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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 74, Number 33

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

JAN. 22, 2020

Follow Me: Sunday of the Word of God

Having just celebrated the birth of the Word made Flesh at Christmas, Pope Francis calls our attention to the written word of Scripture. He has designated January 26 as Sunday of the Word of God – “a Sunday given over entirely to the Word of God, so we might appreciate the inexhaustible riches contained in that constant dialogue between the Lord and his people. The Bible is not a collection of history books...but is aimed entirely at the integral salvation of the person” (*Aperuit illis*, 2,9).

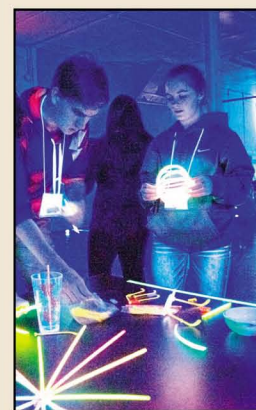
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REUNION OF BISHOPS



Bishops who served in the Diocese of Ogdensburg reunited in Palm Beach as the New York Bishops traveled to the city for the state's bishop retreat. Pictured are, from left, Bishop Terry R. LaValley, current bishop of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Bishop Douglas R. Lucia, a Diocese of Ogdensburg native who is now bishop of the Diocese of Syracuse, Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito, former bishop of the Diocese of Ogdensburg and current bishop of the Diocese of Palm Beach, and Bishop Robert J. Cunningham, former bishop of the Diocese of Ogdensburg and current bishop emeritus of the Diocese of Syracuse.

YOUTH EVENTS PLANNED



Several events are scheduled for the youth of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, including two offerings of a Lenten Retreat, two sessions of Confirmation Retreats with NET Ministries, and the annual diocesan Youth Rally.

FULL STORY, PAGE 5

God's word can never be 'enchained,' pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – A true apostle is one who continues to be a courageous and joyful evangelizer even in the face of persecution and certain death, Pope Francis said.

By choosing to close the Acts of the Apostles not with St. Paul's martyrdom but with his continuing to preach the Gospel even while under house arrest, St. Luke wanted to show that the word of God cannot be "en-

chained," the pope said Jan. 15 during his weekly general audience.

"This house open to all hearts is the image of the church which – although persecuted, misunderstood and chained – never tires of welcoming with a motherly heart every man and woman to proclaim to them the love of the Father who made himself visible in Jesus," he said.

The pope concluded

his series of talks on the Acts of the Apostles with a reflection on St. Paul's imprisonment in Rome.

St. Paul's treacherous journey and adventures to "the heart of the empire," he said, did not weaken the Gospel he preached but instead strengthened it by "showing that the direction of events does not belong to men but to the Holy Spirit, who gives fruitfulness to the church's mis-

sionary action."

During his imprisonment, the pope continued, the apostle would meet with notable Jewish people in his efforts to show "the fulfillment of the promises made to the chosen people" through Christ's death and resurrection.

While not everyone was convinced by his preaching, St. Paul continued to welcome anyone "who wanted to receive the

proclamation of the kingdom of God and to know Christ," which is a grace that all Christians should pray for, he said.

May the Lord "enable us, like Paul, to imbue our houses with the Gospel and to make them cenacles of fraternity, where we can welcome the living Christ, who comes to meet us in every person and in every age," Pope Francis said.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Because I'm not very good at praying

I have a confession to make: I'm not very good at conversations/moments and the things I hope or fear will happen in the future.

At least I'm not very good at the type of prayer in which you sit quietly, tell the Lord what's on your mind and listen to what He has to say to you.

My mind wanders. I'm distracted by every little noise, moving object or smell around me. My brain is constantly

moving to all the things I have to do, all the things I wish I had said in certain



**Darcy L.
Fargo**

But I desperately want to pray, and I want to develop my relationship with the Lord. As a result, I've had to work to develop strategies and practice ways to pray that help me focus.

I've discovered what works best for me is practicing *Lectio Divina* (Latin for "Divine Reading"), a practice that incorporates Scripture into my prayer life, combined with prayer journaling.

I start by just reading a passage of Scripture, usually the daily Readings. The first time I read it, I'm just reading it for overall meaning. Then, I read it again, this time focusing on the language used. What words are repeated? What types of descriptions are being used? Are there any repeated themes/styles of language?

Then, I reflect on the text. Do any passages particularly strike me? What do I think God is trying to say to me in the Reading?

Finally, I just sit with those ideas for a few minutes, and I write them down.

The practice holds my attention. It gives me something concrete to do, which prevents my mind from wandering. Most importantly, I almost always find some takeaway from the sacred text, something I feel God wants to say directly to me in that moment.

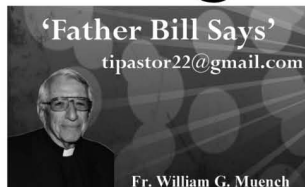
As I considered Pope Francis' proclamation of Sunday as a celebration of the Word of God, I reflected on the fact that the Bible is more than just the story of our salvation. It's God speaking directly to each one of us.

And that is certainly prayer.

Celebrating the Word of God

Each time we, Catholics, join together for the celebration of the Eucharist, our Mass begins with readings from the Sacred Scriptures, the Word of God. These readings are a sacred and important part of our celebration of Mass. Actually, every time we, Catholics, celebrate a Sacrament, we begin with readings from the Bible. This Word of God guides us to realize why we take the time to pray. The Scriptures remind us that Jesus came to be among us to transform our lives. As we pray together as the People of God and celebrate each Sacrament, we begin by placing ourselves in the presence of Our Savior by reading the Scriptures together and recognizing God's message for us – a message that was brought to us by Jesus, who lived with us, who taught us, who died for us and rose again to new life.

The Bible is God's great gift to us. The Bible is our best prayer book. Our reading of the Bible is an important and necessary part of our following of the Lord, Jesus. The Bible is the Word of God. To



emphasize the importance of our reading of the Word of God, Pope Francis has designated a Sunday (the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, January 26) as a celebration of the Word of God. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, hopes to encourage us all to recognize the importance of the reading of the Bible. This celebration is a time for us to make reading the Bible an important part of our prayer life.

The Second Vatican Council – sixty years ago – made an effort to encourage all Catholics of the importance of the study of the Bible. I remember only too well those days, when most other Christian churches were more Bible-centered than we Catholics. Many families owned a Bible, but very few read any part of it. The Council proclaimed as one of its important documents a Dog-

matic Constitution on Divine Revelation. This document taught us of our Church's firm belief, made in faith, that God's message came to us through the Incarnation of Jesus.

We believe that Jesus came to this world to live among us and to teach us of God's great love for us. Jesus chose apostles and disciples to continue to evangelize this message throughout the world. In this way, our Catholic Church was formed. In time, this revelation was written in the Sacred Scriptures. We believe that these Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit. We believe the Holy Spirit guided the many authors of the various books of the Bible and led them to bring God's message to people like you and me.

I remember well, in the time after the Second Vatican Council, one of the important changes in my ministry as a priest was the forming of programs in the parish about the Sacred Scriptures. There were study groups to learn more about the Bible. There were also programs that en-

couraged the reading of the Bible at home. The parish religious education programs included sections that focused on the Bible.

In addition, during Mass, the priests were instructed to give a homily rather than a sermon. The difference was this: the homily was a talk developed from the Scripture Readings that were assigned for that Mass. The Scripture readings of the Mass became the foundation for the homily. We, priests, were to allow the message of the Lord that was in the Scriptures to be our guide for our message to the people.

The result was and continues to be a profound closeness of the Scriptures for us, priests, and now, for the deacons who take part in this preaching ministry. Speaking for myself, I begin each week by making the next Sunday's Scriptures a part of my prayer and study as I prepare my Sunday homily. In a sense, these Scriptures become my friends for the week. The Word of God is an integral part of all that I do as a priest.

FOLLOW ME

Celebrating Sunday of the Word of God

Having just celebrated the birth of the Word made Flesh at Christmas, Pope Francis calls our attention to the written word of Scripture. He has designated January 26 as *Sunday of the Word of God* – “a Sunday given over entirely to the Word of God, so we might appreciate the inexhaustible riches contained in that constant dialogue between the Lord and his people. The Bible is not a collection of history books...but is aimed entirely at the integral salvation of the person” (*Aperuit illis, 2,9*).

Pope Benedict XVI wrote that God’s presence in the Word and His presence in the Eucharist belong together, inseparably. Only if we are living in the sphere of God’s Word can we properly comprehend and properly receive the gift of the Eucharist.

This is what stands out in the very first Liturgy of the Word that took place with the risen Christ and

the two disciples headed for Emmaus.

As they listened to the explanation of the Scripture, their hearts began to soften in such a way that they were able to recognize Him when later Jesus broke the bread.

Not only are the words of the Bible spoken and the stories retold at Mass – they are re-lived in such a way that what is remembered becomes real and present. Whatever it was that happened “at that time” is happening “at this time,” *today*, as the Liturgy loves to say.

We are not only hearers of the Word, passive recipients as it were, but we ourselves are the ones who speak and act. It is to us who are present that the Word is addressed.

We are to be active participants at Mass. We cannot be mere spectators at Liturgy. We are called to

put ourselves in the place of the people in the story, to enter the sphere of God’s Word.

