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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 66, Number 37

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

FEB 1, 2012

Living for God

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Consecrated life entails giving oneself completely to God and living for others, Pope Benedict XVI said. Speaking at his weekly general audience Jan. 25, the pope continued his catechesis on Christian prayer, looking at the Last Supper, when Jesus instituted the Eu-

charist and the ministerial priesthood. The pope said Jesus prayed for God's intercession for his disciples, who, like himself, "do not belong to the world."

Consecration also entails going on missions, the pope said, as Jesus told God, "As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world. The consecrated person exists for others, is given to others," and no longer lives for oneself, the pope said.

"For the disciples it will be to continue Jesus' mission, to be given to God in order to be in mission for everyone," said the pope.

The pope prayed that all Christians follow suit and "open our own prayers to the needs of our neighbors and the whole world."

Jesus also prayed that his disciples "may all be one," as the pope recalled the closing of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

In Plattsburgh on a frigid March for Life

About 150 pro-lifers braved six-degree temperature and icy sidewalks to participate in the 38th Plattsburgh March for Life Jan. 15.

The march, sponsored by Champlain Valley Right to Life, began at 1:30 p.m. at Blessed John XXIII Newman Center and concluded at St. John's Church where a prayer service was held.

James Sedlak, Vice President of American Life League was the guest speaker at the prayer service.Mr. Sedlak specializes in fighting Planned Parenthood.

FULL STORY, PAGE 9

Catholics at the Capital Day

It's time to register for annual public policy day sponsored by the New York State Catholic Conference FULL STORY, PAGE 13

IT'S CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK!



The theme for the 2012 celebration of Catholic Schools Week, Jan. 24 to Feb. 4, is "Faith, Academics, Service," exemplified by new members of the National Honor Society at Seton Catholic in Plattsburgh. The inductees of The Saint Elizabeth Seton Chapter of the National Honor Society for Secondary Schools are, front, from left, Lauren Richter, Melissa Whyman, Maddison Murnane, Yan Ling Long, and Paige Spittler; back, Anh Nguyen, Nicholas Favreau, James Mulligan, Rachel Lamora, Joseph La Franca and Michael Richter. Bishop LaValley reflects on Catholic Schools Week in his Follow Me column on page 3. St. Joseph Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, diocesan superintendent of schools, also writes about the importance of Catholic schools in the diocese on page 4 as well as about the support given to Catholic school parents through the Bishop Fund on page 8.

UNPRECEDENTED RULING

Bishop seeks help to stop HHS mandate

Message from Bishop LaValley:

On Friday, January 20th, the United States Department of Health and Human Services issued an unprecedented ruling that confirmed that virtually all private health plans will be required to include coverage for sterilizations and contraceptives, including abortion inducing drugs. The agency falsely characterizes these as "preventive services" as if pregnancy were a disease. It further stipulates that these "services" must be included in private health insurance plans without co-pays or other cost sharing. Never before has the federal government forced individuals and organizations to go out into the marketplace and buy a product that violates their conscience. This ruling will force Catholics to decide between violating their consciences and providing the basic right of health care. At issue is the constitutionally protected freedom that ensures respect for the conscience of Catholics and all other Americans. In this ruling, you and I were told that we can call ourselves Catholic, we just can't act like we are. Please take the opportunity to learn more about this issue and contact your elected representatives. Thank you for your help in defense of religious liberty and in support of the sanctity of human life1

(Bishop LaValley's letter concerning this matter appears on page 6.)

FULL STORY, PAGE 6

YOUNG CATHOLIC VOICE: The miracle of the cakes and frosting... p.16

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Box 326 Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669 USPS 0039-3400 **BISHOP TERRY R. LAVALLEY** President

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

No time for hibernation here!

It may be the dead of winter but country and in the nation – have there sure is lots of life among Catholics in the Diocese of Ogdensburg these days.

This week, many of the 15 Catholic schools in the North Country will be buzzing with the annual celebration of Catholic Schools Week.

