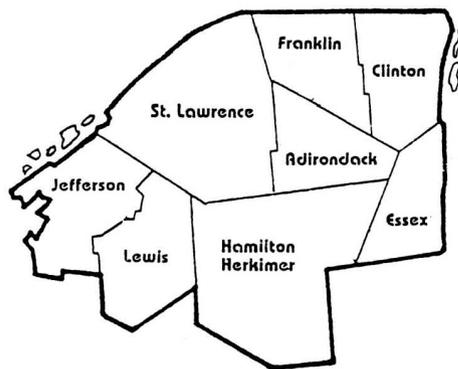
**Features:** A time for prayer, praise, scripture, song, sharing and fellowship. All are welcome! An opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and each other.

**Contact:** For more information or if you have questions, please contact the church office at 518-561-5039.

## JEFFERSON

**CATHOLICISM SERIES**

Watertown – Bishop Robert Barron's



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, 1-866-314-7296;  
e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

"Catholicism" DVD presentation and discussion to be held.

**Schedule:** #1 – Jan. 9 - "Christ & the Church"; #2 – Jan. 16 - "Sacraments"; #3 – Jan. 23 - "Saints" #4 – Jan. 30 - "Prayer"; #5 – Feb. 6 - "Heaven & Hell"

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Place:** Dostie Hall at Sacred Heart Church

**Features:** Explore the faith through stories, biographies and images; like a world tour of persons, places & cathedrals. All are welcome. Refreshments.

**Contact:** Holy Family Rectory, 315-782-2468

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**

Evans Mills – The Indian River Knights of Columbus to have a Spaghetti & Meatball dinner.

**Date:** Jan. 11

**Time:** 4 p.m. to 7

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

**Cost:** Adults, \$7; Senior Citizens, \$6; Children 12 and under, \$5; 5 and under, Free

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**

Adams – The Knights of Columbus will have a spaghetti dinner.

**Date:** Jan. 18

**Time:** 4:30 p.m. to 7

**Place:** St. Cecilia's Church

**Cost:** Adults, \$7; Seniors, \$6; Children, \$4; Children 5 and under, Free

**Contact:** For more information call Joe Hulbert at 315-465-6543

**SURVIVING DIVORCE**

Watertown – Surviving Divorce program to be held.

**Date:** 12 Sessions for 6 weeks starting Jan. 21 on Tuesdays and Thursdays

**Time:** 6:30 p.m. to 8:30

**Place:** St. Anthony's Church

**Features:** Separated and divorced adults – come find support and healing.

**Contact:** For more information, contact Steve Tartaglia at startaglia@rcdony.org or (315) 393-2920.

**SPAGHETTI DINNER**

Watertown – St. Anthony's church to have a Spaghetti Dinner.

**Date:** Jan. 30

**Time:** Take-outs begin at 4 p.m., dinner 4:30 p.m. to 6:30

**Cost:** Adults, \$8; Half portions for children or adults, \$4.50; children 3 and under, Free; Sauce, \$5 quart (bring a pot); extra meatballs are .75 cents each.

## LEWIS

**DIVINE MERCY DEVOTIONS**

Houseville – Divine Mercy Devotions to be held for the month of January.

**Date:** Jan. 5

**Time:** 3 p.m.

**Place:** St. Hedwig's Church

**Features:** The program includes: Vespers (Evening Prayer), Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, and Benediction. All are welcome.

**Contact:** 315-348-6260.

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

**YOUTH BUSES FOR LIFE**

Washington, DC – Registration is now open for the Youth Buses for life.

**Date:** Jan. 26, 2020

**Cost:** \$200

**Features:** Buses depart the North Country and the cost will include transportation, three hotel stays, three breakfasts, two dinners, two lunches, t-shirt, slingbag and an awesome experience! Western bus departs from IHC in Watertown. Northern bus departs from Massena with stops in Canton and Gouverneur. March for Life in our nation's capital and participate in the Life is Very Good Rally and Mass and the National ProLife Summit!

**Contact:** Registration and more information at [www.rcdony.org/prolife](http://www.rcdony.org/prolife)

**YOUTH LENTEN RETREAT**

Lenten retreats to be held for young people in grades 7 to 12

**Schedule:** Feb. 29 at St. Patrick's, Watertown; March 7 at St. Mary's, Champlain

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

**Features:** There is no fee to attend. Each retreat will focus on three aspects to aid us in centering ourselves on Jesus Christ and strengthening our relationship with our loving God. Each afternoon retreat will be fun, heart and mind opening and spiritually rejuvenating.

