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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 78 Number 43

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MARCH 13, 2024

'Cabrini' plays to sell-out crowd

On March 8, the community of Saint Alexander, Saint Augustine, and Saint James, with a mission at Mother Cabrini Shrine and Saint Patrick's Oratory, rented a theater at Regal Cinemas in Plattsburgh to screen the new Angel Studios' movie "Cabrini," which opened that day at movie theaters in the United States and Canada, including several throughout the North Country.

FULL STORY, PAGE 5

PREPARING WITH HER PARISH



On Saturday, March 2, a ceremony was held for Carol Vanarneem, who could not go to the Cathedral for the Rite of Election due to a snowstorm. At the 6 pm Mass at St. John's in Lyons Falls, Carol along with her sponsors, Deacon James and Christine Chaufy with Father Daniel Chapin held the Rite of Election with the congregation.

UNFREEDOM TO WORSHIP



Author Okey Ndibe speaks about the persecution of Christians in Nigeria at the "Trust Truth" speaker series at Sylvia's Lounge, in Canton, on Feb. 27. The series is presented by St. Mary's Catholic Church Canton.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

Pope: 'Of all vices, pride is the great queen'

By Matthew Santucci
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis this week used his general audience to focus on the vice of pride, with the Holy Father for the second consecutive week relying on an aide to read his remarks.

"Today's catechesis will be read by a monsignor," the pope said on Wednesday, "because I still have a cold and can't read well."

The pope delivered the Angelus address from the window of the Apostolic Palace the prior two Sundays. He has relied on aides to read his public addresses since the Vatican announced he was suffering from "mild flu"

symptoms in late February.

The pope's catechesis focused on pride, which the Holy Father argued was the "great queen" of all the vices.

"Those who give in to this vice are far from God, and the correction of this evil requires time and effort, more than any other battle to which the Christian is called."

Pope Francis related the vice of pride to that of vainglory, the topic of last week's general audience, cautioning: "If vainglory is a disease of the human self, it is still a childish disease when compared to the havoc pride is capable of."

Pride is "evil," the Holy Father said, and is of a greater magni-

tude than vainglory, as it arises from "the absurd claim to be like God."

Referencing the monastic tradition of antiquity and Dante Alighieri's epic "The Divine Comedy," the pope noted that there is a "sequence of evils," or hierarchy, of vices, starting with gluttony and culminating in pride.

Highlighting the effects of pride, the pope noted it "ruins human relationships" and foments division instead of promoting fraternal solidarity.

The pope profiled the "proud man" as one who has an inflated sense of self and his place in the world, adding that he is "one who frets about being rec-

ognized as greater than others, always wants to see his own merits recognized, and despises others, deeming them inferior to himself."

Pope Francis outlined what he saw as the characteristics of the person who has succumbed to pride, noting that the prideful person is "stiff," or inflexible, and "easily led to scornful judgment."

"With no reason, he passes irrevocable judgments on others, who seem to him hopelessly inept and incapable. In his haughtiness, he forgets that Jesus in the Gospels assigned us very few moral precepts, but on one of them he was uncompromising: never judge," the pope observed.

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I'm not quite there yet

"Are we there yet?"
If I had a dollar for every time someone has reminded me "patience is a virtue," I'd have a lot of dollars, but I still wouldn't have much patience.

That occurred to me as I sat in the driver's seat of my itty-bitty SUV, feeling annoyed, traveling around 38 miles per hour in a 55 miles-per-hour zone, fifth in a line of cars stuck, all of us behind a truck hauling an oversized load. I'm not much better than I was when I was a young

child, sitting in the back seat of one of my parents' vehicles, on a long (or not-so-long) road trip whining, "are we there yet?"

**Darcy L.
Fargo**

I have no doubt this was part of God's plan when He put me in this job I love so dearly that just happens to be an hour away from where I live. Being in my car in those circumstances in which I can do nothing but accept going slower than I want also made me think of where I am on my Lenten journey.

I'm at that point in Lent

at which I start to think, "are we there yet?" I also have no doubt this was part of God's plan for Lent.

I start every Lent very dedicated to whatever practices I take on, whether it be giving something up, adding something to my routine or both. Every Lent, I maintain that motivation through the first couple weeks pretty easily. Then, often without warning, usually sometime around week four, my Lenten commitments start feeling like a chore. I start to wish it were over. I start longing to move from the solemn to the celebra-

tory, from the cross to the resurrection.

While I wish I could maintain that motivation throughout Lent, God works with me where I am, even if it's not where I want to be. For me, this means He's using how I feel now to give me a little reminder that my relationship with Him, like any relationship, has periods where it's easy and periods in which it feels like work.

This is a time to do the work.

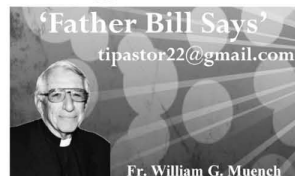
Sometimes that work means trying to find a bit of patience and accepting that I'm not there yet.

Spending time with the cross

As we continue along this Lenten journey, I think our attention should now be more and more on the cross of Jesus. The Lenten story is about the cross. Jesus' story is about the cross. Our story is about the cross of Jesus.

For us, Catholics, the cross is everywhere. There is a cross on the top of all our churches, the cross is over the altar in our sanctuaries, the cross is on each of our rosaries, the cross is on the cover of all our liturgical books. Each time we, Catholics, begin to pray, we start by making the sign of the cross. Actually, each time we, Catholics, want to do something religious, we make the Sign of the Cross. We, Catholics, are easily identified by our making of the Sign of the Cross.

During Lent, one of our best devotions is the Stations of the Cross. As we walk from station to station, the cross in each image holds our attention. Each time we come to the station of Jesus' falling, it



is the burden of the cross that falls upon him.

And there is that impressive station where Simon of Cyrene steps forward to carry the cross for Jesus - a moment of deep meditation. Would I have stepped forward? Would I have offered to carry the cross for Jesus? Now, it is important for us to realize that when we accept the many challenges as disciples of Jesus, we are truly taking our turn in carrying the cross for Jesus.

Again, I want to continue to encourage you to take that personal walk along the Stations of the Cross during Lent in your Church. Go around the Stations by yourself - quietly, silently, walking with Jesus - listening to the Lord's words for you. I can tell you that I have expe-

rienced rather powerful messages from the Lord.

Recently, I talked with the children about the cross. I found it rather difficult to talk about this terrible punishment for a condemned criminal in those days. This was such an unbelievable punishment. I made an effort to show them that, because it was our Lord, the Son of God who accepted this suffering and death on this cross, that we now see the cross as a sign of love, a sign of God's love and His care and concern for us.

Each time, I, as a priest, give a blessing - a blessing to a child, to someone who is sick and dying, a blessing during Mass - I use the Sign of the Cross. I am proclaiming for all to see that Jesus has transformed this once evil sign of pain and suffering to a sign for all times of our Lord's love and his readiness to sacrifice for all who are in need.

