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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 65, Number 31

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

DEC. 22, 2010

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS...



CNS PHOTO/PHILIPP BERNARD, REUNION DES MUSEES NATIONAUX/ART RESOURCE

Mary, Joseph and a choir of angels adore the infant Jesus in the painting "Nativity" by Philippe de Champaigne. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil commemorating the birth of Christ and ends with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord Jan. 9.

DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS IN CHRIST:

We celebrate Christmas at the darkest time of the year. It's a time when we appreciate the value of light. It's no secret, we live in a world darkened by violence, terror and suffering of all kind. We have all experienced darkness in our personal lives and in our families: the darkness of sorrow—a loved one has died; disappointment—I didn't get the job I wanted so badly; illness—a spouse has been diagnosed with cancer; pain—nothing seems to relieve my arthritis; sin—I can't seem to stop committing the same sin over and over; loneliness—I hate this season because it reminds me of how all alone I really am. These are some of the dark clouds that loom over our lives and the lives of our loved ones.

In the midst of such darkness, the Christmas liturgies are filled with references to light. Jesus Christ fulfills the prophecy of the prophet Isaiah: *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone."* (Is.9:1)

Fortunately, the lamp Jesus lit in our world continues to burn. His light was not lit in Bethlehem once and then extinguished. It shines in the midst of the darkness all around us. It is a persistent and defiant light which no darkness can overpower. It shines for all who believe in Him and try to follow Him. Contrary to all the naysayers, the glowing goodness of Jesus continues to illuminate the world. In Jesus and in His Gospel, we have a sure source of light which, for two thousand years, has shone upon humankind. The light that shone on the shepherds of Bethlehem that first Christmas night, shines on us this Christmas. The light of Jesus came to save us. It comes to show us how to live and to guide us towards God's eternal kingdom.

As we follow Jesus, we become sources of light to a darkened world. There is great joy in being in the light. But there is an even greater joy and real hope in being a source of light to others. God has called us out of darkness into the wonderful light of His Son. We live as children of the light. The effects of the light are seen in just plain goodness, right living and truth. Weekly participation at Mass, where we are nourished by Word and Sacrament, becomes a sort of fueling station where we are charged, energized to be the light of Christ that our troubled world needs so badly to see and experience.

May the Lord in His goodness give you and your family a taste of that joy which the shepherds experienced when the light of God's glory shone around them on that first Christmas night. And may you hear His gentle words echoing in your heart: *"Anyone who follows me, will never walk in darkness, but will always have the light of life."* (Jn.8:12)

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

Your Brother in Christ,

Bishop LaValley

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The treasure of
family at Christmas

For 11-and-a-half months of the year, I'm thrilled that our children have created lives for themselves, with spouses, careers and homes of their own.

But as the Christmas countdown continues, oh how I wish they were home.

The week before Christmas isn't the same without little kids looking for Santa or big kids helping to bake.

And, how can a self-respecting old lady watch her favorite holiday cartoons without a short one by her side, switching on Rudolph or Charlie Brown, Frosty or the Grinch.

Sigh...

Still, I hardly have cause for complaint. Our table will be filled with beloved family members on Christmas Eve and again Christmas Day.

Yes, I wish that *all* the family could come - and spend a week - but there will be enough loved ones and enough time to enjoy most of our favorite traditions.

Tradition is such a powerful word this time of year but, with the wisdom of my advancing years, I've discovered that the best way to approach *tradition* is with an attitude of flexibility.

It sounds a little ironic, but our Christmas celebrations can only get richer if we embrace the changes in our lives.

For so many years, Tom and I knew that we would have all three children with us to go to Mass on Christmas Eve and open presents e-a-r-l-y Christmas morning.

Now the only thing we know is that this year's celebration will be different from last year and next year's will be different again.

We now have to share our children with their new in-laws. And, we have to rejoice as they establish their own traditions which will help them define and strengthen the new families they are creating.

This week, Bishop LaValley concludes his reflections on family life with a call for family members to treasure each other.

What perfect timing!

I know that I will certainly follow his advice with my own beloveds this weekend - especially since our time together will be measured in hours, not days.

Our traditions - ever changing - are perfect ways to show how much we value the treasure that is family.

Merry Christmas!



Mary Lou
Kilian

CHURCH: A FAMILY OF FAITH



Rejoice, The Savior Has Come

By Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ
Director of Evangelization

What "Good News"! "Today is born our Savior, Christ the Lord" (Ps. 96).

This is the day we as a family of faith have been waiting for in our preparation during Advent. Today, the Church celebrates the Feast of Christmas and the radiant light of Christ breaks through the darkness of the world.

How much joy Mary and Joseph must have experienced in holding their Son given to them by the power of the Holy Spirit! How can we possibly understand this awesome miracle? How much more Mary and Joseph must have pondered this mystery in the unfolding of the birth of Jesus!

Every mother has her story to tell in the birthing of her own child. The tiny baby has left the womb of Mary to enter into a fragile and fragmented world. And yet, He is ready to be nursed at the breasts of Mary and to be held in the tender arms of Joseph. Mary wrapped Jesus in swaddling clothes and laid Him in the manger. Both Mary and Joseph smiled in wonder at the tiny fingers and tiny little toes! The baby Jesus fixed His eyes on His mother.

Mary looked at Joseph and their hearts were touched with deep love and gratitude for the power of God has united them ever more in love. Together they stare in awe at the baby Jesus as His eyelids become heavy with sleep. The journey and the night of His birth had been long but they were grateful to be a family of love. They were praising God because He had fulfilled His promise as foretold by the angel. Joseph named the baby "Jesus" which means "Savior." He had come to save His people from their sins. Mary pondered these awesome events and continually prayed to be open to the power of the Holy Spirit.

In these next few days of the Christmas season, families gather together to celebrate Christmas with relatives and friends. The greatest gift a family can give to Jesus at Christmas is to celebrate by going to Mass on Christmas Day. Go to the manger and offer your gifts of love and gratitude for the gift of your own family, the gift of your pastor and parish family, and to all those people who help you to be a family of faith. There are many families and people in the world whose lives are fragile and fragmented because there is no sense of God or reverence for Him. Just as in the little town of Bethlehem, that one silent night, the royal birth of the Son of God tiptoed quietly by as the world slept. Are we to let the remembrance of this holy night to slip silently away without coming to the manger to sing: "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests" (Luke 2:14)?

May your family and all families celebrate this Christmas season that brings the promise of hope and joy that is wrapped with Emmanuel's abiding promise that He is with us always.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

NO PAPER NEXT WEEK

The next issue of the *North Country Catholic* Will be dated Jan. 5, 2011.
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the staff of the NCC



**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.

FOLLOW ME

Family: Become What You Are

Editor's note: This is the final installment in a four-part series featuring Bishop Terry LaValley's message to families. The articles were adapted from the bishop's Oct. 30 presentation at a Family Life Forum in Carthage.

PART FOUR: Families are... Communities To Treasure

A third mission that I see for the family of the third millennium is that of the need to appreciate the treasure of being family.

With so many things quickly discarded in this throw-away society, with so much just taken for granted, we must possess an attitude of gratitude for those we call family.

We must have a truly profound sense of gratitude to Almighty God for the precious gift and awesome responsibility of being a member of a family.

We all know that love is not just some warm and fuzzy feeling. It is an act of the will. Every day, husbands and wives, recommit themselves to the labor of loving, accepting real sacrifice.

Do we take time out at the end of every day, or at the start, to literally count all of our blessings?

Why not do it as a family?

The world looks a whole lot different and much brighter when I know I have been blessed and remember that throughout the day.

Instilling in our children that we should never take anything for granted is important.

I know that sometimes in the heat of trial, considering the family as a treasure or a blessing, may take real effort. But when we treat each



PHOTO BY BETTY STEELE

Children from four Catholic schools in St. Lawrence County created handmade ornaments to decorate Bishop LaValley's Christmas tree this year. The bishop invited representatives from each of the schools to join him for a photo and some hot chocolate Dec. 15. In front are Isaac Testani, St. Marguerite D'Youville Academy in Ogdensburg; William Jadlos, St. Mary's School in Canton; and Joseph Cummings, St. James School in Gouverneur; standing, Bishop LaValley, Elizabeth Burke, St. Mary's, Canton; Chloe Wilson, Trinity Catholic School, Massena; Cassidy LaPierre, St. James; Carlie Belile, St. Marguerite D'Youville; and Dan Casey, Trinity.

other as truly a precious gift from God, then we become instruments of God's love and genuine evangelizers.

Do we appreciate the thread of God's presence in the gift of family life?

As parents beget children

on earth, they should never forget that they are also begetting them for God.

Yes, parents are the first and most important educators of their children. When a new person is born, he/she brings into the world a par-

ticular image and likeness of God Himself. Begetting is the continuation of creation.

What a gift—one with earthly and eternal implications!

In July 2006, Pope Benedict in a homily at Mass for the

Fifth World Meeting of Families said: "None of us gave ourselves life or singlehandedly learned how to live. All of us received from others both life itself and its basic truths, and we have been called to attain perfection in relationship and loving communion with others." It's about being companions on a journey.

In his Letter to Families given on the occasion of the Year of the Family in 1994, Pope John Paul II sums it up so well: "how deeply the Church desires to stand at the human person's side as he/she follows the paths of their earthly life. The Church shares in the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of people's daily pilgrimage, firmly convinced that it was Christ Himself who set her on all these paths. Christ entrusted the human person to the Church; He entrusted the human person to her as the way of her mission and her ministry."

We are all pilgrims of eternity, people of hope. It is true and we will face the unexpected many times in our journey as family. Thank God we have each other as travel companions. As we go about our lives trying to deepen the love relationships we call family, we find great hope knowing that, indeed "No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love Him." And we do love Him!

Our family of faith of the Diocese of Ogdensburg earnestly seeks to ensure that there is no family left to walk alone.

The Church will stand by your side from the moment you were conceived in your mother's womb until the day you are laid to rest in anticipation of that great family reunion with all the angels and saints in heaven.

May the Triune God bless all our families.

Funeral held Tuesday for Deacon Joseph Gilbert, 87

AUSABLE FORKS— Bishop Terry R. LaValley presided at a Mass of Christian Burial for Deacon Joseph Henry Gilbert II, 87, Dec. 21 at Holy Name Church.

Deacon Gilbert died Dec. 15 at Woodside Hospice in Pinellas Park, Fla. Burial was in Holy Name Cemetery.

He was born March 14, 1923, the son of Joseph Sr. and Hazel (Herbert) Gilbert.

He married Marion (Gravelle) Gilbert, in May of 1943; she pre-deceased him.