Mass is a living encounter with the Lord. For liturgy to be truly a divine encounter pleasing to God, a change of heart is necessary.

Christian conversion is an encounter for life with the “God of the living” (*Mt. 22:32*). Mass is a life experience that forms, not an entertainment event, not an idea to be learned or merely motions to be meticulously and beautifully performed.

Ours is a hope-filled faith. We remember that Jesus said, “I am with you always, until the end of the age” (*Mt. 28:20*). We witness to the resurrection of Jesus not by collapsing under the weight of scandal in the Church but by acknowledging it,

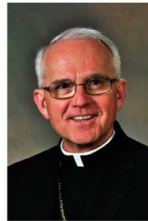
praying, worshipping together as a family faith, working to eradicate the evil (social and personal) and continuing together in the Church’s mission of reconciliation, healing, charity and justice.

We join in the walk, the talk and the breaking of the bread with those two discouraged disciples and the risen Christ.


This New Year 2020, let us resolve to work on our comfort level with Scrip-

ture and to invite others to enter the dialogue at Mass where we are fed with the Word and the very Body and Blood of Jesus. We need this heavenly food for the journey of life.

Pray that members of our own families return to worship with us at Mass. We rely on the prayers of one another and ultimately on God’s grace to be a truly Eucharistic people.




Bishop Terry R. LaValley



Adirondack Center for PEACE
P.O. Box 2748
Plattsburgh, New York 12901

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2020	St. Peter's Church			St. John's Church			Our Lady of Victory		
	Day	Date	Time	Day	Date	Time	Day	Date	Time
JAN	Sat.	1/4/2020	8:15 a.m.	Wed.	1/29/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	1/23/2020	8:00 a.m.
FEB	Sat.	2/1/2020	8:15 a.m.	Wed.	2/19/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	2/13/2020	8:00 a.m.
MAR	Sat.	3/7/2020	8:15 a.m.	Mon.	3/16/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	3/12/2020	8:00 a.m.
APR	Sat.	4/4/2020	8:15 a.m.	Mon.	4/20/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	4/23/2020	8:00 a.m.
MAY	Sat.	5/2/2020	8:15 a.m.	Mon.	5/11/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	5/14/2020	8:00 a.m.
JUN	Sat.	6/6/2020	8:15 a.m.	Mon.	6/15/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	6/11/2020	8:00 a.m.
JUL	Sat.	7/4/2020	8:15 a.m.	Wed.	7/29/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	7/9/2020	8:00 a.m.
AUG	Sat.	8/1/2020	8:15 a.m.	Mon.	8/17/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	8/13/2020	8:00 a.m.
SEPT	Sat.	9/5/2020	8:15 a.m.	Mon.	9/21/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	9/10/2020	8:00 a.m.
OCT	Sat.	10/3/2020	8:15 a.m.	Mon.	10/19/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	10/8/2020	8:00 a.m.
NOV	Sat.	11/7/2020	8:15 a.m.	Mon.	11/16/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	11/12/2020	8:00 a.m.
DEC	Sat.	12/5/2020	8:15 a.m.	Mon.	12/21/2020	8:00 a.m.	Thurs.	12/10/2020	8:00 a.m.

Please join us in prayer for a greater reverence for all human life!

You are invited to join



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on a 10-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land
June 7-16, 2020

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✠ Ein Karem

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Opportunity to support a culture of life

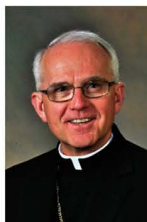
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Since 1973, every January the Church focuses our attention on the United States Supreme Court's horrific decision in *Roe v Wade* that a woman has a constitutional right to abort the innocent child in her womb and now, even during the child's birth.

Later this spring, the Church will mark the 25th anniversary of *Evan-*

gelium vitae (The Gospel of Life). In that landmark encyclical, Pope St. John Paul II provides a clear challenge to us: "With great openness and courage, we need to question how widespread is the culture of life today among individual Christians, families, groups and communities in our dioceses? With equal clarity and determination, we must identify the steps we are called to take in order to serve life in all its truth" (EV, 95).

Here in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Colleen and John Miner, Directors of our Diocesan Respect Life Office, coordinate our efforts to take the steps we need to serve life in all its truth in the North Country.



**Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley**

We work to build a culture of life in a society that far too often demeans, devalues and destroys life. At our Masses this week, we are given the opportunity to support the steps we have identified "to serve life in all its

truth" by contributing to the annual *Respect Life Collection*.

Monies donated to this collection provide grants for our Respect Life efforts.

Grants in 2019 enabled more of our youth and college students to attend the *March for Life* in Washington, where young North Country pilgrims marched with fellow profilers from across our nation, in opposition to the sinful stain of abortion.

Several grants aided parish Project Gabriel programs. The "angels" of *Project Gabriel* lend a compassionate ear to struggling new mothers, material assistance to care for their newborn child and a variety of other supports.

Respect Life grants assisted *Birthright* of Platts-

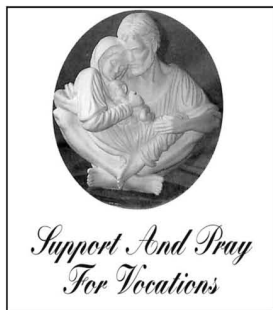
burgh, an interdenominational organization helping women with unplanned pregnancies.

Other grants supported educational programs, Catholic radio in the Adirondacks and various pro-life programs.

Thank you for your prayers and generous support of the 2020 Respect Life Collection and for all your efforts to build a culture of life by changing hearts and minds.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

**Most Reverend
Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg**



Support the **Respect Life Collection** of the **Diocese of Ogdensburg** in our parishes the weekend of **January 25-26**



Proceeds will be distributed through grants



to various North Country parishes, organizations, and programs for the support of a variety of respect life initiatives.

Thank you for your generosity toward this most special need.

Please continue to pray that all will recognize, honor and protect the precious gift of life.

www.rcdony.org/pro-life

Youth retreats, rally offer chances to connect

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

Youth of the diocese have several opportunities to grow in their faith and connect with one another in the weeks ahead.

LENTEN RETREATS

The Office of Youth Ministry is hosting two Lenten Retreats for diocesan youth.

The retreats are scheduled for Feb. 29 at St. Patrick's in Watertown and March 7 at St. Mary's in Champlain.

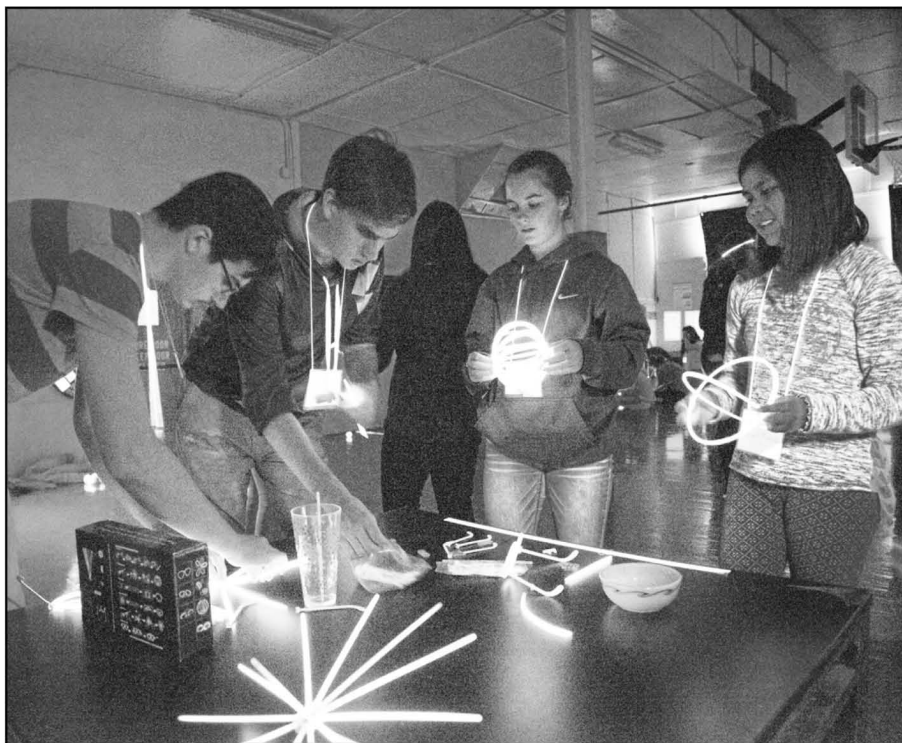
"We're trying to spread out our activities so youth from all parts of the diocese have opportunities to participate," said Thomas Semeraro, youth ministry director for the diocese.

The theme for both sessions is "Reflect, Pray, Reconcile: Discover your pathway to forgiveness."

"We'll start with activities that focus on reflecting on good values, on life and on some of the areas where we fall short," Semeraro said. "Then we'll move into how we use prayer to focus ourselves and deepen our relationships with Jesus, and then how we are forgiven in reconciliation. And we'll have lots of fun activities mixed in with that. They should be fun and spiritually deep retreats."

The retreat will also ask the youth to examine how they see themselves.