Each Good Friday, during the prayer service, we, the disciples of Lord, include

a ritual in which we venerate the cross of Jesus. A deacon enters the Church carrying a large cross as we remember the cross of Jesus. He processes to the front stopping three times singing, "Behold, the wood of the cross, on which hung the salvation of the world." The congregation responds, "Come, let us adore." We all are then invited forward to venerate the cross as we remember and celebrate the cross of Jesus. There was a time when we were asked to remove our shoes, a sign of humility as we approached the cross of the Lord.

So, the cross of Jesus is a profoundly sacred icon for us, Catholics. We celebrate the cross of Jesus. We remember that Jesus suffered and died for us on the cross, for all of us. Lent is our time to walk with Jesus on this way of the cross, a time for us to stand at the foot of the cross of Jesus. In fact, we are invited to unite ourselves on the cross with Jesus.

'The Unfreedom to worship'

By **Keith Benman**
Contributing Writer

In author Okey Ndibe's first novel, "Arrows of Rain," a grandmother tells her journalist grandson: "Remember this: A story that must be told never forgives silence."

Those fictional lines have become a sort of mantra for the Nigerian-born writer, who told a story that must be told once again on Feb. 27 as a featured speaker at the "Trust Truth" series put on by St. Mary's Catholic Church Canton.

"I feel like I have to speak," he told an audience of about 50 people packed into Sylvia's Lounge on Main Street. "And I have to speak fearlessly."

At the microphone at Sylvia's, Ndibe spoke about the "The Unfreedom to Worship: The Perils of Being Christian in Nigeria." For more than an hour, he told of atrocities perpetrated by religious militants and how the perpetrators are almost never brought to justice by the government.

The most well-known case internationally has been that of the 276 Chibok school girls kidnapped in 2014 by Boko Haram, 98 of whom are still believed to be held by the Muslim extremist group, according to Amnesty International. Many of those who have been freed or rescued have returned to their parents with children born in captivity.

As with that kidnapping, most of the atrocities in recent years have been carried out by Muslim militants. But Ndibe preceded his recounting of those atrocities with what he said were important caveats.

"Most Muslims in Nigeria and elsewhere are



PHOTO BY KEITH BENMAN/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Author Okey Ndibe speaks to a packed house at the "Trust Truth" speaker series at Sylvia's Lounge, in Canton, on Feb. 27. The series is presented by St. Mary's Catholic Church Canton.

good, peace loving people," he said. He told his audience how his own father was once rescued from an extremist mob by the region's Muslim leader.

But he said the extreme poverty of most of the Nigerian population, and the corruption of the government, have combined to drive young people into the hands of extremist religious leaders.

"Once you kill a Christian, the state does not bother you," he said.

And it's not just in Nigeria. Throughout the African continent, militants are committing atrocities. Ndibe's friend, Kofi Awoonor, one of Africa's leading writers, was one of 68 people killed by al-Shebab militants at a shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2013. He was 78 years old when he was killed.

That part of the presentation had a powerful impact on St. Lawrence University student Jack Funk.

"It's more damaging even than we can imagine," he said. "They not only erased a wonderful human being, but they erased someone who had

stories, and can tell those stories, and can spread a good gospel."

Funk was part of a crowd of 50 people who listened intently from tables and barstools while Ndibe talked.

Ndibe told his audience there is hope. There is a solution.

"It requires clear action by every person of conscience, but particularly clear action by governments to make sure that those who feel tempted to commit acts of horror, to kill in the name of God, are held to account," he said. "Because ultimately, this will be the only way that the scourge is stopped."

In his writing, Ndibe has continued to tell stories that must be told. He's done that in a subsequent novel, "Foreign Gods, Inc.," and a memoir, "Never Look an American in the Eye."

He also has written columns for the U.K.'s *Guardian* newspaper and other publications. Those columns landed him on a Nigerian government "watch list," which almost inevitably results in him being detained by security services at the Lagos airport whenever he returns to

Read his works

Books by Okey Ndibe:

"Arrows of Rain," Heinemann, 2000

"Foreign Gods, Inc.," Soho Press, 2014"

"Never Look an American in the Eye," Soho Press, 2016

Upcoming 'Trust Truth' topics

March 12 – "I'm not dead yet: End of life issues for the living"

March 19 – "Under a spell: An enlightened age's fascination with the dark arts."

Both sessions are at 6:30 p.m., at Sylvia's Lounge, Canton

visit his native land. But he keeps going back.

St. Mary's Pastor Father Bryan Stitt introduced Ndibe at the beginning of the night by telling the audience something some might not know about the noted author.

"I'm told by his students, he's a wonderful professor and also an incredible novelist," Father Stitt said. "I know him as an incredible man of faith."

Father Stitt says he first ran into Ndibe when he noticed him attending Masses at St. Mary's and staying after to say

the rosary. Since then, he has always been amazed at Ndibe's generosity, including his traveling from his home in Connecticut to present at the "Trust Truth" series.

Father Stitt said the rationale behind the ongoing series is just what the title says. That includes presenting the truth of the Gospel as well as truths derived from reason and science. And just as important is the setting. The talks are purposely held away from the church in order to encourage a wider audience to attend.

Step into a new day! Find hope & healing at Rachel's Vineyard After-Abortion Healing Retreat

May 24-26 Guggenheim Lodge, Saranac Lake. Register online: rcdony.org/pro-life. More info: Respect Life Office 518-524-0774.

Sr. Mary Christine Morkovksy died March 2

A Mass of Resurrection was celebrated for Sister Mary Christine Morkovksy (formerly Sister Theresa Clare), CDP, Ph.D., on Monday, April 11, 2024, in Annunciation Chapel at Our Lady of the Lake Convent Center in San Antonio, Texas.

Sister Mary Christine entered eternal life on March 2, 2024 at the age of 92. She was born on December 13, 1931, in San Antonio, to Henry J. and Mary L. A. (Kucera) Morkovksy.

She had three brothers and six sisters and was proud of her Czechoslovakian heritage.

Sister Mary Christine was a Sister of Divine Providence for 72 years. She made her first profession of vows on June 22, 1951, and her perpetual vows on June 22, 1957.

She ministered as a teacher, graduate student, researcher, historian, Congregational leader, author and spiritual director. She utilized her God-given talents to manifest God's Providence in all that she did.

In her early ministry Sister Mary Christine taught music theory at Providence Catholic School and private

piano and organ at St. Mary's. She was also an instructor of English, music, algebra, and journalism at the Our Lady of the Lake Aspiancy. This led her to become a formation director and attend graduate school. She obtained her M.A. in Philosophy from St. Louis University in 1961 and began teaching philosophy at OLLU - Our Lady of the Lake University.

While working on her doctorate, Sister Mary Christine worked at Mission San Jose as an exhibit consultant (San Antonio Missions National Historical Park). She earned her Ph.D. in Philosophy from Saint Louis University in 1966. Sister Mary Christine was conducting her post graduate research in Paris, France when she was asked by the Texas Parks and Wildlife to research information about the Spaniards who established the Missions. Researching in Madrid and Sevilla, Spain, she once again used her gifts where she was called.

After returning from Europe, Sister Mary Christine served as the Philosophy Department Head and taught at Wadhams Hall Seminary College in Ogdensburg,



Sister Mary Christine Morkovksy, CDP, Ph.D

New York for nearly a decade. Her contributions also extended beyond the classroom. She was a respected author, historian, and spiritual director, influencing many with her deep knowledge and understanding. According to WORLD CAT, Sister Mary Christine is listed 47 times as author, translator, contributor, or creator of 23 print books, 14 ebooks, 28 articles, book reviews or other media.

