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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 74, Number 29

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

DEC. 18, 2019

One holiday, a variety of traditions

Though all are celebrating the birth of our Savior on Christmas, many cultures celebrate the holiday with different customs and traditions.

The *North Country Catholic* talked to a number of North Country residents and North Country natives about how they incorporate cultural traditions into their Christmas celebrations.

Learn more about Irish, French, Polish, Italian, Mohawk Indian, Spanish, German and Indian customs, as well as the traditions that originated in a few area families.

Also, learn how some residents keep Christ in Christmas.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

CELEBRATING THE SEASON WITH CLASS



Bentley and Khloe Parmeter color advent calendars with the Catholic Community of Burke & Chateaugay Faith Formation classes. The Faith Formation program held a family class on Dec. 8. Each participating family made a Nativity ornament and decorated an advent calendar.

SUPPORTING RETIRED PRIESTS



NCC columnist Father Bill Muench is one of 33 retired priests of the diocese who currently benefits from the Priests' Retirement Fund. The retired priests, as well as 12 priests age 70 and older who remain in active ministry, will be direct beneficiaries of the generosity of Catholics in the North Country who contribute to their parishes in the Christmas collection.

FULL STORY, PAGES 6 & 7

Pope: World needs peacemakers, not empty words

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The world does not need more empty words, it needs committed, active peacemakers who do not exclude or manipulate, but are open to respectful dialogue, Pope Francis said in his annual message for the World Day of Peace Jan. 1.

"In fact, we cannot truly achieve peace without a convinced dialogue between men and women who seek the truth beyond ide-

ologies and differing opinions," the pope said in the message released Dec. 12.

Peace requires "patient effort to seek truth and justice, to honor the memory of victims and to open the way, step by step, to a shared hope stronger than the desire for vengeance," he said.

Peace also requires "ecological conversion," he said, which basically is "a new way of looking at life as we

consider the generosity of the Creator who has given us the earth and called us to a share it in joy and moderation."

People, he said, need "a new way to dwell in our common home, to accept our differences, to respect and celebrate the life that we have received and share, and to seek living conditions and models of society that favor the continued flourishing of life and the

development of the common good of the entire human family."

The pope's message was released at a Vatican news conference led by Cardinal Peter Turkson, head of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

The pope defined peace as a journey built on: hope that inspires people to keep moving forward, "even when obstacles seem insur-

mountable"; listening that learns lessons from the past; reconciliation that respects others; ecological conversion; and patience and trust.

His message, which the Vatican sends to heads of state around the world, invited everyone "to set aside every act of violence in thought, word and deed, whether against our neighbors or against God's creation."

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Physical activity makes me cry

Over the last few weeks, my twin sister and one of my best friends have repeatedly invited me to participate in exercise classes with them. I keep saying, "no."

I have a reputation for enjoying physical activities. I played sports growing up. I participated in a 65-mile bike ride with my aunt a few years ago. Up until a couple years ago, I would often follow an hour-long session of karate with a three- to five-mile jog.

So why do I decline these invitations?

I've had health issues that have significantly reduced my strength and flexibility in one leg. When I participate in most physical activities now, I cry.

Darcy L.
Fargo

It's neither pain nor discomfort that bring me to tears, though.

I cry because I'm reminded of my limitations. I cry because I remember how strong I was just a few short years ago, and I focus on how weak I am now. I cry because I know my contemporaries can perform

movements and feats of strength that – at least for now – I can't.

So why am I bringing this up as we're preparing to celebrate Christmas? Gifts and giving have been prevalent in my thoughts and prayers lately.

Yes, I've been thinking about trying to find the perfect Christmas gifts for my loved ones, but I've also been thinking and praying about the gifts God has given me.

I've come to realize I'm sort of an ungrateful jerk.

I've spent an awful lot of time lately focusing on the gifts I lack, the gifts I want and the gifts I've lost. I've let that focus overshadow the fact that God has given me a loving family, hysterical and supportive friends, a job I

love, intellect, humor and relatively good health. And that's just a short list. God has given me much, much more.

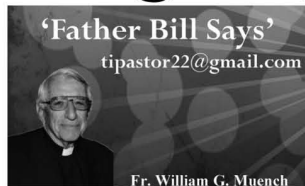
As we approach Christmas, I pray we can all focus on the gifts we've been given by a loving God who knows exactly what we need and when we need it, even if we don't recognize it. I pray we celebrate with gratitude, since we're celebrating that for which we should be most grateful – that our Savior entered the world to save us all.

From all of us here at the *North Country Catholic*, we wish you and your loved ones a blessed and merry Christmas.

Remembering St. Joseph this Advent

When I think of the saints of Advent, I always mention St. John the Baptist, as I did last week. The other Advent saint that I like to remember is St. Joseph. I think of St. Joseph today because on Wednesdays each week, I celebrate Mass with the Sisters of St. Joseph at the Motherhouse here in Watertown. My Mass is with the retired Sisters who live here at the Motherhouse. It is truly a special moment for me – a time of real prayer with the Sisters who spend so much time in prayer during these days in their lives. And, of course, it reminds me of St. Joseph.

So, today, let us take a few moments to remember St. Joseph. We do not learn too much about St. Joseph. However, he has a special place in the Infancy Narrative in St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospels. The question that is brought up often is whether St. Joseph was the same age as Mary or was much older. We do not learn the answer from the Gospels. So, I like to



'Father Bill Says'

tipastor22@gmail.com

Fr. William G. Muench

consider this myself. Some would say that the tradition in those days was for an older man to marry a younger woman. However, personally, I like to think that Joseph was about the same age or a bit older. When I think of Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem for the census, I like to picture two young people in the early stages of their married life. There are many of these little questions that I am saving to ask them if and when I meet them in heaven.

In the First Chapter of St. Matthew, we read of the huge challenge that comes up for St. Joseph when he learns that, before they lived together, Mary was discovered to be pregnant. The Gospel story tells us that Joseph decided that he would quietly

divorce her. He did not want to "expose her to shame." Obviously, it was a rather difficult moment for this young man, not to mention how difficult it was for Mary also. The Gospel story tells us that an angel came to Joseph in a dream: "Joseph, Son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her." Our faith tells us that Joseph accepted Mary and was true to her in marriage. However, humanly speaking, I am certain it was still a rather challenging moment for Joseph.

I am certain that you remember that later, while in Bethlehem, Joseph would be told in a dream again not to return to Galilee but to go for a time to Egypt because of a threat from King Herod. Joseph was certainly challenged by God with these dreams, and yet he proved to be trusting in God and filled with faith.

We recognize in Joseph a strong and protective spirit

for Mary in the Bethlehem story. First of all, travel in those days was not easy, and Mary was pregnant, yet Joseph was an ever-loving and caring husband. Some of the details are mentioned very simply, yet we can be certain that it wasn't all that simple. They couldn't find a place to stay and finally were given shelter in a stable. Each time I see our parish crèche that the Knights of Columbus construct on the church lawn, I am a bit anxious – couldn't there be somewhere in town for them to stay. I want to invite them over to my house across the street.

I am certain that Joseph was rather busy when the child Jesus was born. He was so caring and protective that he didn't hesitate to do all he could to make everything comfortable for Jesus and Mary. So, we celebrate St. Joseph and pray to St. Joseph and seek St. Joseph's care and protection as we remember St. Joseph protecting our Savior, Jesus, and his mother, Mary.

FOLLOW ME

Seek to accompany others

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

"Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Christ and Lord." (Luke 2:10-11)

A constant theme that Pope Francis has incorporated into his teaching is that of accompaniment. Of course, the premier example of accompaniment is the Incarnation, that Joyful Mystery of our faith when God, born of the Virgin Mary, chose to accompany us on our earthly journeys. The Christmas story is a divine love story of accompaniment.

In our recent *ad limina* visit to Rome, the Holy Father spoke of the importance of the family and its tragic brokenness today. He urged us to accompany, with tenderness and care, members of broken families and to support struggling and strong families. We each have a role to play in the

Christmas story as fellow companions in faith, beginning with those closest to us, our families.