"We'll be looking at how we reflect," Semeraro said. "Do we focus just on the bad or do we look at ourselves as a whole? I find a lot of us focus on all the places we fall short or the things we do that we shouldn't. We want to also focus on the things we do well and our gifts. This is intended to be an experience to heal and to strengthen our relation-



Diocesan youth enjoy the "glow room" at the 2019 Youth Rally. The 2020 Youth Rally will be held April 25 in Lake Placid and will feature the theme, "Under the Big Top."

ships with God through Jesus."

Both sessions run from noon to 4 p.m. and will include opportunities for confession and Mass.

Each retreat can accommodate 40 to 50 youth. Youth in grades seven through 12 are encouraged to attend.

There is no charge to attend, and snacks will be provided.

To register, visit rcdony.org/youthlenten.

CONFIRMATION RETREATS

NET Ministries is again returning to the Diocese of Ogdensburg to offer fun and faith-filled confirmation retreats.

Sessions will be held at St. Augustine's in Peru on March 28 and at Sacred Heart Church in Watertown on March 29.

"NET is the National Evangelization Teams," said Cathy Russell, direc-

tor of the Western Region Faith Formation. "It's a group of young adults – mostly college-age or recent college graduates – who give a year or more of their lives to go around the country and deliver retreats. They're very entertaining. They do skits, there's a lot of music and they're funny, but they also share their faith and tell their stories. Their retreats are really powerful."

According to the NET Ministries website, the organization sends 175 young adults, grouped in teams of eight to 14, around the United States to share their love of Christ. Confirmation retreats are centered around the theme, "With Great Power."

"With great power comes great responsibility," says the retreat description. "At confirmation, the grace of

Pentecost is unleashed, and we receive greater access to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God can do incredible things with us if we are open to His action. How will your life look different when living in the power of the Holy Spirit? This theme explores the seven gifts given to us at confirmation and the personal experiences of young people who open themselves to the action of the Holy Spirit after confirmation."

NET Ministries will also be conducting a retreat at Seton Catholic, Russell said.

The Watertown retreat is currently full, but registrations are still being accepted for the Peru event. Parishes are responsible for registering eligible participants.

YOUTH RALLY

Youth from around the

diocese are invited to travel to Lake Placid on April 25 for the annual diocesan Youth Rally. This year's event will be held at High Peaks Resort and will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

This year's rally is themed "Under the Big Top."

"The theme centers around God's all-encompassing love," Semeraro said. "It's also carnival themed. We'll have carnival games, carnival food and lots of fun and entertainment."

The keynote speaker for the rally is Doug Tooke.

"He's dynamic and he's energetic," Semeraro said, noting Tooke also includes audio-visual elements in his presentation. "He'll be talking about God's all-encompassing love, and How we engage Gods love in each other through faith and community. It's about seeking Jesus in others."

The event will also include performances by the Gratto Fellows Circus Performers, who will offer interactive performances of juggling, unicycling, rope walking and other feats.

The rally will conclude with a closing Mass celebrated by Bishop Terry R. LaValley.

Registration is open to youth in grades seven through 12. The cost is \$30 and includes a carnival-style lunch.

Semeraro noted that the Office of Youth Ministry was able to keep the registration cost low thanks to support from the Bishop's Fund Appeal and donor organizations.

Registration for the Youth Rally is limited to 200 participants.

For more information or to register, visit rcdony.org/youthrally.

St. Thérèse at work in the North Country

By Mary Beth Bracy
Contributing writer

What is the connection between a woman who was cured of cancer, yellow flowers, and a love story? Who was the young girl in a First Communion dress who mysteriously appeared at St. Mary's Convent in Canton? Why do people use the phrase "a shower of roses?"

St. Thérèse intercedes for people in our diocese, even today. Numerous people have been touched by her intercession.

Amanda Conklin, who works at St. Mary's Church in Canton, said she and her husband have "a great devotion" to the saint.

"I prayed a novena to her before dating him; we were married on October first (St. Thérèse's feast day) and had a relic of her that people were able to be blessed with. I also wore a veil – my something borrowed – made of lace from the same region in France (Alençon) where Thérèse's mom was a lace maker!"

Amanda gave everyone at her wedding a rosary with a medal of St. Thérèse. In addition, she and her husband named their first daughter Emma Thérèse.

Throughout our diocesan history, St. Thérèse has played an important role. In fact, in 1932 the saint appeared at the former St. Mary's Convent in Canton.

"Sister Mary Aloysia, who taught the first and



The Little Flowers, a group based at St. James in Carthage, held a Christmas party, Dec. 15. Participants made cards to deliver to the local nursing homes as an act of charity and played a Christmas game at the end of their meeting.

second grades at St. Mary's, had a special devotion" to St. Thérèse," explained Sister Mary Eileen, a Sister of Charity, in her account. "At the time she was seeking a favor from her and asked Thérèse to send a sign if she was going to obtain it for her."

On Oct. 2, 1932, first grade student Francis Doyle brought her "a beautiful yellow rose with tinges of pink" that his "mother wished...to be placed on the altar and Sister put it there before school."

On that same day, in the evening, Sister Aloysia asked several of the sisters to come into the convent chapel. Sister Mary Eileen recalled that "When I entered and knelt down, Sister told me to look toward the altar. As I did so,

I saw [Thérèse] the Little Flower as a child in her First Communion garb. Though she wasn't moving or making any sign, she looked very alive and seemed to be resting against the petal of the rose... One could even see the little curl as it came over the shoulder and rested on her dress. You can imagine that it was a highly emotional experience. We remained in the Chapel until midnight. Sister thought we should retire then as we had to rise at 5:00 the next morning."

Sister Mary Eileen continued, "When we arose in the morning, the Little Flower was still there." The evening before and that morning Sister Mary Aloysia tried reaching the priests several times, but they were away. When the pastor, Msgr. O'Neill, finally arrived "Thérèse had disappeared – just as quietly as she had come."

Prior to this, Msgr. O'Neill was not devoted to Thérèse and referred to her as "the little girl." After, he "had a shrine placed in the sanctuary and encour-

aged people in the devotion. Bishop Conroy came to give the apparition his blessing and approval. When questioned as to why Thérèse should come as a child instead of as a Carmelite Sister, he said, "How else would she appear in a school for children except as a child?"

This isn't the end of the story; St. Thérèse's intercession was just beginning.

Sister Mary Eileen described how "We brought the children to the chapel that day to see the rose and to pray to the Little Flower. The rose never actually died. Sister Aloysia took it apart and we made Agnus Dei's out of the petals. We sent these to relatives and friends, especially to the sick. There were a number of cures that we knew of, the most memorable one being that of Monsignor's sister who was his housekeeper. She was very ill with cancer, and was cured by application of the rose and a novena."

Talitha Workman, who cofounded the Little Flow-

ers' group at St. James Parish in Carthage, also experienced St. Thérèse's intercession.

"Several years ago, I was living with my family in Germany while my husband served in the US Army," she said. "I was a busy wife and mother with three children, including an infant. Every day, as we left our home, my preschool-aged son picked a small yellow flower from the bushes outside our door and handed it to me with a grin. It was a sweet gesture of innocent youth, and I would tuck the little flower away, pat him on the head, and go about my errands.

"At this time in my life, my little family was experiencing many difficulties," Workman continued. "It was a trying time for me, especially being so far from home and away from extended family back in the U.S. I was struggling, not only with the day to day, but also with personal and family issues that were causing me much anxiety."

It was around that time that she was introduced to St. Thérèse at a women's prayer group.

"I did not know much about St. Thérèse before that, but for some reason felt a connection to her right away," Workman said. "I read about her and began to learn about her story. I especially loved reading stories about the miracles provided through her intercession. I started a novena to St. Thérèse, asking her to guide me through my family's difficulties. I was hopeful and especially intrigued by the promise of receiving a rose as a sign. After several days, I had not received a sign and

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St. Thérèse at work

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

was a bit disappointed. Despite this, I decided to continue praying the devotion.

Then, Workman was visited by an aunt, who lived in Germany.

"She explained to us about the native bushes in front of our house," Workman said. "I'll never forget her saying, 'You know that those bushes are a type of rosebush and the small yellow flowers are actually teacup roses!' I was stunned. My son had been giving me these roses, just about every time we left the house. I had been showered with roses by St. Thérèse even before I had started my novena to her. This revelation strengthened my faith and my resolve. With this lovely sign from St. Thérèse, I felt assured my family's hardships would improve and that St. Thérèse would help me persevere."

Today, Talitha and Mary Hartzell Bracy continue to lead the Little Flowers' group, which includes 24 girls this year.

For more information

about the Little Flowers' group, or for help in starting one at your parish, contact talitharuth@hotmail.com

During her short life, St. Thérèse spent herself in love for God and souls. She was born on January 2, 1873 and died on September 30, 1897.

As a teenager, her greatest desire was to become a Carmelite nun. Although she had to wait until she was 15, her dream was finally realized.

St. Thérèse longed to travel to foreign countries, but her health was too poor. However, from her convent, she wrote letters of encouragement to priests, and prayed for the conversion of souls far away.

She used her many talents as a poet, playwright, and spiritual writer. She acted as the mistress of novices and, at her superior's request, wrote her autobiography, "The Story of a Soul."

Despite dying at age 24, St. Thérèse became a great saint and is now a Doctor of the Church.

As she was dying, St.