On May 20, 1982, Bishop Stanislaus J. Brzana ordained Gilbert a permanent deacon for the Diocese of Ogdensburg, a member of the first class of men studying for ordination to the diaconate.

He was assigned to serve at Holy Name Church in AuS-

able Forks and Holy Name Church in Tupper Lake.

A decorated veteran of World War II and the Korean War, Deacon Gilbert was employed at Herbst Brothers Seed Plant in Upper Jay, and during the early 1960's, worked Montgomery Ward Retail Store in Plattsburgh as a tire and battery salesman.

He then opened and operated a Montgomery Ward Catalog Agency in Au Sable Forks with his wife. Later, Deacon Gilbert worked for the Olympic Regional Development Authority in a supervisory position until his retirement.

Deacon Gilbert had a strong interest in politics, serving as Campaign Co-Chairman for Essex County Election of Robert F. Kennedy for United States Senator of

New York and later serving as Democratic Chairman for the Town of Jay. He was also involved in the Knights of Columbus, Rotary Club of Au Sable Forks, Polar Square Dancing, and PUFL 504/VFW.

He also volunteered his time instructing students at Holy Name School as well as at Holy Ghost Academy in Tupper Lake.

In his spare time, he enjoyed singing, playing the guitar, and had a love for country music.

Deacon Gilbert is survived by his sister Delores, a daughter Barbara (Gilbert) and husband Norman Paul, sons, Bruce and wife Linda, and Gene and his wife Kevin-Donna, as well as several grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews.

In addition to his parents and his wife, he was pre-deceased by a son Joseph, III; a grandson, Michael; and sisters, Mary and Angeline.



Deacon Joseph Henry Gilbert



The Bottom Line.

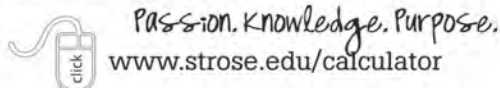
The cost of a private college education is a lot less than you think.



We maintain one of the lowest private college tuitions in the entire North-east and award more than \$25 million annually in guaranteed scholarships, grants and financial aid. In fact, take a look at our guaranteed academic scholarships which range up to \$14,000 annually at www.strose.edu/scholarships.

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Before you make a judgment that a private college experience is out of your reach, take a look at the bottom line. It may surprise you.



The College of Saint Rose

Bp's Fund at 96%

The Bishop's Fund Appeal is at 96% of its goal with \$1,154,046.33 received in cash and pledges from 10,223 households across the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Forty-three parishes have surpassed their goals.

"If you have not made a gift to the Bishop's Fund, please prayerfully consider making your pledge or one-time gift today," said Valerie Mathews, Bishop's Fund director. "The Bishop's Fund Appeal provides us the opportunity to share our blessings with others as we continually serve those who most need our help throughout the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

To make a gift, mail to: The Bishop's Fund Appeal, PO Box 150, Ogdensburg, NY or visit www.dioogdensburg.org/development and click the "Donate Now" button in column on the left.

Funeral held for Sr. Charlotte M. Keith

LAKE PLACID— A Mass of Christian Burial for Mercy Sister Charlotte M. Keith, 87, was held Dec. 14 at Reiss Memorial Chapel in AMC-Uihlein.

She died Dec. 11 at Adirondack Medical Center in Saranac Lake. Burial was in St. Paul's Cemetery in Bloomingdale.

Born April 22, 1923 in Vermontville, she was the daughter of Elmore William and Mary Margaret Dyer Keith.

Sister Charlotte entered the Sisters of Mercy in Tarrytown in 1941 and made Perpetual Vows on Aug. 16, 1946.

Over the years, her assign-

ments took her to Watertown, Saranac Lake, Tupper Lake, Rouses Point, Plattsburgh, Keeseville, Redford, Long Lake, Newcomb and in 1989 to Lake Placid.

Her ministries included teaching, record librarian, coordinator of Christian living, Catholic Charities, pastoral associate and spiritual director. She also ministered in Gabriels for 3 years.

She is survived by her sister-in-law, Mary Ellen Keith of Vermontville; and nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased by her sisters Catherine and Anne, and her brothers Joseph and Patrick.

Job Opportunity

IMMACULATE HEART CENTRAL

school system in Watertown, NY seeks a full-time, salaried Administrative Assistant to the school system's Executive System Administrator. Candidate is an extremely well-organized, self motivated, flexible team-player with excellent written/oral communication skills and office management skills. Responsibilities include helping establish the office of the Executive System Administrator, secretarial work, volunteer and alumni management, and internal and external communication. Skill with computers and common software; able to conduct basic research; excellent interpersonal skills; able to multitask and work under moderate pressure required. Marketing, fundraising, school system/college development, bachelor's/associate's degree, and/or familiarity with IHC community all "pluses." Benefits. Please send resume (including three references with phone/email data) to Chris.Hornbarger@ihchs.org

AMONG CATHOLICS ACROSS THE NORTH COUNTRY

DAYS OF DECEMBER



During her recent visit to IHC Primary in Watertown, St Joseph Shirley Anne Brown, assistant superintendent of schools, enjoys listening to Taylor Brooke Carey read. Taylor is in St. Joseph Sister . Kathleen DeBoalt's second grade class.



PHOTO BY MATT CURATOLO

Residents of St. Joseph's Home, Ogdensburg are shown decorating the memorial tree in the lobby of the nursing home. Everyone who has had a loved one at St. Joseph's or has one there now is invited to purchase ornaments at the front desk from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday for \$5 each. Pictured putting the first ornament on the tree this year is Fran Hackett. Looking on are, from left: Msgr. George Phillips, Cecile Charlebois and Father Roland Gonyo.



PHOTO BY MARY LOU KILIAN

In honor of Bishop Terry R. LaValley's ordination and installation as Bishop of Ogdensburg, the Ogdensburg Ministerial Association had a Mountain Ash tree planted in the yard of the Bishop's House. Mike Frary of Frary's Funeral Home donated a marker to be placed at the base of the tree . Above, Deacon Francis Bateman, treasurer; and Grey Nun Sister Mary Teresa LaBrake, secretary, representatives of the Ogdensburg Ministerial Association, presented the marker to the bishop Dec. 10.



Young Catholics in Tupper Lake marked the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe Dec. 12 with Mexican garb. The feast celebrates the appearance of Mary to indigenous peasant St. Juan Diego in 1531 near present-day Mexico City. From left are Noelle Casagrain, Brasen LaVassaur, Riley Amell, Dakota Larabie, DJ Shaheen, Malorie MClear, Klarissa Hoyt, Mrs. Lisa Jones, Zack Boushie, Tomas Barton, Deacon James Ellis, Father Douglas Decker and Deacon Gerald Savage.

Father Normand Cote' looks back on 52 years of priesthood

Retirement means 'more time to pray'

By Shan Moore
Staff Writer

PLATTSBURGH – Retirement has given Father Normand Côté more time to do what he most wants to do.

"I love to pray," he said.

Sitting in his comfortable rooms on the third floor of St. John's Rectory, the priest flipped page by page through a thick photo album he uses to organize his favorite prayers.

"I pray for my mother and father," he said, touching their images in the album.

A photo of Msgr. George Brisson holds an honored place beside a prayer devoted to him. Had it not been for him, Father Côté's vocation might never have been fulfilled.

"He saw me as a priest."

Images on another page

are of Brother André Bessette of Montreal, who in October was elevated to sainthood, and Sister Marie Leonie (1840-1912), who was beatified in 1984.

"I have a new prayer for Brother André since he's a saint, now," said Father Côté, who's 82. "And I say a prayer for canonization for Blessed Mother Leonie."

She's his first cousin twice removed.

There's a novena to St. Dymphna, who aids those afflicted with depression. To St. Jude, Thomas Aquinas ...

And there's a one for facing the unknown, especially apt, he noted, "when you get old like me."

Age has brought him some surprises, including a small heart attack when he was pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Coopersville, and more

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



PHOTO BY SHAN MOORE

Father Normand Cote enjoys moving the figures around in his Nativity sets in his rooms at St. John's Rectory in Plattsburgh. Father Cote' is one of 47 priests of the Diocese of Ogdensburg to receive benefits from the Priests' Retirement Fund, financed in part through contributions to parish Christmas collections.



Office of Family Life

Office of Natural Family Planning

We invite you to join our
Angelus Family Prayer Project,
supporting families through prayer.

www.dioogdensburg.org/nfp/FamilyPrayer.html



His Greatest Gift

The Sisters of St. Joseph
wish you and yours
a blessed Christmas.
May Jesus hold you close to His heart
during this Blessed Christmas Season
and throughout the New Year.

An invitation from three diocesan offices:

'Invest in priceless gift of family prayer'

By Suzanne Pietropaoli

Diocesan director, Natural Family Planning

As the great feast of Christmas draws near, three diocesan offices invite you to consider investing in the priceless gift of family prayer.

In his Dec. 8 column in the *NCC*, Bishop LaValley reminded us all of the importance of "inviting the transforming power of Jesus Christ into our daily life." God - who made heaven and earth and who sent his Son to dwell among us - still waits for us to welcome him into our hearts and homes.

Prayer - personal, family, and sacramental - does just that.

Far from being one more thing on a to-do list, prayer lifts our minds and hearts to God. What better company could there be? Of all the ways we use our time, and of all the things we teach our children, none is more important than our effort to form our families in faith. What life lesson could be deeper or more lasting for our children than the knowledge that they (and all human persons) are precious sons and daughters of God, and that God is near indeed to those who call upon him?

Praying together, as Bishop LaValley wrote, "... increases the strength and spiritual unity of the family, helping the family to partake of God's own strength...and leaves an impression that the future events of their lives will not be able to erase...When children are brought up in an atmosphere of faith, prayer, and the regular reception of the sacraments, they are brought up in an atmosphere that values love." What greater gift can we give our children?

Or for that matter, what greater contribution can we make to the Church, and to the world in which we live?

While any and all prayer is good and very welcome, the project at this time offers the Angelus for families' consideration.

In a world of broken hearts, broken homes, and fractured families, the love, grace, and strength that are God's gifts are sorely needed. When we pray as a family, we are blessed in a particular way by God's presence and grace; when we pray as a family FOR other families, we act in love and they, too, are blessed.

Family Life Directors Deacon Gary and Gayle Frank know firsthand the struggles families face. "There are so many influences in our society that work against family life," they explain. "Marriage is not highly valued, and commitment is presented as something that interferes with people's freedom. Economic factors have a big impact as families struggle with unemployment, medical bills, and other financial worries. Often, Church and the life of faith get lost in the shuffle just when they are most needed."

