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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 78 Number 35

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

JANUARY 17, 2024

COATS FOR KIDS



Recently, the Malone Council # 308 Knights of Columbus donated 24 coats to the Malone office of Catholic Charities as a part of the national "Coats for Kids" campaign. Pictured delivering the coats are Grand Knight David Petrelli (left) and Deputy Grand Knight Angelo Pietropaoli.

PAINTING THE SAINTS



Seven paintings created by artist Shana (Smith) Kaminski were hung below the choir loft at Sacred Heart Church in Massena, part of St. Peter's Parish, on Jan. 1, the feast day of the Solemnity of Mary. Four of the paintings depict patron saints of Massena-area Catholic churches, while three others depict Catholics who ministered in the region and attained sainthood. Kaminski developed the idea for the works working with St. Peter's Parish Pastor Father Mark Reilly, and her husband, Robert, aided in the framing process.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

Pope: Gluttony may be most dangerous vice

By Matthew Santucci
Catholic News Agency

In the third installment of his catechetical series on vice and virtue, Pope Francis on Wednesday focused on the sin of gluttony, noting that the vice is not about "food in itself, but on our relationship with it."

Framing Wednesday's general audience on the social and psychological impact of this vice, the 87-year-old pontiff underscored that "gluttony is perhaps the most dangerous vice, which is killing the planet."

"The sin of those who succumb before a piece of cake, all things considered, does not cause great damage, but the voracity with which we have been plundering the goods of the planet for some centuries now is compromising the future of all," Pope Francis said to the faithful gathered in the Paul VI Audience Hall on Jan. 10.

Building on the socioeconomic dimension of this vice, Francis noted that "we have grabbed everything, in order to become the masters of all things, while everything had been consigned to our custody. This is why the fury of the belly is a great sin: We have abjured the name of men, to assume another, 'consumers.'"

"We were made in order to be 'eucharistic' men and women, capable of giving thanks, discreet in the use of the land, and

instead the danger is that we turn into predators; and now we are realizing that this form of 'gluttony' has done a great deal of harm to the world."

The pope noted that part of the danger of gluttony arises from the fact that it is a vice "that latches onto one of our vital needs, such as eating." He related this to the grave psychological consequences that arise from an unhealthy relationship with food, "especially in supposedly comfortable societies where many imbalances and pathologies manifest themselves."

Lamenting that eating disorders such as "anorexia, bulimia, obesity" have become all too prevalent, the pope said that

these diseases, which are "extremely painful," are typically "mostly linked to sufferings of the psyche and the soul."

The pope went on to note an unhealthy relationship with food "is the manifestation of something internal."

Focusing on the interiority of these pathologies, the Holy Father said that when thinking about gluttony - and our broader relationship with food - we have to ask whether it is "a predisposition to balance or immoderation; the capacity to give thanks or the arrogant presumption of autonomy; the empathy of those who share food with the needy, or the selfishness of those who hoard everything for themselves."

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Celebrate it 'like a birthday'

I laughed when I saw the story summary below a headline in a collection of news stories that came into my email.

"The pope said Jan. 7 that the anniversary of one's baptism should be celebrated each year 'like a birthday,'" the summary said.

It doesn't seem very funny to anyone but me. So, why did I laugh? My birthday and baptism were on the same day. That day?

I didn't know that until a couple years ago, when

my parents found my baptismal certificate while sorting through old documents and presented it to me. If you had asked

**Darcy L.
Fargo**

me before that, I would've told you I'd been baptized by our parish priest at St. Joseph's in Bombay, Msgr. Clarence Devan, a few months after my twin sister and I were born. I think I recall seeing photos.

When my twin sister and I were born, my sister had significant respiratory issues. Medical providers weren't sure she'd live. I knew

she was baptized the day we were born because of the circumstances. While it seems obvious, it never occurred to me that I was also baptized that day. Again, I'd seen pictures of a ceremony in a church.

It's obvious to me now, though, that my twin sister and I were a package deal, and we were both baptized at the hospital shortly after birth by Father Donald Robinson, who was then newly ordained and serving as parochial vicar in Malone.

While there are parts of aging that I don't love, I celebrate Jan. 7. I celebrate that I'm alive. I celebrate the life of my amazing

twin sister, who will forever be my better half. I celebrate the fact that my parents chose to give me the gift of life and the gift of baptism, making me part of two families I love dearly - my biological family and my Church family. I celebrate the fact that God somehow kept drawing me to Him and keeps drawing me to Him, sometimes despite my best efforts (I was a bit of a rebel in my teen/young adult years).

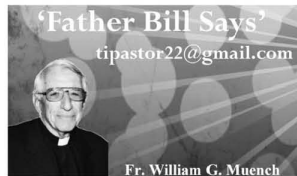
So, I think I'll keep celebrating my baptism like it's my birthday. And I'll enjoy the fact that there's finally a directive from a spiritual guide that I don't find difficult.

'True closeness to our Savior'

Today, I would like to share something with you about the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. This came to mind for me because the presentation at this week's RCIA meeting was on the Holy Eucharist.

I am certain you are aware of how important this Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is for us, Catholics. The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is the very heart of our spiritual life. So, you can see how important the presentation on the Holy Eucharist was for the RCIA - the program of formation for those who are preparing to enter the Catholic Church. It was important to help them understand our teaching about the Holy Eucharist.

You know how difficult it is to explain all we, Catholics, believe about this Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, especially to those who are not Catholic. Further, you certainly know how difficult it is to convince someone who is not a Catholic to accept and believe all we believe about the Holy Eucharist.

**Fr. William G. Muench**

Every Sunday we, Catholics, join at Mass for the Eucharist. The very word, Eucharist, helps to explain what we are about at Mass. Eucharist, from the Greek, means "thank you." Our prayer is a prayer of gratitude. We, Catholics, come to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, at each Mass as the people of God offering our gratitude to God for the Lord's great love for us all.

Today, I would like to take this space to review with you our Catholic belief - what we believe about the Holy Eucharist. I will use the words of our Catholic Catechism here.

Let us begin with the real presence. We believe in the real presence of the Lord Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. The Catechism tells us in these words, "By the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ is present in

the proclamation of God's word, in the Eucharistic assembly, in the person of the priest, but above all and in a wholly unique manner in the Eucharist. We call this presence 'real' because it is a presence in the fullest sense."

The Catechism goes on to say that Catholics believe "this presence is a substantial presence by which Christ, God and man, makes himself wholly and entirely present." We call this transubstantiation - the substance of the bread and wine is changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of Christ. At the consecration of the Mass, the ordained priest uses the words that Jesus used at the Last Supper, and the bread and wine sacramentally becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus.

At Mass, when we receive Holy Communion, we believe that we receive the Body and Blood of Jesus through the consecration of the ordained priest. The Lord is really present with us. Let me add here that we, Catholics, further believe that the real presence

of Jesus endures in the consecrated element even after the Mass is ended. So, we believe in the real presence of the Lord Jesus in the consecrated Eucharist in the tabernacles of all our Catholic Churches. It's an excellent practice for people of a parish to visit their parish church and pray in adoration of the Lord Jesus truly present in the Holy Eucharist in the tabernacle.