So many persons need someone to lean on, someone to show them Jesus. Our Godparents and Confirmation sponsors will want to recommit themselves to accompanying the baptized and confirmed in their walk of faith. We enter more fully the Christmas story when we take the time to understand and support the fearful migrant, the confused teen, the depressed homeless, the victim of abuse, the mentally ill, the desperate addict, the overwhelmed parent, the forgotten elderly. No one should walk alone.

Christmas is the divine reminder that our God never forgets us. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life who never leaves us alone. It is no wonder that this is a time of great hope, joy and peace. The Christ-

mas story is our love story! For the faithful one, we know how the story ends. As the New

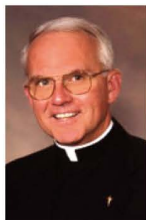
Year approaches, let us turn the page to a new chapter in our story. *Christ-led, Christ-fed and Hope-filled*, we seek to be the companion whose own personal encounter with Jesus becomes the witness for others to want to seek the Prince

of Peace. May the Christ Child bring you and your loved ones the Gift of Love, the Blessing of Hope and the Promise of Peace. A blessed Christmas and joy-filled New Year!

Faithfully yours in
Christ,
Most Reverend



Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg



Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley

In Brief

Plattsburgh March for Life date moved to October

Plattsburgh March for Life, coordinated by Champlain Valley Right to Life, has traditionally been held in January prior to the March for Life in Washington, DC.

Beginning in 2020, the Plattsburgh March for Life will be held the third Sunday of October.

More information about the local March will be released closer to the event date.



*The Word
became Flesh*

*and dwell
among us*

Christmas Blessings

From the Natural Family Planning Office

NAVE to perform 'Carols & Lessons'

The Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble (NAVE) will give two performances of a Festival of Lessons and Carols.

In the show, anthems, carols, and hymns illuminate the Christmas story along with community readers and congregational singing in the beloved tradition of King's College, Cambridge:

- Saturday, Dec. 21 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh
- Sunday, Dec. 22 at 4 p.m. at St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid

NAVE, under the musical direction of Andrew M. Benware, a church musician holding positions at both St. Bernard's Church in Saranac Lake and St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid, is a mixed chamber choir of professional and amateur singers that performs choral music

from a variety of periods and styles with harmonies of four to eight parts.

NAVE's membership is comprised of singers from Clinton, Essex, and Franklin counties.

Distinct from other choral groups in our region, NAVE is essentially an a cappella chamber choir focusing on the rich and historical repertoire composed specifically for chamber choir unaccompanied by instruments.

NAVE's Festival of Lessons and Carols follows the traditional model of those performed annually on Christmas Eve (since 1928) at King's College Chapel in Cambridge, England.

Admission is a suggested donation of \$10.

For more information please find us on Facebook or contact drew.benware@gmail.com.

**At Christmas, grace is given to our world.
Because of you, Peace reaches to the ends
of the earth, to the Mission,
to those longing for life in Christ.**



Merry Christmas
from the Pontifical Mission Societies, Inc.
in the Diocese of Ogdensburg



Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director
Molly McKee Ryan, Secretary

Celebrating Christmas in a variety of ways

By Mary Beth Bracy
Contributing writer

Though cultures celebrate the holiday differently, Christmas (or Christ-Mass) reminds all of us that God is with us and present among us. Hymns like “Minuit, Chrétiens,” “Gesù Bambino,” “Adestes Fideles,” “Away in a Manger,” and “Stille Nacht” ring in our hearts at Midnight Mass, echoing joy at Our Savior’s holy birth. North Country faithful reflected on some of their favorite memories of celebrating Christmas with faith, hope, and love in a variety of ways.

When she was a child, Mary Hartzell Bracy, now a resident of Carthage, recounted that nuns sent her mother, Bette, a little packet of Christmas wheat seeds.

“Every time you did a sacrifice or something nice for someone you’d put a seed in a bowl,” Bracy said. “On the feast of St. Lucy (Dec. 13), you’d plant the seeds. They grew, and on Christmas you’d present the plant at the manger while singing a hymn.”

This Hungarian custom is intended to remind those who practice it of the Holy Eucharist and that Jesus was born at Bethlehem, which means house of bread.

Joyeux Noël: French traditions

Peru resident Bruce Beauharnois has a special tradition of visiting and attending Mass at Notre-Dame Basilica in Montréal. This family trip, the week after Thanksgiving each year, marks the beginning to the Advent season. After, the family enjoys crêpes in Centre-Ville.

Growing up, Michele Renadette Polhemus of Plattsburgh describes



A theatrical presentation of ‘the Three Kings’ visit’ was taken by Lora Sepúlveda Kluwe at the Catholic Church in Boquerón, Puerto Rico. A native of Puerto Rico, Kluwe now calls the North Country her home.

Tourtière (French Canadian meat pie) and pastries, filled with brown sugar and cinnamon, made from the leftover dough. It was a family time and they would visit both sets of grandparents and go to church on Christmas Eve.

Similarly, Plattsburgh resident Jackie Ryan Bracy’s mother, Sally, always made Tourtière on Christmas Eve. They visited her maternal grandparents and attended evening Mass together as a family. When she and her sisters were older, they went to Midnight Mass.

“My mother really kept Christmas about the birth of Christ, and it was not commercialized,” Jackie Ryan Bracy said. “She kept it simple. I really appreciate that now.”

Nollaig Shona! Irish traditions

Sharon Riley Luck of Cliff Haven recalled celebrating the holiday with Irish traditions.

Luck noted she fondly remembers her mom’s Irish Soda Bread, and how “she would make it for us but also give it to friends

and the priests at the rectory.”

Clare Szydlik Whitten recalls the traditions of her parish, St. John’s in Plattsburgh, as well.

“At St. John’s when I was little, there was always a pageant before Midnight Mass,” Whitten said. “Sister Felicitas always put it on. The boys would wear the cassock and surplice and sing. There would be little kids who would come up during the song ‘Oh Come Little Children.’ The junior high girls – boys could start in 4th grade, when they started serving – would sing certain songs while they were dressed in angel costumes trimmed in gold or silver garland with matching halos. I longed for the day when I could be one of those angels and was thrilled when I could.”

Wesolych Świąt: Polish traditions

Whitten noted her family observed Polish customs during the Christmas season.

“We would follow the Polish tradition and put our tree up on Christmas Eve,” she said. “We would also have Mary and Joseph

travel around the living room and arrive at the stable about a week before Christmas. Jesus didn’t get into the manger until after Mass on Christmas Eve.”

Natalie Wagner Batt’s family also celebrated the holiday in the Polish tradition.

“As a child, Christmas Eve meant carrying on the Polish Wigilia customs handed down by my dad’s family,” she said. “My husband and I continue to carry on these traditions with our own five children. After the first evening star has risen, Oplatki – unleavened Christmas wafers – are broken and shared amongst all the members of the family; each piece is offered with a blessing or joyful wishes for a Merry Christmas. The Wigilia meal, which includes fish, pierogi, peas, and noodles, among other traditional Polish goodies – and in our particular tradition, always all green or white – is meatless but hearty and wonderfully comforting. Soon after dinner, we break out the Christmas cookies and enjoy dessert

and games, and a nap for the little ones before heading off to Midnight Mass.”

Satonhà:ren tsi rotón:ni Mohawk traditions

Dr. Rose-Alma “Dolly” McDonald shared that there is “traditional midnight mass on Christmas Eve at the St. Regis Mission Church. Our Mohawk Choir sings throughout the Mass and we have hot cross bread that we always distribute on Christmas Eve.” At an earlier Mass there is a pageant with children and “the baby Jesus is a little Mohawk baby.”

Merry Christmas! American traditions

In addition to celebrating cultural traditions, many area families have created their own practices. Peru resident Pam Sears says she remembers “Mass with family on Christmas Eve and lighting the Advent candle at our evening meals.”

Elizabeth Gibbs of Plattsburgh said her family uses tree decorating as a way to reflect on the meaning of the holiday.

“When we decorate the Christmas tree, we always make sure the angel is the last thing to go on the tree on the top,” Gibbs said. “Wyatt [her youngest son] asked me why we don’t have a star on the top, and I said we have an angel so that we are reminded of God’s presence in the holiday. Christ’s birth is the ultimate act of love.”

Deacon Dave Clark, also a Plattsburgh resident, said his family’s celebration of the holidays blended traditions from around the United States.