To encourage families to pray as families, for families, the Family Life, Natural Family Planning, and Respect Life offices have begun a family prayer project. This is a way of asking families to commit to pray daily as a family, for just a few minutes, and to remember the intentions of all in our family of faith.

This act of love and solidarity connects us deeply with our own families, and with the whole Body of Christ. It also relies upon Jesus' promise

to hear the prayer of those who pray in his Name: "...if two of you join your voices on earth to pray for anything whatever, it shall be granted you by my Father in heaven." (Matthew 18,19)

While any and all prayer is good and very welcome, the project at this time offers the Angelus for families' consideration. (Find the Angelus at www.dioogdensburg.org/nfp/FamilyPrayer.html, or through the diocesan homepage www.dioogdensburg.org.) Why the Angelus? Prayed by the Church for centuries, the Angelus celebrates God becoming part of the human family in the mystery of the Incarnation.

Through it, we also seek the intercession of our Blessed Mother, whose obedience made possible the coming of Christ among us—and whose faith and discipleship are always a model for our own.

At a practical level, the Angelus is a wonderful family prayer: short, simple, direct—and powerful. It has particular appeal for young children, since it is usually prayed antiphonally (back and forth, alternating verses).

This lends a musical quality to the Angelus, and the three-fold recitation of the Hail Mary helps children learn that prayer with little effort. As they grow older, children can lead the verses as well. All parents know the delight that children take in learning to recite what they know; what better information to store in a child's memory than the mystery of the Incarnation, of God's awesome love for us, and of Mary's selfless response to what God asked of her?

In the article mentioned above, Bishop LaValley urged all of us to, "Believe in the power of prayer." That belief is surely one of the best gifts we can give our children. "The family," he reminded us, "has much to hear from God, and much to say to God, so let us pray."

Fr. Cote'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

recently, some spells of weakness. He was in the midst of giving Communion at St. Patrick's Church in Rouses Point sometime back when he collapsed.

"I was very careful as I fell to hold up the ciborium," he said.

And he completed the Mass, seated.

A similar incident happened as he prayed for an end to abortion with others outside Planned Parenthood in Plattsburgh.

"Come to find out, (it was) low blood pressure."

For a long time after his retirement in 2003, the priest filled in at parishes around the diocese and, every other

weekend, at St. Anne's Shrine in Isle LaMotte, Vt.

These days, Father Coté says a weekday Mass at St. John's and another at Our Lady of Victory. He concelebrates other services as well.

"I do whatever he asks me," he said of Father Timothy Canaan, St. John's pastor.

He doesn't get out much anymore, though he often visits his two sisters, who live nearby. Dominos and other games liven those evenings.

He also continues to meet monthly with the Secular Franciscan Order he founded in the early 1980s.

The walls of Father Coté's rooms are hung with reli-

gious paintings and framed messages that help keep him in the presence of the Lord.

"Though art a priest forever," reads one.

"Priest of God, say this Mass as if it were your first Mass, your last Mass, your only Mass," says another.

In glass cases are figurines and other spiritual items.

"I could almost have my own religious store," Father Coté chuckled.

And this time of year, he anticipates the birth of the savior with Christmas displays. On shelves in one room, one above the other, are four nativity scenes. Electric votives bath the lowest one in ruby light. Through-

out Advent, the priest has studied the arrangements with a critical eye, moving a shepherd here, a sheep there.

"I'm never satisfied," he said with a chuckle.

He is more than satisfied with his retirement digs.

"I don't think I could ask for better," he said. "No worrying about heat or lights or anything. It's comfortable."

Father Coté, who was born in Quebec but grew up in Champlain and Plattsburgh, was ordained May 31, 1958.

His parents, Gabriel and Christine Coté, gave him the chalice he used at his first Mass as a priest at Our Lady of Victory in Plattsburgh. En-

graved on the bottom are the names of his beloved family members and the prayer: "Jesus, make me a priest according to your heart."

"When I lift (the chalice), what do I see? That prayer," he said.

Unseen are many, many others for whom he prays, for many years listed in tiny print on paper that fits between the chalice and its base.

Just now, he's updating that list, which includes the parishes he served, popes past and present, family, friends, parishioners who have asked for prayers ...

To pray for them all, he said, "I think it's so essential."

Rites held for Brother Albin

Alfred, Me. - A Mass of Christian Burial for Brother Albin Vigeant, 95, was celebrated Dec. 13 at the Brothers of Christian Instruction Motherhouse.

A former teacher in Plattsburgh, Brother Albin died Dec. 8 at the Maine Medical Center in Portland.

Burial was in the Brothers Cemetery.

Brother Albin, born David Henry Vigeant on May 15,

1915 in Fall River, MA was the son of David Elie Vigeant and Marie (Lafleur) Vigeant. He entered the juniorate of the Brothers of Christian Instruction at LaPrairie, Quebec, Canada on April 11, 1929 and the novitiate of the Brothers at LaPrairie on August 15, 1930. He made his first profession of vows in 1931, his final profession on July 7, 1936 and spent 80 years in religious life.

Brother Albin had a long and varied career. He taught in a number of elementary schools both in the United States and Canada. His teaching career lasted from 1934 to 1961 and included assignments to schools in Plattsburgh and in Maine in Waterville, Biddeford and Sanford. He then worked at the Brothers Notre Dame farm in Alfred from 1966 until his retirement in 1987.



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Bishop LaValley's Schedule

Dec. 24 – 12 p.m., Mass at Ogdensburg Correctional Facility in Ogdensburg; 4 p.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

Dec. 25 – 12 a.m., Christmas Vigil Midnight Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

Dec. 26 – 8:30 a.m., Mass at St. Ann's Church in Mooers Forks.

Dec. 28 – 5 p.m., Mass with Discerners and Vocation Dinner at St. Bernard's Church in Saranac Lake.

Jan. 1 – 9 a.m., Mary-Mother of God Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

Jan. 2 – 9:30 a.m., Mass at Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Churubusco; 4 p.m., Epiphany Lessons and Carols Concert at St. Alexander's Church in Morrisonville.

Jan. 3 – 5:00 p.m., Mass with Discerners and Vocation Dinner at St. Mary's Church in Potsdam.

Jan. 4 – 9:45 a.m., Episcopal Council Meeting at the Spratt Building in Ogdensburg.

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration online is required in order to participate. Participants may pre-register at www.virtus.org by selecting the registration button and following the directions. All employees and volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities with minor are required to participate in this training. Ongoing monthly training is required for all employees involved in activities with minors. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to continue their training. Further information is available from Atonement Sister Ellen Donahue, phone, 315-393-2920. ext. 403

Upcoming programs:
Jan. 27– St. Mary's School, Canton, 7:30 p.m.

Rest in Peace

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

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

Dec. 25 – Rev. Patrick Lyons, 1911; Rev. Oswald L. Bentley, 1940

Dec. 26 – Rev. Aloysius Hyacinth McMahon, 1936

Dec. 27 – Rev. Hollis David Burns, 1936; Rev. Henry Gilbeau, O.F.M. Conv., 1978

Dec. 28 – Rev. Nicolaus Burtin, O.M.I., 1902; Msgr. John M. Waterhouse, 1995; Rev. Eugene J. Beaudet, 2004

Dec. 29 – Rev. John A. Mullen, 1887

Dec. 30 – Rev. Jean Baptiste Lemercier, 1863; Rev. Sam D'Angelo, O.S.A., 1961; Deacon Victor Demers, 2003

Dec. 31 – Rev. Joseph Butler, 1894; Rev. Benedict Granottier, 1930; Rt. Rev. Msgr. Clarence A. Kitts, V.F., 1949

Jan. 1 – Rev. Earl Leo Taylor, 1974

Jan. 2 – Rev. Henry William McFadden, 1978; Deacon Robert J. LeClair, 2009

Jan. 3 – Rev. A. J. M. Viau, 1966; Rev. Hilary Neal, O.P., 1986

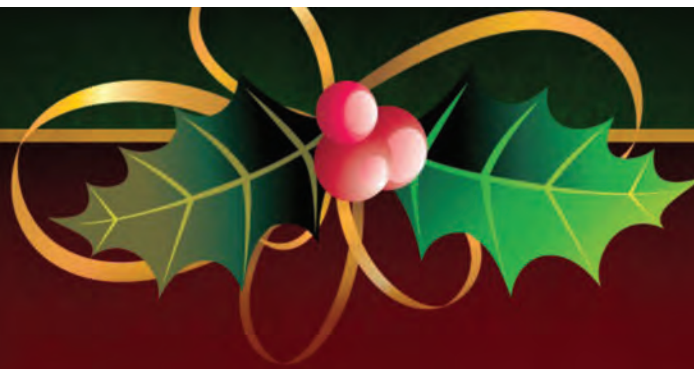
Jan. 4 – Rev. James Edwin O'Haire, 1877; Rev. Michael Walsh, M.S.C., 1977

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Diocesan Central Offices will be closed in observance of Christmas beginning 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, December 23rd and will re-open for business on Tuesday, December 28th at 8:15 a.m. The offices will also be closed Friday, Dec. 31 in observance of New Year's Day.

NO NCC NEXT WEEK

The next issue of the *North Country Catholic* will be dated Jan. 5, 2010



Provide for our priests through a generous gift to your parish

Christmas Collection



Father Normand Cote' resides at St. John's rectory in Plattsburgh and continues to assist in Plattsburgh parishes seven years after his retirement from active ministry in 2003. He is among 47 priests of the diocese who will benefit from donations to the Priests' Retirement Fund through the Christmas Collection in parishes across the diocese.

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

And suddenly there was with the Angel
a multitude of the heavenly host praising
God and saying:
"Glory to God in the highest!"

Luke 2:13-14



Bring the message of Christmas into your home all year long.