Through reception of the Blessed Eucharist in Holy Communion and through prayer in the presence of Jesus truly present in the Blessed Eucharist, we are all leads, each one of us, to a powerful relationship, a wonderful friendship, with the Lord Jesus. In many parishes, there are times when the Blessed Sacrament is placed in a monstrance on the sanctuary altar for prayer and meditation - for the people of the parish is come for personal prayer, a holy hour, in the presence of the Lord truly present in the Holy Eucharist. We are all united in a true closeness to our Savior.

Saints along the St. Lawrence

North Country native makes spiritual visible at Massena church

By Keith Benman
Contributing Writer

Saints with a local flair now grace the back of the nave at Sacred Heart Church in Massena, part of St. Peter's Parish.

Seven paintings created by artist Shana Kaminski were hung below the choir loft on Jan. 1, the feast day of the Solemnity of Mary. Four depict patron saints of Massena-area Catholic churches, while three others depict Catholics who ministered in the region and attained sainthood.

"It's a little bit of Massena identity, a little bit of Massena pride," Kaminski said on a recent afternoon as she explained the process that led to their creation.

St. Peter's Parish Pastor Father Mark Reilly said the paintings will serve as a powerful reminder for parishioners.

"You have these paragons of holiness in a local setting," he said. "That should suggest holiness and sainthood are possible for all of us."

In each painting, the St. Lawrence River flows behind the saints. Details like a loon in the water and native species of fish in St. Peter's net add to the local flavor.

The patron saint of St. Mary's on Cornell Avenue, the Virgin Mary, is depicted with the baby Jesus in her lap in the central painting of the seven. St. Joseph, the patron saint of the church on Bayley Road, is depicted in the painting on Mary's right. Next to him is St. André Bessette, a lay brother from Montreal who was just canonized in 2010.

The next painting por-

trays St. Kateri Tekakwitha, who spread the Catholic faith among her Mohawk people in Central New York and near Montreal in the 17th century.

On Mary's left is St. Peter, patron saint of Massena's first Catholic Church. St. Peter's is now the name for the umbrella parish for all Massena-area Catholic churches.

St. Lawrence, the patron saint of the Catholic Church in nearby Louisville, is next.

At that end is a figure of a Jesuit, representing the eight North American Martyrs, all Jesuits, who died for the Faith in the 17th century.

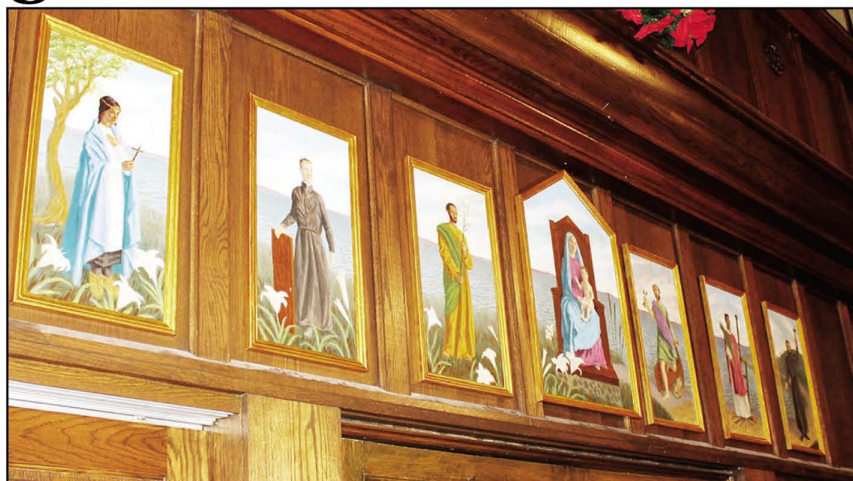
The project got started when Kaminski was talking to Father Reilly at her wedding reception after being married at Sacred Heart in August 2020.

"I just said I wanted to do something for the parish."

They discussed ideas over a period of time, and that "something" grew into the concept for the paintings. Kaminski was well prepared to turn the concepts developed with Father Reilly into finished works. She has a bachelor's in fine arts degree from Alfred University and also attended the Sacred Art School in Florence, Italy, from 2012 to 2014.

While studying art, she became interested in Saint John Paul II's "Theology of the Body," where the pope taught: "The body, and it alone, is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine."

Born and raised in Massena, Kaminski, whose



PHOTOS BY KEITH BENMAN

(Above) These seven paintings created by artist Shana Kaminski now grace the wall just below the choir loft in the nave of Sacred Heart Church., part of St. Peter's Parish in Massena. (Right) Artist Shana Kaminski and her husband, Robert, stand below the paintings Shana created for Sacred Heart Church. Robert constructed the frames for the works.



For more information

For more examples of the sacred art work of painter and sculptor Shana Kaminski go to her Website at <https://shanakaminski.com/> or on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/shanakaminskiart/> The Website also explains the theology behind her work, as well as describing Kaminski's own artistic and faith journey.

the planning with Father Reilly was done virtually, as Shana and Robert were living in Chicago for much of that time.

Before Kaminski's paintings were installed, Father Reilly said the last major artwork installed at the church was the altar table used for the preparation of the Eucharist at Mass. It was fashioned from pews once in use at Watertown's Holy Family Church and was installed at Sacred Heart

in 2017. Such well-crafted pieces play an important role in worship. And Father Reilly admits to lots of nervousness whenever one is readied for installation.

"I knew Shana is very gifted," he said as he surveyed the finished product on a recent afternoon. "But I was still concerned what might be a great piece of work might just not fit. But gosh, looking at them now, I'm just so pleased."

Gouverneur churches work, pray together

Family support coordinator helps create link between denominations

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

In the basement of Fowler Baptist Church, located just a few miles outside the Village of Gouverneur, representatives from different denominations gathered on Jan. 11 to pray together, share a meal and discuss plans to expand the unity they're trying to create.

"We started working on this in September, and we've been meeting since October," said Family Support Coordinator Michele Lallier, who serves at St. James School in Gouverneur. "As a family support coordinator for the diocese, I knew people came to St. James Church to look for help. I thought people probably did that at other churches in the area, too. I talked to Father Jay (Seymour, pastor at St. James Church), and I asked him if it was ok if I reached out to pastors of the other churches in the area to let them know about my position and how I might be able to help people with needs who go to them."

Father Seymour gave his approval to the idea, and Lallier began calling churches around the Gouverneur area.

As a result of those discussions, pastors and representatives of the area churches decided to start gathering monthly to better their cooperation and community.

"This created an opportunity to get to know pastors in the surrounding churches for fraternity and to become more familiar with their traditions," said Father Seymour. "It's also an opportunity to coordinate our efforts so we're not duplicating services. When we're helping people, whether it be through a food pantry or some other means, it's good to work together rather than separately."