From 1999-2005,

Sister Mary Christine served on the General Council and was liaison for the Mexico region of the Congregation. She continued to serve the community at The Mexican American Catholic College in San Antonio, Texas, focusing on teaching, writing, and music until 2011. Her lifelong dedication to education, her commitment to her faith, and her unwavering support of the Congregation of Divine Providence left a lasting impact on all who knew her.

Sister Mary Christine collaborated on a regu-

lar basis with the national organization called Women of Providence in Collaboration (WPC.) The WPC is comprised of the congregations of women religious who recognize Providence as their charism. She shared her writings and presentations exploring the applied theology of Providence and contributed regularly to their Providence retreats, conferences, publications and events. Internationally she also shared her writings, knowledge and spirit with her sister congregations founded by Blessed Fr. Jean Martin Moye.

Her focus of manifesting God's Providence allowed her to move from one kind of ministry to another. She said, "I didn't enter the convent to do one particular thing. I entered because I wanted to be of service - to follow Christ and manifest God's Providence."

She is survived by her sisters Helen (Edward) Cyr; and Agnes (Joe) Raz; brothers Henry, John, and Paul Morkovksy; and all her Sisters of Divine Providence. She is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, and their families.

She was preceded in death by her parents Henry J. and Mary L. A. (Kucera) Morkovksy; sisters Rose Ann (Sam) Hauger, Ann Frances (Gerald) Adam, Teresa Clare (Bob) Auburn, and Katherine Angela Morkovksy.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Sisters of Divine Providence, 603 S.W. 24th Street, San Antonio, Texas 78207-4619.

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*Support And Pray
For Vocations*

Parish shows 'Cabrini' to sell-out crowd

By Mary Beth Bracy,
consecrated virgin
Contributing Writer

On March 8, the new Angel Studios' movie "Cabrini" opened at movie theaters in the United States and Canada, including several throughout the North Country. One local parish with a special connection to Mother Cabrini decided to rent out a theater for the occasion.

"I was at one of 'The Chosen' movies and saw an ad for 'Cabrini' and thought that looked really interesting to me. That would be a good movie night for the parish and people are always asking for them. They like going together as a family of faith. Who better to watch than Mother Cabrini because she is in our circle, she is our shrine. It seemed like a no brainer," shared Father Scott R. Seymour, pastor of the community of Saint Alexander, Saint Augustine, and Saint James, with a mission at Mother Cabrini Shrine and Saint Patrick's Oratory.

The local cinema was very accommodating, he explained, and the parish had a table at the movie theater to welcome people and have them check-in.

"We had to bump up the size of the theater to seat 200 because of the response of people from all three of our churches and some from other parishes," Father Seymour said. "We called Regal, and they said we could do it on the night it was opening, we could pick anytime we wanted. I

asked if I could say a prayer before and they said 'that is fine.' They were also fine with us handing out prayer cards and medals of Mother Cabrini after the movie."

It was a packed house for the show.

"We're excited," Father Seymour said. "It's a nice group across the board of all ages. Mother Cabrini is a very important part of people's lives in this area, so it seemed like a great thing to do for Lent."

"I always knew of Mother Cabrini," added Father Seymour. "I knew she was an immigrant to the United States and one of our first saints here. I went to visit her shrine in Upper Manhattan. I didn't realize she was such a force to be reckoned with some of the statements from the movie trailer ('Men could never do what we do.') It's amazing what you can do when you have God on your side. Things that seem insurmountable are never too big. Her desire to help the poor was continuous. Her prayers and activities for the poor were matchless, they were very powerful. The hospitals and the things that she opened not just in New York but Philadelphia and Chicago. That's pretty impressive. I was surprised that she started her own order."

"She clearly has been an important part of this area for years. We get throngs of people there (at Mother Cabrini Shrine in Peru) every week to this day. We go through candles up there like there's no



Film poster for the movie 'Cabrini,' which opened on Friday.

tomorrow. We collect funeral prayer cards because we get so many that people leave there. People from all over are attracted to the shrine itself. They light candles indoors and outdoors. We order pallets of candles twice a year for a total of 7200 candles! When it's not open, people call. They find great solace up there, being removed from everything, looking down on everything, up the mountain close to God. It is a place of prayer, which adds to the mystique of everything. People go for healing and to remember their dead loved ones. In the summer time you get people from all over. In this area, it's just a very popular place to go. I think it's all because

of the devotion of that priest who was here."

Father Harold P. McCabe, pastor of St. Patrick's in 1946, was greatly devoted to Cabrini and wanted to begin a shrine to her. Parishioners worked for its construction and, as a result, thousands of people visited the shrine from as far away as Michigan. Numerous people of all faiths came by busloads from the New York City metro area and Canada. Father McCabe had a local radio program called "The Mother Cabrini Hour." Regularly, he received letters from visitors who received help and cures from Cabrini's intercession, sometimes after their visits to the shrine.

"We offer Mass there

in the summer for our parish picnic with the three parishes," said Father Seymour of the shrine affiliated with the faith community. "We get hundreds of people. People love it. No one disputes whose she is, it is common ground. They are looking for an answer to prayer or remembering a loved one."

"Mother Cabrini is kind of a nice bridge between everybody because she is known to everybody and they have visited there on many occasions," Father Seymour added. "Msgr. Dennis Duprey began the Stations of the Cross outdoors there when we were coming out of Covid. They used flambeaux (torches) to safely light the way to the stations. It met a need because we weren't inside. People like it. Sometimes the weather is not the best. Last week in the wind storm I prayed and the weather was wonderful until after the Stations. We had 40 people. We use a shorter version. It's a wonderful experience. We conclude Good Friday with the Stations there. Our maintenance man, Dave, built an apparatus so the Cross is all lit up.

"Mother Cabrini is still an important part of our life, she is in our circle. We are pretty blessed to have a great devotion to her and Brother André. We have a relic of his blood, handwritten letters. The bottom floor of our new building is dedicated to his memory: Brother André ed-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Environmental Stewardship

Personal connections

The 21st Century with all its technology has created an era that allows people to regularly avoid personal contact with others. Zoom meetings, texts, using social media sites for encounters with friends, shopping online, and getting your entertainment from a streaming service rather than going to a theater or concert enable us to isolate ourselves. This has limited our interaction with other people both while at work and away from our job.

God never intended humans to be solitary beings; rather He created us to have harmonious, face-to-face interactions with others around us. This ability to live peacefully with others is an important skill both for our mental and spiritual wellbeing. Having many friends on a social media platform may sound good, but it is not as healthy as establishing and maintaining strong face-to-face, personal relationships with coworkers, neighbors, people you regularly meet in the store...

Nature is a massive interconnecting web of life of which we are a part. If we find it challenging to interact with other people, it often becomes difficult to live in harmony with other organisms that share the environment with us. Viewing a nature documentary on YouTube is not the same as spending time outdoors. Granted, maintaining a friendship with another person or being out in nature requires more effort than interacting with an image on a screen, but the benefits are immensely greater.