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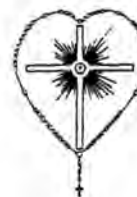
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Clip and Mail to: North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY 13669

GIFT FOR BABY JESUS



Junior Kindergarten student, Seth Green, places his gift before Baby Jesus in the Manger at the annual "Shower for Baby Jesus" held at St. Marguerite D'Youville Academy in Ogdensburg. The gifts will be shared with poor babies who need food and clothing during this Advent Season. The agencies that will distribute these gifts are Catholic Charities, St. Vincent de Paul Society and St. James Outreach in Gouverneur



Adirondack Center for PEACE
 P.O. Box 2748
 Plattsburgh, New York 12901
 Phone: (518) 561-5083

These Masses for Life are co-sponsored by
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and
Knights of Columbus Council #255

2011	St. Peter's Church			Our Lady of Victory			St. John's Church		
	Day	Date	Time	Day	Date	Time	Day	Date	Time
JAN	Sat.	TBA	TBA	Tue.	1/18/2011	8:00	Tue.	1/11/2011	12:05
FEB	Sat.	TBA	TBA	Tue.	2/15/2011	8:00	Thu.	2/10/2011	12:05
MAR	Sat.	TBA	TBA	Tue.	3/22/2011	8:00	Thu.	3/10/2011	12:05
APR	Sat.	TBA	TBA	Tue.	4/19/2011	8:00	Wed.	4/13/2011	12:05
MAY	Sat.	TBA	TBA	Tue.	5/17/2011	8:00	Wed.	5/11/2011	12:05
JUN	Sat.	6/11/2011	8:15	Tue.	6/21/2011	8:00	Tue.	6/14/2011	12:05
JUL	Sat.	7/9/2011	8:15	Tue.	7/19/2011	8:00	Tue.	7/12/2011	12:05
AUG	Sat.	TBA	TBA	Tue.	8/16/2011	8:00	Tue.	8/16/2011	12:05
SEPT	Sat.	9/3/2011	8:15	Tue.	9/20/2011	8:00	Fri.	9/9/2011	12:05
OCT	Sat.	10/8/2011	8:15	Tue.	10/18/2011	8:00	Wed.	10/5/2011	12:05
NOV	Sat.	11/5/2011	8:15	Tue.	11/22/2011	8:00	Wed.	11/9/2011	12:05
DEC	Sat.	12/10/2011	8:15	Tue.	12/13/2011	8:00	Wed.	12/7/2011	12:05

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

UNTO US A Child IS BORN

ISAIAH 9:6

VATICAN LETTER

Christmas at the Vatican

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - While snowfall is a rarity and Santa Claus is seldom seen, Christmas at the Vatican is truly unique.

**It may be short on snow,
but it's big in spirit**

Cranes erect an enormous ever-green alongside the granite obelisk in St. Peter's Square and workers nested in cherry picker buckets adorn the tree with lights, ornaments and tinsel.

This year's tree is decorated with 3,000 gold and silver balls, and 1,500 white and yellow LED lights, which have lower energy consumption and greater durability.

The tree will be topped with a flashing star.

Construction of the larger-than-life nativity scene takes weeks and yards of thick burlap keep curious eyes from seeing the final product until its unveiling on Christmas Eve.

But even further from the public eye are the holiday traditions of the papal household. While Pope John Paul II had close to an open-house attitude, Pope Benedict XVI is much more discreet.

In addition to the public events, Pope Benedict celebrates Christmas privately with the members of his papal household.

"We celebrate Christmas together, listen to the holiday music, and exchange gifts," he said in the recent book-length interview "Light of the World."

The close-knit papal family includes Pope Benedict's two secretaries and a small group of women from the Memores Domini lay com-



CNS PHOTO/PAUL HARING

The Vatican's large Nativity scene, pictured here in St. Peter's Square last year, is kept under wraps until Christmas Eve.

munity who care for the papal apartment. Unfortunately, this holiday season is marked with the loss of one of the pope's close collaborators, Manuela Camagni, who died Nov. 24 after she was struck by a car.

A close friend of the pope still delivers traditional Bavarian food every Christmas season.

Thaddaeus Joseph Kuehnel, a German banker in Munich, has spent the past 28 years hand delivering the pope's favorite sweets and sausages from Bavaria.

Kuehnel told Catholic News Service he was driving to Rome the week before Christmas to deliver Bavarian sausages from the pope's favorite restaurant, Franziskaner; special mustard; and sweets from the Zentis food company, which specializes in marzipan and jams.

The papal goodie bag also includes cakes and cookies that cloistered nuns baked specifically for the pope, Kuehnel said in a Dec. 8 interview.

He will load his car with five Bavarian Christmas trees for the pope and will personally deliver the gifts and have dinner with the pope, he said.

On Christmas Day itself, no special guests are expected and the main meal, lunch, is made up of "Italian food," said Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, Vatican spokesman. The pope's brother, Msgr. Georg Ratzinger, will arrive at the Vatican Dec. 28 to spend a few weeks with the pope.

Father Lombardi said Dec. 28 is the date then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger always would leave Rome for Germany to spend the holidays with his brother, so they have kept the same date of reunion.

All of the trees adorning the various Vatican offices and hallways, including the pope's, are decorated by the technical services department of the Vatican City governor's office, said Pier Carlo Cuscianna, department director.

The department also provides the

figurines and creche supplies for one of the papal household's Nativity scenes, but the pope and his personal assistants "put it together as a family," Cuscianna told CNS.

Father Lombardi said the pope has three different Nativity scenes in the papal apartment: a large one in the hallway set up by the Vatican workmen; one under the Christmas tree in the living room, where the pope puts the baby Jesus just before celebrating Midnight Mass in St. Peter's Basilica; and one in the dining room, which has belonged to the pope for the past 45 years.

The large Nativity scene in St. Peter's Square is unveiled Dec. 24, and while the pope can see it from his apartment window, he doesn't visit it until after his New Year's Eve thanksgiving prayer service.

The core figures in the scene -- the Holy Family and the Magi -- come from St. Vincent Pallotti, who had them on public display in a Rome parish starting in 1842.

Another Nativity scene is on display inside St. Peter's Basilica. That creche is constructed by the basilica's workmen, known as "sanpietrini," who compete with the workers in the square in trying to build the more spectacular representation of Jesus' birth, one of the "sanpietrini" told Vatican Radio.

Carlo Stella, one of the workmen in the basilica, said they try to introduce new elements into the scene each year, and the 2010 addition is a mechanical kneeling shepherd who lifts his hat before the Christ child.

The wooden statues were carved by a German sculptor, but the Vatican workmen fire and paint the clay chicken, ducks and sheep figurines themselves, Vatican Radio reported.

*May you hold the love of
Jesus in your heart,
today and always.
Blessings at Christmas
and throughout the
New Year.*

The Catholic Parishes of
St. Mary, St. Joseph & St. Patrick
(Ft. Covington, Bombay & Hogansburg)



**MAY THE HOLY FAMILY
BLESS YOU AT CHRISTMAS
AND THROUGHOUT THE
NEW YEAR!**

*The pastor and parishioners of St. Mary's,
St. Theresa, St. Joseph's and St. Michael's
(Evan's Mills, Theresa,
Philadelphia and Antwerp)*

Bethlehem sees boost in tourism in 2010

By Judith Sudilovsky
Catholic News Service

BETHLEHEM, WEST BANK (CNS) With five new hotels in the works, a handful of new souvenir shops opening recently and nearly 40 restaurants able to serve crowds from 100 to 1,000, the Bethlehem economy is showing signs of recovery following the desperate intifada years.

For the first time in years, shop owners and tourist industry workers in the birthplace of Christ are optimistic and have confidence in the economy.

For most, 2010 was the best year for business in a decade.

Outside the Church of the Nativity in mid-December, Nigerian pilgrims snapped pictures of each other as Russian pilgrims made their way into the ancient church through a small entranceway. Inside, groups waited pa-

tiently at the stairway leading into the grotto where tradition holds that Jesus was born.

"Coming to Bethlehem is always an exceptionally emotional experience," said Father Filiberto Barrera, who led a group of Californian and Mexican pilgrims as they left the grotto to make room for another group. "We feel extremely safe here; the police outside are doing their job well."

But the lines in the week before Christmas were modest compared to those of late November, the high season for tourists.

Pilgrims waited up to two hours in a line that wound outside the historic church, said street vendor Khaled Omar, 47, who has been working in the tourist business for 33 years.

"Thank God, it has been a good year," Omar said with a broad smile as he arranged embroidered tote bags and

colorful beaded necklaces along a wall next to the church.

Some 10,000 pilgrims and tourists were expected to come through Bethlehem for the Christmas holiday, said Samir Hazboun, chairman of the board of the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce. He said hotels in the Bethlehem triangle -- with 2,750 rooms -- are reporting full occupancy.

The Church of St. Catherine, where midnight Mass celebrates Christ's birth, can accommodate a maximum of 2,000 worshippers. Hazboun said most pilgrims will spend the evening with local residents, celebrating outside the church in Manger Square.

"We are seeing this as good news to the region," he said.

He said the unemployment rate has steadily declined since the end of the second intifada in 2005, when 45 percent of residents were out

of work. Today, Hazboun said, unemployment has been cut in half thanks to government incentives and tax cuts that have led Palestinian investments to flow into the city again.

Deputy Mayor George Saadeh partially credited the influx of tourists to the "very good" security situation. But all is not perfect, he said as he stood next to the Israeli separation wall several hundred yards from a checkpoint in an area that is under full Israeli control.

"There is a respect for law and order despite lots of things trying to sabotage this," Saadeh said, explaining that Palestinian police are prevented from wearing uniforms in some areas and "the Israeli side is not really committed to doing what needs to be done."