“For years, our Christmas tradition was midnight Mass with our three kids,” he said. “I would get the kids ready and get

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Celebrating Christmas

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

them into the car. Meanwhile Mary [his wife] would put new sheets on their beds and lay out new pajamas on the pillow. That way there were new PJs for Christmas Day. Another tradition was food. Christmas Eve was seafood – an Illinois custom, Christmas Day meant a very special breakfast, then a turkey or ham dinner. New Year's Day would have to include black eyed peas – a southern tradition – for good fortune in the New Year. Finally, our Christmas traditions always revolved around Mass. We celebrated Mass to honor our God and thank Him for another great year."

Christu Pirapu Perudhina Valthukkal! Indian traditions

Sister Jackie Sellappan, a Sister of the Cross of Chavanod, explained that in India, they light candles on the wreath during Advent and prepare for Christmas with spiritual lessons. Children write poems and essays about the season that are presented in a competition. A Christmas pageant is staged with live animals.

Faithful go "caroling house to house, street to street," Sister Jackie said.

They also have traveling nativities where they act out on streets, "how Jesus is born today in our situations in this part of the world."

Stars are the most important decoration, and they are hung on the rooves of houses. At Midnight Mass, the liturgy lasts three hours and is known for having beautiful music, Sister Jackie said.

People display large, ornate nativities in their homes, and a priest travels to the houses to choose the most beautiful. Prizes are awarded.

It is also customary to bake Indian cookies which they put on a platter to give to Hindus, Muslims and everyone. All of the neighbors are invited to share in Christmas dinner.

Sister Jackie said children travel to relatives houses and ask for a blessing from their elders who say: "God bless you, have a long life."

Feliz Navidad!

Spanish Traditions

Lora Sepúlveda Kluwe, a native of Puerto Rico who now lives in Keene, shared that "the celebration of the feast of Los Tres Reyes Magos is so beautiful! Throughout the

island [of Puerto Rico], there are town-wide festivities including processions, singing, theatrical presentations of the Three Kings' visit to the Holy Family in Bethlehem. Children and their families accompany the Three Kings in song as all process through a village. Our traditional Christmas songs are called Aguinaldos. It is a great joy to witness the excitement and wonder of the children, especially the younger ones, as they receive little gifts directly from Los Reyes Magos. This January 6th tradition, Christmas Eve Midnight Mass and the Christmas season's Parrandas, Puerto Rican Christmas caroling, Pasteles—the sabroso traditional Puerto Rican Christmas dish, are unforgettable experiences filled with love and joy."

Fröhliche Weihnachten!

German traditions

Mary Stauss Szydlak, a Plattsburgh native of German heritage, food ties her Christmas celebration with her culture.

"A yeast fruit bread called Stollen [or Christstollen] is Christmas fare with those of German parentage," she said. "A German friend baked it on

a cookie sheet so that it was rather flat. She would fold it over itself when she panned it. My cookbook written by Germans in this country bakes the rich dough filled with candied fruit, almonds and raisins in a bread pan. It is very delicious."

One legend says the "humps" in the bread represent the humps on the camels who carried the magi and the colorful fruit symbolizes the gifts they brought the Baby Jesus.

Buon Natale! Italian traditions

Thinking back to some Italian traditions, Lisa Mockus emphasized that "going to church was a definite. People dressed up to do so. My cousin used to bake a birthday cake for Jesus."

Mockus said her family would attend Midnight Mass, staying up late to see family, grandparents, and cousins. They had a special meal before Church.

Keeping Christmas spiritual

Father Theodore A. Crosby, pastor of St. Joseph's in West Chazy and Sacred Heart in Chazy, encourages "any Catholic to reflect on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary throughout Advent and Christmas time.

St. Matthew tells us that the Wise Men found the Christ Child with Mary, His Mother. Wise men, the old saying goes, still seek Him. And the wise still find Him with Mary!"

Anne Marie Holleran said that her family, "always, always, always attended Mass together; the celebration was definitely faith based."

Celebrating Christmas as an adult is important to Debbie Rheome, a Plattsburgh resident.

"We have quite few nativities and ornaments that express my faith in Jesus," she said. "He is at the center of Christmas for me now, it's all about Him. I like to read the scripture from Luke 2:8-14 on Christmas morning. That's what Christmas is all about."

Attending Midnight Mass, and taking part in all of the French traditions, was also central in Linda Bennett Bracy's family. Following Mass, they continued "Le Réveillon," rejoicing with family, music, and sweet treats throughout the night. Her grandmother also passed on an Advent prayer which the family still says today:

O Jesus, little child, come into my heart on Christmas morn to wash away my sins and remain there in eternally. O Mary, Mother of my Savior, prepare for Jesus a cradle in my heart.



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Forty-five priests benefit from retirement fund

By Michael J. Tooley
Diocesan Fiscal Officer

The 33 retired priests of the diocese who currently receive pensions from the Priests' Retirement Fund will be direct beneficiaries of the generosity of Catholics in the North Country who contribute to their parishes in the Christmas collection. Also, 12 priests age 70 and older who remain active in their ministry in the Diocese of Ogdensburg are receiving partial retirement benefits.

Your gift this year will help support not only priests currently receiving support from the Priests'

Retirement Fund but also benefits to be paid to future retirees.

The Priests' Retirement Fund of the diocese receives 75% of the Christmas Collection proceeds given to each parish. While your gift helps pay pensions to retired priests, it will also help the diocese make provisions for pensions for other priests as they retire in the future.

Actuarial studies are performed annually to assure the diocese is preparing for its future obligations to retired priests. The firm of Frank J. Walters and Associates has determined that ade-

quate provisions are being made in 2019-20 to fund the Plan.

As a result of investment returns below budget in 2018-19 the diocese determined the Plan could not provide an hoc pension increase to retired priests on July 1, 2019. It is the diocese's goal to provide a pension increase when able to do so. Estimated pension payments in this fiscal year amount to \$900,000. One hundred percent of the cost of health insurance for retired priests is also funded through the Plan, the budget in 2019-20 for this benefit is \$220,000.

Retired priests of the

diocese receive pensions from the Social Security system. Because priests' income is typically modest, their Social Security pensions are not large and most rely heavily on pensions from the diocese for a good portion of their financial support.

The value of the investments of the Priests' Retirement Fund decreased over a one-year period from \$12,203,447 to \$12,169,325 on June 30, 2019. The diocese's Investment Advisory Committee, diocesan administration, and the investment portfolio's investment managers closely monitor monies invested in support of the Plan.

The Priests' Retirement Fund of the diocese is also assisted through extraordinary gifts. Information about gift opportunities to benefit the Priests' Retirement Fund is available from the Development Director of the Diocese, Scott Lalone. He can be reached in Ogdensburg at (315) 393-2920 or through e-mail to slalone@rcdony.org.

Your personal generosity to the Christmas collection in your parish will support all retired priests of the diocese and benefit longer term the diocesan and religious priests serving you today. Your priests, retired and active, will appreciate your support tremendously!



*May the blessings of that first Christmas
be yours this season and always.*



From the Staff of the Development Office
Scott Lalone, Valerie Mathews & Meg Kownacky



Catholics along the Au Sable
Comprised of the following parishes
The Catholic Community of Holy Name and St. Matthew's, Au Sable Forks
The Roman Catholic Community of Keeseville, Keeseville and
St. Margaret's Roman Catholic Church, Wilmington
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Provide for our priests through a generous gift to your parish

Christmas Collection

*A gift to the
Christmas Collection
in your parish helps
to support our retired
priests.*



Msgr. Lawrence M. Deno, Rev. William G. Muench and Rev. Joseph N. Sestito are among the 45 priests of the diocese who will benefit from donations to the Priests' Retirement Fund through the Christmas Collection in parishes across the diocese.



Glory to God in the highest,
and on Earth, peace and good
will towards men.

-Luke 2:14



Alleged victim sues Vatican

NEW YORK (CNS)— John Bellocchio, 37, who claims former Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick abused him when he was a teenager, announced at a Dec. 9 news conference that he is suing the Vatican and demanding "sweeping child protection changes."

He filed the suit in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York. Ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of New York in 1958, McCarrick was named an auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese in 1977.