Spending more time without a cell phone during Lent can be quite hard, and may seem impossible to many who have become dependent on them. In *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis warned of the dangers to society if we lose our ability to develop strong personal contacts. We all are diminished, including nature, when we view the components of life as just some virtual image or avatar.

Bishop's Public Schedule

March 13-14 – Seminarian Visit at Saint Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Pennsylvania

March 16 – 11 a.m. – Mass and Celebration of Saint Joseph's Day at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse in Watertown followed by Dinner 4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

March 17 – 11:15 a.m. – Mass at Holy Cross Parish (at St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh followed by the Knights of Columbus Annual Bishop's Burse Dinner at Our Lady of Victory Parish Center at 12:30pm

March 18 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

March 19 – 9:45 a.m. – Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by Lunch

March 20 – 11:30 a.m. – Mother Cabrini Health Foundation Annual Bishops Meeting via Zoom

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg is able to schedule sessions of the training, Protecting God's Children for Adults. To arrange for training, call 315-393-2920 or email jgrizzuto@rcdony.org

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

Rest in Peace

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

March 13 – Rev. James Keveny, 1880; Rev. Ferdinand J. Ouellet, 1929; Rev. Joseph A. Bachand, 1950

March 14 – Msgr. Maurice John Bellamy, 1958; Msgr. Edgar A. Gallagher, 1961; Rev. John Quinn, M.S.C., 1962; Rev. Joseph E. Turcotte, O.M.I., 1980; Rev. Edward C. Rivette, 1981; Rev. Timothy J. Soucy, 2009

March 15 – Rev. Charles J. McMorro, 1898; Rev. Howard G. Goiser, 1984

March 16 – Rev. William A. MacDermott, 1913; Msgr. Noel V. Zimmerman, 1994

March 17 – Rev. Michael Froc, O.M.I., 1905; Rev. Francis X. Parisian, 1955

March 18 – Rev. Joseph Murtagh, 1928

March 19 – Rev. Andronique Blaignier, 1958; Msgr. Thomas J. Robillard, 2009



'Cabrini' movie

ucational center. In one corner we have Brother André, a statue of him and stained glass window. We live on holy ground where important people have come.

"Mother Cabrini's calm and good works drove devotions. People are always welcome to visit Mother Cabrini's shrine and St. Patrick's Oratory. Her relic is there to venerate, along with those of other saints."

Stations of the Cross is held at Mother Cabrini Shrine during Lent (except March 27) on Wednesdays at 5 p.m. and at St. James in Cadyville at 6 p.m. during Lent (except Good Friday). The outdoor shrine at Mother Cabrini's is open all the time. The Church is open from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. weather permitting (not in snowstorms).

Born in 1850, near Milan, Italy, Cabrini loved the Holy Eucharist from a young age, saying: "My Jesus, I want to adore You for all." She longed to be a re-

ligious, but her health was too poor to join the teaching Sisters.

Cabrini founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, desiring to travel to China, but the Pope told them to go to the US instead. They left Italy in 1889 and arrived in NYC without a home.

The Sisters ministered to Italian immigrants and traveled the Americas, Europe, and beyond founding schools, orphanages, and hospitals.

Cabrini encouraged them to find strength through Mass and by starting Eucharistic Adoration.

Despite busy schedules, they spent six hours in prayer daily. At the time of Cabrini's death in 1917, she had over 4,000 sisters and more than 50 houses, in addition to 67 institutions: hospitals, schools, and orphanages worldwide.

Though afraid of water, Cabrini crossed the Atlantic 23 times. She is patroness of immigrants.

To correspond with the U.S. opening of "Cabrini," Sophia Press, in partnership with Angel Studios, is releasing three related book titles: the heroine's definitive biography, "The World Is Too Small: The Life and Times of Mother Cabrini"; a prayer devotional drawn from her authentic letters, "The Mother Cabrini Companion"; and an illustrated children's book dramatizing her work with children, "Mother Cabrini: A Heart for the World." They are available at sophiainstitute.com.

JOB OPENING

Facilities Director for Guggenheim Center for Religious Programs

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg is seeking a **Facilities Director for Guggenheim Center for Religious Programs** who will be responsible for the management and maintenance of the camp facilities including building and grounds. Candidates should possess basic maintenance knowledge and skills including painting, carpentry and some plumbing and electrical. Candidates must be self-directing, have good communication skills and the ability to work well with others. The position is seasonal from May to October. Weekly hours vary with need. Pay Rate: \$18.99/hour - \$20.44/hour.

Submit letter of interest, resume and three professional references to:

Human Resources Office, Diocese of Ogdensburg
P.O. Box 369
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
or e-mail to: ksnover@rcdony.org

Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled.

Report: Uptick in attacks on Catholic parishes

By Martin Barillas
Catholic News Agency

In a message to parishioners, Father Ed Cimbala, pastor of St. Mary Byzantine Catholic Parish in New York City, revealed that overnight on March 3 intruders entered his rectory and office, wrecking both while he was sleeping in an attack that has raised questions about the vandals' motivations.

Apparently nothing was stolen in the intrusion. Cimbala wrote: "The detective identified the incident as a potential hate crime as there was no evidence that the intruder was looking for money."

The incident appears to track with others in which the vandals' main purpose appears to be to intimidate Catholics and wound their religious sensibilities.

Hostility and vandalism against churches, especially Catholic places of worship, have increased by several multiples since 2018, according to a February report by the Family Research Council (FRC).

The report found that attacks on churches are at an all-time high, occurring in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Specifically, the report documented more than 430 incidents in 2023, double the figure for 2022, amounting to an 800% increase since 2018 or an average of 39 attacks per month. These included vandalism, arson and attempts at arson, bomb threats, interruption of worship, and gun-related incidents.

According to the FRC report, from January 2018 to November 2023, there were 709 vandalisms, 135 arson attacks or attempts at arson, 22 incidents involving firearms, 32 bomb threats, and 61 incidents involving assaults, threats, and interruption of worship.

Commenting on the report's findings, Arielle Del Turco, director of FRC's Center for Religious Liberty and author of the report, observed: "Our culture is demonstrating a growing disdain for Christianity and core Christian beliefs, and acts of hostility against churches could be a physical manifestation of that."

"When a statue of Mary outside of a Catholic church is beheaded, it is natural for congregants to feel disturbed and upset, and that may be the vandal's aim," the report noted. "Acts of hostility against churches can send the

message — regardless of whether it is the perpetrator's intent — that churches are not wanted in the community or respected in general. This may cause congregants or church leaders to feel unsafe."

The symbolism of the vandalism is not lost on observers, who noted, for example, that the Christmas crèche at St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish in the New York City borough of Queens was attacked twice on the same night in January.

Also during January, suspects broke a stained-glass window and attacked a cross at St. Columba Church in Brooklyn, New York.

Among the multiple acts of hostility and sacrilege was an arson attack at St. Edward Catholic Parish in Elmdale, Minnesota, that charred the sacristy and damaged the church interior, causing thousands of dollars in damage.