Thérèse promised, "I feel that my mission is about to begin, my mission to make God loved as I love Him, to teach souls my little way."

"When I die, I will send down a shower of roses from the heavens, I will spend my heaven by doing good on earth."

As patroness of missionaries, she continues to intercede for us today, sending a shower of roses from heaven.

St. Thérèse, the Little Flower, please pick me a rose from the Heavenly Garden and send it to me with a message of love. Ask God to grant me the favor I thee implore, and tell Him I will love Him each day more and more. Amen.

(Pray the above prayer for five days along with five Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory Bes. Mention your request.)

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

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, Merril, 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

Bishop's Public Schedule

Jan. 22 – Board of Bishops meeting at Cardinal Cooke Catholic Center in New York City

Jan. 23-26 – March for Life in Washington, DC with the diocesan Youth Buses for Life

Jan. 27 – 10:30 a.m. – Meeting with all Priests at the former Holy Family School in Malone

Jan. 28 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Jan. 29 – 10:30 a.m. – Meeting with all Priests at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse in Watertown

Rest in Peace

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

Jan. 22 – Rev. James Edward Joy, 1950

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

Jan. 24 – Rev. Joseph N. Beaudry, 1897; Rev. M. A. Ryan, O.S.A., 1924

Jan. 25 – Rev. Eugene Gauvin, O.M.I., 1890

Jan. 26 – Rev. Antoine Paillier, O.M.I., 1916; Rev. Henry Thameling, O.F.M.Conv., 1929; Rev. Leon Lamothe, O.M.I., 1937; Rev. Daniel E. Cahill, 1945; Rev. John Emmett Weir, 1990; Rev. Earl W. Nichols, 2002

Jan. 27 – Rev. Emile H. Mission, O.S.A., 1973; Rev. Mr. Adam S. Crowe, 2009

Jan. 28 – Rev. James A. McKenna, 1895; Deacon Richard E. Winter, 2004

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!

Environmental Stewardship

What's on your list?

As this year begins the intention of the Holy Father's prayer is promotion of world peace. The theme for January 1's message to world leaders for World Day for Peace was "Peace as a Journey of Hope: Dialogue, Reconciliation and Ecological Conversion." This week of January we observe Respect Life.

This challenge to respect life may be an important step to peace on the Journey of Hope. The word respect comes from the Latin "specere" and "re" that translates "to look again."

In today's fast-track world, it can be a real challenge for us "to look again."

It means looking again and again at myself, others, world around me and events in order to be able to see the presence of the Divine love embedded in everything and everyone – no matter what!

As Christians, to **respect life** challenges us to see the presence of God in every moment of human life from the womb to natural death. This challenge encompasses the natural world from which our bodies are formed and nurtured throughout our lives. This nurturing is not only for our bodies but also our souls.

Think of the many references in Scripture, the Psalms and the Gospel in which nature speaks to the heart. Often there is a seeming conflict between caring for human life and for the natural world; for example, jobs vs. the protection of earth. Some see the problem lying in the view that we are **apart** from nature rather than we are **a part of it**, as is revealed in Genesis story of creation.

The more we take a contemplate break in our busy day to stop and look again at the presence of God whether in the face of a child, an elder or in the natural wonders around us, the more we will commit to protecting all life through an ecological conversation that recognizes that all are one, as Jesus teaches us.

All creation needs our care and compassion. How will you **respect life** this week?

News in Brief

Diocesan priests plan pilgrimage opportunities

Two diocesan priests are planning to lead pilgrimages in 2020.

Father Christopher J. Looby, pastor of St. Anthony's and St. Patrick's churches in Watertown, will lead a Lenten pilgrimage to the Holy Land March 23-31, allowing participants to prepare for Easter by walking in the footsteps of Jesus.

The trip will include stops in Bethlehem, Nazareth, Capernaum, the Sea of Galilee, Jerusalem and other locations. Prices are \$3,899 for a double, \$4,699 for a single, \$3,869 for a triple. For more information please contact Mary McIntosh at Watertown AAA at (315)558-6372.

Father Andrew J. Amyot will then lead a pilgrimage to Austria and Germany, including the Oberammergau Passion Play, from Sept. 15-25.

The pilgrimage will include stops in Heidelberg, Rhine Valley, Innsbruck, Salzburg, Vienna, Altötting, Munich and Rothenburg.

The Oberammergau Passion Play is performed every ten years, so this will be the last opportunity to see the performance until 2030.

Cost is \$4,099 per person, including all taxes and airline surcharges.

For more information, or for a detailed brochure, contact Father Amyot at 315-384-2064 or fraamyot2@twcny.rr.com.

CLINTON

BLOOD DRIVE

Plattsburgh – Catholic Daughters Court #479 and Knights of Columbus Council #255 will co-Host an Adirondack Regional Blood Center Blood Drive.

Date: Jan. 23

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Peter Church, The Emmaus Room

Contact: 518-563-9483 or 518-536-0265

MARCH FOR LIFE

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

Schedule: Bus to leave St. Peters at 7:45 p.m. on Jan. 23 and it will return to Plattsburgh on Jan. 24

Cost: \$30

Contact: Deacon Randy Smith 518-566-6229.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

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

Date: Feb. 2, March 1 & April 5

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

Place: St. Joseph's Parish Hall

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

FISHERS CLUB

Plattsburgh – Priesthood discernment group to meet for those men hearing the call.

Date: Feb. 2 & 16, March 1 & 29, April 19, May 3 & 10

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: St. Peter's upper room

Features: For High School Junior men & older. Meetings will have discernment, evening prayer & dinner. It's never too early to begin the discussion with your Pastor or another trusted priest.

Contact: Just drop in or contact Father Howard Venette:

pastorsmoll@stmarysti.org 518 585 7144 or Father Christopher Carrara at ccarrara@rcdony.org 315-375-6571

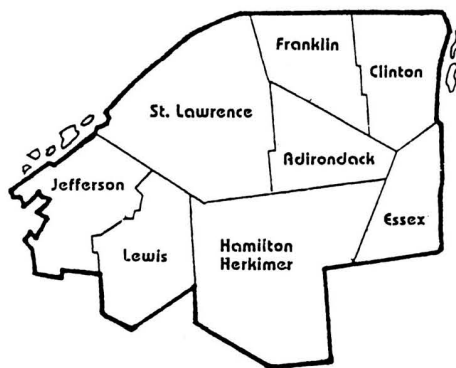
BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM

Plattsburgh - Join us this Lent as we take six weeks to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ!

Date: Tuesdays, Feb. 25 – March 31

Schedule: 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at St. John's Parish center classroom; 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the upper room at St. Peter's

Features: The Road to Redemption, Cycle A. A Catholic Scripture Study In-



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,
Ogdensburg, NY 13669; fax, 1-866-314-7296;
e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

ternational Program by Mitch Pacwa, S.J. The six weeks leading up to Easter mark our own 40 days in the desert with Jesus. To prepare, each participant reads the Sunday readings along with the "Points to Ponder" commentary, answers the Study Questions & Questions for Reflection and "prays the scriptures." All material is provided in the study guide.

Contact: Please call The Rectory office at 518-563-1692 to register by Feb. 18 When you call please make arrangements to pick up your study guide prior to the session on Feb. 25 (We will be discussing the Week 1 Session - Temptation in the Desert at the 1st session).

40 DAYS FOR LIFE

Plattsburgh – You're invited to join other Christians for 40 Days for Life – 40 days of prayer and fasting for an end to abortion. You are also invited to stand and peacefully pray during a 40-day vigil.

Date: Feb. 26 – April 5

Time: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Place: Public right-of-way outside Planned Parenthood

Contact: If you'd like more information – and especially if you'd like to volunteer to help, please contact: Nancy Belzile at 518-593-6024 or nancys_56@hotmail.com www.40daysforlife.com/Plattsburgh

FRANKLIN

ROSARY RALLY

St. Regis Falls – Rosary Rally to be held for world peace and the sanctity of families.

Date: Jan. 25; Feb. 22, March 21

Time: Noon

Place: St. Ann's Church

Contact: For more information call Elaine McGivney at 518-529-6133

JEFFERSON

CATHOLICISM SERIES

Watertown – Bishop Robert Barron's "Catholicism" DVD presentation and discussion to be held.

Schedule: #3 – Jan. 23 - "Saints" #4 – Jan. 30 - "Prayer"; #5 – Feb. 6 - "Heaven & Hell"

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Dostie Hall at Sacred Heart Church

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

Contact: Holy Family Rectory, 315-782-2468

SURVIVING DIVORCE

Watertown – Surviving Divorce program to be held.

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

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

Place: St. Anthony's Church

Features: Separated and divorced adults, come find support and healing.

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

RESPECT LIFE PRAYER VIGIL

Watertown – Heal Our Land Interfaith Respect Life Prayer Vigil to be held.

Date: Jan. 27

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: In front of Watertown Municipal Building on Washington Street

Features: Music by the King family – This peaceful half-hour vigil will be followed by refreshments in the nearby First Presbyterian Church.