Every year as we hear about all the special activities, I have the same thought: "My friends and I at Bishop Conroy sure would have appreciated a Catholic Schools Week in our time!"

School days filled with special lunches, games and guests – what could be better than that!?!

But, we all know that there's a serious purpose behind the fun. This is a unique opportunity for Catholic schools to toot their horns a little louder than usual, letting parents know that – if they care about faith, academics and service - there's no better choice for their children than their closest Catholic school. (Check out the list on page 5.)

These cold winter days have also become the time for persevering pro-lifers to protest.

Thirty-nine years after the Jan. 22, 1973, Roe vs Wade decision allowing abortion, the crowds at pro-life gatherings – in the north

Name

City

Parish

only become larger, younger and more confident.

On Jan 23, three busloads of high schoolers, a group of young adults and buses from the east and west sides of the diocese were among more than 100,000 participants at the March for Life in Washington. This week's NCC covers a Jan. 15 March in Plattsburgh; next week we'll turn our attention to those who made the journey to DC.

Next week, we'll also catch up on other January

news: the annual diocesan Ecumenical Service and special parish activities.

And this week, next week and the one after that, we'll be encouraging every Catholic to raise his/her voice in the pursuit of justice.

We'll have the chance through participation at the annual Catholics at that Capital event in March and we'll have the chance, as well, if we follow Bishop LaValley's urgent request to make sure the HHS ruling for contraceptive insurance coverage is rescinded. (See his important letter on page



Mary Lou Kilian

6.) In this, we can make a difference without ever leaving the warmth and comfort of our Come In From The Cold Warm up with a subscription to the North Country Catholic and find out what is happening with the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Address State Zip Charge my □ Visa □ MASTERCARD □ New Subscription □ Renewal ☐ Check for \$25 enclosed ☐ Outside Diocese \$28

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CHURCH: A FAMILY OF FAITH

Jesus: A Model for Prayer for the Mission

5th Sunday of Ordinary Time - Feb. 4-5

Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ

Director of Evangelization

We may lament, like Job, that life on earth seems like drudgery perhaps because of family sickness, unemployment, addiction, or no real purpose in life. Today's readings address that issue from our Christian vantage point.

We learn from the two readings from Job and Mark that God is well-acquainted with human burdens and misery. In Job's reading, we are led to humility and trust in the power of God because we do not understand the mystery of God's ways.

In Mark's Gospel, Jesus, who has the power of God, understands the misery of human suffering from within as He Himself is vulnerable and is acquainted with grief and infirmity. The person of Jesus in Mark shows the deep compassion and understanding of God for the needs and trials of humanity because He himself is human. He understands human misery and the pain it inflicts upon humanity.

God's ways are not always our ways. God's providence is often far beyond our capacity to understand. God is utterly different from us and we can forget this in time of great distress. At the same time, God is very much concerned about our trials and misfortunes. Through Jesus, we are God's brothers and sisters who need to call upon Him to ask for His help. We may not understand the plan He has in mind for us; but He does not abandon us and will give us the strength and grace to accept His ways.

In his message to the Corinthians, the great missionary Paul expressed his own struggle with his humanity and the human condition that we all face. For Paul, it was the power of Christ who enabled him to face the burdens and trials of life.

Jesus calls us to the same mission, that of being a community of believers called "church" to show the same compassion and mercy for others. Jesus' ministry of healing, driving out demons, and preaching could not be accomplished without His daily prayer to the Father. Our ministry of being evangelizers, of proclaiming the Good News, will never bear fruit if we do not take the time to pray both individually and communally. It is one thing to know about Jesus but we are called to know Jesus. Jesus is the model of how to pray. Jesus took the time to pray daily to His Father.

We are called to do the same. Withdraw each day to encounter the Risen Lord. You will be refreshed and reinvigorated. Prayer moves us to go out and to move onward and outward to those most in need of hope and new life. The burdens and difficulties of life are transformed into acceptance and trust in God's ways. God will provide. What benefits have you experienced when you have taken time to pray? How have you experienced the healing power of God?