In their January report on religious liberty, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops also observed that "recent years have seen an alarming rate of vandalism, arson, and other property destruction at Catholic sites." The bishops' report said that the majority of cases occurred at churches and often involved defacement of religious icons with pro-abortion messages, such as "If abortion isn't safe, neither are you."

The chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Religious Liberty, Bishop Kevin Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, pointed out that in 2014 when the committee was first formed, vandalism was not a pressing issue but has since become a significant concern.

In their report, the USCCB indicated that "opposition to Christians' witness against abortion continued to motivate vandalism against churches and pro-life pregnancy centers."

The USCCB report pointedly questioned "the general failure ... of the federal government to apprehend and prosecute the perpetrators of such attacks, in contrast with the numerous charges brought against pro-life protesters outside abortion clinics."

In its latest report, the FRC further indicated that "many acts of hostility against churches are likely not reported to authorities and/or are not featured in the news or other online sources ... Thus, the number of acts of hostility is undoubtedly much higher than the number reflected in this report."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Retired judge to investigate charge against Canadian cardinal

The Archdiocese of Quebec in Canada has announced that Pope Francis has appointed a retired judge to lead an investigation into the accusations of sexual abuse against Cardinal Gerald Lacroix, charges that the cardinal "categorically" denies. In a March 4 statement, the Archdiocese of Quebec said that it was informed "last Feb. 8 that Pope Francis has commissioned André Denis, a former judge of the Superior Court of Quebec, to conduct an investigation" into the accusations against Lacroix. Lacroix, the archbishop of Quebec and member of the Council of Cardinals that advises Pope Francis, has been accused as part of a lawsuit against his archdiocese of abusing a 17-year-old girl almost four decades ago. The cardinal has previously denied the accusation. According to the AFP news agency, the accusation against the 66-year-old Canadian cardinal is part of a class-action lawsuit. The accusation dates back to 1987 and 1988, when the alleged victim was 17 years old, according to her lawyer, Alain Arsenault, who is prosecuting the case.

Pennsylvania priest named to role in Vatican's highest court

Pope Francis has appointed a Catholic priest from the Diocese of Scranton, Pennsylvania, as an officer of the Vatican's highest court. The Holy See Press Office announced March 5 that Monsignor Shane L. Kirby has been named the substitute promoter of justice of the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura. The Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura, established in the 15th century, is one of three courts within the Holy See and functions as a sort of Supreme Court, hearing appeals coming from the two other tribunals. The pope is the Holy See's supreme judge. Kirby has been based in Rome since 2017 serving as an official in the Dicastery for the Clergy. Raised in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania, Kirby converted from the Pentecostal tradition while in high school and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Scranton in 2004. Kirby replaces German Father Matthias Ambros, 44, who served as the substitute promoter of justice since January 2023 and was recently appointed as the undersecretary for the Vatican's Dicastery for Culture and Education.

Church Militant to shut down following defamation suit

Church Militant, the controversial Catholic media outlet that has for years maintained a reputation for combative and antagonistic coverage of Catholic figures and issues, will cease operations next month following a \$500,000 defamation judgment against it. Boston-based law firm Todd & Weld said in a press release this week that Church Militant had "agreed to the entry of a judgment against it in the amount of \$500,000" in a defamation lawsuit brought by Father Georges de Laire, the judicial vicar of the Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire. The law firm said an article, "NH Vicar Changes Dogma Into Heresy," had been written in "an attempt to discredit Father de Laire" and the Diocese of Manchester. Todd & Weld said in the press release that St. Michael's Media, the parent company of Church Militant, "will cease all operations of Church Militant by the end of April 2024."

VIRTUAL EVENTS

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: Mar. 24, Apr. 14, Apr. 28

Time: 4 to 5 p.m.

Place: Online

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

FRIENDSHIP GROUP MEETING

Our next Friendship Group meeting will be held, Father Craig MacMahon, OMV will return to talk with us about the second half (Chapter 13 - conclusion) of "Struggles in the Spiritual Life," by Father Tim Gallagher, OMV and answer your questions.

Date: March 21

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Zoom

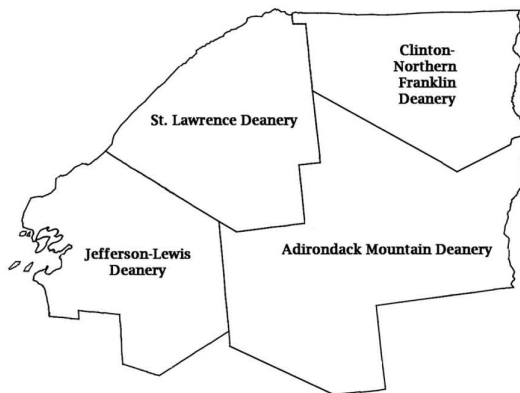
Features: This book will help you understand and conquer the struggles you face in your spiritual life. Father Gallagher presents spiritual struggles as experienced by fictional characters and provides the advice he gives about that struggle. Gain confidence as you journey through desolation, and you'll learn to reject the enemy's ploys.

Contact: If you weren't able to make the last meeting, there is still time to order the book and catch up at sophiainstitute.com (enter Friendship25 at checkout for 25% off). If you haven't, sign up for the Friendship Groups at <https://mailchi.mp/sophiainstitute/friendship-groups>, and you will receive updates, including the Zoom link and discussion questions, prior to the meeting.

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

LENENT PROGRAM

Lake Pleasant – St. James Church



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.

to host Bishop Barron's 4-week presentation on the Eucharist.

Date: March 13, 20 and April 3

Time: 5 p.m.

Features: The Seder meal will be celebrated on March 27. The four presentations will follow a simple shared meal of soup and bread.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Stations of the Cross to be held during Lent.

Place: St. James, Lake Pleasant, St. Ann's, Wells

Schedule: Half an hour before the 8 a.m. Mass at St. James, Lake Pleasant and the 10 a.m. Mass at St. Ann's, Wells.

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

FAITH, FELLOWSHIP AND REFLECTION

Ellenburg - Join Us for "Faith, Fellowship, and Reflection." Experience the Lenten journey like never before!

Date: Every Thursday during Lent (March 14 and 21)

Time: 5 p.m. Mass, followed by soup and salad and then a video from the Symbolon Series

Place: St. Edmund's parish hall

Features: "Symbolon: The Catholic Faith Explained" offers a systematic presentation of our Catholic Faith, guiding you through its "big picture" with

our Creed as the compass. Led by trusted Catholic teachers, this series delves into the breadth and richness of our faith. All are welcome to attend this transformative Lenten program.

FISH FRY

Plattsburgh – Holy Cross Parish to have fish fries during Lent.

Date: Fridays through March 22

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

Place: Holy Cross Parish Center

Cost: \$14
Menu: Haddock, coleslaw, beverage, tartar and cocktail sauce, roll with butter, dessert and the following sides on these dates, Mac & cheese on Feb. 16, 23 and March 15; French Fries on March 1, 8 and 15

Contact: 518-563-0730 for more information.

LENT, SEASON OF TRANSFORMATION

Plattsburgh – Holy Cross Parish presents, "Season of Transformation."

Schedule: March 18 at 6:30 p.m. or March 13 and 20 at 10 a.m.