**Contact:** To register go to [www.rcdony.org/youthlenten/lenten-retreat.html](http://www.rcdony.org/youthlenten/lenten-retreat.html) or contact Virginia Demers, at: [vdemers@rcdony.org](mailto:vdemers@rcdony.org) - 315-393-2920 ext. 1401

**LEAD EVENT**

Lake Placid – Diocesan LEAD event to be held.

**Date:** March 9-10

**Place:** Crowne Plaza

**Cost:** One LEAD member is free, Additional members cost \$50. If you have a team of three, the cost is \$120. Non-LEAD parishes cost \$75 per person.

**Features:** The theme will be "The Catechumen's Journey: The Initiation process". Creating Holy Moments for New Disciples. Participants are responsible for their own hotel accommodations and expense. Mention the event when registering with the hotel.

**Contact:** Jessica Hargrave by email: [jhargrave@rcdony.org](mailto:jhargrave@rcdony.org) or by phone: (315)393-2920

**DAY OF REFLECTION**

LEAD event to be held in the Eastern and Western region of the diocese.

**Date:** March 21

**Time:** 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

**Place:** Eastern Region, St. John XXIII

Newman Center, Plattsburgh. Speaker will be Deacon Mark Bennett. Western Region, Wadhams Hall, Ogdensburg. Speaker will be Deacon Jim Crowley.

**Cost:** One LEAD member is free. Additional Lead member and non-members fee is \$20

**Contact:** Jessica Hargrave at [jhargrave@rcdony.org](mailto:jhargrave@rcdony.org) or call 315-393-2920

**CONFIRMATION RETREAT**

Net Ministries challenges young Catholics to love Christ and embrace the life of the church.

**Schedule:** March 28, St. Augustine's Church, Peru from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; March 29, at Sacred Heart Church, Watertown from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Cost:** \$30 per student (meal included)

**Contact:** These are a first come, first served basis registration, so don't be the last and miss the chance to attend. Register by March 18 by emailing [crussell@rcdony.org](mailto:crussell@rcdony.org) or by calling 315-393-2920

**YOUTH RALLY**

Lake Placid – Diocesan Youth Rally to be held for grades 7-12.

**Date:** April 25

**Time:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Place:** High Peaks Resort

**Cost:** \$30, All inclusive

**Features:** The Youth office is excited to bring young people together for a celebratory day filled with "God's All Encompassing Love". The theme of "Under The Big Top" sets the tone for a carnival style event with fun games, entertainment, great food, a wonderful resort location, a dynamic speaker and a closing Mass offered by Bishop Terry LaValley. This year our Keynote speaker will be, Doug Tooke. Doug Tooke is a dynamic and energetic speaker with more than 20 years in Ministry. Utilizing cinematic storytelling, Doug's presentations inspire and motivate people to seek a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Also appearing will be the Gratto Fellows Circus Performers showcasing their interactive juggling, unicycling, rope walking, and other feats of daring, bravery and comedic entertainment. You can also try your skill or luck at one of the Carnival Game tables and we will have great music all day long! Carnival style lunch will be provided by the High Peaks Resort.

**Contact:** Tom Semeraro at 315-393-2920 ext. 1415 or register at [www.rcdony.org/youthrally/rally](http://www.rcdony.org/youthrally/rally)

## AT THE MOVIES

## LITTLE WOMEN

**NEWYORK (CNS)**—Writer-director Greta Gerwig, who proved her bona fides as a screen moralist in 2017 with "Lady Bird," has repeated the feat with her elegant, vibrantly emotional adaptation of the 19th-century classic "Little Women" (Sony).

This interpretation of Louisa May Alcott's novel, the fourth major film version since 1933, turns it into a non-linear memory play. Its framing device consists of flashbacks in the mind of the adult Jo March (Saoirse Ronan).

All four of the tight-knit March sisters, who grow up in Massachusetts during the Civil War, with their father away as a military chaplain, were artistically inclined. But only Jo has become a professional writer.

As a result of this look-back approach, there are no surprises. Gerwig shows, early on, how everyone has ended up.