A week earlier, Bellocchio, who is represented by Minnesota attorney Jeff Anderson, filed a lawsuit in New Jersey against McCarrick, who was archbishop of Newark, New Jersey, from 1986 to 2000. The suit also names the Archdiocese of Newark as a defendant.

Bellocchio alleges Vatican officials were aware of McCarrick's behavior over his more than 60 years as a cleric and yet continued to promote him as a

church leader. He took the legal action under the New York Child Victims Act and the New Jersey Victim's Rights Bill, both of which are new laws lifting the statute of limitations on sex abuse.

McCarrick — who was removed from the clerical state in February of this year following a Vatican trial into charges of abuse levied against him — became bishop of the Diocese of Metuchen, New Jersey, in 1981. From 1986 to 2000, he was archbishop of Newark. He became a cardinal in February 2001 and served as archbishop of Washington from 2001 to 2006.

The Vatican may publish what it knows about the ascent to power of now-disgraced former prelate by Christmas, or perhaps the New Year.

At the New York news conference, Anderson, who has filed other lawsuits against the Vatican on behalf of the abuse survivors he represents, said "the origin" of the abuse

problem is the Vatican. He accused members of hierarchy of refusing "to come clean and to protect those that need to be protected."

He and Bellocchio seek "to change the practices and protocols" used by Pope Francis and his predecessors, Pope Benedict XVI, St. John Paul II "and those that preceded them."

Bellocchio alleges McCarrick sexually assaulted him when he was 14 and then Archbishop McCarrick was visiting Bellocchio's parish in Hackensack, New Jersey.

Earlier this year in St. Paul, Minnesota, Anderson announced May 14 that he was suing the Vatican on behalf of five sexual abuse survivors he represents. Similarly, they are seeking names of clergy sexual abuse offenders worldwide and the names of church leaders who have been involved in abuse cover-up.

In October 2018, he announced a suit in California against the Vatican, but he has since dropped that suit.

NJ church destroyed in fire, arson suspect arrested

FRANKLIN LAKES, N.J. (CNS)— After a fire destroyed Most Blessed Sacrament Church in Franklin Lakes in the early hours of Dec. 11, the suspected arsonist was arrested. He was receiving burn treatment at a local hospital prior to his court hearing.

"We are thankful for the efforts of the police, firefighters and public safety workers who immediately responded to calls and battled the blaze during frigid conditions to try and save Most Blessed Sacrament Church," said a Dec. 12 statement from the

Newark Archdiocese.

James Mayers, a 26-year-old local resident, was arrested at the scene of the fire that had been set with a cigarette lighter and gasoline. He was charged with first-degree aggravated arson and third-degree burglary, according to a report by NJ.com, a digital news content provider and website in New Jersey.

The archdiocesan statement said: "We are moving forward to ensure parish life continues and we are currently identifying alternative sites for Masses, liturgies and parish activi-

ties. We ask everyone to please pray for all who have been affected by this incident."

Parishioners gathered outside the charred remains of the church Dec. 12 remembering the importance the nearly 60-year-old parish had for many of them.

"Every family memory is wrapped up in that church," Diann Isola, a parish member for more than 50 years, told NJ.com. "It's a very sad day."

The parish, which serves more than 2,000 families, was founded in 1960.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Sainthood causes require thorough investigation, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS)— The saints are "the true light of the church," so before they are proposed to all Catholics for imitation and veneration, a scrupulous investigation is required, Pope Francis said. Celebrating the 50th anniversary of having an office, the Congregation for Saints' Causes, totally dedicated to identifying and promoting models of holiness, Pope Francis met Dec. 12 with the congregation's staff, members and consultants — including physicians, historians and theologians — and with postulators, the people who shepherd and promote the causes of saints. "The very many beatifications and canonizations that have been celebrated in the past few decades demonstrate how the saints are not unreachable human beings but are close to us and can support us in our life's journeys," the pope said. In the past 50 years, 2,203 people have been beatified and 1,479 have been canonized. In addition, the congregation handled the processes for the papal declarations of six new "doctors of the church," namely: Sts. Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena, Therese of Lisieux, Hildegard of Bingen, John of Avila and Gregory of Narek.

Guards attacked at national shrine in Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON (CNS)— Washington authorities apprehended a suspect in an incident involving an attack Dec. 10 against two security guards at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the largest Marian shrine in the United States. Authorities believe the incident involves a domestic dispute but did not give details or identify those involved. In a statement, the shrine's director of communications, Jacquelyn Hayes, said both guards were injured in the 9:15 a.m. incident, and at a news conference later in the day, the shrine's rector, Msgr. Walter Rossi, said the suspect allegedly used his car to hit a female security guard "with whom he was acquainted," trying to run her over. He did not explain their relationship. The second guard then confronted the assailant, he said. The second guard was later stabbed multiple times while inside the crypt area in the lower part of the basilica. "A member of our family has been struck ... but we are in solidarity," said Hayes, trying to hold in her emotions during the late afternoon news conference. Msgr. Rossi said there's "no ongoing threat to the shrine, our staff or our visitors related to this incident."

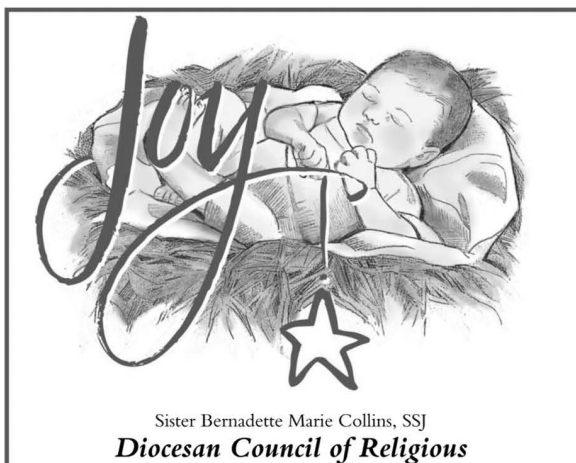
Daleiden, colleague charged with criminal eavesdropping

SAN FRANCISCO (CNS)— A California judge ruled Dec. 6 to let a criminal trial proceed against David Daleiden and Sandra Merritt on nine counts of violating California's anti-eavesdropping law. The charges stem from undercover investigative videos filmed in 2015 by Daleiden and Merritt, who are with the Center for Medical Progress, which showed Planned Parenthood officials discussing fees related to selling fetal tissue. The two posed as representatives of a mythical fetal tissue procurement firm. Judge Christopher C. Hite of San Francisco County Superior Court dropped five counts against Daleiden and Merritt, but in his order he said there was sufficient evidence to support the nine counts. The defendants must appear in court for arraignment Jan. 30. Hite's ruling follows a preliminary hearing held in September. The case is California v. David Daleiden and Sandra Merritt. "The remaining charges under the California video recording law — the first and only time it has ever been used against undercover news gatherers — will fall for the same reasons that five charges were dismissed today: These were public conversations easily overheard by third parties," the Center for Medical Progress said in a statement.



**May the Lord grant you
and your loved ones
love, joy & goodwill
this Christmas and
all the new year!**

St. Mary's Church,
Ticonderoga



Sister Bernadette Marie Collins, SSJ
Diocesan Council of Religious

Protecting God's Children

The **Diocese of Ogdensburg** has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration online is required. Participants may preregister at www.virtus.org.
Upcoming sessions:
Jan. 30 – 6 p.m., Wakefield Recital Hall at SUNY Potsdam, room C-224

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters from readers of the North Country Catholic.

- Due to space limitations, we ask that the number of words be limited to 300.
- We cannot accept letters which support ideas which are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Send letters to North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY, 13669 or e-mail to news@northcountrycatholic.org
- Join the conversation!