Place: St. Peter's Emmaus Room

Cost: Suggested donation is \$5 for the study guide

Features: During Lent, we

strive to free ourselves from all kinds of clutter-material and spiritual-in order to focus on God and turn back to him with our whole hearts. If this "turning back" is genuine, it will be a reorientation, a transformation. To help us enter into this season, Amy Ekeh guides readers in exploring three key moments in the life and ministry of Jesus. The result will be a better understanding of the authentic transformation that God calls each of us to embrace as individuals and as a community.

Contact: Please register for the day or evening session to: plattburghsec@rcdony.org or call the Parish Office at 518-563-0730.

LENENT SERIES

Ellenburg – Join us for a series of Lenten Talks, Sharing and Prayer.

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

Place: Adirondack House of Prayer

Schedule: March 23, Discipleship in Three Stories in Mark: come and discover the process of discipleship illustrated by three stories in the Gospel of Mark followed by lunch and a Holy Hour based on the discipleship of the Woman at the Well; April 23, Eucharist and the Call to Discipleship: Come and join us for a presentation on the Eucharist and the Call to Discipleship followed by a simple lunch and a Holy Hour.

Features: These events are free and open to all. A donation to help cover lunch will be gratefully accepted.

Contact: For registration, contact Sarah at 518-534-9976 or Email: olaprayerhouse@gmail.com

PALM SUNDAY BRUNCH

Altona – Palm Sunday Brunch to be held.

Date: March 24

Time: 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Place: Holy Angels Hall

Cost: Adults, \$15; Children 6-12, \$8; 5 and under, Free
Features: Bake Sale, Gift Basket Raffle and 50/50.

Contact: for more information call 518-236-5632

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

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

Date: March 9

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

CHICKEN AND BISCUIT DINNER

Lyons Falls – St. Johns Church will have a drive-thru chicken and biscuit dinner.

Date: March 19

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6

Cost: \$12

Menu: Menu consists of chicken with homemade biscuits, mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetable, a side, and dessert.

Contact: To ensure your dinner call today, don't wait. The pre-order dinner phone numbers are 315-348-8945 or 315-348-8577. The day of the dinner, please call the church hall at 315-348-6599.

SPAGHETTI DINNER AND BASKET RAFFLE

Adams – St. Cecilia's to have a Spring Spaghetti Dinner and Basket Raffle.

Date: March 23

Time: 3 p.m. to 6

Cost: Adults, \$10; Seniors, \$8;

Children 10 and under, \$5

Features: Each basket has a value of \$20 or more. Baskets can be viewed at St. Cecilia's Kehoe Center. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Sales begin the weekends of March 9 & 10 and 16 & 17. Drawings will be held at 6 p.m. on March 23. www.stceciliaandqoh.org

DIVINE MERCY CELEBRATION

Watertown – Divine Mercy Sunday will be celebrated along with the Divine Mercy Novena beginning on Good Friday.

Place: St. Patrick's Church

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'Popcorn and the Pope'

What do these movies have in common? "Ben-Hur," "A Man for All Seasons," "Chariots of Fire," "On the Waterfront," "It's a Wonderful Life," "Schindler's List," and "The Wizard of Oz" have in common. Well, all these films are among the forty-five films discussed in the recent book "Popcorn With the Pope" published by Word on Fire in December 2023.

Over the centuries the Vatican has been known to ban or condemn certain books and films. However, in 1995 the Pontifical Council for Social Communications and the Vatican Film Library commissioned some well-known experts to recommend films worthy of consideration for people seriously exploring their faith especially as it is expressed in contemporary culture, particularly in the cinema.

So, at the rate of about one

film per month, I will explore with you one of the films from this list. Most, if not all, are available at one of the current streaming services such as Amazon Prime, Netflix, Apple TV Hulu, etc.

In addition to those films found on this list of forty-five films, I will discuss with you relatively current films that have a theme or content that will stimulate our Catholic ethos and Christian worldview.

There always is and should be some concern about the "red flags" found in so many movies currently produced. We will be sensitive to that reality as well as to the classifications and ratings given by the Motion Picture Association (MPA). At no time will we promote a film. Rather we will discuss the

content of a film and how that content compares, reflects, or opposes our Catholic views.

The March 2024 issue of America magazine contains an interview with Martin Scorsese, a well-known movie director who has struggled over time with his Catholic faith and whose movies often reflect that struggle. In the interview, he makes this comment: "In a way, [American] society is not based on morality. When a society is not based on a moral foundation or spiritual foundation, then the corruption set in easily and makes you think you're doing the right thing. Because that's how everybody else thinks."

Mr. Scorsese rightly points out this lack of moral and spiritual foundation. Without those

foundations, anything goes. Film is the ideal environment to expose the lack or to portray the presence of these foundations.

In my priesthood, I spent many years in Catholic education. So, giving homework assignments has become part of my DNA. So, if you want to prepare for the next article and see if your thinking and mine jive, then your homework is to stream the movie "Killers of the Flower Moon." It's not from the Vatican, but is worthy consideration because of these moral issues prevalent in the movie. In fact, it is rated "R for violence, some grisly images, and language."

In our discussion of the film, we will attempt to analyze the values missing and present in the lives of the main characters.

Don't forget the popcorn.



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Schedule: March 29 at 3 p.m., The Divine Mercy novena will begin with a brief background of the Divine Mercy, and by praying the Chaplet in the Church to begin the 9-day novena. The novena will end Divine Mercy Sunday, April, 7 at 3 p.m. at the church. There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, singing of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, confession, and a procession. You may bring a Divine Mercy picture to be blessed.

Contact: For more information on Divine Mercy Sunday ... call Judy Boulton at 315-783-7349 or Kim Tyler at 315-486-4542, or by visiting www.thedivinemercy.org

ST. LAWRENCE

TRUST TRUTH SERIES

Canton - Join Canton Catholics for a discussion on hot-button topics in the cold of our North Country winter!

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Sylvia's Lounge (below Josie's Pizza).

Schedule: March 12, I'M NOT DEAD YET, END OF LIFE ISSUES

FOR THE LIVING, Speaker-Father Bryan Stitt, Pastor of St. Mary's in Canton; March 19, UNDER A SPELL, AN ENLIGHTENED AGE'S FASCINATION WITH THE DARK ARTS, Speaker-Elizabeth Pietropaoli, Educator and Student Adviser

Features: Cash preferred for drinks. We hope to see you there!

Contact: Free childcare will be offered in St. Mary's Parish Center. Please call ahead to reserve your child(ren)'s spot at 315-386-2543 or for more information.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

LEAD EVENTS

The following is a list of upcoming LEAD (Leaders for Evangelization and Discipleship) events.

Schedule: March 23, Ogdensburg, Wadhams Hall, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., "What Are You Looking For? Day of Reflection", John 1:38, www.rcdony.org/dayofreflection, \$25

April 7, Watertown, Hearthside, SSJ Motherhouse, 1 p.m. to 3, "Sacred Scripture the Big Picture", No Cost

April 10, Virtual, 6p.m. to 8, "Vo-

cation of the Catechist", No Cost April 11, Plattsburgh Regional Office, 1 p.m. to 3, "Child Methodologies and Learning Styles Part 1", No Cost

Features: We are all called to know our faith and to share it with others. LEAD offers quality diocesan and regional events to support the varied work of parish ministries. These opportunities include spiritual, personal and professional development, networking and days of reflection. All involved in parish ministries are invited to attend LEAD events. If there is a cost associated with the event, parishes may receive a bill.