Visit our re-designed website www.northcountrycatholic.org

- Read Bishop LaValley's columns
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In celebration of Catholic Schools Week

By Bishop Terry LaValley Bishop of Ogdensburg

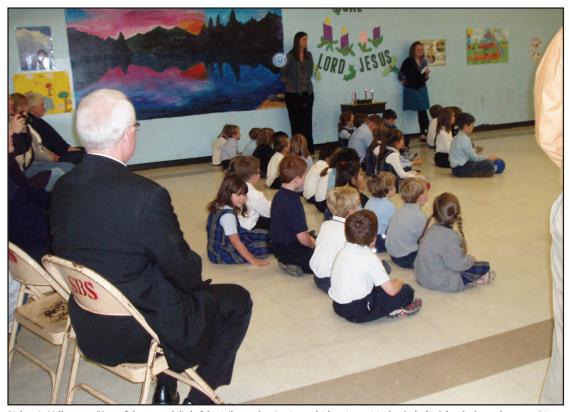
Run a short homemade movie on the screen of your imagination. Imagine that you come home some dark night and, to your horror, you see a 35 foot snake on your front lawn. Your heart begins to pound wildly and adrenaline starts pumping into your bloodstream.

'Faith, Academics and Service' Jan. 24 - Feb. 4

You quickly grab a garden hoe, and in your frenzy you hack the writhing snake into small pieces. Satisfied that it is dead, you go inside and try to settle your nerves with warm milk. Later, lying in bed, even with your eyes closed, you can still see the wriggling form on the front lawn.

The next morning you return to the scene of the snake slaying and find, again to your horror, that there had never been a snake on your front lawn. That which lies in pieces before your eyes was simply the garden hose which had been left out on the lawn. It was always a hose, of course; but last night for you it was a snake. What you saw last night was a snake, and all your actions and reactions followed from what you saw. The fear, the hoe, the struggle, the effort to calm down—all followed from the vision of a 35 foot snake.

All our emotional and behavioral actions and reactions follow from our perceptions. In that snake drama, we were talking about a vision of reality, a highly personal and unique way that each one of us perceives reality—a vision seen with the eyes of the mind. We look at the various parts of reality through the eyes of our minds, and no two



Bishop LaValley says, "One of the most delightful privileges that I enjoy as bishop is to visit the Catholic Schools throughout our Diocese. As soon as I enter the school building, it becomes clear to me that in our school families, religion is not an interruption in an already packed daily schedule, but a faith experience that permeates the whole of the day." He is shown above during a December school visit to St. Bernard's School in Saranac Lake.

people ever see those parts of reality in exactly the same way. You have your vision. I have mine.

The important fact is this: We always act and react according to what we see. If I see a 35 foot snake, even though it is really a garden hose, my glands and my emotions, my hands and feet and palpitating heart all react to the "snake" I see.

There are many things that we perceive again and again in very much the same way. Pretty soon such repeated perceptions, looking at a certain reality in the same way, gets to be a habitual way of looking at things. Like the snake, we can begin to mistake our perceptions for reality. For instance, over and over, society presents us with perceptions that are difficult to ignore: making lots of money brings happiness; all schools are created equal; children know what's best when selecting schools; athletics is the crucial determining factor when selecting a school for my child. My friends, never mind the perceptions, the reality is: we can give our children no greater gift than a Catholic school education.

One of the most delightful privileges that I enjoy as bishop is to visit the Catholic Schools throughout our Diocese.

As soon as I enter the school building, it becomes clear to me that in our school families, religion is not an interruption in an already packed daily schedule, but a faith experience that permeates the whole of the day.