Contact: For further info contact Beti-Ann Honan at 315-782-3616 or Bette Hartzell at 315-785-1087

SPAGHETTI DINNER

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

Date: Jan. 30

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

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

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

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

Date: Feb. 8

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$7; Senior Citizens, \$5; Children under 12, \$5; Under 5, Free

Contact: For more information call 315-629-4678

PARISH MISSION

Watertown – "Dare to be Holy," a parish mission to be hosted by the parishes of St. Anthony, St. Patrick, Holy Family and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Schedule: Feb 9 at Holy Family Church; Feb. 10 at St. Patrick's Church; Feb. 11 at St. Anthony's Church; Feb. 12 at Sacred Heart Church

Time: 6:30 p.m. all days & extra special session after 12 p.m. Mass at St. Patrick's Church Feb. 10-12

Features: Bill Wegner will be joining us to preach our Parish Mission. Everyone welcome. Offering will be taken. Refreshments will be served.

Contact: For more information call 315-782-1190

FISHERS CLUB

Watertown – Priesthood discernment group to meet for those men hearing the call.

Date: Feb. 23, March 22, April 26, May 31

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: St. Anthony's Church, Sechi

Hall

Features: For High School Junior men & older. Meetings will have discernment, evening prayer & dinner. It's never too early to begin the discussion with your Pastor or another trusted priest.

Contact: Just drop in or contact Father Chris Looby at fatherlooby@gmail.com 315-782-1190 or Father Christopher Carrara at ccarrara@rcdony.org 315-375-6571

LEWIS

DIVINE MERCY DEVOTIONS

Houseville – Divine Mercy devotions to be held for the month of February.

Date: Feb. 2

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

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

Contact: 315-348-6260

ST. LAWRENCE

WOMEN'S GROUP

Norwood – The Father's Song-Listening for and learning the voice of God.

Date: Jan. 26

Time: 12:30 p.m.

Place: St. Andrew's Church Hall (Enter through side door)

Features: All women are welcome to join us for faith, fellowship, and snacks. There is no cost to attend.

Contact: For more information, call/text/email Sara at 315-212-7565 or narrow56@gmail.com

FISHERS CLUB

Potsdam – Priesthood discernment group to meet for those men hearing the call.

Date: Feb. 2, March 1, April 5

Time: 1 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Rectory

Features: For High School Junior men & older. Meetings will have discernment, evening prayer & dinner. It's never too early to begin the discussion with your Pastor or another trusted priest.

Contact: Just drop in or contact Father Stephen Rocker at srocker164@yahoo.com or 315-265-9680 or Father Christopher Carrara at ccarrara@rcdony.org 315-375-6571

BIBLE TIME LINE STUDY

Massena – Eight-week series to be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

held unlocking the mystery of the bible.

Date: Tuesdays, Feb. 4 – March 31
Time: 2 p.m. to 4 & 6:30 p.m. to 8:30
Place: St. Mary's Social Hall
Cost: Free-will offering
Contact: 315-769-2469 or smar-ton@massenacatholics.com; masse-nacatholics.com

ST. JAMES SCHOOL GALA

Gouverneur – St. James School Gala with the theme of "God Bless the USA" to be held.

Date: Feb. 8
Time: Doors open at 5:45 p.m.; Treasure Chest Keys go on sale at 6:30 p.m.

Place: St. James School
Cost: \$60 per person; \$45 special ticket price for active and retired military, law enforcement and emergency responders.

Features: Tickets are available at the parish office or log onto stjamesk-6.org, hit the donate button and purchase your tickets. Ticket includes: Admission to our auctions, raffles, appetizers, full course dinner, dessert bar, drinks and dancing. Must be 21 years of age. Formal attire is optional. Join us as we ignite the pride in every American heart and celebrate our Home-town Heroes.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Canton – Knights of Columbus to sponsor a pancake breakfast.

Date: Feb. 9
Time: 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Place: St. Mary's School Gym

Cost: Adults, \$7; Children 5-10, \$5; Under 5, Free; Families, \$30

HEALING MASS

Massena – St. Mary's Church to have a Healing Mass.

Date: Feb. 11
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Place: St. Mary's Church
Contact: Parish office at 315-769-2469 for more information.

YOUTH BUSES FOR LIFE

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

Date: Jan. 23-26
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 re-

lationship with our loving God. Each afternoon retreat will be fun, heart and mind opening and spiritually rejuvenating.

Contact: To register go to www.rcdony.org/youthlenten/lenten-retreat.html 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-mem-

ber fee is \$20

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

CONFIRMATION RETREAT

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

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

Cost: \$30 per student (meal included)

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

YOUTH RALLY

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

Date: April 25
Time: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Place: High Peaks Resort
Cost: \$30, All inclusive

Features: The Youth office is excited to bring young people together for a celebratory day filled with "God's All Encompassing Love." The theme of "Under The Big Top" sets the tone for a

carnival style event with fun games, entertainment, great food, a wonderful resort location, a dynamic speaker and a closing Mass offered by Bishop Terry LaValley. This year our Keynote speaker will be, Doug Tooke. Doug Tooke is a dynamic and energetic speaker with more than 20 years in Ministry. Utilizing cinematic storytelling, Doug's presentations inspire and motivate people to seek a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Also appearing will be the Gratto Fellows Circus Performers showcasing their interactive juggling, unicycling, rope walking, and other feats of daring, bravery and comedic entertainment. Try your skill or luck at Carnival Game tables, and we will have music all day long! Carnival style lunch will be provided by the High Peaks Resort.

Contact: Tom Semeraro at 315-393-2920 ext. 1415 or register at www.rcdony.org/youthrally/rally

DIOCESAN EVENTS

For a New or Used Car
Mort Backus & Sons
 On Canton-Ogdensburg Rd.
315-393-5899

CHEVROLET

Career Opportunity

DUE TO GROWTH, AND RETIREMENT OF AGENTS IN THE *KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS* INSURANCE PROGRAM WE ARE ADDING FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME CONSULTANTS IN CLINTON, ESSEX, AND FRANKLIN COUNTIES.

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If this sounds like something you would like to be considered for, or if you know a fellow Catholic gentleman that might be interested in this opportunity, please call (518)-593-3298 or email me at shawn.tetreault@kofc.org



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The somber anniversary of abortion expansion

Leading up to the passage of New York's 2019 abortion expansion legislation, lawmakers and advocates dismissed Catholic concerns as hysterical fear-mongering, devoid of facts.

The new law merely updated New York's outdated statute, they insisted. It simply codified the protections of Roe vs. Wade at the state level.

Pro-life New Yorkers were scoffed at when we said the proposal was unnecessary and dangerous.

As we approach the one year anniversary of the so-called Reproductive Health Act (RHA), it's worth a look at the accumulated body of evidence to ascertain who was right.

Spoiler alert: It was us.

First, we said the law would expand late term abortion, and drive up the number of third trimester procedures. We were derided as liars; the governor's counsel repeatedly stated: "There is no expansion of abortion rights in this bill."

Really? Well, the good news is New York's late-term abortion rate has re-

mained largely unchanged, according to a recent report by New York City media outlets WNYC and Gothamist, which found a "dearth of third trimester abortion providers" in New York.

The bad news is this was seen as bad news, at least by abortion advocates.

"There are large numbers of women across the state who are not able to access this expanded scope of care," said the head of a pro-abortion group in the Gothamist story.

When RHA author Senator Liz Krueger was informed of the scarcity of late-term abortionists, she told the news site she was "both surprised and disappointed," and demanded new regulations from the Department of Health to ease liability concerns for providers.

It seems RHA supporters are now dissatisfied that the law's not working to expand late-term abortion the way they had envisioned.

I cannot comprehend

this seemingly insatiable appetite for the destruction of fully formed infants in the womb. But at least now we know the truth: Sponsors did indeed attempt to expand late-term abortion through the RHA, and are saddened that more medical providers aren't lining up to get in the business.

Second, we warned that by removing the term "duly licensed physician" from the law regulating who can perform abortions, and replacing it with the vague term "health practitioner," the RHA would endanger women's lives because that term applies to a large class of professions, some which have nothing to do with gynecology.

Nonsense, we were told, no one could do abortions if it wasn't in their "scope of practice."

Now the AP is reporting that bureaucrats in the State Education Department are asking the governor and the legislature to give them some clarity on just who they would

suggest should be performing these procedures.

What kind of a law doesn't stipulate such a thing? It's as though the desire to increase abortion outweighs the health and well-being of women.

This brings us to the third – and perhaps most tragic – unheeded warning. We said the new law would prevent accountability and justice for pregnant domestic violence victims who have their babies violently destroyed against their will, because the new law repealed all abortion crimes, even when the abortion is involuntary.

The bill sponsors again said we were fear mongering.

But less than two weeks after the new law was signed, the brutal slaying of a pregnant mom and her five-month-old unborn child took place in Queens, extinguishing two innocent lives.

The district attorney was forced to drop the unlawful abortion charge because, well, the RHA says no abortion is unlawful in the Empire State, not even those coerced or

unwanted.

Other cases like this one followed, and the families of the victims will continue to be denied justice as a result.

I hate to say 'we told you so,' but we did, for 12 long years. It's a case where I wish we had been wrong, because being right breaks my heart. Sadly, though, when the Church speaks out in Albany, even if we are pointing out unintended negative consequences, the instinct of some legislators is to double down.

So I don't expect too many people to pull me aside in the halls of the Capitol to tell me they wish they'd listened.