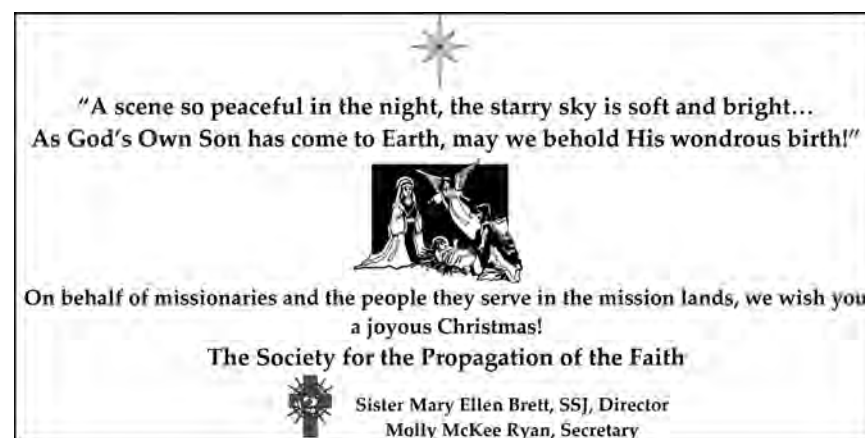
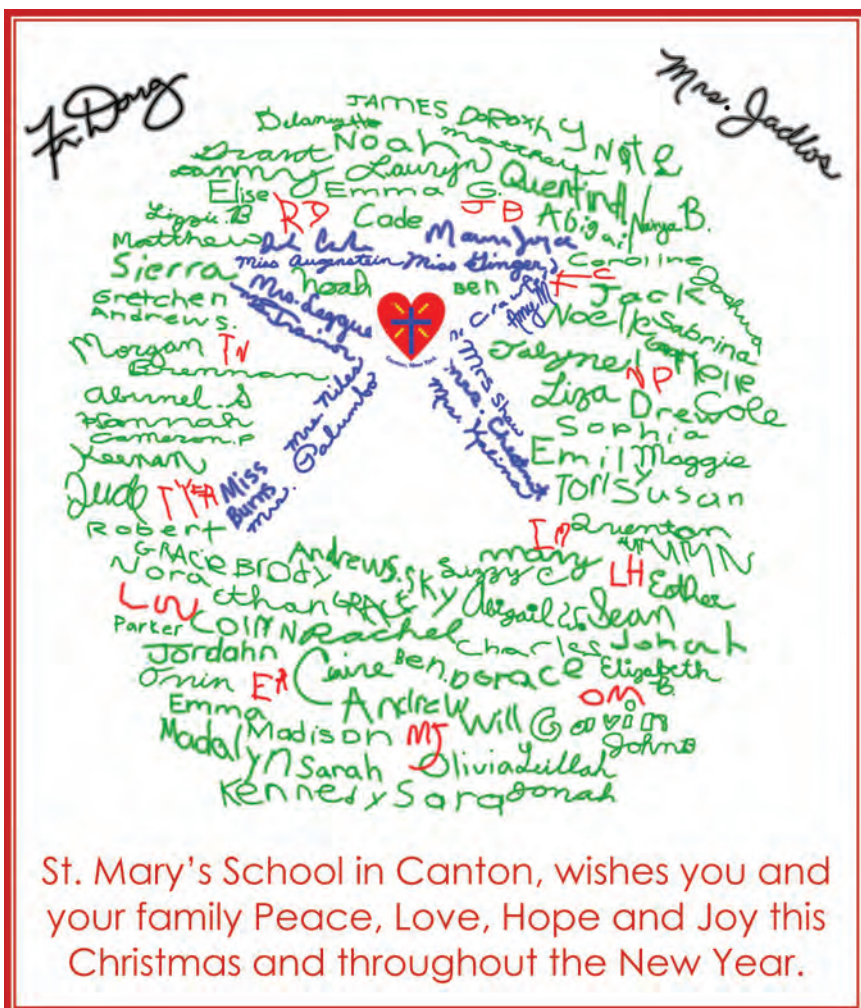
He said he hoped that when the tourism data for 2010 is compiled, it will show that Bethlehem wel-

comed 1.5 million visitors.

Statistics from the Israeli Ministry of Tourism project that about 2.4 million Christian pilgrims will have visited Israel by the end of 2010, almost double the number in 2009. The great majority of Christian pilgrims also visit Bethlehem, the ministry said.

However, for years, Palestinians in the tourism industry have complained that most pilgrims are shuttled in and out of the city, quickly visiting the Church of the Nativity and a few select souvenir shops or restaurants. They have said such short visits limit the opportunity for pilgrims to patronize smaller shops and eateries.

The Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities believes tourists and pilgrims must stay for a minimum of three to four nights in Bethlehem to effectively contribute to the growth of the Palestinian tourism industry.



NOEL

*Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg
wishes all in the
Diocese of Ogdensburg
a blessed Christmas!*

Daughters of Charity announce U.S. merger

Congregation of the Holy Cross also makes the decision to merge their US provinces

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Two of the best-known religious orders operating in the United States have made separate decisions to merge their existing U.S. provinces.

The new U.S. province of the Congregation of Holy Cross, with more than 410 priests and brothers and 80 seminarians in the current Eastern and Indiana provinces, will be called the United States Province of Priests and Brothers and will have its headquarters in South Bend, Ind. The change takes effect July 1, the feast of the Sacred Heart.

The 580 members of four provinces of the Daughters of Charity will unite into a new Province of St. Louise,

also effective in July. The new province covering the United States and Canada will be based in St. Louis.

The Holy Cross merger was approved by the worldwide congregation last summer in Rome and was endorsed at a joint meeting of the councils of the two provinces Dec. 4-5.

The reorganization has been under discussion for some time, with a vision "to enhance the effectiveness of the Holy Cross mission in the United States," said Holy Cross Father David T. Tyson, provincial superior for the Indiana province.

Said Holy Cross Father Thomas P. Looney, provincial superior of the Eastern province: "In merging we celebrate and manifest God's gift of our brotherhood in Christ for the service of God's people."

The Holy Cross congregation operates six colleges

and universities throughout the country, the most famous of which is the University of Notre Dame, as well as 17 parishes from Vermont to Oregon; Andre House in Phoenix; the Downtown Chapel in Portland, Ore.; Ave Maria Press in Indiana; and Holy Cross Family Ministries in North Easton, Mass.

Members of the new U.S. province also work in Mexico, Chile, Peru, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

The Holy Cross congregation, founded in France by Blessed Basil Moreau, first came to the United States in 1841.

The Daughters of Charity

The Daughters of Charity merger involves four of the five existing U.S. provinces -- Emmitsburg, Md.; Albany, N.Y.; St. Louis; and Evansville, Ind.

The process of unification

called *Visioning for the Mission* began at a 2007 gathering in Buffalo, N.Y.

The Province of the West, based in Los Altos Hills, Calif., is not involved in the merger.

Sister Louise Gallahue, who has twice served as visitatrix, or leader, of the Albany province, will be the first visitatrix of the new Province of St. Louise.

The province is named for St. Louise de Marillac, who founded the congregation in France in 1633 along with St. Vincent de Paul to "serve Christ in persons who are poor."

The Daughters of Charity "believe that combining sister-personnel and their 'best practices' would be the most effective way to continue to stand in solidarity with the increasing numbers who find themselves in circumstances of poverty," according to a news release about the

merger.

The Daughters of Charity serve in 92 countries as educators, health care professionals, social workers, parish ministers and advocates for those who live in poverty.

The new province covers 34 states, the District of Columbia and the Canadian province of Quebec.

Local Daughters

Among the Daughters of Charity affected by the merger decision are five connected to the Diocese of Ogdensburg: Sister Donna Franklin, diocesan director of Catholic Charities; Sister Evelyn LaCarte, pastoral associate in Louisville; Sister Patricia Collins, who works for Catholic Charities in Ogdensburg; Sister Catherine Cotter and Sister Mary Frances Barnes, pastoral associate in Lisbon.



Christmas Blessings



Our Lady of Lourdes
Schroon Lake



Saint Joseph's Church
Olmstedville

May the blessings
of Peace and Happiness
fill your home this
Christmas season.



*Roman Catholic Community of
Brownville and Dexter
St. Andrew's of Sackets Harbor*

Youth ministers told they have difficult job, but God is boss

By Christine Bordelon
Catholic News Service

NEW ORLEANS (CNS) - With such New Orleans traditions as a second-line parade and a Carnival float, participants in the National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry joined in the convention's opening night Dec. 9 at the city's Convention Center.

As a brass band played and emcees Ansel Augustine and Mike Patin led the crowd in ice-breakers, Archbishop Gregory M. Aymond appeared atop a Carnival float throwing beads with youths and young adult leaders of the New Orleans Archdiocese.

"I hope these days in New Orleans will be good to you," Archbishop Aymond told the crowd, after proclaiming -- with a big smile on his face -- that he was king of Carnival for one day.

The four-day conference

drew 2,500 people.

It is the largest gathering in the country of youths and young adult leaders, campus ministers, religious education leaders, clergy and religious who minister to young people.

Breakout sessions and workshops on topics such as "Building Pathways to Ministry and Leadership," "Living Youth Strengths," and technology and ministry were interspersed with a resource exposition showcasing the latest in available tools to help youth ministers succeed and Masses to strengthen Catholic youth leaders in their task.

Patin told the youth ministers that they are the people who make a difference in parishes and dioceses all over the United States.

He surprised one youth minister -- Bryan Webb of the Diocese of Amarillo, Texas -- by recognizing his work with an "extreme faith makeover."

Webb was called to the stage to meet contemporary Catholic musician Steve Angrisano and given the gift of a free future concert in his diocese by the artist.

Keynote speaker and long-time youth minister Mark Hart, known as the "Bible Geek," joked about the all-consuming tasks of youth ministry -- getting permission slips turned in, doing all-nighters editing videos that don't play when needed and energizing kids. But, he emphasized, in the midst of all these tasks, youth leaders should consider their motivation.

Hart said he was in the midst of a breaking point in his ministry when God posed a simple question: "Who are you doing this for? Are you serving God out of the promise you made to him or the promise he made to you?"

"When we starting doing it for God instead of letting God do it through you, it becomes a burden," Hart said.

He said God calls them first and foremost to intimacy, something that is hard for leaders to take the time to understand.

"God is calling you and me to a deeper relationship as leaders," he said. "It's insane for youth ministers or pastors to think they can take the youth they are charged to lead to places (in faith growth) that they themselves aren't willing to go."

He brought attendees back to the Sea of Galilee as Simon Peter and other apostles were in their boat mending their nets when Jesus chose them.

Hart said the same is being offered today to them.

"Jesus has chosen you to go out in his name," he said. "God selected each one individually to lead youth over others who might be smarter or holier because he saw worth and potential. (Jesus said,) 'My goal for you is to be in perfect union with me and to become my divine nature so when teens come to you, it's not you but me.'"

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

WikiLeaks cables show Vatican as horrified by Irish clergy's sex abuse

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- A spate of U.S. diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks portray the Vatican as horrified over clerical sex abuse in Ireland but also deeply concerned that the procedures used by Irish investigators of the scandal were "an affront to Vatican sovereignty." The cables, released Dec. 10-12, touched on a wide range of issues, from the Vatican's efforts to deal with leftist governments in Latin America to its recent moves to welcome disaffected Anglicans into the Catholic Church. One cable offered a highly critical assessment of the Vatican's communications apparatus and said Pope Benedict XVI was surrounded by advisers who make sure dissenting voices are not heard. Another reviewed the Vatican's efforts to position itself as an intermediary with Iran in case an international crisis erupts and stated that in 2007 the Vatican had helped secure the release of British sailors detained in Iranian waters. The cables offered a rare glimpse at Vatican diplomacy in action, but through the lens of the U.S. policy experts who authored the reports. Most of the cables regarding the Vatican were written by officials of the U.S. Embassy to the Holy See, sometimes after personal meetings with Vatican diplomats. The Vatican issued a disclaimer Dec. 11, saying the reliability of the cables must be evaluated carefully and with great prudence. "Naturally these reports reflect the perceptions and opinions of the people who wrote them and cannot be considered as expressions of the Holy See itself, nor as exact quotations of the words of its officials," it said in a statement.