Bishop's Public Schedule

Dec. 18 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
Dec. 21 – 4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
Dec. 22 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
Dec. 23 – 12:15 p.m. – Diocesan Staff Christmas Party at Bishop's Residence
7:15 p.m. – Novena followed by Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
Dec. 24 – 4 p.m. – Christmas Vigil Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
Dec. 25 – Midnight – Midnight Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
9 a.m. – Christmas Mass at Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg

Rest in Peace

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

Dec. 18 – Msgr. Narcisse Lorrain, 1915; Rev. Laurent Legoff, O.M.I., 1932; Rev. Louis Kopp, M.S.C., 1946; Msgr. Harold J. Skelly, 1980; Rev. George A. Fortaine, 1990
Dec. 20 – Rev. Luke Harney, 1892; Rev. Jean B. A. Barette, O.M.I., 1955
Dec. 21 – Rev. Charles A. Grady, O.S.A., 1981
Dec. 22 – Rev. Edgard Thivierge, O.M.I., 1975
Dec. 23 – Rev. John B. P. Honorat, O.M.I., 1862
Dec. 24 – Rev. Jean Claude Leonard, O.M.I., 1868

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terri-
anne Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY, 12955
terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com
Phone: Day: 518-651-2267, Night: 518-569-0612; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy at 315-393-2920

Environmental Stewardship

What about the animals?

Have you ever had a child who has just lost her/his favorite pet ask, "Will my pet be in heaven?"
Whatever your answer may be, Scripture does not expressly give us the answer to that question. However, we find many places in Scripture where animals are a very important role.
In the celebration of the birth of Christ we find the donkey was the one that carried pregnant Mary to the stable.
Later it was the faithful donkey that brought them to safety when they had to flee as refugees to Egypt.

The cow in the stable, when Mary and Joseph sought refuge, may have helped keep the Holy Family a little warmer.

The lamb becomes the first gift that Jesus receives as a baby. Jesus often used the lamb as a symbol of his love for us.

Then, there are the camels that bring their seekers, the Magi, to the feet of the Christ child.

In the Scripture readings during Advent we find animals having a place in the kingdom of peace prophesized in the Book of Isaiah. "The wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. . . The baby shall play by the cobra's den, and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair. There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain." (Isaiah 11:6-9)

This vision of the new creation seems to reveal an intimate harmony between us and the whole of God's creation.

In our culture today we often find that animals and other species are viewed solely in terms of their use to us, while the Scriptures reveal that animals and all species have a sacred purpose given to them by the Creator.

With animals in our forest, birds at our feeders, pets in our homes, how can my celebration of the holy season include loving care and reverence for all creatures?

St. Mary's Cathedral
415 Hamilton Street, Ogdensburg

Notre Dame Church
125 Ford Avenue, Ogdensburg
315-393-3930

Christmas Eve Masses
4:00 pm: St. Mary's Cathedral
4:00 pm: Notre Dame Church
(Children's Mass)

Christmas Day Masses
9:00 am: Notre Dame Church
11:00 am: St. Joseph's Nursing Home

12 Midnight: St. Mary's Cathedral



Funeral held for Sister Mary Monica Archambault

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Theresa Archambault (Mary Monica) was held Thursday, Dec. 12 at the Mount Sacred Heart Chapel in Littleton, New Hampshire.

Sister Mary Monica, a Sister of the Daughters of Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was called

to God on December 9, 2019 at the age of 92 after 71 years of Religious Profession.

She died at the Holy Cross Health Center in Manchester after a long illness.

She was born in Richford, Vermont on July 27, 1927. Sister Mary Monica

was a devoted teacher and administrator of elementary and secondary Catholic schools, in Newport, Vermont, Champlain, New York, and Colebrook, New Hampshire.

Later in life, to bring to fruition her intense love for the poor, Sister was missioned to a rural, poor parish in Crowley, Louisiana for nine years, teaching the illiterate, as well as being engaged in pastoral and social work in the area.

It is impossible to measure the impact of her witness and love for the deprived people of the area.

Sister Mary Monica possessed an engaging personality that loved to laugh and tell a good

story or joke that endeared her to all the people around her. She is fondly remembered and loved by her former students, her relatives and friends and her Sisters in the community.

The Daughters of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus wish to express our sincere thanks to the professional staff at Mount Sacred Heart Infirmary in Littleton, New Hampshire, as well as the Holy Cross Health Care Center in Manchester for their loving care given to Sister Mary Monica during her years of receiving necessary medical care.

Sister Mary Monica is predeceased by her father, Eli Archambault; her mother, Lucille Hamel Archambault; siblings, John

Archambault, Henrietta Chadwick, Mary Miller, Lawrence Archambault, Madeline Manahan, Bernard Archambault, Rita Morin, James Archambault, Sister Cecile Archambault, RHSJ, Ester Madigan, Richard Archambault, Gerald Archambault, Bruce Archambault.

She is survived by a brother, Melbourne Archambault, and nieces and nephews numbering 175.

Interment will take place in the Spring at St Mary's Cemetery in Newport, Vermont. Memorial donations in Sister Mary Monica's name may be addressed to: Daughters of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 226 Grove St. Littleton, NH 03561

*May the Hope of Christmas
brightly shine on you and
your loved ones.
And, may the special love and
blessings of our savior
Jesus Christ,
be with you this season
and all year through.
Merry Christmas
from
St. Peter's Parish, Massena!*



*And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us.*



Merry Christmas from the Respect Life Office
(Image used with permission from The Saints Project)

CELEBRATING OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE



Parishioners and guests who attended the 11 a.m. Mass at St. Alphonsus Holy Name of Jesus Parish in Tupper Lake on Dec. 8 were blessed to see children helping out as they honored Our Lady of Guadalupe. The students wore sombrero and giant smiles. The Mass festivities were enjoyed by young and old alike, as the Blessed Mother Mary was honored on her very special Mexican feast day. One of the youngest to enjoy the tribute to the Blessed Mother was Isabella Ariel Arancel, daughter of Kayla and Jair Arance, and grand daughter of Denis and Lisa Jones.

ADIRONDACK

FESTIVAL OF LESSONS & CAROLS

Lake Placid – The Festival of Lessons and Carols to feature the Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble.

Date: Dec. 22

Time: 4 p.m.

Place: St. Agnes Church

Cost: Donation of \$10

Features: Anthems, carols, and hymns illuminate the Christmas story with community readers and congregational singing.

Contact: For more information contact drew.benware@gmail.com

CLINTON

FESTIVAL OF LESSONS & CAROLS

Plattsburgh – The Festival of Lessons and Carols to feature the Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble.

Date: Dec. 21

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Place: St. Peter's Church

Cost: Donation of \$10

Features: Anthems, carols, and hymns illuminate the Christmas story with community readers and congregational singing.

Contact: For more information contact drew.benware@gmail.com

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

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

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

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

Place: St. Joseph's Parish Hall

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

CHARISMATIC PRAYER GATHERING

Morrisonville – A Charismatic Prayer Gathering is to be held.

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

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: St. Alexander's Church

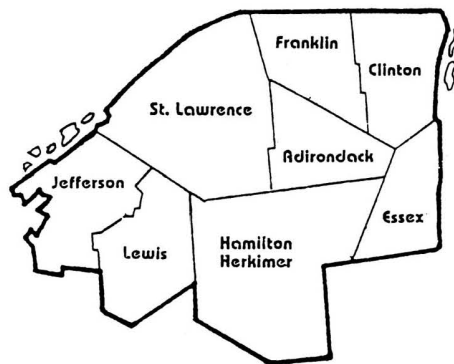
Features: A time for prayer, praise, scripture, song, sharing and fellowship. All are welcome! An opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and each other.

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

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

Plattsburgh – The Sacred Heart Fraternity Secular Franciscan Order meets the second Sunday of each month.

Time: 2 p.m.



The North Country Catholic welcomes contributions to "Around the Diocese"

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,
Ogdensburg, NY 13669; fax, 315-394-0670;
e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

Place: St. John's Church (Holy Family Chapel)

DONATION CENTER

Plattsburgh – Drop unwanted clothes, shoes, sheets, blankets, bedspreads, towels, curtains and stuffed animals in our BLUE drop box.

Place: Seton Catholic

Features: Seton receive 5 cents per pound of donations. You can also donate cans and bottles in our redemption box.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Keeseville – There is Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every Sunday.

Time: 1 p.m. to 4

Place: Immaculate Conception Church

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

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

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

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

Contact: call 518-561-5083 or email Sjohnsadoration@aol.com

JEFFERSON

IHC MYSTERY PLAYERS ADVENT

Watertown – IHC Mystery players to present their Advent play.

Schedule: Dec. 22 at Holy Family Church, Watertown at 7:15 p.m.

ADORATION FOR VOCATIONS

Watertown – The St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity of the Secular Franciscans

will be having adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for vocations into the priesthood and religious life.