"I think the saddest thing in Church history is the divide between denominations," added Howie Maxson, pastor of Fowler Baptist Church. "It's important for us just to be together. We can coordinate services, but we can also pray for and with each other. Maybe the community at large can see something different. If you go to the south, there's a Baptist church on every corner. None of them can get together. It gets even worse from a wider view. The world needs to see some unity and peace right now."

In addition to St. James Church and Fowler Baptist Church, the group includes Pastor Ben Lalka of the Gouverneur First United Methodist Church, Father Gregory Bailey of Trinity Episcopal

Prayer vigil for peace and Christian unity

All are invited to join the various churches from the Gouverneur area in a prayer vigil for peace and Christian unity.

Date: Jan. 25

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Gouverneur Community Center

Church, Pastor Mike Tomford of the North Country Christian Fellowship, a non-denominational church, and Reverend Carrie Demers, pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Gouverneur.

The group hopes to work together to help individuals in need who approach their churches and to serve their communities. For example, the church representatives noted they could potentially work on Christmas meal and gift distributions together.

Pastor Maxson said there was previously an "ecumenical fellowship of pastors" in the Gouverneur area, but its activities were suspended during the pandemic and never resumed.

"I'm happy we're actually doing this," he said, smiling. "It's good to get together again. It's good to come to-

gether to eat, pray and talk, though maybe not in that order."

"The witness of unity is important," Father Seymour added.

To further witness to and foster that unity, the group of pastors and church representatives is planning a prayer vigil for peace and Christian unity. The vigil will be held at 6:30 p.m. on January 25 at the Gouverneur Community Center.

Members of all the involved churches and the community at large are invited and encouraged to participate.

"There's so much division in the world," said Deacon Henry Leader, also of St. James Church in Gouverneur. "There's division in the Holy Land. There's division between Christians and non-Christians. There are divisions between denominations. Even

within the Church, there's a huge spectrum from conservative to liberal, and that's causing division. Coming together, we can be witnesses for Christ. It's the enemy, the devil, that wants division. God wants unity. I think it's important for us to gather together and pray together. And what's better to pray for than peace and unity?"

While the organizers hope this event, to be held on the last day of the International Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, will be a good launching point for further fellowship and cooperation.

"After this event on the 25th, we're hoping to have more things that bring people together for community as a large group," said Lallier. "We're hoping to have more unity. I think our culture needs to see unity in our love of God and our love of each other."

"I've heard it said that we all have the same boss, just different unions," added Deacon Leader, laughing.



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(Left) Emily Currier, Trinity Catholic School administrative assistant, presents Patricia Russell with her grand prize winnings from the school's Winter Raffle. (Right) Marianne Jadlos, Trinity Catholic School principal, presents Nicholas Premo with his second-place raffle winnings.

Trinity School announces Winter Raffle winners

Trinity Catholic School in Massena recently announced the winners of its Winter Raffle.

More than \$10,000 in prize money was given away as part of the fundraising event.

Trinity Catholic School families sold tickets from mid-November until Jan. 2.

The drawing took place at St. Mary's Church after the 11 a.m. Mass on Jan. 7.

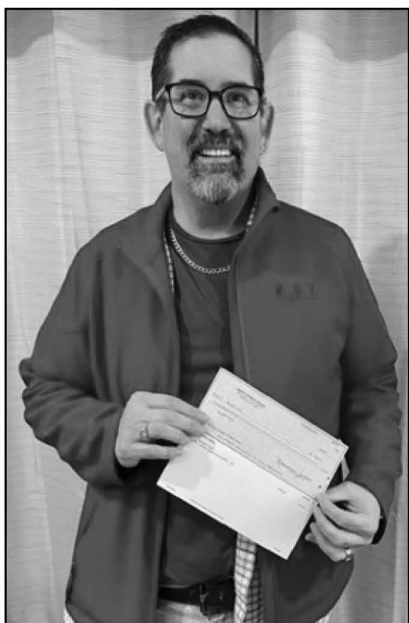
Father Mark Reilly, pastor of St. Peter's Parish in Massena, drew the winning tickets, with some help from Trinity Catholic School students.

Taking the \$10,000 cash prize was Patricia Russell.

Nicholas Premo won the second-place prize of \$1,000.

Kenneth French was the \$500 third-prize winner.

Trinity's winter raffle is an important fundraiser for the school. The school thanks everyone who purchased a ticket!



Kenneth French took home the third-place raffle prize.

BOOK REVIEW

'God Loves the Autistic Mind'

Editor's Note: The following book review is offered by Marika Donders, director of the Office of New Evangelization for the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Additional book reviews can be found at <https://www.rcdony.org/evangelization.html>.

God Loves the Autistic Mind: Prayer Guide for Those on the Spectrum and Those Who Love Us

**Author: Father Matthew P. Schneider, LC
Pauline Books and Media 2022**

The first part of this book is an exploration of the unique strengths and challenges faced by individuals on the autism spectrum from the perspective of a priest who himself is on the spectrum. As is often said, if you know one autistic person, you know one autistic person, and not every topic will relate to every neurodiverse person, because there is a great diversity in the autistic community. Yet, the book helps the reader gain insight and understanding of what it means to be autistic from the inside out. Society tends to view autism from the disability perspective, but it can also be seen as an asset, a strength and a unique way into a relationship with Christ and his Church.

The second part of the book is a series of 52 meditations to assist the autistic individual to develop that deeper relationship with Jesus. Each meditation includes a story, a biblical passage, a reflection, and a short prayer to help the reader enter into prayer in whatever unique way they are comfortable communicating.

This book is primarily aimed at the autistic individual, to assist them in prayer and navigating the challenges of their unique neurodiversity within the Church and faith environment. But this book is also for those who love someone on the spectrum, equipping them with a deeper understanding of the autistic experience and providing insight in how they can support and accompany autistic individuals on their spiritual journey. This book should also be read by catechists and other leaders of parish ministries to help them create welcoming and inclusive spaces for neurodiverse persons.

What struck me as I was reading this book is that when we make accommodations for people who are differently abled, whether it is a physical disability or a matter of neurodiversity, it accommodates everyone. Although the 52 meditations in the second part of the book are written with the autistic individual in mind, these meditations would be fruitful for anyone, whether on the spectrum or not. If you are looking for practical material to help you deepen your own prayer life, this might be the book for you.

Environmental Stewardship

A curse or a blessing?

Like some of you who experienced the recent power outage, I awoke to a chilly room, pitch darkness and the prospect of no coffee. I went back to bed. When I finally did arise, I found my way with a candle to the kitchen and a breakfast of cold cereal. Then, unexpectedly, a friend came to the door with fresh mugs of coffee from the local coffee shop!

Returning to my room, I found myself asking, "Was this wind storm a curse or in some ways a blessing for me?" First, it changed my plans for the day. It caused me to shift my attention from outward activities to interior space at home. It provided me an opportunity to have coffee with a friend. With no power, I spent time reading, reflecting and enjoying quiet. Despite this deprivation of taken-for-granted conveniences, I was gifted with time to replenish my inner self.