Faith, Academics, Service, the theme for this year's Catholic Schools Week, speaks of the reality, not perception, of what happens within the school family. Unfortunately, too often, our own perception of religion is to compartmentalize it—put it either on the shelf, or over in the corner, without it impacting

everything we say and do in life. What is my perception of religion? Remember, this vision of reality, this attitude will trigger my actions and reactions about Catholic schools. For instance, religion can be faith or a front, the hose or a snake.

Let's, for a moment, consider some of the tasks of Catholic school educators. They: love, inspire, challenge, affirm, correct, motivate, discipline, and impart knowledge.

The content of their labors include: Catholic

faith, human values, knowledge, confidence, social skills, human dignity, creativity, sense of humor and

self-knowledge.

Years ago, Blessed Pope John Paul II, in an address to US bishops from the Midwest at their ad limina visit, said, "Catholic education aims not only to communicate facts, but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberate students in the most profound meaning of human freedom." Educators in our Catholic schools are enablers of a vision of reality.

In the Catholic school, there is no separation between time for learning and time for religion, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom. The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be at tained but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered. The mission of the Catholic School is the integral formation of students so that they may be true to their condition as Christ's disciples and as such work effectively for the evangelization of culture and for the common good of soci-

Something distinctly different happens within the walls of the Catholic school: the pulsating love of Jesus' Spirit enlivening and celebrating life. It is a truly sacred environment. But this hallowedness comes not from the walls, but from the Catholic school educators, students, staff and parents who are actively involved in the life of the school and parish family.

The reality is that in the Catholic School, we don't see the stark dichotomy of religion and academics. It becomes obvious that it is not an *either/or* situation where one always has to be sacrificed to the other. Our students excel in academics and service precisely because they are steeped in and motivated by our faith.

It is with profound gratitude to all of our parents, parishioners, pastors, faculty, and diocesan staff that we celebrate Catholic Schools Week in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

The Church is so aware of your sacrifice and commitment to our children because for you, seeing is believing!

Faith – Academics – Service

By Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, SSJSuperintendent of Schools

The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2012 is "Catholic Schools: Faith – Academics – Service."

For many of our 15 schools, observance of Catholic Schools Week begins Sunday, Jan. 29and extends throughout the week until Feb. 5. Due to testing schedules and the timing of the winter "break" some schools choose to hold the annual celebration later in February.

Regardless of when it is celebrated, Catholic Schools Week is a special week for our school communities. It provides an opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments of our students, express gratitude to pastors, parents, parishioners and volunteers who give so much time and talent to our schools and, most importantly, to express the unique character of Catholic schools

This year's theme focuses on three priorities that distinguish our schools from other educational institutions. Our children and young people are taught the basics of our Christian faith. These fundamental doctrines impart knowledge about our faith, the teachings that are the foundation of our faith.

But more than knowledge about our faith, our students encounter the person of Christ, experience His love and learn how to become companions and disci-



"Trinity Infinity," the robotics team at Trinity Catholic School in Massen received a huge surprise Dec. 12, when they learned that in addition to winning the Championship Award at the First Lego League's Robotics Competition Dec. 3, they had also been invited to compete on an international level in Mannheim, Germany next June. The team members are Eric Miller, Ruben Boyea, Jacob Brothers, Cooper Regan, Samantha O'Keefe, Erin McCarthy, Hannah Laneuville, Grace Furnace, Hayden Doe, Megan Garcia, Coach, Heather Doe. The team is also coached by Ed Reyes.

ples of Christ. "... comprehensive and systematic formation in the faith . . . includes more than instruction: it is an apprenticeship of the entire Christian life, . . . which promotes an authentic following of Christ, focused on his Person; it implies education in knowledge of the faith and in the life of faith, in such a manner that the entire person, at his deepest levels, feels enriched by the word of God"

(National Directory of Cat-

echesis, #19. D).

Our academic programs provide the knowledge and skills our students need to be integral members of the Church and society. But here, too, Catholic schools have an added value. The Gospel and the teachings of the Church are integrated into all subject areas, programs and the environment of the school.