Contact: To register go to: www.rcdony.org/certworkshops unless otherwise noted.

CHRISM MASS

Ogdensburg - All the faithful of the Diocese of Ogdensburg are invited to join Bishop LaValley in the annual Renewal of Priestly Commitment, the Blessing of the Holy Oils, and the consecration of the Sacred Chrism for use in all the churches of our Diocese.

Date: March 21

Time: 11 a.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Features: This ritual symbolizes that we are one family in Christ. The Chrism Mass may be viewed at <https://www.rcdony.org/live-mass>. The Chrism Mass program will be available at the same link shortly before the Liturgy.

LEAD DAY OF REFLECTION

Ogdensburg - Welcome Catechists, Catechetical Leaders, Commissioned Lay Ministers & Candidates and all Parish Ministers to the Lead Annual Day of Reflection.

Date: March 23

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Place: Wadhams Hall

Cost: \$25 per person

Theme: "What are you looking for?" John 1:38

Features: This event will be led by Bishop LaValley. Includes Mass, two talks, discussion, holy hour, benediction, and opportunity for confession.

Contact: Register at www.rcdony.org/dayofreflection

HEALING MASS

Potsdam - Bishop LaValley has scheduled a Healing Mass for those hurt by the Church on Divine Mercy Sunday.

Date: April 7

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church, Potsdam

RACHELS VINEYARD

Saranac Lake - A Rachel's Vineyard After-Abortion Healing Retreat to be held.

Date: May 24-26

Place: Guggenheim Lodge

Features: If you or a friend are suffering after abortion loss, you are not alone. Find hope and healing at the spring Rachel's Vineyard Retreat.



SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

'When we live for others'

I am the center of the universe. I have to be me. I want what I want when I want it. After all, it's all about me. These expressions are commonplace today. They may not be so blatant, but the fact remains that "What's in it for me?" and "Why should I bother?" and "Is it worth my time?" are our other ways of expressing one's self-importance. They are spoken by self-centered adults who were once probably self-centered children.

Then, we come to church and hear Jesus say: "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life."

Jesus speaks these words as he approaches

his crucifixion. He says them not just to justify the death he will endure, but to clarify the full meaning of life. In a nutshell, if we don't stop living for ourselves, we will live lonely lives and just fade into oblivion. Jesus lived for others and clearly tells us that the fullness and meaning of life will be found only when we live for others.

There is a rather well-known expression that illustrates this point: "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church." Those early martyrs gave their lives for the faith. Even today, we see people mocked, challenged, derided, and even slaughtered because they are Christians. Just flipping through the pages of history, we can easily note that the memorable leaders, movers, shakers and saints were those

March 17

Fifth Sunday
in Ordinary TimeREADINGS
Ezekiel 37:12-14
Romans 8:8-11
John 11:1-45*This homily is offered
courtesy of a priest of
the Diocese of Ogdensburg.*

who gave of themselves for the sake of others. Jesus makes that point very clearly when he speaks about the grain of wheat. He lives that message with his own life.

Jesus spent his life for others and wanted us to do the same. Wouldn't the world be much different if we took that message seriously. There was a well-known evangelist, Christmas Evans, who was always on the move. His friends

urged him to slow down and to take life a little more easily. His response was simply: "It is better to burn out rather than to rust out." Jesus is not suggesting that we burn out, but you get the point.

If we focus on ourselves and treat life as a hypochondriac looks after his life, we will probably exist longer, but we will never fully live, never fully appreciate life.

Jesus' life reveals that service towards others formulates the true key to happiness and the fullness of life. The Mother Therasas, the St. Vincent de Pauls, the Joans of Arc, the Brothers André have all shown us that the path to success and happiness and rewards and fulfillment is centered on being the grain of wheat that dies so that there can be life.

God has written his law in our hearts. It's

quite simple. When we stop making ourselves number one, we will gain so much more. When we forget about ourselves, as did the saints and the great leaders of the world, then we gain a treasure. We gain the whole world.

Others have echoed Jesus' message in their own way. For example, Albert Schweitzer said it this way: "The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others." Einstein's version: "A person starts to live when he can live outside himself."

As our Lenten journey continue to unfold, we see and experience more deeply a Jesus who gives himself for others, for us. Will we ever learn that self-giving is a model for true success in our world? This formula has worked for centuries. Let's do the right thing!

CALLED TO SERVE

Have you seen 'The Chosen'?

During the vine and the branches discourse in the Bible, Jesus is quoted as saying, "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you." (John 15:16).

Influenced by that quote, I reckoned "The Chosen" would focus on the persons selected by Jesus to be his followers, the Apostles.

The growth and development of the disciples is certainly emphasized in the series. But the biography of Jesus of Nazareth shares viewer's attention too. Perhaps He is "The Chosen." The one God the Father calls "my son" and tells us to "listen to him."

I am getting ahead of myself. Let me back up.

"The Chosen" is not a

made for television series, it is not a theatrical movie production, it is not a made for streaming production. It is all those things wrapped into one.

"The Chosen" is a historical drama based on the life of Jesus and those who knew him. Set against the backdrop of Roman oppression in first century Israel, the series shares an authentic look at Jesus' revolutionary life and teachings."

That quote is from the marketing folks at IMDb, a ratings and review company for movies and TV series. Kathy and I have watched all four seasons, 32 episodes. If you are a The Chosen

viewer, I hope you have likewise been educated and entertained.

Season four was available this year, beginning first in movie houses and will eventually be available via stream and DVD purchase.

The official synopsis for the series is "The life of Christ through the eyes of those who encountered him called The Chosen."

Kathy and I have thoroughly enjoyed the series. The script occasionally strays from the Bible timeline in the name of plot development, perhaps writer's prejudice

and the theatrical nature of the show. However, the script is pretty close to the Bible accounts we all know. It is written from a Christian point of view and few Catholics,

if any, should be offended by any of the script. The opening episode begins with a disclaimer: "all Biblical and historical context and any artistic imagination are designed to support the truth and intention of the Scriptures."

The main producer and writer of the series, Dallas Jenkins, has promised three more seasons of "The Cho-

sen." Since season four ends just before Jesus' entry to Jerusalem, what we call Palm Sunday, we can only surmise what seasons 5, 6 and 7 will offer. Jenkins has said Season 7 will deal with Jesus' Resurrection and "just beyond."

If you have never seen "The Chosen", but want to start, I recommend you begin at the beginning, Season 1 Episode 1. The story of Jesus and those chosen to follow him will make more sense that way. You will not be disappointed.

Deacon Kevin Mastellon ministers in Watertown. He is the Director of Permanent Deacons for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

Behind the coverings

Editor's Note: In celebration of the Eucharistic Revival, Father Bryan Stitt, director of Worship for the Diocese of Ogdensburg, will answer questions about worship, the Eucharist and related topics. To submit a question, email bstitt@rcdony.org.