Date: Dec. 28

Time: 10 a.m. to noon

Place: St. Patrick's Church

Features: We extend our welcome for all to join us and share some moments in prayer.

SPAGHETTI DINNER

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

Date: Jan. 18

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Cecilia's Church

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

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

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Watertown – St. Patrick's Church in Watertown sponsors weekly Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursdays. The Monstrance is placed on the Altar at the end of Noon Mass. Our doors remain open until 8 p.m. All are welcome.

Contact: Deacon Kevin Mastellon at 315-782-6086

LEWIS

OPLATEK CHRISTMAS WAFER

Houseville – The Polish Christmas Wafer or Oplatek is available from St. Hedwig's Church.

Cost: \$3 per package plus postage

Features: The Christmas Wafer or Oplatek is part of a Polish, Lithuanian and Slovak custom that is observed during the Vigil of Christmas (Wigilia).

After the first star is visible, family and friends gather around the dinner table to share the Oplatek which symbolizes the presence of Christ, the Newborn Child. The Oplatek is sent and shared with family and friends all over the world as symbol of love, unity and forgiveness.

Contact: 315-348-6260.

INTERNATIONAL NATIVITY

Houseville – All are welcome to an International Exhibit of Christmas Creches-Nativities.

Date: Dec. 22, 29 and Jan. 5

Time: Before or after the celebration of the 11 a.m. Mass, or between 1p.m. to 3 or by appointment

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Features: The exhibit is free and open to the public. Help keep Christ in Christmas. Bring family and friends and experience the universality of the Birth of the Christ-Child as experienced through the eyes of many different cultures.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

DISCERNMENT RETREAT

Syracuse – The Vocations directors of Upstate NY will hold a discernment retreat.

Date: Jan. 5-7

Place: Christ the King Retreat House, Syracuse

Features: Have you felt the invitation to follow Jesus Christ as a Catholic Priest? Gather with other young men from across the state who are considering the call to the priesthood. Meet seminarians and hear their stories. Enjoy Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as well as time for silent prayer. Have an opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Take your spiritual life to the next level. Be inspired to live your life generously.

Contact: Father Christopher Carrara at ccarrara@rcdony.org, 315-393-2920 or speak with your pastor.

YOUTH BUSES FOR LIFE

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

Date: Jan. 26, 2020

Cost: \$200

Features: Buses depart the North Country and the cost will include transportation, three hotel stays, three breakfasts, two dinners, two lunches, t-shirt, slingbag and an awesome experience! Western bus departs from IHC in Watertown. Northern bus departs from Massena with stops in Canton and

Gouverneur. March for Life in our nation's capital and participate in the Life is Very Good Rally and Mass and the National ProLife Summit!

Contact: Registration and more information at www.rcdony.org/prolife

YOUTH LENTEN RETREAT

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

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

Time: Noon to 4 p.m.

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

Contact: To register go to www.rcdony.org/youthlenten/lenenretreat.html or contact Virginia Demers, at: vdemers@rcdony.org - 315-393-2920 ext. 1401

LEAD EVENT

Lake Placid – Diocesan LEAD event to be held.

Date: March 9-10

Place: Crowne Plaza

Cost: One LEAD member is free, Additional members cost \$50. If you have a team of 3 the cost is \$120. Non-LEAD parishes cost \$75 per person.

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

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

DAY OF REFLECTION

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

Date: March 21

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

Place: Eastern Region, St. John XXIII Newman Center, Plattsburgh. Speaker will be Deacon Mark Bennett. Western Region, Wadhams Hall, Ogdensburg. Speaker will be Deacon Jim Crowley.

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

Contact: Jessica Hargrave at jhargrave@rcdony.org or call 315-393-2920

MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

Medicine and a 'sense of the sacred'

As clergy, we touch upon very holy realities when we baptize, consecrate the Eucharist, give absolution to sinners, or anoint the sick. These special moments engage divine grace in deep and important ways in the lives of those to whom we minister.

In the midst of these sacred realities, we remain, nonetheless, very human and fallible instruments. I remember one time when a bishop contritely divulged in my presence that during the consecration that morning all he could think about was a good cup of hot coffee.

We clergy need to attend carefully to the graced realities we regularly handle lest we end up squandering or losing our sense of the sacred. The old adage reminds us: familiarity breeds

contempt. An elderly priest and professor in Rome used to urge us as seminarians: "Seek the grace to celebrate each Holy Mass as if it were your first Mass, your last Mass, and your only Mass."

Similar challenges exist in the world of medicine. Physicians who work with frail and vulnerable human beings every day must be attentive when it comes to the sacredness of their subjects and their profession.

One of the lesser-known lines from the famous Hippocratic Oath has always intrigued me: "In purity and holiness I will guard my life and my art." Doctors face a range of unique temptations that

the Oath enumerates: it counsels them to swear off "all mischief and in particular of sexual relations with both female and male [patients]" as well as all abortions and acts of euthanasia. To engage in any of these activities is to lose one's way, forswearing the sacredness of the medical profession's calling.

Yet some doctors, not unlike some priests and bishops, end up losing touch with this "sacred dimension."

An article in the Irish Times, written by a physician in the run-up to the 2018 abortion referendum in Ireland, exemplified this loss and profanation of medicine's sacredness.

Following a routine 20-week ultrasound of her third pregnancy, Dr. Caroline McCarthy described her sadness at learning that her baby "had no kidneys and as a result there was no amniotic fluid. His lungs could not develop properly without the fluid, but he wouldn't need his lungs or his kidneys until after birth, so the pregnancy would probably carry to term." She was told she had two options: "Carry my baby to term and he would ei-

ther be born dead or die shortly after birth or travel to the UK to end the pregnancy."

After a few days spent in a haze of panic and tears, Dr. McCarthy and her husband Michael took a flight out of Ireland to undergo a "compassionate induction" of labor at Liverpool Women's Hospital. The terminology brought to mind an astute observation a friend had once made: "Beware of any medical procedure with the word 'compassion' in its name; it often conceals wrongdoing."

When the hospital clerk arrived to get their informed consent signature, the procedure listed on the form was: "Feticide termination of pregnancy." Feticide is a medical term referring to the killing of a human, in this case during an early stage of development — "fetal homicide." After Dr. McCarthy's labor was induced, a large-gauge needle (termed a "catheter" in the article) was used for the feticide; it passed through her abdomen and uterus into her baby's heart and potassium chloride was injected to stop its beating.

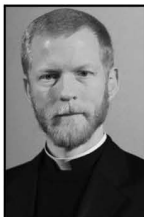
Shortly thereafter, her stillborn son was delivered: "I saw his perfect little face for the first time. I felt that same post-birth relief and elation as I had after the birth of my other two children. The midwife wrapped him in a towel and I held him close. I felt at complete

peace with my decision and just sat holding and staring at my beautiful son. In the morning, the midwife helped us dress John. We spent the day holding and looking at him and taking photographs."

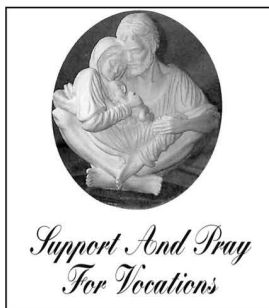
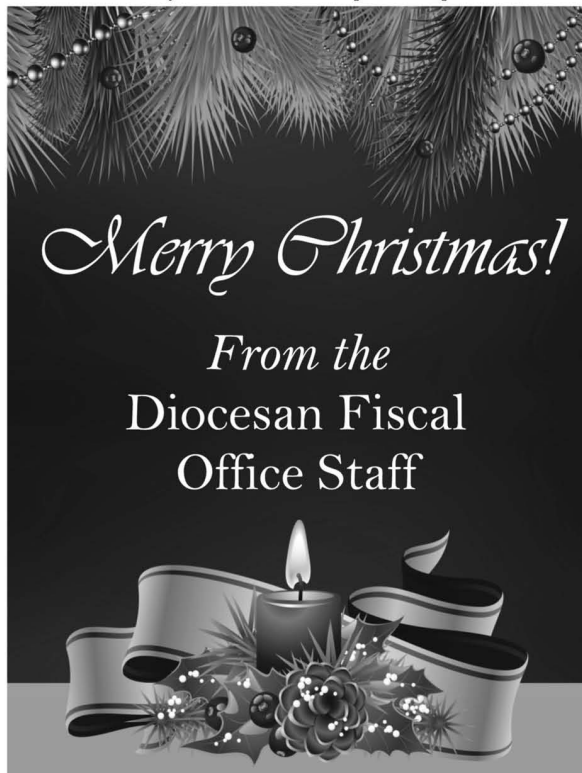
It's hard to miss the jolting unseemliness of the family's taking photos of their dead child whose life they had just ended. Dr. McCarthy's actions cannot be squared with her vocation as a mother or with her sacred calling as a physician to "do no harm." That sacred calling translates into helping all those born with birth defects or afflicted by disease, without ever imposing death penalties onto them. Ahead of all others, physicians are tasked with grasping this key truth.