No subject is only a secular pursuit. Each subject is enriched by the virtues which spring from the grace of the Gospel accepted and lived. This integration develops and supports the vital connection between faith and life and faith and culture.

The service aspect of



Catholic schools is receiving a heightened emphasis in our schools this year. At the fall Superintendent's Conference the principal from each school presented Bishop LaValley with the school's pledge to engage in service throughout the year.

Although service is a regular feature in our Catholic schools, this year the schools are maintaining a record of the students' service hours. On May 14th, delegations from each school will join Bishop LaValley for a prayer service at St. Mary's Cathedral at which time they will present him with the actual hours of service performed by the school community and a display of the particular forms of service in which the school was engaged.

I was recently reminded of the importance of service when I participated in a meeting at the Emmaus Room, the parish conference center at St. Peter's parish in Plattsburgh. As I approached the building I noticed a striking wall relief of Jesus washing the feet of St. Peter. The plaque accompanying the relief said, "Caring for one another is the very essence of being a follower of the Lord Jesus."

The relief and the words on the plaque brought to mind the Last Supper scene as depicted in Saint John's Gospel. "... if I washed your feet – I who am Teacher and Lord – then you must wash each other's feet. What I just did was to give you an example: as I have done, so you must do" (Jn 13: 14).

From the Master's example, St. Peter learned the importance of service. So must we. So must our students. A disciple is one who serves as Christ served.

Matthew's Gospel is clear also about the importance of service to our neighbor. Feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the imprisoned, promoting justice and comforting the suffering (cf. Mt 25:31-46) are works of service by which the disciple of Christ can reach out to others. Our very salvation depends upon recognizing Christ in our brothers and sisters and reaching out to them through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

The specific purpose of Catholic education is the formation of students who will be good citizens of this world, loving God and neighbor and enriching society with the leaven of the Gospel, and who will also, one day, be citizens of heaven, enjoying the company of all the blessed who have heard, accepted and lived the Gospel.

Catholic Schools Week is a wonderful time to celebrate this purpose, to experience how this purpose is a reality in each of our schools and to invite anyone who is interested in learning more about our schools to visit one of them.

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Bishop seeks efforts to overturn HHS ruling on health insurance coverage

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

On January 20th, the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued an unprecedented ruling that negatively impacts the Catholic Church in the United States directly, and that strikes at the fundamental right to religious liberty for all citizens of any faith.

All employers, including Catholic employers, will be forced to offer their employees health coverage that includes sterilization, abortion-inducing drugs, and contraception.

The federal government, which claims to be "of, by, and for the people," has just dealt a heavy blow to almost a quarter of those people—the Catholic population—and to the millions more who are served by the Catholic faithful.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced last week that almost all employers, including Catholic employers, will be forced to offer their employees health coverage that includes sterilization, abortion-inducing drugs, and contraception. Almost all health insurers will be forced to include those "services" in the health policies they write. Almost all individuals will be forced to buy that coverage as a part of their policies.

In spite of many appeals, the current Administration also refused to broaden the religious exemption to these rules – an exemption limited to groups that hire and serve people primarily of their own faith. Consequently, most churches and church-run institutions do not qualify because of their very openness to serving the common good of society and all people regardless of creed.

In so ruling, the Obama Administration has cast aside the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, denying to Catholics our Nation's first and most fundamental freedom, that of religious liberty. As a result, unless the rule is overturned, we Catholics must be prepared either to violate our consciences, or to drop health coverage for our employees (and suffer the penalties for doing so). The Administration's sole concession was to give our institutions one year to comply and "adapt" to this new rule.

You must know that we cannot—we will not—comply with this unjust law. Even those who may disagree with the Church's teaching on the sanctity of human life recognize that the government has no business forcing religious institutions to sponsor and pay for procedures which violate those teachings.

People of faith cannot be made second class citizens. Our ancestors in faith did not come to these shores to

help build America's cities and towns, its infrastructure and institutions, only to have their descendants stripped of their God-given and constitutional rights.