I know it's typical to see statues covered in churches later in Lent. Can you please explain it? It looks disrespectful.

The 5th week of Lent until the Triduum is known as Passiontide. It is during these last days of Lent that we are to keep our hearts and souls united to the Lord in His Passion. On the Saturday of the 4th week of Lent, the day prior to the beginning of Passiontide, the Roman Missal (the book that contains the prayers for



FROM WONDERING TO WONDER IN WORSHIP

With Father Bryan Stitt, Diocesan Director of Worship

Mass) states: The practice of covering crosses and images may be observed. The crosses are to be covered until the end of the celebration of the Lord's passion on Good Friday. Images are to remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil. So why do we veil statues? Because the book on how to celebrate Mass says we can! But "why?" For what purpose do we do it? There is a deeper meaning.

Statues are veiled to help us realize what it would be like to NOT have the fruits of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. If our Lord

had not died and rose from the grave; there would be no saints, no images of the passion, no images of the Sacred Heart. These images which we look upon on a regular basis become "normal" and taken for granted. We veil them in order to emphasize how good they are. By taking them away we appreciate their goodness in a new way. The crosses/crucifixes and images of our Lord's Passion will be unveiled at the celebration of our Lord's Passion on Good Friday. It is part of the liturgy, that the cross if our Lord will be un-

veiled and then venerated by people coming forward and kissing His body. It makes much more sense to unveil them if they had been veiled for a period of time. The other images of the saints and images of our resurrected Lord remain veiled until the beginning of the Easter Vigil. The Easter Vigil, celebrated after dark on Holy Saturday, is our ancient anticipation of and celebration of the Resurrection. These statues are unveiled prior to the celebration because it is the resurrection that brings them meaning. It is the resurrection that opens the doors of heaven, and allows the saints to live in Glory. Please also remember that we are deprived progressively of many symbols throughout the Lenten season:

- We are deprived of

the Alleluia beginning on Ash Wed.

- We are deprived of the Gloria during Lent except for Solemnities.

- We are deprived of the crucifix and statues at the start of Passiontide.

- We are deprived of Holy Water during the Triduum.

- Finally, we are deprived of the Lord Himself in the Blessed Sacrament and the celebration of Holy Mass on Good Friday and Holy Saturday.

All to be restored in glorious fashion - solemnly and progressively - during the Easter Vigil: First the statues, then the Gloria, then the Alleluia, then the Holy Water and finally the Holy Eucharist. So many treasures in the sacred liturgy that we come to appreciate more keenly this holy time of year.

OBITUARIES

Altona – Eileen Bernadette (Lafountain) Bosley, 84; Mass of Christian Burial March 8, 2024 at Holy Angels Church; burial in St. Ann's Cemetery, Mooers Forks.

Altona – Leonard R. Bulriss, 83; Mass of Christian Burial March 8, 2024 at Holy Angels Church.

Clayton – Juditha A. (Lane) Cornaire, 76; Graveside services in May at St. Mary's Cemetery.

Croghan – Wilfred Joseph Proulx, 89; Mass of Christian Burial March 14, 2024 at St. Stephen's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Croghan – Angela A. Robbins, 57; Mass of Christian Burial March 5, 2024 at St. Stephen's Church; burial in Lowville Rural Cemetery.

Elizabethtown – Janice Lena

(King) Hutchins, 88; Mass of Christian Burial March 7, 2024 at St. Elizabeth's Church; burial in St. Elizabeth's Cemetery.

Lake Placid – Paul J. Reiss, 93; Mass of Christian Burial March 16, 2024 at St. Agnes Church.

Lisbon – Arlene Ann (Matthews) Jordan, 84; Mass of Christian Burial March 8, 2024 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg; burial in Morley Cemetery.

Lowville – Betty J. (Kaban) Rowsam, 79; Funeral Services March 7, 2024 at the Iseneker Funeral Home, Inc.; burial in Martinsburg Cemetery.

Lyon Mountain – Kenneth I. Davies, 96; Mass of Christian Burial March 4, 2024 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in Church of the

Assumption Cemetery, Redford.

Massena – James B. Norton, 91; Burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Potsdam.

Morrisonville – Peter J. Zmyewski, Sr., 85; Mass of Christian Burial at St. Alexander's Church; burial in Saratoga National Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Robert O. Butchino, 88; Funeral Services March 4, 2024 at the R.W. Walker Funeral Home; burial in Plattsburgh Community Mausoleum.

Plattsburgh – Beverly A. (Tyndall) Garrow, 83; Mass of Christian Burial March 8, 2024 at St. Peter's Church.

Plattsburgh – Joseph H. Monette, 87; Mass of Christian Burial March 11, 2024 at St. Peter's

Church.

Plattsburgh – Winifred (Drake) Pearsall, 90; Mass of Christian Burial March 9, 2024 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Donna A. (Rivers) St. Denis, 74; Mass of Christian Burial March 11, 2024 at St. Peter's Church.

Port Henry – Stefania Trybendis Frazier, 80; Funeral Services March 4, 2024 at the Harland Funeral Home; burial in Chilson Cemetery.

Saranac Lake – Malcom "Mac" G. Fobare, 89; Services to be held at a later date; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Saranac Lake – Karyl P. Willette, 74; Funeral Services March 9, 2024

at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home; burial in St. Paul's Cemetery, Bloomingdale.

St. Regis Falls – C. Donald Chase, 83; Funeral Services March 6, 2024 at the Hammill Funeral Home; burial in Mound Hill Cemetery.

Watertown – Margaret A. (Gorri) Bracken, 79; Mass of Christian Burial in spring at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Lori Gagnier Gokey, 63; Mass of Christian Burial March 7, 2024 at Holy Family Church; burial in Brookside Cemetery.

Watertown – Victor R. Leon, 80; Mass of Christian Burial March 7, 2024 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Diocesan priest returns to Mollendo, part 2

Father Francis Flynn served in our Diocese' former mission parish, San Martin de Porras, in Mollendo, Peru from 1973-1981. This is the second of weeks feature a reflection on his recent return trip to visit the parish and its people.

That evening, I celebrated her wake service. The next day I left for home. Her family commented that Haydee waited for a priest of the Ogdensburg Diocese to anoint her. She



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

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had been anointed before, but they said that after I anointed her, they sensed that she was at peace. I couldn't get over it either: that after all these years, the only priest available to anoint her and celebrate the wake service

was a priest from the Diocese of Ogdensburg, who just happened to be visiting Mollendo. Haydee was 98 years old when she died. One of her daughters wrote me this: "Dear Pancho, like I said before, she was waiting

for the presence of an American priest and one from the parish of San Martin de Porras where she worked with all of her love, and you were the one chosen. A thousand thanks to all of you priests from the Diocese of Ogdensburg who keep on ministering to us even long after you have left the parish."

In addition to having been there at the end of Haydee's journey through life, I had sev-

eral opportunities to celebrate Mass. I blessed a few houses and a hotel. One memorable event was hearing the confessions of several teenagers whose parents had gone to confession to me when they were teenagers. I was just getting to know them and spend time with them, and first one then another asked to go to confession before Mass. God works in mysterious ways for sure.

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Haydee de Salas and her daughter Marita

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