Instead, if history is any indication, things will likely get worse in the years to come.

Because when it comes to abortion policy in New York, it always gets worse.

Kathleen Gallagher is the director of Pro-Life Activities for the New York State Catholic Conference.



Kathleen Gallagher

Rosary Rallies planned in St. Regis Falls

ST. REGIS FALLS— Working with America Needs Fatima, St. Ann's Church will host three Rosary Rallies for world peace and the sanctity of families, as well as other intentions.

The rallies will be held at noon at Jan. 25, Feb. 22 and March 21, all inside the church.

"When the weather is good, we hold them outside," said event organizer Elaine McGivney, who has been affiliated with

America Needs Fatima for nearly a decade. "We have a banner outside encouraging people to pray the Rosary, but we'll be inside because of the weather this time of year."

McGivney said the rallies were requested by America Needs Fatima.

"We usually sing a couple songs, we pray the Rosary, we pray the Divine Praises and a couple other prayers," she said. "I usually start the Rosary,

and then other individuals lead a decade each. We try to appoint different people to lead the other prayers, as well."

McGivney said the rallies typically last around 45 minutes.

"Everybody is welcome," she said. "We'd love to have more people."

According to the organization's website, America Needs Fatima is The American Society for the Defense of Tradition,

Family and Property's special campaign to spread the message of Fatima in the United States.

The goal of America Needs Fatima is to win the heart and soul of America for Mary by spreading Our Lady's Fatima message and promoting devotion to Her Immaculate Heart.

For more information about the Rosary Rallies, contact Elaine McGivney at 518-529-6133.

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FACES OF FAITH



Gathered to celebrate and serve at the closing Mass at St. Joseph's in Bombay were Deacon Garry N. Burnell, Father Thomas E. Kornmeyere, Bishop Terry R. LaValley, Father Martin E. Cline, Deacon Brian T. Dwyer, Knight of Columbus Cory Haynes (representing Honor Guard of Our Lady of Victory Assembly) and altar servers, front row, Anna Jock-Miller, Anna Reardon, Liam Reardon, Ryan Oakes, middle row, Lucas Oakes, Kyle Reardon, back row, Brody French, Brennan Oakes, and Adrienne Brill.



PHOTO BY GRAND KNIGHT JOHN TAILLON
At Christmas time every year, the Canton Knights of Columbus deliver chocolates and a rose to each widow of the Council. Pictured here is Sandra Bartlett and Deputy Grand Knight Corey Swinwood.



PHOTO BY SANDY LOCY
Canton Knights of Columbus erected a "Keep Christ in Christmas" nativity. Pictured are Brothers Mike Riley, Al Locy, Randy Brown, Edd White, Grand Knight John Taillon and Deputy Grand Knight Corey Swinwood.



Mike Caughey, director of Maintenance of the diocese and Knight of Columbus, colored his hair and beard white and donned a suit loaned by Bill Seymour, facilities manager at Wadhams Hall, to play Santa for the Knights of Columbus Council 258 (Ogdensburg) Christmas gathering.

Trump looks to open grants to faith-based entities

WASHINGTON (CNS) – President Donald Trump said Jan. 16 his administration is issuing nine proposed rules to ensure the nation's faith-based service providers and organizations are not discriminated against by federal agencies' regulations or in their grant-making processes because of religion.

The agencies affected include Veterans Affairs, Health and Human Services, Labor, Agriculture, Education, Justice, Homeland Security, and International Development.

Trump said his administration "is committed to ensuring religious organizations can compete on a level playing field for funding, without discrimination."

"The proposed rules would eliminate burdensome Obama-era requirements that unfairly imposed unique regulatory burdens only on religious organizations," he said.

Among those requirements faith-based service providers have had to give notice they are religiously affiliated and must

make available a list of alternative secular service providers.

He made the comments on the proposed rules during an Oval Office event on National Religious Freedom Day after he announced new guidance on prayer in public schools.

Trump said the Office of Management and Budget also was releasing a memo requiring federal agencies to ensure the grant-making practices of state recipients of federal funding comply with the First Amendment's guarantee of religious freedom.

The federal agencies have 120 days to comply and provide evidence of updating their policies.

Supporters of the Trump administration's proposed rules cite the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Trinity Lutheran Church v. Comer* in 2017. The justices ruled Missouri had wrongly determined the church as a religious entity could not receive public funds for a playground used by students no matter their religion.

President issues guidance on prayer in public schools

WASHINGTON (CNS) – President Donald Trump announced his administration's new guidance on prayer in public schools during a Jan. 16 event in the Oval Office on National Religious Freedom Day.

Primarily, it will require states to report cases where public school students have been denied their right to pray.

Ahead of the event -- which was delayed from a 2 p.m. (EST) start to about 4 p.m. -- material on the guidance was provided to reporters in a background briefing the morning of Jan. 16.

In a separate proposed rule, the administration aims to protect the rights of religious student groups at public universities, giving them equal treatment with secular student groups.

For schools to receive federal funding, they will need to certify once a year with state education departments that they do not have policies in place that would prevent students from constitutionally protected prayer, a senior administration official said.

State departments of education also would have to report to the U.S. Depart-

ment of Education each year with a list of local school boards that failed to make the required certification as well as complaints made to that department about a local school board or school that has been accused of denying students or teachers their right to engage in constitutionally protected prayer.

The new guidance also stipulates that state education offices provide a clear process for people to report complaints about school boards or schools that have denied students or teachers their right to prayer which will in turn be sent to the federal Education Department. Similarly, state education offices will need to report to the Education Department any lawsuits against a local school or school board concerning rights to pray.

At an evening event marking National Religious Freedom Day, Jennie Bradley Lichter, deputy assistant to the president for domestic policy, said the guidance was important because "you don't lose your constitutional rights when you walk in a public school."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Faith-based health care system leads anti-trafficking campaign

HOUSTON (CNS) – While many may be aware of Houston as a hub for sex trafficking, the crime may occur right in front of them in hotels near the city's fashionable Galleria shopping mall or suburban school campuses rather than just at shady motels plagued by drugs. To train people, especially medical staff, to become aware of the crime and how to report it, Catholic Health Initiatives, one of the largest nonprofit, faith-based health systems in the nation, leads a campaign to prevent and intervene in human trafficking, said Kimberly Williams with Baylor St. Luke's Medical Center Mission/Spiritual Care Department. "Many times the one common ground for these survivors is in the emergency room for being assaulted or injured in some way," said Williams, project coordinator of the Human Trafficking Initiative. "We are training 7,000 health care providers on how to identify and intervene." Now with a federal grant of \$649,560 to be used over the next three years, the effort builds on the Greater Houston Area Pathways for Advocacy-Based Trauma-Informed Healthcare (PATH) Collaborative founded by St. Luke's Health, which includes Baylor College of Medicine, Ben Taub Hospital, Doctors for Change and San Jose Clinic, which is a health ministry of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

'9 Days for Life' prayer, action campaign takes place Jan. 21-29

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Catholics across the country are invited to take part in the 9 Days for Life, a novena for the protection of human life. Each day's intention is accompanied by a short reflection and suggested actions to help build a culture of life. The pro-life novena, sponsored by the Committee on Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, coincides with the annual March for Life that takes place in Washington every January to mark the anniversary of the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion across the country. This year's march takes place Jan. 24. But "even if you can't come to D.C., you can join others to witness and pray for an end to abortion," said Kat Talalas, assistant director for pro-life communications at the USCCB. "We ask all of the faithful to unite in prayer to protect the rights of unborn children, to end the violence of abortion, and for greater respect for human life." By signing up online at 9daysforlife.com, participants will receive a daily prayer intention, a reflection and suggested actions via email, text or through an app.

USCCB president urges nation to overcome racism

WASHINGTON (CNS) – While the United States has "come a long way" in addressing racism and injustice, much more remains to be accomplished to achieve the dream of "the beloved community" envisioned by the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said. Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles urged the country to overcome still-entrenched racist beliefs and discriminatory practices in a statement released in Washington to mark the annual holiday honoring the civil rights leader, which this year falls on Jan. 20. "We have come a long way in our country, but we have not come nearly far enough," Archbishop Gomez said in the statement issued Jan. 16 by the USCCB. "Too many hearts and minds are clouded by racist presumptions of privilege and too many injustices in our society are still rooted in racism and discrimination." The archbishop lamented that "too many" young African American men are killed across the nation or are "spending their best years behind bars."

AT THE MOVIES

BAD BOYS FOR LIFE

NEW YORK (CNS) – After lying dormant for more than a decade and a half, the action-comedy franchise that gave us "Bad Boys" in 1995 and the imaginatively titled sequel "Bad Boys II" eight years later makes an unwelcome reappearance.

In the tradition of its predecessors, the third outing, "Bad Boys for Life" (Columbia), is a gleeful shoot'em-up that revels in violence for its own sake.

Thus there's an assassination spree going on as the plot reunites the twin pillars of the saga, Miami police partners and best

friends Mike Lowrey (Will Smith) and Marcus Burnett (Martin Lawrence). And one of its first victims is Lowrey – who comes close to dying of his gunshot wounds.

Once his long recovery is complete, he and Burnett find their relationship strained since family man Burnett wants to retire while they still can whereas free-spirited bachelor Lowrey is bent on the pair pursuing their own version of justice yet again. (Strict observance of police regulations has never been their trademark.)