Hippocrates possessed unusual wisdom and foresight to codify these real dangers for the soul of the medical professional millennia ago. As we witness an unprecedented collapse of the sense of the sacred within the world of the healing arts today, we must assiduously pray for those who have turned their backs on that ancient and time-tested Oath, and vigorously support those fighting to uphold its tenets within medicine's hallowed hallways.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org



Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk Ph.D.



SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

God intervenes in dire times

Today's readings on this Fourth (and last) Sunday of Advent describe how God very dramatically and lovingly intervenes in human history when "there is no way out." In the first reading, God directly invites King Ahaz to ask for a sign that God would protect the southern kingdom of Judah from enemies that threaten to destroy it. Now, a wise leader would eagerly grasp at the opportunity. Not Ahaz, who in his pride has already decided on his own political solution! Isaiah decides to give him God's sign anyway, saying "the virgin shall conceive a child and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel." Ahaz was not interested in God's help. He foolishly trusted his own wisdom. As a result, the whole nation was defeated and sent into exile in Babylon.

The Gospel tells us of another man faced with a grave dilemma who did listen to God. Joseph, already bound by a solemn betrothal ceremony to take Mary as his wife, discovers to his dismay that she is with child. He can only suppose that she has been unfaithful to him and would be subjected to very severe laws that could result in her death if he exposes her. He takes the compassionate way out. He will divorce her quietly, exposing himself, not her, to shame. God intervenes through a dream in which an angel tells him the whole story. The angel tells Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, for her child has God Himself as the Father! With incredible trust and humil-

ity, Joseph obediently agrees to the plan. What a contrast between this just man and crafty Ahaz!

At Christmas, God is asking of us what He asked of Mary and Joseph – complete trust in His plans. He wants each of us to help Him save His world again! He richly rewards those who say "yes" and accept His plans for their lives. It's even more incredible that

Jesus the God-man, in turn, entrusted His life to Joseph and Mary. Again, a God entrusts the success of His plans this year to those who can love enough and sacrifice their plans for His own.

Advent has been all about getting ready to

December 22

Fourth Sunday of Advent

READINGS

Isaiah 7:10-14

Romans 1:1-7

Matthew 1:18-24

agree to let Joseph and Mary use our hearts for a manger. From there, Jesus can help our poor country and our poor world to rebuild his kingdom. He needs our witness, our courage in speaking His truth and sharing His love. He so wants us to be part of a much larger Advent, when all those prophecies we heard read in the last few weeks will be brought to fulfillment. If we can only give a simple, unqualified "yes" as Mary and Joseph did, some amazing things could happen through us in the world.



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore



*Blessings
to all for a
Merry
Christmas!*

St. Hubert's Parish,
Star Lake



"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

John 3:16

Wishing you a
Blessed Christmas!

St. John the Baptist Church, Madrid

&

St. Mary's Church, Waddington



Catholic
Charities

Diocese of Ogdensburg

Christmas is the time of year when we think of the ways we can bring the light of Christ into the world. The light shines in every single act of compassion and kindness we set forth. It shines each time we tell our loved ones how special and loved they are.

The manger scene reminds us that even our Holy Family was in need of clothing, food, and shelter. It reminds us of how faith and a hope-filled community responded with generosity and love.

During this beautiful season, share your "light" with your brothers and sisters in need. Any contributions will positively impact those less fortunate folks which our agency serves throughout the year as well as continue our Lord's mission!

I believe in our mission. I want to continue to support the programs and services of Catholic Charities!

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Enclosed is my check for: \$ _____

Please send all checks to:
Catholic Charities, 6866 State Highway
37 Ogdensburg, NY 13669 or
You can make a donation online at:
www.cathcharities.org

For additional information or questions,
call Johanna at Catholic Charities at:
315-897-2203



AT THE MOVIES

DARK WATERS

NEW YORK (CNS) – Eventually, there may be a movie focused on some travail affecting people in West Virginia without John Denver's "Take Me Home, Country Roads" on the soundtrack.

Or one that portrays the residents of that state as more than semiferrous superstitious yahoos who put too much trust in corporations that endanger their health.

Until then, there's "Dark Waters" (Focus). This fact-based drama about poisoned H₂O is similar in theme to 2000's "Erin Brockovich." The plot has a single crusading lawyer taking on a powerful company – in this case, DuPont – that's been dumping industrial waste from the manufacture of Teflon around Parkersburg, the loyal company town where the coating is made.

The film covers all the bases well, taking time to explain long-chain fluorocarbons and how they won't disintegrate, but rather remain in the body and cause darkened teeth at the least, or cancer and horribly disfiguring birth defects at the worst.

Mark Ruffalo is Robert Bilott, an ambitious corporate lawyer from Cincinnati who used to represent chemical companies. He's thrust into the drama of Parkersburg because Wilbur Tennant (Bill Camp), a stubborn farmer, knows his grandmother (Marcia Dangerfield).

That tenuous family tie is just enough for Bilott, beginning in 1998, to agree to examine Tennant's videos and the substantial home-made forensic evidence he's collected, both of which show that something in the water his cattle



CNS PHOTO/FOCUS FEATURES

Mark Ruffalo stars in a scene from the movie "Dark Waters."

drink has killed nearly 200 of them.

The Environmental Protection Agency only began regulating chemicals in 1976. Most manufactured before that time were "grandfathered" in by the laws, meaning that DuPont

wasn't committing a violation by disposing of 55-gallon drums of this chemical waste, so a governmental prosecution is not possible.

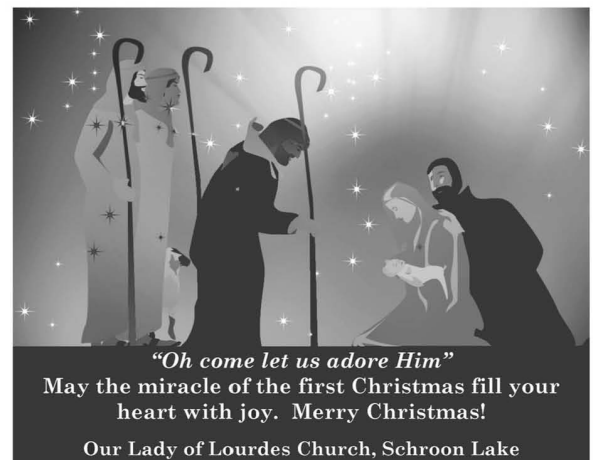
That means Bilott has to sue DuPont in order to reach the discovery process to find what the company's been hiding from the folks in Parkers-

burg.

The courtroom procedural part of the story doesn't contain the typical histrionics. Instead, the low-key sequences focus on Bilott sifting through hundreds of boxes of evidence – this is still a pre-internet world at first – and the growing paranoia in Parkersburg as the residents don't know whom to trust since DuPont has the means to intimidate them.

In adapting a magazine article by Nathaniel Rich, director Todd Haynes and screenwriters Mario Correa and Matthew Michael Carnahan limn a rural landscape where the sun seems never to shine and the wealthy exploit and poison the poor with seeming impunity. DuPont's slogan, for many years, was "Better living through chemistry," but here, chemistry has everyone trapped.

The film contains some rough and profane language and occasional animal gore. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III – adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 – parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.