In this way, the much-beloved episodes of the

novel—the burning of Jo's first manuscript, selfish Amy (Florence Pugh) falling through the ice, sweet Meg (Emma Watson) at the debutante ball, and the saintly love of Beth (Eliza Scanlen)—are shown as foreshadowings of their future characters. The siblings are also seen happily settling into the adult responsibilities of marriage and families.

This could possibly be off-putting for those most familiar with the book and previous film versions, but Gerwig is patiently striving to make the story relevant.

She's not delivering a lecture, and neither is she trying to confuse anyone. She clearly loves these girls, at the same time underlining historical context.

The framing also lets Gerwig sharpen the connection between Alcott and the free-spirited Jo, who knows how to handle a recalcitrant publisher, Mr. Dashwood (Tracy

Letts), adroitly after he dryly advises her, "If the main character's a girl, make sure she's married by the end. Or dead. Either way."

Gerwig has added lines, some taken from Alcott's other writings, which demonstrate that the March sisters are sadly aware of how the law and societal norms constrict their independence and ambitions. Women at the time were considered little more than male property, with few legal rights of their own.

Amy and Meg would like to marry for love. But they're also intensely clear-eyed about how the power relationship between the sexes works.

"Don't sit there and tell me that marriage isn't an economic proposition, because it is," says Amy, the aspiring painter who knows she'll never be considered a great talent.

Jo, who longs to be financially independent so she can support her

mother, reflects, "I can't get over my disappointment at being a girl." Even matriarch Marmee (Laura Dern), as strong as she appears, concedes, "I'm angry nearly every day of my life."

Additional wry commentary about love and money is occasionally provided by rich Aunt March (Meryl Streep), who often makes pronouncements on what she thinks are the girls' poor choices, although her love and generosity are never in doubt.

The powerful themes of motherhood, bonds of sisterhood and social service to help those in need are also clearly present.

The girls ultimately all follow their hearts, which is the source of the story's lasting appeal. Jo realizes that her critic, Friedrich Bhaer (Louis Garrel), isn't as cruel as he first appears.

Meg marries an impeccable tutor, John Brooke (James Norton). The vain

Amy finally lands the feckless Laurie (Timothée Chalamet) after Jo turns him down. And Beth, whose beautiful piano playing brings neighbor Mr. Laurence (Chris Cooper) to tears, can't avoid her destiny—a fatal illness.

As literature brought to the screen, this version should endure for quite a long time. Moviegoers who already love these characters will get the lush presentation they hope to see. Gerwig's occasional alterations, moreover, prove she's equally adept at accurate history and subtle moral messaging.

The film contains mature themes, including death. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II—adults and adolescents.

The Motion Picture Association rating is PG—parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

## MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

## The foxes and the henhouse

Probably the biggest bioethics story of 2019 involved Dr. Jankui He (known to his associates as "JK"), a Chinese scientist who employed a new technology called CRISPR/Cas9 to produce the world's first gene-edited babies. JK made genetic changes to two little girls, Lulu and Nana, when they were early-stage embryos, attempting to modify a receptor for HIV to confer resistance to a possible future infection from the virus. He publicly announced the birth of the

girls at an international scientific conference near the end of 2018, and as the news rapidly spread, many scientists and commentators expressed shock and dismay over his "designer baby" experiments.

Chinese provincial authorities quickly became aware of his activities as well, and he was placed under house arrest upon

his return from the conference. In the closing days of 2019, a secret trial was held, and he was sentenced to three years in prison for producing the CRISPR babies. The trial proceedings concluded that JK had "rashly applied gene editing technology to human assisted reproductive medicine."

The verdict reached by the Chinese court raises

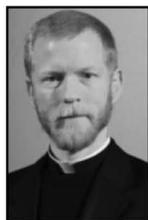
complex questions that must be confronted: What does it mean to "rashly apply" a new technology like human gene editing? Who should determine if a particular use is "rash" or "reasonable"?

Dr. Rita Vassena, a member of the Executive Committee of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology, framed the ethical concerns around JK's case this way: "As the current scientific consensus indicates, the use of CRISPR/Cas9 in human

embryos destined to give rise to a pregnancy is, at this stage, unjustified."

She couches her ethical analysis, as many scientists do, in terms of the "current scientific consensus." But such "consensus"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Father Tadeusz  
Pacholczyk  
Ph.D.



## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

# Jesus prepares for His mission to the world

Last Sunday, we celebrated the coming of the Wise Men from the East to let the world know that a tiny child born in Bethlehem is really a King.