As clues suggest that the culprits are Isabel (Kate Del Castillo) and Armando (Jacob Scipio) Aretas, a mother-and-son team of narcotics runners out for revenge for the long imprisonment from which Isabel has just escaped, and as other officials involved in her case are gunned down, there's little suspense about what course our, uh, heroes will ultimately choose.

Directors Adil El Arbi and Bilal Fallah steer us through a subplot about the clash between the old-fashioned methods favored by Lowrey and

Burnett and the up-to-date approach – watch that surveillance drone fly! – of a newly formed special unit led by Lowrey's old flame, Rita (Paola Nunez). But the real agenda of their slick movie is graphically portrayed gory mayhem.

Taken together with the sometimes-flippant attitude toward faith that marks the script, penned by Chris Bremner, Peter Craig and Joe Carnahan, all the nasty death dealing on both sides renders "Bad Boys for Life" inappropriate for any age group.

Ah, but what about that infectious reggae theme

song, you ask. Well, you can always stay home and watch reruns of "Cops" to hear that ditty again – over and over, in fact.

The film contains excessive bloody violence, gruesome sights, an ambiguous treatment of religion, a couple of profanities, numerous milder oaths and pervasive rough and crude language. The Catholic News Service classification is O – morally offensive. The Motion Picture Association rating is R – restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

Vatican wartime archives open for scholars

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – After decades of anticipation, the Vatican archives are ready to welcome, starting March 2, scores of scholars wishing to study documents related to the wartime pontificate of Pope Pius XII.

All 85 researchers who have requested access have been given the green light to come and sift through all the materials from the period of 1939 to 1958, Bishop Sergio Pagano, prefect of the Vatican Apostolic Archives, told Catholic News Service Jan. 13.

Coming from at least a dozen countries, the first wave of researchers includes 10 experts from the United States, including two from the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. The museum has been working with the Vatican archives for more than a decade, Bishop Pagano said, ever since Pope Benedict XVI authorized the early opening of mate-

rials pertaining to the pre-World War II pontificate of Pope Pius XI.

So far, Bishop Pagano said, seven experts will be coming from Israel, 14 from Germany, 16 from Italy, 20 from Eastern Europe, including Russia, and the rest from France, Spain and Latin America to study the Pius XII-era archives.

"But we expect an increase in requests after March 2," he added.

While the reading rooms and archive personnel can accommodate and assist a maximum of 60 people a day, the newcomers' access will be staggered out over the year, he said, allowing the many academics currently pursuing other topics to continue their work. The archive's records and artifacts date back more than 1,000 years and fill more than 50 miles of shelving.

It took more than 12 years to sort through, organize and catalogue the enormous quantity of in-

formation from Pope Pius XII's long pontificate, Bishop Pagano said; documents from the time period also were collected from the archives of the Vatican Secretariat of State, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Vatican nunciatures around the world. The open collection also includes thousands of notes regarding Pope Pius' charitable activity in Italy and abroad.

In fact, Bishop Pagano said he hoped there would be in-depth research into the critical and huge amount of aid the pope gave to those desperately in need during and after the war. Such massive assistance, he said, was due in large part to a constant flow of generous donations from the United States.

Just the index – listing the documents with detailing of who made the donations, the amounts sent and where the money went – takes up two vol-

umes.

"There was not only a Marshall Plan," the U.S. program for the economic recovery of Europe after World War II, he said, "but you could say there was also a U.S.-Vatican plan by American Catholics to help the pope in his enormous works of charity."

The nationality or religion of those requesting aid did not matter to the pope, only verifying that need was legitimate, the bishop said.

He said the archives have letters from people who admitted they were atheists but were turning to the pope for help because they saw him as the only moral leader left in such a dark time in history.

Referring to accusations by some historians and Jewish groups that Pope Pius XII and others did not do enough to stop the Nazi rise to power and the Holocaust, Bishop Pagano said the pope "did speak with his efforts and then

he spoke up with words, so it is not true that the pope was totally silent."

The new researchers' stated fields of interest, he said, obviously were focused on World War II, the Holocaust, the persecution of the Jewish people, the murder of Italian citizens in Rome by Nazi German troops and the relationship between the Holy See and the Nazi's national socialist party and with communism.

But some are also looking into Pope Pius' valuable theological legacy and writings. He wrote more than 40 encyclicals, and "he is one of the popes most cited during the Second Vatican Council," the bishop said.



SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Christ is the unifier of division

Today, on this third Sunday in Ordinary Time, we celebrate for the first time The Sunday of the Word of God. Our Holy Father Pope Francis has set this new celebration for the whole Church to be enriched by a day of listening to Sacred Scripture and reflecting on its message of the past history of salvation as mysteries for our present day understanding of our role in the Church. We are messengers of God's Word through our baptism and confirmation. God has designed our Sunday public gathering as a time to grow in understanding of our duty as being bearers of His Word to the world, at least by the witness of our lives.

Jesus Himself was the

first to explain to two of his followers – on the very day He rose from the dead – the meaning of His life as foretold in Scripture, how he had to suffer and rise from the dead in order to bring repentance and the forgiveness of sins. As Pope Francis stated, “the relationship between the Risen Lord, the community of believers and Sacred



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

Scripture is essential to our identity as Christians.” He quotes St. Jerome as saying, “Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.” A special Sunday dedicated to the Word of God helps us to experience today “how the risen Lord opens up for us the treasury of his word and enables us to proclaim its

January 26

Third Sunday of Ordinary Time

READINGS

Isaiah 8:23-9:3

1 Cor 1:10-13, 17

Matthew 4:12-23

unfathomable riches before the world.”

How are we to be messengers of the Word this week? We find much wisdom in the clear message of this week's readings: Christ is the unifier of division and the light for the darkness. Prefaced by the marvelous prophecy of Isaiah concerning the land of Zebulun and Naphtali (Capharnaum is in the ancient territory of Naphtali), in which the prophet announces the restoration of light, we find Matthew declaring Jesus as the fulfillment of that prophecy.

Just as the people in

Capharnaum sat in darkness until Jesus came, so, too, we sit in darkness. God provides clear light to dispel this darkness, but our culture is divided and confused on how to let religious and moral values influence our political action. Fear can be prudent and justified when a real danger is present and imminent, but it can also cause depression and paralysis. Let's pray today for prayerful and courageous discipleship.

St. Paul gives us strong and helpful advice in today's second reading. Christ is the one reason for unity, He tells us. We break His heart with our squabbles. First, comes unity in our own Catholic communities. Both clergy and people committed to their care need to be united in our present crisis. With what nostalgia we look back on

those early days after Vatican Council II when the spirit of *Gaudium et Spes* brought such excitement and new life. Our Holy Father also recommends for our study the document for Vatican II – *Dei Verbum*. For a brief time after the Council, we were united. And then we let go the Spirit's Hand. And all that of which St. Paul accused the Corinthians, happened to us! Working for unity is ongoing. It means struggling to let go of suspicions and false assumptions. It means prayer and discussion.

When we are unified, we stand a much better chance of influencing the society in which we live.

May we celebrate with joy this Sunday of the Word of God. May it encourage and empower us to bring light in the present darkness.

How can a business be more pro-life?

The following is an editorial titled: "How can businesses be more pro-life? Create family-friendly workplaces," which appeared on the website of America magazine.

On Jan. 2, over 200 members of Congress called on the Supreme Court to reconsider and, "if appropriate," to overrule *Roe v. Wade* when the justices decide this spring the fate of a Louisiana law that requires abortion providers to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals.

The call to reverse the landmark decision that legalized abortion nationwide will be echoed later in January by the thousands of students, religious leaders and activists attending the 47th annual March for Life in Washington. With the appointment of two

pro-life justices to the Supreme Court by President Donald Trump, members of the pro-life movement are hopeful that the long-awaited reversal or a significant weakening of *Roe* is close at hand. We share that hope.

But as the editors of this review wrote one year ago: "The pro-life movement's work becomes more complicated, not less so, as the prospect of meaningful legal protections for unborn children dawns."

Because abortion will likely remain legal in many if not most states regardless of where the court comes down on *Roe*, building a culture that helps mothers and fathers to welcome children remains imperative. Support for working parents is an essential part of that culture

and Catholic organizations and business leaders should be at the forefront of efforts to create more family-friendly workplaces.

The Archdiocese of Chicago has been a leader in this regard. In 2016, it became the first U.S. diocese to offer 12 weeks of paid parental leave to its employees. In March 2019, the Diocese of Burlington, Vermont, also began providing 12 weeks of paid leave to employees after a birth or adoption. Bishop Christopher J. Coyne described his decision to offer parental leave as "one way we can help to build a culture of life." But these dioceses are outliers – and not just in the Catholic Church. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 16% of workers in the private sector have ac-

cess to paid leave.

There are steps short of fully funded family leave – which may be out of reach for many cash-strapped dioceses and nonprofits – that employers can take to ensure that parents do not have to choose between supporting their families financially and spending time with infants and young children.

All workplaces can provide nursing mothers with paid breaks for breast-feeding or lactation rooms. Granting more flexible schedules or the option to work remotely allows parents to spend more time with children during the essential years of early development and can cut down on child care costs.