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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

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The light of Christ shines

Candles have been and will always be a staple in both traditional and contemporary Christmas décor. Candles in the traditional colors of red and green are familiar decorations for us. We become mesmerized by their flickering flames. They remind us of the warmth and the love the Christmas Season brings into our lives. People caring for other people in special ways is a familiar sight in the North Country. This is truly letting Christ's light shine through our generosity. The Advent wreath and all it symbolizes also showcase the beauty of candles. The colors of purple and pink have beautiful meaning to the four weeks of Advent leading to Christmas and the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Christmas lights adorn our trees, homes and displays. The world seems so much at ease this time of year. The joy of simply looking on to a beautifully lit neighborhood or a breathtaking church this time of year is all it takes to bring a smile to someone. The thought and effort people put into making the Christmas joy perfect for all is so special, especially the little children.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, our world continues to be a troubled place. We have seen natural disaster, terrorism and continued war. Through all of this, we come to understand what millions of people in developing countries have had to endure for their lifetimes. If you are blessed to live in the world where we can sometimes take things for granted, stop and take a moment to remember the mission lands. Realize that your prayer and sacrifices do make their lives better, especially at Christmas time. The light in the darkness is the Missions and more specifically, Catholic Church missionaries. Yes, Catholic Church missionaries like yourself let the light of Christ shine in the lives of people in the missions as they receive your generous do-nations.

On behalf of missionaries and the people they serve who benefit from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Missionary Childhood Association and the Missionary Projects of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, I thank you for supporting their work. Your donation does make a difference by bringing Christ's light into the dark-ness of the suffering and the poor of the Missions.

May the Lord grant you and those you love many blessings at Christmas.

Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.
www.rcdony.org/mission

OBITUARIES

AuSable Forks – Helen Ward McDonald, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 14, 2019 at Holy Name Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Carthage – Antonio J. Avallone, 63; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 11, 2019 at St. James Church; burial in New St. James Cemetery.

Copenhagen – Genevieve Elizabeth Baker, 102; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 9, 2019 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Croghan – Bernard L. Bush, 78; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 11, 2019 at St. Stephen's Church; burial in St. Stephen's Cemetery.

Crown Point – Marjorie (Hager) Treadway, 80; Memorial Mass Jan. 18, 2020 at Sacred Heart Church.

Gouverneur – John T. Kitchin, 52; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 10, 2019 at St. James Church; burial in New St. James Cemetery.

Gouverneur – John G. "Mike" Reilly, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 9, 2019 at St. James Church; burial in New St. James Cemetery.

Lake Placid – Muriel (Ide) Morrison, 99; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 9, 2019 at St. Agnes Church; burial in St. Agnes Cemetery.

Lowville – Ronald J. Walter Sr., 85; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 13, 2019 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Lowville Rural Cemetery.

Madrid – Robert J. Vallance Sr, 77; Funeral Services Dec. 11, 2019 at Phillips Memorial Home; burial in Riverside Cemetery, Norwood.

Malone – Gerald F. Demers, 77; Funeral Services Dec. 10, 2019 at the Bruso-Desnoyers Funeral Home; burial in St. Bridget's Cemetery, Trout River.

Malone – Elizabeth (Muzzey) Kemp, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 13, 2019 at Notre Dame Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Ft. Covington.

Massena – Donna M. (Votra) Meacham, 70; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 16, 2019 at Sacred Heart Church.

Massena – Robert J. Vallance Sr., 77; Funeral Services Dec. 11, 2019 at the Phillips Memorial Home; burial in Riverside Cemetery, Norwood.

Peru – William B. Corrigan, 59; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 11, 2019 at the Hamilton Funeral Home.

Plattsburgh – John Chauvin, 79; Funeral Services Dec. 8, 2019 at the R.W. Walker Funeral Home.

Potsdam – Martha E. Hayes, 70; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 13, 2019 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Raymondville – Lois F. Ploof, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 17, 2019 at St. Raymond's Church; burial in St. Ann's Cemetery, St. Regis Falls.

Rouses Point – Albert George Gokey, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 16, 2019 at St. Patrick's Church.

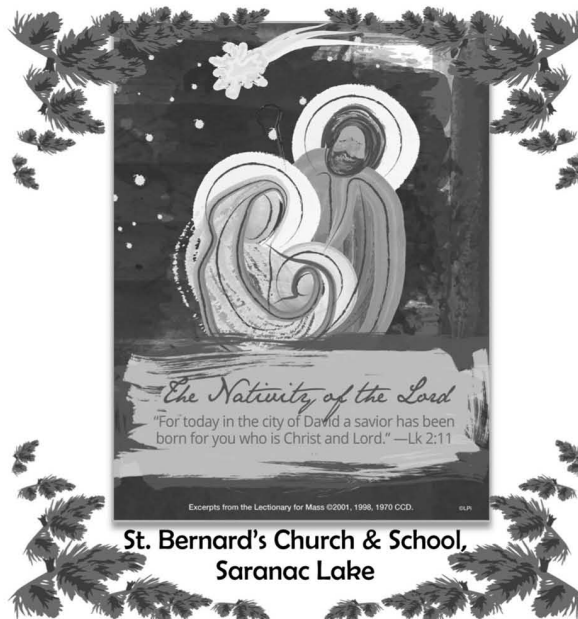
Rouses Point – Martha B. (Rabideau) Hicks, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 11, 2019 at St. Patrick's Church.

Watertown – Ronald J. Melara, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 12, 2019 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.



*Holidays can be challenging for families
but they are opportunities for abundant grace.
May God richly bless your family in this new year!
Behold... I make all things new!*

- The Office of Family Life



**St. Bernard's Church & School,
Saranac Lake**

SCENES OF THE SEASON



Bob and Cassie Kotz, as well as their daughters, Sophia and Emily display Advent wreaths they made at St. Mary's in Canton's annual Advent Family Gathering. The families were introduced to the Liturgical Calendar; learned about Advent wreaths and created one for their home. The wreath were blessed by Father Bryan Stitt, pastor.

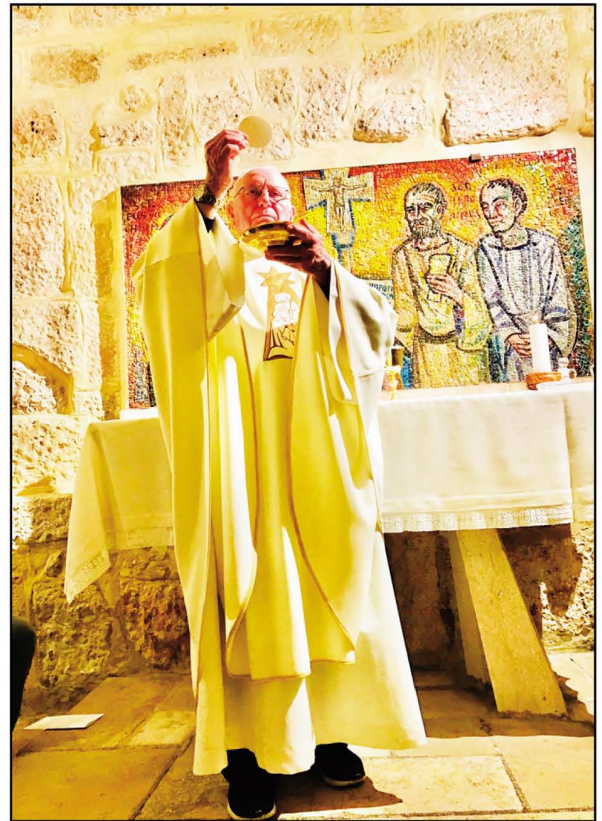


PHOTO BY MARY AIKEN

Father Andrew J. Amyot, pastor emeritus at the Church of the Visitation in Norfolk, celebrates Mass in the Chapel of St. Jerome's Cave, beneath the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, just a few feet from where Jesus was born. It was here in the 4th century that St. Jerome spent 30 years translating the Scriptures from Hebrew and Greek into Latin. His translations became known as the Vulgate, and remained the official version of the Bible for Catholics until the 20th century. Father Amyot celebrated Mass each day for a group of 43 pilgrims who made a 10-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land from Dec. 3 to 12. Father Amyot has been leading groups on various pilgrimages for the past 18 years. During this trip, Father Amyot renewed the wedding vows of eight couples at Cana, the site of Jesus' first miracle. The group, which included Father Amyot's brother, Martin, also celebrated Father's birthday with him on Dec. 11.

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