In her book *Staying Healthy With the Seasons*, Elson M. Hass, MD, speaks of characteristics of winter. "Nature is in her resting season, quiet, withdrawn, deep in the earth and the roots, preparing for spring. You also may be deeper within yourself, seeking replenishment, resting, reflecting, and being more aware of your senses. As the winter climates of cold and wet chill you to your bones, seek inner warmth and spend more time at home with family and friends." (p. 157)

At times, my attitude toward winter can be like my initial approach to this storm. It can seem like a **curse** to have to put on heavy clothes and boots and deal with the ice and snow. However, like this recent storm, maybe a **blessing** of winter is a call to shift from outward activities to inner activities that may replenish and restore our inner, spiritual selves. Like the natural world around us, this season may bless us with an invitation to deepen our roots in the Divine Energy.

Diocese of Ogdensburg
Faith & Ecology

Bishop's Public Schedule

Jan. 17-19 — New York State Bishops' Retreat at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Retreat Center in Venice, Florida

Jan. 20 — 4 p.m. — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Jan. 21 — 8 a.m. — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Jan. 22 — New York State Catholic Conference Board of Bishops Meeting in Douglaston

Jan. 24 — Noon — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration is required. Preregister at www.virtus.org. Upcoming sessions:
Jan. 30 — 10 a.m. — St. Peter's Parish, Massena

Rest in Peace

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

Jan. 17 — Rev. Francis A. Menard, 2009

Jan. 18 — Rev. Hugh Shields, 1881; Rev. Telesphore Campeau, 1935; Rev. Paul Martin Hagan, 1980

Jan. 19 — Rev. Arthur P. Condon, 1966; Rev. Aloysius R. Isele, 1974

Jan. 20 — Rev. William D. O'Byrne, 1928; Rev. Joseph Erhard, O.M.I., 1936; Rev. Victor Viaud, O.M.I., 1937; Rev. Joseph Pontur, 1940

Jan. 21 — Rev. Albert W. Giroux, 1991; Rev. Adam Zajdel, O.F.M. Conv., 1997; Rev. Patrick C. Callaghan, O.F.M., 2001

Jan. 22 — Rev. James Edward Joy, 1950

Jan. 23 — Rev. Jeremiah C. Manning, 1909

OBITUARIES

Altona — Kenneth George Barcomb, 91; Mass of Christian Burial at Holy Angels Church.

Constable — John H. Horner, 77; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 12, 2024 at St. Francis of Assisi Church; burial in St. Francis of Assisi Cemetery.

Crown Point — Joyce (Raine) Hill, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 12, 2024 at Sacred Heart Church.

Evans Mills — Mary Alice Fortune Wood, 99; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 8, 2024 at Frederic Bros. Funeral Home; burial in Child's Fall Sunrise Cemetery, Philadelphia.

Hogansburg — Charles Peters, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 12, 2024 at St. Regis Church; burial in family cemetery.

Lowville — Louise (Monnat) Albertson, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2024 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Stephen's Cemetery, Croghan.

Lowville — Mary R. (VanNest) Burr, 91; Graveside Services in spring at Lowville Rural Cemetery.

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victims Assistance Coordinator, Terriane Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terrianeyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: 518-358-3145, Ext. 7179 days; 518-569-0612 evenings; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; ccarrara@rcdony.org Phone: 315-393-2920 ext. 1340.

If you have a complaint of suspected sexual abuse or related misconduct by the bishops, contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at 800-276-1562 or www.ReportBishopAbuse.org

Massena — Paula J. (Derouchie) Gray, 69; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 10, 2024 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Hogansburg.

Morrisonville — Regina E. (Nina) Cornea, 78; Funeral Services Jan. 16, 2024 at the R.W. Walker Funeral Hom chapel, Plattsburgh.

Morrisonville — Edna M. (Brassard) LaValley, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 15, 2024 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in Immaculate Heart of Mary Cemetery.

Morrisonville — Clifton Herbert St. Louis, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 8, 2024 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in St. James Cemetery, Cadyville.

Morristown — Beverly (Valois) Newtown, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 11, 2024 at St. John the Evangelist Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Norwood — Marlen M. (Scott) Boprey, 85; Graveside services in spring at Riverside Cemetery.

Ogdensburg — Joseph S. Johnson, 68; Funeral Services Jan. 11, 2024 at Frary Funeral Home.

Ogdensburg — Linda A. (Robertson) Redmond, 78; Funeral Services Jan. 10, 2024 at Frary Funeral home.

Ogdensburg — Maria Ann (Crucci) Sawyer, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 16, 2024 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Oswegatchie Mausoleum.

Olmstedville — Margaret Kelly Strohmeier, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 13, 2024 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Irishtown

Plattsburgh — Nancy (Horton) McGauley, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 13, 2024 at St. John's Church; burial in Mt. Carmel Cemetery.

Plattsburgh — Nicholas A. Pope, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 12, 2024 at Our Lady of Victory Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Port Henry — Daniel "Digger" Joseph Laing, 38; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 12, 2024 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Redford — Ty "Kitty" Allen, 52; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 12, 2024 at Church of the Assumption; burial in Church of the Assumption Cemetery.

Saranac Lake — Dorothy O'Connor Metz, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 25, 2024 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in Malone.

Waddington — Mary Elizabeth (Dalton) Knapp, 80; Mass of Christian Burial in spring at St. Mary's Church; burial in Brookside Cemetery.

Watertown — John Doldo Jr., 93; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 13, 2024 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

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Report: Over 130 Catholic priests, religious arrested, kidnapped or murdered

By Tyler Arnold
Catholic News Agency

Throughout 2023, more than 130 Catholic priests and religious were either arrested, kidnapped, or murdered, according to a new report on Catholic persecution published by Aid to the Church in Need.

The report published by the Catholic charity found at least 132 instances of arrests, kidnappings, and/or murders, which is slightly higher than the report from the previous year, which found 124. The uptick was mostly driven by arrests from authoritarian governments, which went up from 55 in 2022 to 86 in 2023.

Nicaragua President Daniel Ortega's crack-down on political dissent among members of the clergy was a primary driver of persecution throughout the year. The report found that the regime held 46 clergy in custody in 2023, including two bishops and four seminarians. This included 19 clerics arrested in December, including Bishop Isidoro de Carmen Mora Ortega de Siuna.

According to the report, many of the priests in Nicaragua who were arrested before December were either released or expelled from the country and refused re-entry. The government also released two of the priests arrested in December, but the other 17 are still in custody.

Bishop Rolando Álvarez, who was arrested in August 2022 and sentenced to 26 years in

prison after refusing to leave the country, is also still in custody.

Ortega's administration also expelled religious sisters such as the Missionaries of Charity and shut down Catholic schools and media organizations.