What Isaiah had foretold 500 years before has now come true. A Savior has come for all people. Jesus, as an infant, is already preparing the way for His mission to the world.



Monsignor  
Paul E.  
Whitmore

That mission is to bring the light of God's truth and God's love into the world's ignorance and lack of love. And so, the Father sends a star to guide foreign "magi" – wise men – to see the light for themselves.

Today's feast is another "epiphany" of Jesus, as He is about to begin his preaching and healing. He receives his

January 12

Baptism of the Lord

READINGS

Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Acts 10:34-38

Mat 3:13-17

official approval from God the Father and the Holy Spirit in a very dramatic scene in the desert. Jesus has left his mother in order to journey into the desert to seek out his cousin, John.

To the amazement of

John, Jesus insists on going down into the water to receive John's baptism of repentance. John protests, then gives assent to Jesus' request. Here, surrounded by ordinary sinners and seekers, Jesus, the sinless One, bends his head and shoulders as John pours the water.

We wonder what Jesus was praying about. It is quite likely He is asking the Father to show some sign of His approval for his "going public." His

prayer is answered in a most dramatic fashion. The heavens open, a voice thunders, "You are my beloved Son; with You I am well pleased!" Remarkably, the third Person of the Holy Trinity, in bodily form, takes the form of a dove, visible to all onlookers. He, too, endorses Jesus' mission.

For those onlookers who had been wondering if John the Baptist was the Messiah, all doubt is removed. It is Jesus who God has chosen.

## Foxes and henhouse

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

is an extremely malleable concept. It also conveniently implies that scientists themselves can set up their own ethical rules and provide regulatory oversight for scientific research, so that they, in effect, become the foxes guarding the henhouse. The saga that has unfolded during the last year surrounding the gene-editing experiments of JK has demonstrated, if nothing else, how self-serving and ineffective a community of scientists can be as they try to exercise the role of lawyer, judge and

jury of their own ethical standards.

Even though we should be justifiably alarmed at Chinese courts meting out jail time in secret to scientific researchers, the fact remains that it was a government-controlled court that finally put some teeth into ethical regulations. In the West, to have governments, courts or major institutions take any action whatsoever in a case like JK's seems at present inconceivable. Instead, in American and European universities and industrial settings, we often encounter feeble, meander-

ing discussions about research ethics, along with a proliferation of rubber-stamping "ethics review panels." These often consist of hand-picked members devoid of strong ethical or religious training and viewpoints. Such panels give increasingly systematic cover for an ever-expanding range of unethical research practices.

Whether it's giving a green light to use stem cells derived from human embryos or tissues from intentionally aborted fetuses for research, or to employ cloning technol-

ogy to produce new human life, or to manufacture three parent embryos, many biomedical researchers have come to rely so much on ethical rubber stamps that they just venture ahead, confident that they won't be "fenced in" by ethical considerations.

JK's gene-editing experiments and China's strong reaction have at least managed to bring the ethical concerns momentarily back into the spotlight. "I think a jail sentence is the proper punishment for him," said Wang Yuedan, a professor of immunology at Peking University in comments he shared with the New York Times. "It makes clear our stance on the gene editing of humans – that we are opposed to it... signaling that there is a bottom line that cannot be broken."

Yet this is precisely the difficulty in biomedicine today: namely, that there are few, if any, "bottom lines" when it comes to research ethics. The lines have become exceedingly flexible, if the price is right or if a particular political administration is

amenable to re-drawing them.

While there isn't any perfect solution to ensure scientists never engage in unethical research –and the involvement of communist secret courts is certainly far from ideal – we clearly need to promote, fund and regulate modern biomedical research in a way that prioritizes ethics over expediency.

This means establishing significant sanctions and funding restrictions when ethical violations by researchers occur. It also means including alternative viewpoints on ethics review panels, especially those informed by long-standing religious and philosophical traditions, like that of the Catholic Church, which offer the important perspective that certain ethical lines are not able to be moved or redrawn. This kind of input can contribute much to the kinds of discussions that need to occur, and can afford an important counterbalance to any foxes who desire to keep guard over the ethical henhouse.