Pope to make four foreign trips in 2011

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Benedict XVI plans to make four foreign trips in 2011, including one to his German homeland and a three-day visit to the African country of Benin. Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi, the Vatican spokesman, told reporters Dec. 14 that the pope would also make four trips to Italian cities. In all, the pope will spend 18 days on the road next year. The pope will visit Croatia June 4-5 and travel to Spain Aug. 18-21 to preside over World Youth Day Celebrations. He will visit Germany Sept. 22-25, the third trip to his native Germany. German bishops have said the pope is likely to visit the capital city of Berlin, as well as Freiburg and Erfurt. The pope's trip to Benin Nov. 18-20 will be his second trip to Africa. In Benin, a small country in West Africa, Catholics make up about 30 percent of the population, and Muslims about 25 percent. Pope Benedict, who will turn 84 in April, has to date made 18 trips abroad, 12 of them in Europe.

Advocates see some policy bright spots from 111th Congress

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- As the 111th Congress drew to a close with news reporting that focused on the bitter battles over tax cuts, it was a good time to look back on legislative successes that might have been somewhat lost in the shuffle. The Catholic Church's anti-poverty agenda and some of its international policy goals fared pretty well, rounding out the year with the signing Dec. 13 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, and an extension of unemployment benefits in a bill that also included some tax cuts for the middle class. Some progress also was noted on international issues, including assistance to Haiti, attention to Sudan's long-running internal strife and possible ratification of a nuclear arms control treaty. The Hunger-Free Kids law provides for the first increase in reimbursement to schools for meals in more than 30 years. The 6-cent per meal increase is intended to go to improve the quality of lunches and breakfast.

THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

— PRAYER SUGGESTION —

Eternal Father,
we lift up to you these
and all the priests of the world.
Sanctify them.
Heal and guide them.
Mold them into the likeness and
holiness of your Son, Jesus,
the Eternal High Priest.
May their lives be pleasing to
you. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen

(With ecclesiastical approval)

Mass
Rosary
Fasting
Day Offering
Eucharistic Adoration
Offering of Sufferings
Divine Mercy Chaplet

Or whatever the Lord
inspires you to offer Him

JANUARY 2011

Diocese of Ogdensburg, NY

SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY SATURDAY

	2 REV. PHILIP T. ALLEN	3 REV. ANDREW J. AMYOT	4 MSGR. JOSEPH G. AUBIN	5 REV. PIERRE AUBIN MSC	6 MSGR. ROBERT H. AUCCOIN	7 REV. GEORGE H. BELGARDE SJ	8 OUR PASTOR
	9 REV. PETER M. BERG	10 REV. PAUL V. BEYETTE	11 REV. NED BLICK	12 REV. GILBERT G. BOISVERT	13 REV. TIMOTHY G. CANAAN	14 REV. CHRISTOPHER C. CARRARA	15 POPE BENEDICT
	16 REV. GERALD A. CERANK	17 REV. DANIEL L. CHAPIN	18 REV. CHARLES E. CHASE	19 MSGR. BERNARD E. CHRISTMAN	20 REV. MARTIN E. CLINE	21 REV. DOUGLAS G. COMSTOCK	22 RETIRED PRIESTS
	23 REV. FRANCIS COFFEY	24 REV. JOHN J. DONAGH	25 REV. NORMAND C. COFFEY	26 REV. LAWRENCE E. COITTE	27 REV. ROBERT L. COITTE	28 REV. JOHN M. CRABLE	29 DECEASED PRIESTS
	30 REV. THOMAS HENRY						

For more information visit us online at: www.mppapostolate.com
 A donation to help support THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS will be appreciated.
 The Monthly Prayer Request for Priests is graciously underwritten by:
SERRA CLUB OF OGDENSBURG
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RESPECT LIFE

Christmas greetings from a reasonable Catholic

I recently saw a billboard that took my breath away. It didn't leave me breathless in a "just woke up to the first snowfall of the season" kind of way; it was more like a "just witnessed a horrific car accident" gasp. The 48-foot advertisement, sponsored by the American Atheists organization, depicted a silhouetted Nativity scene with the bold words: "You know it's a myth. This season, celebrate reason!"

I felt like I had been punched in the gut. Like every moral lesson I had ever been taught by my parents, every prayer I recited for the nuns at school, every Scripture passage I listened to on countless Sunday mornings were being derided as lies. My deeply held religious beliefs were being publicly mocked for all the world to see.

Recovering my breath, I suddenly felt angry. Because in addition to attacking Christmas and disrespecting my faith, that billboard implies that I'm stupid. It says that Christians can't be rational thinking people, that faith and reason cannot be joined, and if you have one, you cannot possibly have the other.

Rubbish. Faith is not an excuse to evade thinking.

Faith and reason are not competing alternatives. They are, as Pope John Paul II has said, "like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth" (Fides et Ratio, 1998).

Personally, I consider myself a pretty logical Christian, and I don't think that's an oxymoron. As a lobbyist for the Catholic Bishops Conference, every day I must bring my faith to the intellectual demands of my job, and every day I must bring my intellect to my faith.

When I speak with legislators about the need to protect innocent unborn human life, it is my faith that motivates me. The rich teachings of the Church guide me and inform me as I make my way through the halls of the legislature. The Church's foundational belief in respect for all human lives (even lawmakers!) sustains me as I visit both those who agree and those who disagree with the Church's views. Jesus' model of love and charity helps me to be a better witness as I seek to persuade.

But knowledge and reason give me the tools I need to do my job. Science provides the evidence of a unique individual in the womb, with his own blood type, fingerprints, heartbeat and hair color. New medical

technology shows that child growing and developing, interacting with his mother, eating, sleeping, playing.

"This is how Jesus was in Mary's womb," Pope Benedict XVI said at last month's Vigil for All Nascent Human Life. "This is how it was for each of us in our mother's womb."

Reasonable people would have to agree that when a woman is pregnant, there is another life growing in her womb. I find that many reasonable elected officials do agree, yet are unable to make the leap beyond what's politically expedient or popular to actually work to protect the unborn. That takes faith. And faith is a leap.

Faith gives each of us the moral imperative to take our intellect and apply it to the world around us. Whether we are lobbying politicians, or just trying to convince our next door neighbor of the need to promote a culture that's more respectful of human life, we need to do it with smarts. We need to do our homework, dig up the data, present the evidence and clearly state our case.

Only by doing so will we be obeying the greatest commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37)

The beginning of God's redemption did not start in a manger in Bethlehem. It

began in a womb in Nazareth. To remind us, a powerful new ad campaign has begun in Britain showing an ultrasound image of the unborn infant Jesus, a halo around his head, with the words "He's on His way. Christmas starts with Christ."

In this Holy Season, let's remember that knowledge

and technology work to serve the truth. All of us have a desire to know the truth, which is God Himself, the fullness of truth.

Pity the atheists. That's what they simply can't comprehend.

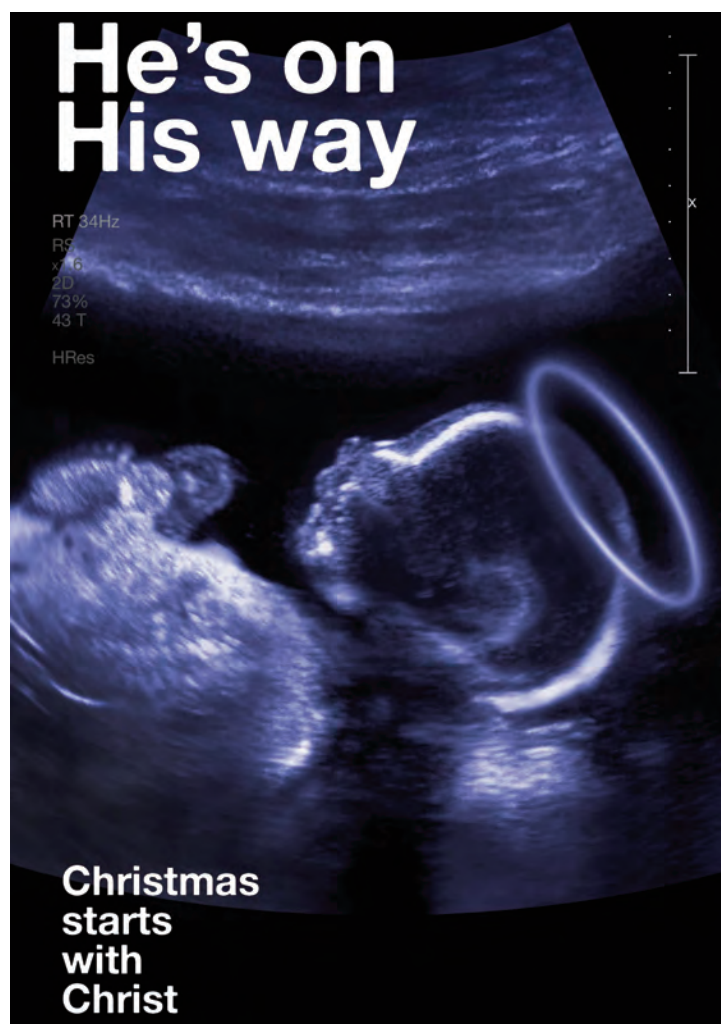
This Season, we Christians are celebrating reason.

Jesus is the reason.

Merry Christmas.



Kathleen Gallagher



OUR READERS WRITE

Stop abortion funding campaign

As a taxpayer, I am opposed to millions of hard-earned tax dollars being used to fund abortion and abortion providers, such as Planned Parenthood, the largest provider in America.

That is why I am a part of the Susan B. Anthony List's Stop Abortion Funding campaign (www.stopabortionfunding.com) which is working to pass two pro-life bills that would end all federal funding of abortion.

The "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act," a bi-partisan bill sponsored by Reps. Chris Smith (R-NJ) and Dan Lipinski (D-IL), would create a government-wide statutory prohibition on abortion funding, including problematic provisions in the health care bill.

The "Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act" ensures that organizations, including Planned Parenthood, do not receive federal dollars under the Title X federal family planning assistance program. According to the Government Accountability Office, abortion providers have received over a billion dollars in the past seven years alone.

I signed a petition at www.StopAbortionFunding.com to let my Representative in Congress know that I expect them to co-sponsor and vote for these two bills. I shouldn't have to be complicit in the destruction of innocent human life when I pay my taxes.

NANCY BELZILE
WILLSBORO

May Peace be your gift at Christmas and your blessing all year through!

*From the pastor and parishioners at
Church of the Visitation, Norfolk*



St. Raymond's Church, Raymondville



SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Celebrating the Feast of the Holy Family

This year, we have two great feasts on one week-end. Christmas (celebrated on Friday night and Saturday) melts into the Feast of the Holy Family (celebrated the next day).