The report found that 20 members of the Catholic clergy were under arrest at some point in China throughout the year. However, the report also noted that "confirming the information is almost impossible" and some of the persecuted members of the clergy "remain unaccounted for after many years." The number could be slightly higher or lower, according to the report.

At least five Catholic clergy and one woman religious were arrested in India in 2023, which was mostly driven by anti-conversion laws, which the report noted "impede the work of the Church." All of them have been released but could still face charges and even prison time.

There have also been arrests in two European countries. The report found that 10 members of Catholic clergy were arrested in Belarus, three of whom are still imprisoned. Two Greek Catholic priests were also arrested by Russian forces in Ukraine, neither of whom have been released.

The kidnapping of clergy and religious sisters went down in 2023, according to the report, but the problem "remains significant." The total number of kidnapped clergy and religious was

33 in 2023, which is down from 54 in 2022.

All but five of the kidnappings took place in Nigeria, where religious and ethnic conflicts have made the country dangerous for Christians. The 28 kidnappings in the country included three religious women.

There were also two kidnappings in Haiti. One priest was kidnapped in Mali and another in Burkina Faso. One religious woman was abducted in Ethiopia.

Murders of Catholic priests and other members of the clergy slightly decreased, from 18 in the previous year to 14 in 2023. This includes 11 priests, one bishop, one religious brother, and one seminarian. However, half of these murders were unrelated to persecution or have unclear motives.

Of the seven murders that are clearly tied to persecution, three were in Nigeria. This includes Father Isaac Achi and a seminarian named Na'aman Danlami, both of whom died in their residences when they were burned down during attacks. It also includes Godwin Eze, a Benedictine brother, who was killed by kidnappers.

Other murders linked to persecution included the murder of Father Pamphili Nada in Tanzania, who was killed by a mentally unstable man; Father Javier García Villafañá, who was shot dead in Mexico; and Father Leopold Feyen, who was stabbed to death in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Vatican announces restoration project in St. Peter's Basilica

The Vatican announced on Thursday that the soaring baldacchino over the main altar of St. Peter's Basilica designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini 400 years ago will undergo a major restoration. The ambitious restoration and conservation project, expected to be completed just before the start of the Catholic Church's jubilee year in December, will require scaffolding to be set up around the canopy of the basilica's main altar for nearly a year. Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, the archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica, has assured that papal liturgies will still be able to take place in the basilica amid the restoration work. The 700,000 euro (about \$768,000) restoration is being funded by the Knights of Columbus and will be carried out by the Vatican Museums' expert art restorers. Patrick Kelly, the head of the Knights of Columbus, was present in Rome for a press conference on Jan. 11 to announce the restoration in the basilica, calling the project "one of the greatest restorations" of the many that the Knights have funded at the Vatican in the past 40 years.

McCarrick found incompetent to stand trial in Wisconsin

The criminal sexual assault case against former cardinal Theodore McCarrick in Wisconsin has been suspended after a psychologist hired by the court found that the former prelate is not competent to stand trial. The misdemeanor sexual assault charges relate to an incident that allegedly occurred in April 1977 near a house by Geneva Lake. The complaint alleges that McCarrick and "another adult male" sexually assaulted then-18-year-old James Grein, the same man who brought a complaint against the former cardinal in Massachusetts. The suspension practically ends the last standing criminal case against 93-year-old McCarrick, who once held offices at the highest levels of the Church and was removed from the clerical state in 2019 following accusations of sexual abuse of minors and seminarians.

Online database tracks attacks against Christians in real time

Global Christian Relief, a religious freedom advocacy group, has developed a database that tracks attacks on people of faith in real time, bringing advocates and government officials information quickly and shedding light on the state of global persecution. Launched Jan. 5, the "Violent Incidents Database" updates and compiles religious freedom violations as they occur. The tracker allows users to search incidents of violence by country, region, religion and perpetrator. "We live in a world where the violent persecution of Christians and other religious groups is rampant and increasing," said Ronald Boyd-MacMillan, chief of global strategy and research for Global Christian Relief. "This database not only helps us track the violence but helps us better understand what persecuted Christians really need from their brothers and sisters around the world." Currently, the database lists thousands of incidents of persecution that occurred in just the last year in all parts of the globe.

VIRTUAL EVENTS

BROWN BAG SERIES

The Office of New Evangelization will be running a new Brownbag Chat Series on the topic of Catholic Social Teaching.

Date: Wednesdays starting Jan. 17

Time: Noon to 1 p.m.

Place: online

Features: Each session will include a short video and discussion. For background information we will read the Statement from the USCCB Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish

Contact: To register, go to <https://www.rcdony.org/brownbag>. A link will be sent to those who register. For more information, contact Marika at info@rcdony.org.

PRIESTHOOD DISCERNMENT

Are you a single Catholic man who is hearing the Lord's call to the Priesthood? Consider joining others virtually who are listening and seeking to respond.

Date: Jan. 28, Feb. 11, Feb. 25, Mar. 10, Mar. 24, Apr. 14, Apr. 28

Time: 4 p.m. to 5

Place: On-Line

Features: High school age men and older are invited to join fellow discerners and Father Howard Venette to discuss this vocation.

Contact: You must register in order to attend, please go to www.rcdony.org/priesthooddiscernment

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

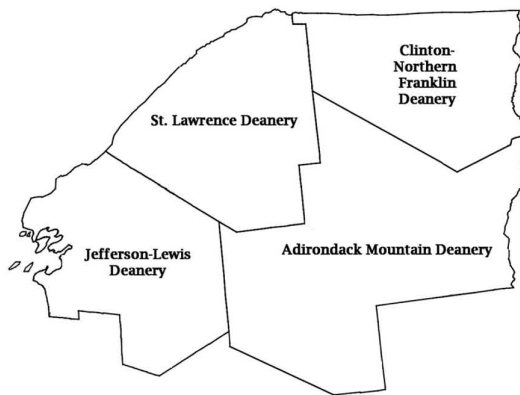
FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Tupper Lake - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks is recruiting new volunteers and has scheduled a Friendship Volunteer Training Program.

Date: Jan. 18

Time: 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Features: New Volunteers will join Mercy Care's more than 100 Friendship Volunteers from Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake and surrounding areas who



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

e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

are helping their elder neighbors stay connected to their communities and helping to make their lives a little easier and happier. Volunteers of all faiths are encouraged and invited to participate. Complementary lunch will be provided.

Contact: There is no cost for the training but registration is required. To register for the training, please visit Mercy Care's website at www.adkmercy.org or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Mercy Care's Program Director, at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or call Lexi for more information at 518-523-5446.

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

WOMEN'S LENTEN STUDY

Plattsburgh – Walking with Purpose to have a Women's Lenten Study.

Date: Thursdays, Feb. 15 to March 21

Time: 10 a.m. to 11:45 or 6:30 p.m. to 8:15

Place: St. John's Dwyer/McAvoy Parish Center

Cost: Suggested donation, \$20

Features: Discover God's plan for friendship, how to navigate toxic relationships, let God reshape how you see and experience intentional relationships, and explore what it takes to have deep connections for the long haul.