Executives and managers also should create a workplace culture that does not

penalize or stigmatize those who choose to take advantage of the benefits available to parents. This is especially important for men – 76% of whom return to work after one week or less following a birth or adoption, according to a 2014 study.

If *Roe v. Wade* is reversed, it will remain only a partial victory as long as people feel they have to choose between keeping their baby and supporting their family. But mothers and fathers should be able to feel secure in their decision to bring a child into the world without having to depend on the rulings of justices or the votes of politicians. Pro-life employers do not need to wait for a government mandate to begin building pro-family workplaces.

Revisiting a thought: Be positive, have faith

By Molly Ryan

Occasionally, I have to revisit a piece I have written in the past because it is still relevant. I think this column from years ago, may bring a smile to your face and make you remember what is important.

Winters in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, regardless of where you are located, are brutal, challenge our patience, compromise our health and safety and worse, drain our bank accounts as we pay the heat bill. So, what makes the residents of the North Country stay here? What makes us persevere through three to four months of cold, snow, ice and discomfort? One word is what keeps us here: faith.



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

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We, as residents of the North Country, have faith that spring will come, the snow and ice will disappear, the grass will turn green and our coats and boots will be put away until next November. The sun will come out and bring the flowers, the birds will come back and the children will go back outside to play.

We know that all of this will happen and our faith in the inevitable spring-time provides us with hope that all will be right

again.

This same concept can apply to life in the Missions. Ask yourself, what makes the people who live in such adverse conditions of poverty, famine, and war get up and embrace each day? Could it be their faith in God?

Pope Francis tells us, "Everyone should be able to experience the joy of being loved by God." As those who live in the Mission lands know, they may not have wealth or luxury in their lives, but if they

give thanks to the Lord for His abundant love, then they will know the joy of His love and gifts in their lives.

We make sacrifices and gifts here in order to help bring hope to those in the Missions. Your help here provides for pastoral and evangelizing programs, for catechists and catechetical work, to build churches and chapels, for the work of Religious communities in health care and education, and for communication and transportation needs. Your help here helps to provide them with their faith.

No matter where you are in this world, when it comes to God, our faith and love, these things are universal.

The love of God we have here and the faith and

hope He brings us is no different than in the Mission lands. Some things are universal, like the love a mother has for her son, or the knowledge that the sun will come up each day. These are things that make us strong and aware that life is good. God is good.

So, when staying positive in the winter doldrums seems impossible at times, we always have our faith. We know that winter is part of our lives here and we will get through it. We accept and we move on.

Remember that this is what our counterparts in the Missions, thousands of miles away, contend with each day. They pray, have Faith, accept and move forward. Stay positive, move forward, have faith.

SINGING FOR THE UNBORN



North Country residents sing Christmas Carols in front of Planned Parenthood in Plattsburgh as part of a recent "Peace in the Womb" caroling event.

OBITUARIES

Brushton – Diane T. Clark, 63; Funeral Services at a later date.

Colton – Kathleen M. (Chase) Cook, 61; Funeral Services Jan. 14, 2020 at the Buck Funeral Home; burial in Stark Cemetery, South Colton.

Hogansburg – Agnes Mary (Jock) Cook "Owesokon", 101; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 14, 2020 at St. Regis Church

Malone – Robert J. Brown Sr., 93; Mass of Christian Burial to be held in the spring.

Massena – Cecile "Boissonneault" Roy, 91; Mass of Christian Burial at St. Mary's Church; burial in Evergreen Cemetery, Canton.

Moers – Tanya Rose (Mott) Hemingway, 67; Funeral Services Jan. 20, 2020 at the Hamilton Funeral Home Chapel.

Norfolk – Mary E. (Papp) Molnar, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 17, 2020 at Church of the Visitation; burial in Visitation Cemetery.

Peru – Robert F. Patnode, 89; Mass of

Christian Burial Jan. 15, 2020 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Port Henry – Walter M. Wojewodzc, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 14, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church.

Rouses Point – Barbara E. (Mitchell) Bechard, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 15, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church.

Rouses Point – Marcel G. Caron, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 11, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church.

St. Regis Falls – Jennie M. (Susice) Wait, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 17, 2020 at St. Ann's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Ticonderoga – Betty Jean "B.J." (Nornton) Davis, 89; Mass of Christian Burial

in the Spring at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Parish Center.

Watertown – Vivian R. (Downs) Bufalini, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 17, 2020 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Samuel B. Felice, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 20, 2020 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Francis J. Murray, 71; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 8, 2020 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Watertown – Earl W. Van Ness, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 13, 2020 at Holy Family Church burial in North Watertown Cemetery.



**Attention
Snowbirds**
going south for the winter!

Notify our office so you don't miss a single issue of the *North Country Catholic*! Call (315) 608-7556 with your winter address.

Grant improves disability access in two parishes

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley has announced that two grants of \$5,000 each have been disbursed to the Catholic Community of Burke and Chateaugay and Our Lady of Victory in Plattsburgh to assist them with projects to improve accessibility to their facilities for the disabled.

The funds are available from the annual contributions of the New York State Knights of Columbus. The funds are distributed by the Diocese on the recommendation of Catholic Charities and the Department of Education.

In announcing the grants to this year's recipients, Bishop LaValley noted the generosity of the Knights which "assist our diocesan institutions in their efforts to make Churches, schools and parish centers accessible to all people. I am most grateful to the Knights of Columbus for their generosity in this area and in the many ways in which they support the work of the Church in our Diocese. In addition to the grants that improve accessibility to our facilities, the Knights are generous in their support of our seminarians, respect life initiatives and numerous diocesan ministries. I am most grateful for their generosity and dedication to the Church in our North Country."

Announcement of the availability of these grants was made last April by Catholic Charities and the Department of Education. The criteria for acceptability of a request cover several factors. Improvement in already existing programs or facilities is considered as well as program development and the purchase of special equipment.

The grants awarded this year will assist Deacon Brian Dwyer with funds to repair the ramp for disabled persons at St. Patrick's Church in Chateaugay. Likewise, Father William Reamer, pastor of Our Lady of Victory will use the funds to install a rest room for disabled persons in the OLV Parish Center.

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Judge blocks Trump's order on refugee resettlement

WASHINGTON (CNS) – A federal judge in Maryland issued a preliminary injunction Jan. 15 blocking the Trump administration from enforcing an executive order that would allow state and local government officials to reject resettling refugees in their jurisdictions.

The judge ruled in favor of the plaintiffs, three faith-based resettlement agencies – HIAS, a Jewish organization; Church World Service; and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service – who said their work would be directly impacted and harmed by the order.

In his 31-page decision, U.S. District Judge Peter Messitte said the executive order could be seen as unlawful because it grants states and localities veto power that "flies in the face of clear congressional intent."

The judge also called for refugee resettlement to "go forward as it developed for the almost 40 years" prior to President Donald Trump's executive order, announced last September.

Ashley Feasley, director of policy for Migration and Refugee Services of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, echoed this sentiment, telling Catholic News Service that "refugee resettlement will continue as it has before" based on available resources and family connections.

But she also acknowledged that the refugee resettlement process has taken a hit. "Everything is in flux," she said just after the injunction was issued, and she pointed out it would likely be appealed by the Trump administration.

One sentence from the order that stood out for her was Messitte's assertion that the order goes against the intent of Congress as per its 1980 Refugee Act.

The judge said Trump's executive order "appears to run counter to the Refugee Act's stated purpose, which is to provide 'comprehensive and uniform provisions for the effective resettlement and absorption of those refugees who are admitted.'"

He also noted that giving states and localities veto power over refugee resettlement "raises a serious matter of federal preemption under the Constitution."

The judge said he agreed with the plaintiffs' claim that their work would

be harmed by the executive order, and he said he also was convinced they would be able to demonstrate the order is "arbitrary and capricious" as well as "susceptible to hidden bias."

He concluded by saying the order "does not appear to serve the overall public interest."

The three refugee advocacy groups filed the lawsuit against the executive order with the U.S. District Court in Greenbelt, Maryland, last November. The groups are among nine national agencies that have agreements with the federal government to provide housing and other services for refugees, including the USCCB's Migration and Refugee Services, which in partnership with its affiliates, resettles about 30% of the refugees that arrive in the U.S. each year.

In a Jan. 17 statement, Auxiliary Bishop Mario E. Dorsonville of Washington, who is chairman of the USCCB's migration committee, called the ruling "a welcome step in our ongoing ministry to provide refugees, who are fleeing religious persecution, war and other dangers, with safe haven here in the United States."

He also said the injunction "helps to maintain a uniform national policy of welcome to refugees and serves to maintain reunification of refugee families as a primary factor for initial resettlement."

Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, president and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, called the ruling a "win for the rule of law and for all refugees and the communities that welcome them."

"We know the fight isn't over," she added in a statement, but she said the refugee advocacy groups are "confident that the Constitution – and, as the last few months have proved, the country – are on our side."

She said LIRS and its colleagues have been working on the local, state and national level to "successfully resettle refugees for decades, and we plan to continue doing just that."

Trump's executive order issued last fall, said state and local officials in any jurisdiction had veto power over refugee resettlement after June 2020, if they make their decision on this public by Jan. 21.