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## The Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Inc.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSI, Director

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# Hope in the new year

The year 2020 of our Lord is upon us. The promise of a new year calls us to a mission of prayer and dialogue for peace. As we respond to these calls, the word hope could be our guide in the days and months ahead. As people of faith we have no doubt in the word hope. Hope runs hand and hand with faith, a fundamental precept of Christianity.

The media informs us of threats that exist in our world. For those of us who are mission minded, we see the deprived, the challenged and lost. We see those who need basic necessities of life in war torn and natural disaster-prone areas. For all of those on both sides, we pray in this spirit of the new year and offer our hope for better days.

As we see the pain of starvation in the faces of many, we see human fragility. We see pictures of children huddled together for safety and are reminded that human fear is very real. The world view of life at times offers us places where there is no home for hope. That is where we know we must help.

A major part of our faith as we support the missions is the discovery that the more impossible hope appears to be, the more human resilience shines through. Our hope and support of the missions becomes the place where light shines in the darkness and deprivation. Hope can be the answer.

Hope is great comfort and consolation. As we hope, so does God. He hopes eternally and passionately for the whole world. God hopes lovingly for each of us. God's hope is in our prayers for peace. He believes that we do hopeful deeds to bring about peace in the hearts of individuals and the world.

Just about 2000 years ago, the early Christian missionaries began their journeys of hope to help those reaching out for change. In those days, Christians seeking hope for a better way from the Mediterranean basin, Gaza and Alexandria were some of the first few find what Christianity could offer them. The love of Christ by way of our baptism in the missionary spirit. In other words, baptized and sent. As 2019 ends, the year of extraordinary missions, let us proceed into 2020 with hope as we know we are baptized and sent.

We are one week into our New Year and a new decade. It is my hope that we find the peace that exists in the heart of each of us. I pray that through your missionary spirit, that we turn to God for salvation. I pray for peace, love, tranquility and above all, forgiveness. I pray that the walls that are built of sin that block our true relationship with God can be broken down. I pray for hope. And why not? We have so much to be hopeful for.

## OBITUARIES

**Alexandria Bay** – Audrey M. Senecal Pratt, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 28, 2019 at St. Cyril's Church; burial in Oakwood Cemetery, Theresa.

**Black River** – Allen Birchenough, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 27, 2019 at St. Paul's Church.

**Brownville** – Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 3, 2020 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in Dexter Cemetery.

**Canton** – Melvin Jaskowski, 78; Funeral Services Dec. 22, 2019 at the O'Leary Funeral Home.

**Chateaugay** – Kerry O'Neill, 60; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 4, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church.

**Colton** – Adrienne (Peary) Gilbert, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 30, 2019 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Chapel Hill Cemetery, Parishville.

**Constable** – Erma T. (Burgess) Fleury, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 30, 2019 at St. Francis of Assisi Church; burial in St. Francis of Assisi Cemetery.

**Crown Point** – Jeanne LaFave Duval McMurtry, 68; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 2, 2020 at Sacred Heart Church.

**Ellenburg** – Rita Florence (Forrett) Badore, 92; Mass of Christian Burial in Spring at St. Edmund's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Keeseville** – David Paul LaBounty, 56; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2020 at St. John's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Lake Placid** – Bonnie Jean (Woodward) Waton, 69; Funeral Services Dec. 30, 2019 at M.B. Clark Inc. Funeral Home.

**Lowville** – Jane Marie (Burrows) Bush, 72; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 27, 2019 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Martinsburg Cemetery.

**Malone** – Brenda K. (Degon) Turner, 61; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at Notre Dame Church.

**Massena** – Joseph L. Cash, 38; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2020 at Sacred Heart Church.

**Massena** – Julia H. (Stucz) White, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 30, 2019 at Sacred Heart Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Mineville** – Deborah Jean (Danyow) Harrington, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 23, 2019 at All Saints Church.

**Peru** – Albina (Archambault) St. Germain, 108; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 4, 2020 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Dan-

nemora.

**Plattsburgh** – Richard Pombrio, 56; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 30, 2019 at St. Peter's Church.

**Potsdam** – Robert R. Gerrish, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 27, 2019 Dec. 27, 2019 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Saranac Lake** – June M. (LaFranchise) Riley, 84; Funeral Services Dec. 28, 2019 at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

**Watertown** – James E. Hall, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 4, 2020 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Evans Mills.

**Watertown** – Dorothy Mary Caswell Tauroney, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 27, 2019 at St. Anthony's Church.