Contact: Janice Tobin C/T 518-569-5370

ADORATION

Plattsburgh – Adoration to be held weekly.

Date: Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

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

Place: St. John's in the Holy Family Basement

Features: Come to an out of the way place and rest awhile in Jesus' Presence. Experience His healing power, grace, love and mercy for yourselves and loved ones. Pray for the sick, suffering, vocations, our priests, country and peace in the world.

Contact: For more information, to become a substitute or to sign up for an hour, please contact 518-563-3773.

DEVOTION AND HOLY HOUR

St. Regis Falls – All are invited to the monthly first Saturday Devotion and Holy Hour for Vocations.

Date: First Saturday of the Month

Time: Following the 4:30 anticipated Mass

Place: St. Ann's Church

Features: Prayer after Mass, Night Prayer, Prayer for All Souls and the Holy Souls, Novena in Honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Chaplet of Divine Mer-

cy, The Reparation Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary with private meditation on the 15 Mysteries of the Rosary and Prayers for the Holy Father and his intentions.

HOUSE SITTERS

Ellenburg Center – Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer is looking for many Volunteer "House Sitters".

Time: The responsibility is to arrive by 10 a.m. on your chosen day(s) and remain on premises until 4 p.m. to welcome visitors.

Features: Lunch and snack items on hand. Training will be provided on the history of the House of Prayer, its mission, and the various ways to carry out this gentle ministry of hospitality for those seeking time in a home of Mary to listen to our Lord, browse in the library, or visit the "Gift Shop". Flexible schedule (and hours) are fine.

Contact: If interested in volunteering for one day a month, or week, or more, please call Sarah Anderson at 518-534-9976.

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

HOLY HOUR AND DIVINE MERCY

Houseville – A Holy Hour of Adoration with the Divine Mercy Chaplet will be observed the first Sunday of the month.

Date: Feb. 4

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

RESPECT LIFE PRAYER VIGIL

Watertown – Liferight is sponsoring their annual Respect Life prayer vigil.

Date: Jan. 22

Time: 6 p.m.

Place: Watertown Municipal Building

Features: Please dress warmly and join us for prayer, reflection, and worship songs. Refreshments to follow at St. Patrick's Church.

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

Evans Mills – The Indian River Council 7471 Knights of Columbus will be having a spaghetti &

meatball dinner.

Date: Feb. 10

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$9; Seniors, \$8; Children 12 and under, \$5; under 5, Free

Contact: For more information call 315-629-4678

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Carthage – Pancake breakfast to be held to benefit Augustinian Academy.

Date: Feb. 11

Time: 8 a.m. to Noon

Place: St. James Community Room

Cost: Adults, \$9; Seniors, \$7; Children under 10, \$4; Family of 4 or more, \$27

Menu: Scrambled Eggs, Pancakes, French Toast, Ham, Sausage, Baked Goods, Juice, and Coffee

Features: Event is sponsored by Carthage K of C, Father John Cosmic #291 and Ave Maria Circle.

Contact: For more information call: 315-493-3224

ST. LAWRENCE

UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF THE BIBLE

Massena – An 8-part Bible study that helps you to get "the big picture" of the Bible.

Date: Tuesdays, Jan. 23 to March 12

Time: 2 p.m. to 4 or 6:30 p.m. to 8:30

Place: St. Mary's Social Hall or zoom during evening session

Cost: Free will offering

Features: Many people want to read the Bible because they know it is God's Word, but they give up because it seems so complicated. Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible helps you to get the "big picture" of the Bible by showing how 14 narrative books of the Bible tell the complete story from Adam and Eve to Christ and the Church. Light refreshments will be available.

Contact: For more information call 315-769-2469 or massenacatholics.com

'Life Fest' offers worship, music at March

By Joe Bukuras
Catholic News Agency

At the 51st annual March for Life on Jan. 19, attendees will be offered a range of activities including participation in "Life Fest," a morning of worship with Mass, music, and testimonies at the D.C. Armory the day of the march in the nation's capital.

Now in its second year, Life Fest is put on by the Knights of Columbus and the Sisters of Life and offers youth an opportunity to enter into prayer for the unborn on the morning of the march.

The Knights of Columbus is the world's largest Catholic fraternal organization and has several pro-life initiatives that include support of pregnancy resource centers and maternity homes.

The Sisters of Life is a New York-based religious order with a mission to protect human life.

"[E]very human person is made in God's image," Life Fest's website says, stating that "our world is crying [to] us for healing" and "Love is the answer."

"We are at a critical moment in history that demands a new vision. The fall of Roe is not the end. Let's renew our commitment to love. Let's be agents of healing in a broken world. We need each other," the website says.

Life Fest takes place from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. and opens with the Catholic worship group Damascus Worship.

At 7:30 a.m., attendees will be welcomed by Sister Cora Caeli, SV, and Sister Charity, SV, from the Sisters of Life. Testimonies will be given at that time.

Following the testimonies, there will be Eucharistic adoration. Catholic singer-songwriter Sarah Kroger will be playing music, and more testimonies will follow.

Attendees will also participate in Mass.

Other speakers at the event include Boston archbishop Cardinal Sean O'Malley; Monsignor James Shea, president of the University of Mary; and Sisters Pia Jude and Luca Benedict, identical twins from the Sisters of Life.

The March for Life follows Life Fest with a pro-life rally at noon on the National Mall featuring pro-life speeches and a free live concert. The D.C. Armory is about a 10-minute drive from the National Mall.

Marchers will begin heading toward the steps of Congress at about 1 p.m., starting between 12th and 14th Streets, NW, heading up Constitution Avenue.

The March for Life, which calls itself the world's "largest annual human rights demonstration," takes place every year in January to mark the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the 1973 Supreme Court case

that legalized abortion nationwide.

More than 60 million unborn children have been killed since the court's ruling in Roe, which was overturned in June 2022 with the Supreme Court's decision in the Mississippi abortion case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*.

"The Constitution does not prohibit the citizens of each state from regulating or prohibiting abortion. Roe and Casey arrogated that authority. We now overrule those decisions and return that authority to the people and their elected representatives," the majority opinion in the case said.

The abortion landscape in the United States has dramatically changed since Roe's repeal, with many states passing legislation to protect life and others having approved measures to expand abortion.

The theme for this year's March for Life is "With Every Woman, For Every Child."

Around the diocese

CONTINUED From PAGE 8

ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

Ogdensburg – The Legion of Mary will pray the rosary with devotions for First Saturday.

Date: Feb. 3

Time: 8 a.m.

Place: Notre Dame Church, Ogdensburg

Features: Rosary with devotions

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

Massena – Sacred Heart Church to have first Saturday Rosary Devotion.

Date: Feb. 3

Time: 3:15 p.m.

Features: First Saturday Rosary Devotion. Vigil Mass at 4 p.m.

MEN'S PRAYER GROUP

Massena – First Saturday of the month, men's prayer group to meet for Mass and Adoration.