It's as though the Church wants us to see right away the "flip" side of family life, both its joys and its sorrows.

How do we define "family" in modern terms?

Is it just one Mom, one Dad, and four kids living in the same place for years? This fits fewer and fewer families in our world.

Many children are members of broken families, and so-called dysfunctional families.



Monsignor Paul E. Whitmore

Pictures of refugees escaping from the conflict of war have become familiar images on TV. Terrified families in Iraq, Somalia, Pakistan and Haiti, stir our pity. Families on the run with a few possessions loaded onto a tractor and cart, or on foot, move out of their native land to seek refuge wherever they will be tolerated.

Most homes are abandoned and will probably be

looted and vandalized. It may never be possible for these people to return to their homelands.

They're part of our definition of family, too. It all comes under the umbrella of the "nuclear" family.

Only yesterday, we celebrated the birth of a tiny Baby, surrounded by the ethereal angel choir, greeted with awe and adoration.

Today, we commemorate a family in deep stress because their two-year old is seen as a threat, Joseph and Mary are running for their lives from Herod the Great.

This tyrant, having deceived the Magi who had unwittingly informed the King of the child's presence

Dec. 26

The Feast of the Holy Family

READINGS

Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

Colossians 3:12-17

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

nearby, was enraged to the point of massacring all newborn babies in his kingdom.

Joseph is informed of this in a dream by an angel who instructs him to take the child and his mother, and escape to Egypt.

This flight into Egypt as told us in today's Gospel, is a reminder that many centuries before their journey, Moses, also a child of danger, had led the Jewish people from slavery to freedom in what we call the Exodus.

Now Jesus, the new and greater Moses, will free his people from their slavery to sin in a new Exodus, and secure eternal life to all who will follow Him, in the Promised Land of heaven.

Tradition says that after three years in exile, another angel informs Joseph that Herod the Great is dead.

The Holy Family returns to their homeland, not to Bethlehem, since the new King Archelaus who reigns in his father's place is also a cruel and barbaric ruler.

Joseph brings Mary and Jesus to His native town of Nazareth in Galilee. There, they lived a simple ordinary life, Joseph as a carpenter, and Mary as a housewife and mother.

Jesus grew in holiness and in knowledge of God's will in the same ordinary ways that we do.

What extraordinary wisdom we find in both the first and second readings this Sunday for family life!

Sirach, a second-century B.C. writer, gives us the fruit of constant reading of Scriptures. First, he reminds us that parents' authority is given them by God Himself.

When a child obeys his parents will have their sins forgiven, their prayers heard, and will themselves be blessed with children.

Sirach counsels us to be good to our parents in their old age, even when their minds fail!

St. Paul, in Colossians, gives families, both our own individual families, and the wider family of the Church, a sure-fire formula for success. We are to act with "heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another."

Who would ever want to escape home - whether Dad, Mom, or teenager - from such a happy home?

Or, who would ever want to leave that kind of a parish family to seek Christ elsewhere?

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AT THE MOVIES

THE TOURIST

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

Adult viewers on the lookout for a two-hour cinematic vacation may appreciate the chance to tag along with "The Tourist" (Columbia). Though hardly memorable, this enjoyably old-fashioned romantic thriller -- courtesy of director and co-writer (with Christopher McQuarrie and Julian Fellowes) Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck ("The Lives of Others") -- does make for a pleasant diversion.

The breezily improbable plot sees elegant mystery woman Elise Clifton-Ward (Angelina Jolie) crossing paths with the titular visitor to Europe, Frank Tupelo (Johnny Depp), a thoroughly ordinary math teacher from Wisconsin. In keeping with Elise's purposes, their flirtatious encounter aboard a

Venice-bound train -- which Frank takes to be entirely accidental -- causes Frank to be mistaken for Elise's long-time boyfriend, Alexander Pearce.

Unfortunately for Frank, Pearce is a fugitive embezzler known to have paid top dollar for extensive plastic surgery to alter his appearance. His financial antics have Pearce on the lam, not only from a high-level British police investigation -- led by Scotland Yard inspectors Acheson (Paul Bettany) and Jones (Timothy Dalton) -- but from Reginald Shaw (Steven Berkoff), the brutal gangster for whom Pearce worked and from whom he stole his ill-gotten millions.

So it's not long before Frank, barefoot and clad in pajamas, is running for his life across the tiled roofs of the City of Bridges, with

Shaw's thugs in hot pursuit.

With Elise turning heads, but instructing Frank to sleep on the couch when they share a hotel suite for the night, and with La Serenissima providing a colorful backdrop to the generally bloodless action, "The Tourist" feels like something Hollywood might have offered up circa "To Catch a Thief."

Hitchcock this assuredly is not. But there are tete-a-tete dinners beside moonlit canals, rides in stylish mahogany motorboats and even a black-tie ball along the way, all of which helps to distract attention from the occasional lapses of logic.

Besides the amorous restraint the leading pair display -- though the script implies that Elise and Pearce had lived together -- love causes Elise to regret en-



CNS PHOTO/SONY PICTURES


Angelina Jolie and Johnny Depp star in a scene from the movie "The Tourist."

snaring Frank and she eventually does her best to extricate him from danger. He, in turn, demonstrates a willingness to sacrifice himself for her sake as the proceedings move toward their climax.

As for the villain Shaw, he freely acknowledges, in an unusually serious exchange of dialogue, that he values the money Pearce robbed from him so highly because he "paid an infinite price" to


obtain it, namely his soul.

The film contains brief graphic violence, an implied premarital situation, at least one use of the F-word, a few crude and crass terms and occasional sexual references. 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.



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St. Mary's Cathedral Parish

ADIRONDACK

FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING

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

Date: Jan. 12 and Jan. 19 (both afternoons required for training)

Features: Anyone in the Tri-Lakes area who is interested in becoming a Mercy Care Friendship Volunteer is invited. Mercy Care's Friendship Volunteer Training Program is free of charge but pre-registration is required. Volunteers of all faiths are invited. New Volunteers will join Mercy Care's 50+ Volunteers from Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake, and Lake Placid who are helping elders stay connected to their communities.

Contact: To request registration information, please contact Sheila Schneck at Mercy Care by calling 523-5583. Mercy Care can be reached at 185 Old Military Road, Lake Placid, NY 12946, by calling Donna Beal, Executive Director, at 523-5581, or by e-mail at dbeal@adkmercy.org. For more information, visit Mercy Care's web site at <http://www.adkmercy.org>

CLINTON

PRAYER VIGIL

Plattsburgh – A prayer vigil will held the first Sunday of the winter months.

Place: St. Peter's Chapel

Time: 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Features: Helper's of Gods Precious Infants prayer vigil will be held. We may not be able to save their lives, but can we not plead on their behalf?

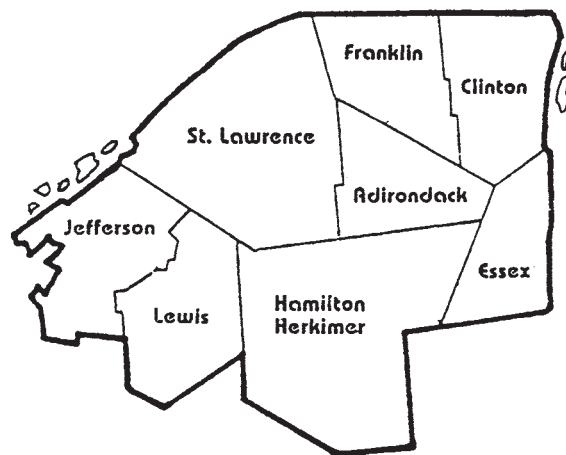
SCHEDULE OF MASSES

Morrisonville - Here is the following schedule for upcoming Masses.

Dec. 24: 4 p.m. St. Alexander's Church (Children's Choir); 6p.m. St. Joseph's Church

Dec. 25: Midnight Mass, St. Alexander's (Adult choir w/string quartet); 10 a.m., St. Alexander's Church.

Dec. 26: 7:30 a.m., St. Alexander's; 9 a.m., St. Joseph's; 10:30 a.m., St. Alexander's



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

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

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

Jan. 1: 4 p.m., St. Alexander's
Jan. 2: 7:30 a.m., St. Alexander's; 9 a.m., St. Joseph's; 10:30 a.m., St. Alexander's

EPIPHANY LESSONS AND CAROLS

Morrisonville – Bishop LaValley Will preside at an Epiphany Lessons and Carols Concert.

Date: Jan. 2

Time: 4 p.m.

Place: St. Alexander's Church

Features: Choir members from area church choirs. Reception to follow in parish hall.

40 DAYS FOR LIFE IN 2011

Plattsburgh – Please mark your calendars for Spring 2011 40 days for life! Ash Wednesday, March 9 to Palm Sunday, April 17.

LITTLE ROCK SCRIPTURE SERIES

Plattsburgh - St. Peter's Parish Will hold Little Rock Scripture Series, The Acts of the Apostles.

Date: Beginning Jan. 4, continuing every Tuesday until March 1.

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: St. Peter's Chapel

Features: The excitement of Pentecost

enlivens the early believers in their struggles to establish communities of faith—struggles surprisingly like those today. You will meet two of the early Church's most significant leaders in the persons of Peter and Paul. Every study is unique and you do not have to have completed any previous study to join in.

Cost: \$10

Contact: To sign-up, call the Parish Office at 563-1692 or fill out a registration form in the atrium.

YOUTH FREE THROW

Peru – Local Knights of Columbus Council 7273 to sponsor Youth Free Throw Championship.

Date: Jan. 16

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Place: St. Augustine Parish Center

Features: All boys and girls ages 10 to 14 are invited to participate in the local level of competition for the 2011 Knights of Columbus Free Throw Championship. All boys and girls 10 to 14 years old are eligible to participate and will compete in their respective age divisions. All contestants on the local level are recognized for their participation in the event. Participants are required to furnish proof of age and written

parental consent.

Contact: For entry forms or additional information contact: Brian Mulcahy at (518) 643-6805.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

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

Place: St John's Adoration Chapel,

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

Theme: "Theme: "We adore you, Lord, truly present in the Sacrament of the Altar, the living Bread which gives life to humanity. We acknowledge you as our one God, a little Child lying helpless in the manger!" (Ven. John Paul II, Homily, Midnight Mass, Dec. 24, 2004). O Come let us Adore Him—A Birthday gift for Jesus! Everyone is invited to spend some quiet time with Jesus anytime during these hours.

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

JEFFERSON

LIFERIGHT MEETING

Watertown - Liferight of Watertown will hold its monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of the Month.