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# Archbishop: Iraqis have anxiety after drone strike

AMMAN, Jordan (CNS) – Iraqis fear their country, already weary from years of war, may be dragged into a conflict between the United States and Iran, following the U.S.-targeted killing in Baghdad of Iran's top general, Qassem Soleimani.

"We prayed during the days of Christmas for peace on earth, and the timing of this revenge from America creates in us a big anxiety about what will happen," Chaldean Catholic Archbishop Yousif Thomas Mirkis of Kirkuk, Iraq, told Catholic News Service by phone.

"This can also divide the population. Some are against. Some are for," Archbishop Mirkis explained, but warned that the assassination of Soleimani, known as the architect of Tehran's proxy wars in the Middle East, could spark further sectarian divisions in Iraq between Sunni Muslims and Shiites.

Many of the recent demonstrations rocking the capital, Baghdad, and southern Iraq were against the growing influence of Iran and Soleimani's al-Quds Force inside Iraq. Soleimani was widely seen as the sec-



CNS PHOTO/NAZANIN TABATABAEE, WEST ASIA NEWS AGENCY VIA REUTERS

**Demonstrators react during a Jan. 3, 2020, protest in front of U.N. offices in Tehran, Iran, after Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani was killed in a U.S. drone airstrike at Baghdad International Airport earlier that day.**

ond-most-powerful figure in Iran, behind Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader. Soleimani is believed to have been responsible for hundreds of U.S. service member deaths in Iraq. He was also Iran's main strategist in the Syrian conflict.

"We only pray that the situation can be calm and peaceful. We are waiting to see," Archbishop Mirkis said. "The situation in Baghdad and the South is

more troubled. But Kirkuk and Kurdistan region is still calm. Until now, this is all that we can say."

The drone attack was the lead news story in L'Osservatore Romano, the Vatican newspaper, Jan. 3: "The raid last night was only the latest episode in a long escalation of tensions culminating in the attack Dec. 31 of a crowd of demonstrators on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad."

Archbishop Leo Boccardi, apostolic nuncio to Iran, told the Italian news agency ANSA that the first reactions in Tehran were "incredulity, pain and anger."

"I think tensions have reached a level never seen before, and this is worrying and further complicates the situation in the region, which truly appears to be intensely heated," he said.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad issued a security alert telling Americans to "depart Iraq immediately, via airline while possible, and failing

that, to other countries via land."

Analysts say Soleimani was a "much more powerful figure" than former al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden or Abu Bakr Baghdad, the now-deceased leader of the so-called Islamic State.

The Soleimani killing was sparked by a series of escalating attacks between the U.S. and Iranian-backed forces. It began with the Iranian-backed Iraqi Shiite militia Kataeb Hezbollah's firing of 31 rockets into a base in Kirkuk province Dec. 27. The attack killed an American contractor and wounded several U.S. and Iraqi servicemen. In response, the U.S. bombed five of the militia's sites in Iraq and Syria. Militia supporters retaliated by setting fire to the wall and attacking the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Fawaz Gerges, professor of international relations at the London School of Economics, said many are now anxious about what action Tehran will take

against the U.S. and its interests.

Former U.S. Ambassador Matthew Bryza, now of the Washington-based Atlantic Council, said he believes Iran may use one of its proxies, such as the Lebanese Shiite militia, Hezbollah, to carry out a retaliatory attack, possibly against Israel, a U.S. Mideast ally.

Analysts expect an emergency session of the Iraqi parliament Jan. 4 may seek to end the long-standing U.S. military presence in Iraq. They believe such a move would have disastrous consequences for the fight against Islamic State militants.

Adel Abdul-Mahdi, Iraq's outgoing prime minister, called for the emergency session, saying the U.S. presence there is limited to training forces to fight terrorism. He described the attack that killed Soleimani as a "violation" of conditions for the U.S. troop presence.

The World Council of Churches appealed for all sides to "exercise maximum restraint, to refrain from further escalation, and to give priority to the welfare of all people of the region, and their right to peace and stability after so many years of violence and bloodshed."

"Gen. Soleimani was no innocent victim of war, having been the architect and promoter of armed violence in many parts of the region, but this attack and anticipated reactions to it threaten even wider and more disastrous conflict in the region," said the Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC general secretary. "As destabilizing as Gen. Soleimani's activities have been, the consequences for the people of the region of more intensive conflict are incalculable."

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