Date: Feb. 3

Time: 9 a.m.

Place: Sacred Heart Church

MONTHLY BRUNCH

Norfolk – Parish of the Visitation and St. Raymond's will have their monthly Knights of Columbus Brunch.

Date: Feb. 11 (Second Sunday of each month)

Time: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Place: Father Amyot Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$10; under 12, \$5; under 5, Free; Omelets, add \$3; Take-outs available

Contact: For more information contact Grand Knight Gil Gonther 315-212-5166.

ADORATION

Ogdensburg – Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament to be held every Wednesday.

Time: 3 p.m. to 6

Place: The Deacon Winter Chapel at St. Mary's Cathedral, enter through the glass doors on

the Green Street side.

Features: A sign up book will be at the podiums at the front entrances of St. Mary's Cathedral and Notre Dame Church, however you may attend adoration without signing up.

ALPHA

Massena – You are invited to ALPHA.

Date: Tuesdays starting April 2

Time: 6 p.m. to 8:30

Place: St. Mary's Social Hall

Features: Free to all and includes a free meal.

Contact: Parish office at 315-769-2469 or go to massencatholics.com for info or to register.

CATHOLIC PARENTING

Potsdam – A series of workshops from the Franciscan University Catechetical Institute to be held on Catholic Parenting.

Date: First Sunday of the month from Oct. to April

Place: St. Mary's Rectory, second floor

Features: Attend all or only those that interest you. Child care can be provided. Event is free.

Contact: For more information contact Mike Neaton at 315-335-6302 or Liz Tarbox at formationstp@gmail.com

HOLY HOUR

Canton – Holy Hour for Vocations to be held.

Date: Every Tuesday

Time: 4:10 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church

Features: Holy hour followed by Mass at 5:15 p.m. and confessions at 5:45 p.m.

ROSARY FOR LIFE

Canton – Rosary for life to be held.

Date: Every Sunday

Time: 4:25 p.m. preceding the 5 p.m. evening Mass

Place: St. Mary's Church

ADORATION

Norwood – St. Andrew's Church to offer Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Friday.

Time: After 8:30 a.m. Mass until Noon

Features: Sign up is not needed.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

HEALING MASS

Potsdam – Bishop LaValley has scheduled a Healing Mass on Divine Mercy Sunday.

Date: April 7

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church, Potsdam



Funeral celebrated for Sr. Maureen Sweeney

A Funeral Liturgy was celebrated for Sister Maureen Sweeney, a Sister of St. Joseph, on Friday, January 12 at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse Chapel. Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated the Mass, and Father Mark Reilly served as homilist.

Burial was in Glenwood Cemetery.

Sister Maureen died January 6, 2024, at the Summit Nursing Home at the age of 83.

She was born Bridget Marie Sweeney on November 21, 1940, in County Donegal, Ireland, the daughter of Edward and Ellen Sweeney. She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph

on September 7, 1963, and received the habit on June 24, 1964. Sister Maureen made first profession on June 24, 1966, and final profession on August 29, 1969.

She received her bachelor's degree from Chestnut Hill College and her Master of Arts degree from Duquesne University.

Sister Maureen also has a certification as a spiritual director.

She taught in many schools in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, including: Sacred Heart School in Watertown, St. Mary's School in Ticonderoga, St. Joseph's School in Dannemora,

St. Agnes School in Lake Placid, Holy Name School in AuSable Forks, St. Patrick's School in Watertown, Bishop Smith School in Malone, and Holy Family School in Malone.

She was assigned as superior of the Motherhouse for six years and was involved in the general administration of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Sister Maureen also served as pastoral associate for St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Parishes in Massena from 1997 to 2018.

Sister Maureen is survived by her brother, James Sweeney of County Donegal, and a sister Mary O'Sullivan of County

Kerry, Ireland. She is also survived by many nieces, nephews and cousins.

Besides her parents, she is predeceased by her sister, Norah McElholm of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and her nephew, Paul Sweeney of Glendoan, County Donegal, Ireland.

Funeral arrangements are with Cummings Funeral Service, Inc., Watertown.

Contributions in her memory may be made to the Sisters of St. Joseph, 1425 Washington St., Watertown, NY 13601.

Online condolences to her family may be posted at www.cummingsfuneral.com.

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

'God uncorked his potential'

"Some enchanted evening, you may see a stranger, you may see a stranger across a crowded room.... somehow, you'll know..." And it ends with "once you have found him, never let him go." The tune ends with a type of cosmic forever melody that connotes the longevity of this commitment.

Our Gospel has a similar story if not a tune. One enchanted afternoon, you may see a stranger.... somehow, you'll know. Of course, the exhortation and the reality of that story end the same way: "Once they have found him, they never let him go." Once the disciples found Jesus, they never let him go.

What a wonderful faith story to grab onto! These fishermen, much to the dismay of their families and the family fishing businesses, abandoned everything to follow this stranger. While perhaps not as

instantaneous as portrayed in the Gospel, nevertheless the reality tells us that the apostles, except for Judas, never let go of this Jesus.

What an amazing fact. Eleven out of twelve remained faithful to Jesus. In today's scientific, mathematical, statistical world, that reflects an amazing rate of retention.

Look at our main characters in today's scriptures. Jonah had no great ambitions to go preach to people who wanted nothing to do with him. Andrew, Peter, James and John were ordinary fishermen who would probably take over the family businesses some day. But they had abilities that Jesus recognized and called upon.

Most of us are like that bottle Aladdin found on the seashore. We have a magnificent genie inside us. But that genie cannot get out by himself. Nor can we

January 21

**Third Sunday
in Ordinary Time**

READINGS

Jonah 3:1-5, 10
1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Mark 1:14-20

*This homily is offered
courtesy of a priest of
the Diocese of Ogdensburg.*

ourselves release him. We need some Aladdin to come along, pull the cork and free the genie for us.

God resembles Aladdin in dealing with Jonah. God uncorked his potential. Likewise, Jesus uncorked the potential he saw in Peter, Andrew, James and John.

Interestingly, we can note that none of these men were looking for something beyond what they had. It took a divine invitation to get them out of their bottle and into a whole new world.

2024 will be an inter-

esting year, an election year that will be fired up with many speakers and leaders. They can inflame our emotions and excite our imaginations. Is Jesus just another leader getting us revved up?

Absolutely not. You see other leaders can excite us, but they cannot share with us their power and strength. Jesus is much different. We believe he gives us his Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This Spirit changes and transforms our lives. This Spirit can make us different. Listen carefully to the words of the various sacraments. We always pray for the Spirit to transform bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, men and women into sons and daughters of God. Our prayers ask for a transformation.

But, for this to happen, we have the key. We must open our minds and hearts and free will to what God

calls us to do. We hold the key to let God into our minds and hearts. If we do not turn the key, nothing will happen.

So many are afraid to turn that key and open themselves up to God. Why? There will be sacrifice. Jonah ended up in the belly of a whale. The twelve had to leave their families behind. To be a true disciple, we must take a chance, take a risk. Taking the chance means that we will be brought far beyond ourselves; we will be transformed as were Peter, Andrew, James and John.