Time: 4 p.m.

Place: 312 Sherman St.

Features: Liferight is a pro-life educational organization. The office has videos, books and educational materials which may be borrowed. Topics covered: infanticide, assisted suicide, euthanasia and chastity.

Contact: Phone 315-788-8480; website: www.liferight.org

TO SHRINES OF FRANCE

Watertown - Father Donald Robinson, is leading a pilgrimage to shrines in France

Date: March 21-31, 2011

Cost: \$2349 includes airfare, accommodations, and most meals

Features: Visit Lourdes, Nevers, Tours, Loire Valley, Chartres, Mont St. Michel, Normandy, Caen, Lisieux, and Paris.

Contact: Call 782-1190.

LEWIS

DIVINE MERCY DEVOTIONS

Houseville - Divine Mercy Devotions for the month of January will be held.

Date: Jan.

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: at St Hedwig's Church, Route 26, Program: Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Divine Mercy Chapel (sung), and Benediction.

ST. LAWRENCE

K OF C BRUNCH

Norfolk – The Knights of Columbus will be sponsoring a brunch.

Date: Jan. 9

Time: 8:30 a.m. to Noon

Place: Visitation Parish Center; Take-outs available

Cost: Adults, \$6; Children under 12, \$4; Under 5, Free; Family, \$16

NOVENA FOR MILITARY

Ogdensburg - Notre Dame Church is holding a weekly novena for the safety of U.S. military personnel

Date: Tuesday evenings

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Notre Dame Church

HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS

Ogdensburg - St. Mary's is holding a monthly Holy Hour for Vocations.

Date: Thursday before the First Friday

Time: 8 p.m. to 9

Place: Deacon Winter Chapel

Features: Nocturnal Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament continues through the night, concluding with Benediction at 7 a.m. Friday.

FRIDAY FISH FRY

Ogdensburg - Fish Fry Buffet will be held every Friday sponsored by Knights of Columbus Council 258.

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

Place: Knights of Columbus Hall; Eat in or take out, deliveries are available only to the Towers.

Cost: Adults, \$9; Children 5-10, \$6; under 5, Free

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The Society For The Propagation Of The Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director
622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669
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mbrett@dioogdensburg.org

An angel for the missions - every day

From the Director's Desk,
Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Diocesan Mission Director

The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." In our world today – perhaps in our own lives – there are times it seems that not too much "good news" exists. We hear of war and natural disasters. At home, we are afraid as we face illness, financial hardship and crisis. In these times, we call to mind the angel's announcement that first Christmas – taking comfort in the message of God's love, as it supports us every day through life's challenges.

For some 40 children in northern Zambia, Sister Margaret Mweshi is their angel – every day. These little ones struggle with physical disabilities of all kinds. At a home run by Sister Margaret and others in her Religious Community, they receive treatment, physical therapy, even an education.

And, every day, the children find much more. "I know that I have to do more than provide medical help," Sister Margaret explains. "I have to be a mother to these children, bringing them, by all I do and say, the 'good news' of God's great love."

Sister Margaret says she follows St. Paul's rule every day – "Whatever you do, do from the heart." And the Sisters of the Cross in Poona, India, would say they do the same. For some 150 boys and girls, these Sisters are truly their angels – providing them with care and love at St. Anthony's Home there. The children learn about Jesus and His great love through the example of the Sisters; those who are not baptized come to ask about the little boy who was "poor like them."

The Lovers of the Holy Cross Sisters are also angels – to the poorest of the poor in their homeland of Vietnam. These local Religious serve in social service and parish ministries, as well as through programs for younger children.

This Christmas, will you be an "angel" for the Missions? Will you support their efforts – and the work and witness of so many Religious Sisters throughout the Developing World? Every day, these Religious offer concrete help to the poor and suffering – and the hope that comes from experiencing the love of our Lord, so they will not be afraid.

May you and your families know peace and great joy every day – and especially as we celebrate Christmas!

Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.

OBITUARIES

Carthage – Mary P. (Powell) Boomer, 90; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2010 at St. James Catholic Church; burial in St. James Cemetery.

Carthage – Michael J. DeCaprio, 63; Funeral Services Dec. 16, 2010 at St. James Catholic Church; burial in St. James Cemetery.

Carthage – Kevin D. Fuhrken, 52; Funeral Services Dec. 18, 2010 at St. James Catholic Church; burial in Fairview Cemetery.

Chasm Falls – Herbert C. "Herbie" Perkins, 61; Funeral Services Dec. 11, 2010 at St. Helen's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Constableville – Jamie N. Pallotta, 32; Funeral Services Dec. 15, 2010 at St. Mary's Church.

Fort Covington – Ronald J. Lauzon, 62; Funeral Services Dec. 18, 2010 at St. Mary's Catholic Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Lowville – Robert L. Stone, 74; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2010 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Lowville Rural Cemetery.

Lyon Mountain – Kathryn (Healey) Danussi, 86; Funeral Services Dec. 18, 2010 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Massena – Armand J. Rivers, 66; Funeral Services Dec. 14, 2010 at St. Mary's

Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – George A. Latour, 69; Funeral Services Dec. 15, 2010 at Notre Dame Church.

Potsdam – Ruth A. (Ames) Robar, 70; Funeral Services Dec. 15, 2010 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Canton.

Star Lake – Alexander "Alex" Henry Bush, 85; Funeral Services Dec. 15, 2010 at French Funeral Home; burial in Oswegatchie Cemetery.

Ticonderoga – Yvonne Elizabeth (Peters) King, 42; Funeral Services Dec. 11, 2010 at St. Mary's Catholic Church; burial in St. Mary's Parish Cemetery.

Watertown – Miriam (Free) Campbell, 80; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2010 at D.L. Calarco Funeral Home, Inc.

Watertown – James E. Daly, 86; Funeral Services Dec. 17, 2010 at Reed & Benoit Funeral Home; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Donald C. Morehouse, 91; Funeral Services Dec. 15, 2010 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Kevin D. Schaeffer, Sr., 52; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2010 at Holy Family Church; burial in Westchester.

Watertown – Robert C. Simmons, 85; Fu-

neral Services Dec. 18, 2010 at St. Anthony's Catholic Church; burial in Grove Cemetery, LaFargeville.

Watertown – Nancy M. (Abbate) Vecchio, 94; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2010 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.



Merry Christmas from Mary Lou & Christine

Along with our creative staff of
writers, photographers and
designers at the
North Country Catholic,
we wish our faithful readers a
joyous Christmas and a
New Year filled with plenty
of Good News.



Mary Lou Kilian
Editor/
General Manager

Christine Ward
Editorial Assistant

The Rich Meaning of Christmas

By Father Ron Rolheiser, OMI
NCC columnist

What does Christmas mean? Christmas is like a perfectly-cut diamond twirling in the sun, giving off an array of sparkles.

Here are just some of its meanings:

- A four-year-old child woke up one night frightened, convinced that there were all kinds of spooks and monsters in her room. In terror she fled to her parents' bedroom. Her mother took her back to her room and, after soothing her fears, assured her that it was safe there: "You don't need to be afraid. After I leave, you won't be alone in the room. God will be here with you!" "I know that God will be here," the child protested, "but I need someone in this room who has some skin." The word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

John 1, 14

- God is not found in monasteries, but in our homes. Wherever you find husband and wife, that's where you find God; wherever children and petty cares and cooking and arguments and reconciliation are, that's where God is too. The God I'm telling about, the domestic one, not the monastic one, that's the real God.

Nikos Kazantzakis

- Every year of life waxes and wanes. Every stage of life comes and goes. Every facet of life is born and then dies. Every good moment is doomed to become only a memory. Every perfect period of living slips through our fingers and disappears. Every hope dims and every possibility turns eventually to dry clay. Until Christmas comes again. Then we are called at the deepest, most subconscious, least cognizant level to begin to live again. Christmas brings us



CNS PHOTO/JERRY L. THOMPSON, ART RESOURCE

Mary holds the Child Jesus in "Virgin of the Lilies" by French painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau. The Christmas season begins with the Dec. 24 evening vigil commemorating the birth of Christ and ends with the feast of the Baptism of the Lord Jan. 9.

all back to the crib of life to start over again: aware of what has gone before, conscious that nothing can last, but full of hope that this time, finally, we can learn what it takes to live well, grow to full stature of soul and spirit, and get it right.

Joan Chittister

- After a mother has smiled for a long time at her child, the child will begin to smile back; she has awakened love in its heart, and in awakening love in its heart, she awakes also recognition. In the same way, God awakes Himself before us as love. Love radiates from God and instills the light of

love in our hearts.

Hans Urs Von Balthasar

- At Christmas, through his grace-filled birth, God says to the world: "I am there. I am with you. I am your life. ... Do not be afraid to be happy. For ever since I wept, joy is the standard of living that is really more suitable than the anxiety and grief of those who think they have no hope. ... This reality, this incomparable wonder of my almighty love, I have sheltered safely in the cold stable of your world. I am there. I no longer go away from this world. Even if you do not see me. I am there. It is

Christmas. Light the candles! They have more right to exist than all the darkness. It is Christmas. Christmas lasts forever."

Karl Rahner

- Even at Christmas, when halos are pre-tested by focus groups for inclusion in mass market campaigns, they are hard to see. ... This is how halos are seen, by looking up into largeness, by tucking smallness into folds of infinity. I do not know this by contemplating shimmering trees. Rather there was a woman, busy at the Christmas table, and I looked up to catch a rim of radiance etching her face, to

notice curves of light sliding along her shape. She outglowed the candles. All the noise of the room left my ears and silence sharpened my sight. When this happens, I do not get overly excited. I merely allow love to be renewed, for that is the mission of haloes, the reason they are given to us. ... But when haloes fade, they do not abruptly vanish, abandoning us to the lesser light. They recede, as Gabriel departed from Mary, leaving us pregnant.

John Shea

- Some of the Church Fathers compared Jesus to a singer with a strong voice and a perfect pitch who joins a discordant choir and completely transforms it. It is not that Jesus gave us a different set of songs to sing, but helped us instead to perform our standard repertoire in an entirely new and more beautiful way.

Richard McBrien

- The incarnation does not mean that God saves us from the pains of this life. It means that God-is-with-us. For the Christian, just as for everyone else, there will be cold, lonely seasons, seasons of sickness, seasons of frustration, and a season within which we will die. Christmas does not give us a ladder to climb out of the human condition. It gives us a drill that lets us burrow into heart of everything that is and, there, find it shimmering with divinity.

Avery Dulles

- Looking for God these days requires the willingness to investigate the small.

Aztec Poem

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