This reflection from John Henry Cardinal Newman captures this thought: "God has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have a mission... Therefore, I will trust him... He does nothing in vain... He knows what he is about. O my God, I put myself without reserve into your hands."



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith
Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296
mbrett@rcdony.org

Prayer for peace

As the world looks with concern at the political and military tensions between North and South Korea that have increased in recent days, the Catholic faithful gathered in prayer in Seoul and Pyongyang to call for peace and reconciliation. A special "Mass for Reconciliation" was celebrated at Seoul Cathedral, an initiative launched by Cardinal Stephen Kim in 1995 and constantly carried out - with the Eucharist or with simple prayer - by the Catholic community on both sides of the 38th parallel border.

Jan. 9 was the 1,400th Eucharist in the sign of reconciliation. After the Mass of Reconciliation, according to a communiqué from the Archdiocese of Seoul, "those present recited the prayer attributed to St. Francis, which says: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace, that I may love where one hates; that I forgive where one offends."

Today, this prayer, said by the faithful of the "Association of North Korean Catholics," recognized by the government in Pyongyang, also resounds across the border. In fact, on August 15, 1995, Augustine C. Park, a Korean priest who for many years carried out pastoral service in the United States, visited Pyongyang and managed to agree with this group of North Korean Catholics to use this text as a "prayer for reconciliation."

Since then, the faithful in the Seoul Cathedral and the Association of North Korean Catholics at Changchung Church in Pyongyang every Tuesday pray this prayer in spiritual communion and intention. At the Mass celebrated in Seoul on Jan. 9, Auxiliary Bishop of Seoul Job Yobi Koo, who presided over the Eucharist, recalled in his homily that "Cardinal Stephen Kim's motivation for introducing this Mass was not 'for change of each other,' but to pray 'for the grace of reconciliation and unity' from God."

Msgr. Koo said he felt "the glimmer of reconciliation is getting weaker and weaker."

"Now," Bishop Koo concluded, "it is time to give up hatred and follow the path shown by Jesus. Let us pray together that we become true apostles of peace."

The tradition of this special Eucharistic celebration began on March 7, 1995, with the first Mass of Reconciliation celebrated by Cardinal Stephen Souhwan Kim, then Archbishop of Seoul and Apostolic Administrator of Pyongyang. At the beginning, the bishops and priests of Seoul took turns celebrating mass. Since 2000, it was the community's newly ordained priests who presided over the Eucharist. This tradition continued every Tuesday at 7 p.m. for 29 years, with only a brief interruption due to the pandemic.

Article from FIDES missionary news service of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

CALLLED TO SERVE Would you like to call me later?

"Mommy's on the phone right now, darling"

A young mother called me recently to chat about scheduling the baptism of her youngest son.

In our parish, the deacons take care of baptism preparation and what follows from first contact through post baptism training in the faith.

In this case, Mom had a toddler and an infant she was trying to love and respond to while we talked. It made for an interesting conversation. There were times I was uncertain if Mom was talking to me or one of her children. We got through it. I smiled through the whole exchange. Mom was being a mom and the little ones, well, little ones.

When I was in the secular business world, calls like that would infuriate me.

Folks would call with a news tip or to brief me about some issue; I was a broadcast journalist. Occasionally, I would be competing on the call with cooking, a third voice in the background, interruptions of one kind or another and the ever-present and the ever-present Mommy's on the phone right now, darling" means absolutely nothing to a child?

If I originated the call,

it stands to reason I would be competing for the attention of the person on the other end of the call. If the call originated elsewhere, it struck me the person would have the courtesy to call when he or she is least likely to be distracted.



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

I was venting to my wife about this recently, and Kathy said, "how do you think God feels when you're praying to Him, and a thousand other thoughts interrupt your conversation?"

Talk about a gut punch!

I am guilty as charged. My mind often wanders while I am trying, really trying, to pray to the God who loves me or to engage God in a conversation. Is God the understanding guy at the other end of the call or the furious businessman who hates competition for his attention?

Many years ago, a St. Joseph sister, Sister Mary William Argy, turned me on to a little pamphlet by Benedictine Jerome Kodell entitled "Twelve Keys To Prayer."

Kodell's third key is *Involuntary distractions do not interrupt prayer.* It set my mind at ease.

"We may spend a good part of the time set aside for prayer in fighting distractions," he says. Mine might be how my wife slept the night before, or the stuff on my calendar

for the day, or worrying about an assignment due in the next day or two, or thinking about calling my son-in-law to discuss the latest Buffalo Sabre's loss. These and many other thoughts compete with my prayer to God.

Kodell says not to get ourselves in a knot about these distractions. If you set out to pray to God, a matter of will, that decision trumps the mind "which is constantly aggressive for thoughts and ideas."

"We may end our prayer not really knowing what we have done with our time, though we intended to pray the whole time."

Kodell's advice is to try to stay focused. Try to give your attention to God completely. Hopefully, you will succeed. But take some solace in Kodell's statement "every attempt at prayer is prayer."

Deacon Kevin Mastellon ministers in Watertown.

He is the Director of
Permanent Deacons
for the Diocese
of Ogdensburg.



Support And Pray
For Vocations

FACES OF FAITH



The Full Spectrum Flutes brought more joy to St. Patrick's Church in Colton at the Gaudete Sunday Mass on December 13. Those in the group are Jane Subramanin, Arlene Babich, Brenda Curley and Sandy Steinburg. Rebecca MacDougall, St. Patrick's cantor was responsible for inviting them to play the liturgical music for Mass. Jason Larson, St. Patrick's organist was unable to be there.



On November 13, the Msgr. T. Walter Cleary Council of the Knights of Columbus held its annual Memorial Mass to remember past members. Knight Robert Hurley read the names of members who have passed on to be with the Lord. Members of the deceased knights' family and/or friends were invited to light candles in their remembrance. The Mass was well attended and well received by all in attendance. The council is grateful to Jackie Hobbs for providing music and Father Robert Decker for celebrating the Mass, and Deacon Larry Ambreu for assisting.



Father Todd Thibault, pastor of St. James in Carthage, and Augustinian Academy's new Principal, Sister Suanne Johnson, SSJ, posed for a photo with Santa at Augustinian Academy's Cookies and Cocoa with Santa event. The event, the second of its kind, brought together more than 120 people from the school, parish and community for treats, cocoa, crafts and pictures with Santa.



The Ogdensburg Knights of Columbus made a generous donation of \$1,000 to the Gabriel Project at the Gabriel Project Appreciation Dinner held in October at the Father Martin Clubhouse. Knights Dan Harradine and Bill Taylor presented the check to Gabriel Project volunteers Dorinda Mallette and Cindy Wilson. Gabriel Project helps pregnant moms in need by supplying spiritual and material support. For more information or to help a mom in need connect with services, call Gabriel Project at 315-276-9654.