In generations past, the Church has always been able to count on the faithful to stand up and protect the Church's sacred rights and duties. I hope and trust it can count on this generation of Catholics to do the same. Our future generations deserve nothing less.

Therefore, I would ask of you three things. First, as a family of faith we must commit ourselves to prayer and fasting that wisdom and justice may prevail, and religious liberty may be restored. Without God, we can do nothing; with God, nothing is impossible.

Secondly, I urge you to contact your representatives in Congress seeking their support of legislation that would reverse the Administration's decision.

Thirdly, I would invite you to learn more about this unprecedented assault on religious liberty in our nation and what is at stake with this ruling by visiting the U.S. Bishops' website at www.usccb.org/conscience.

United in prayer and in our defense of human dignity, I am

Sincerely yours Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley Bishop of Ogdensburg

Bishop LaValley's Schedule

Feb. 1 — 12p.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

Feb. 3 – 10:50 a.m., Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg; 7 p.m., Canon Law Class for Deacon Aspirants at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg.

Feb.5 — 8a.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

Rest in Peace

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

Feb. 1 — Rev. John B. Doonan, 1949; Msgr. George T. Donnelly, 1968; Rev. Edward M. Delaney, 1977 Feb. 2 — Rev. William Bennett, O.M.I., 1887; Rev. Amadeus Viger, O.S.A., 1915; Rev. George E. Racette, 1961 Feb. 4 — Rev. Joseph Redington, 1892; Rev. Edmund Walsh, 1925; Msgr.

Michael R. Burns, 1932; Rev. Alexander Klauder, 1935; Rev. Henry McArdle, O.S.A., 1969; Rev. Francis Maurus Kearns, 1990

Feb.5 – Msgr. Thomas E. Walsh, 1901; Msgr. F. Gordon Coseo, 1997; Rev. John J. Fallon, 2005

Feb.6 – Msgr. Gerard Gefell, 2009

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To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy Rev., James Seymour at 315-393-2920, or:

the **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terrianne Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, PO Box 2446, Plattsburgh, NY, 12901; e-mail: aycsnn@yahoo.com; Phone: 518-569-0612; Fax: 518-425-0401

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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.

Further information is available from Atonement Sister Ellen Donahue, 315-393-2920, ext. 440. Upcoming programs:

Feb.6 - 5 p.m., St. Marys School, Canton

Celebrating Catholic identity

WATERTOWN-Immaculate Heart Jr. / Sr. High School's student leadership group has planned several special activities to celebrate Catholic Schools Week, set for Jan. 30 through Feb. 4.

At IHC in Watertown

Students strongly feel that Catholic identity is what sets IHC apart from other schools and wanted to take advantage of Catholic Schools Week to recognize and celebrate that fact.

The activities scheduled include:

- Wearing your school uniform to church
 - Adoration,
- Reciting a decade of the Rosary every day before and after school,
- Hosting a reception for parents and grandparents after the Presentation of the Lord Liturgy, and
- Blue Out Day (everyone wears blue uniform shirts)

Additionally, all students, faculty and staff at the Jr. / Sr. high school will be given a wrist band to commemorate the theme for this year.

Family and friends have been invited to join IHC this week to acknowledge and honor the privilege we have of being part of the IHC school community.

The students would welcome the donation of any baked goods to share during the reception following the Mass on Thursday.





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Now Hiring: Director of Advancement

Description: Seton Catholic and Seton Academy are now offering an exciting opportunity for an enthusiastic individual to serve as its full time Director of Advancement. The Director will be responsible for planning and executing a comprehensive advancement program, including database management, planned giving, the annual fund, alumni relations, grant procurement, and communications. The Director will work closely with the school administration as well as the community.

Requirements: Strong belief in and commitment to Catholic education and the mission of Seton Catholic, ability to mutlitask, flexible personality, well organized, excellent communication skills, competency in Microsoft Office programs, Bachelor's degree and some experience in development or marketing is strongly preferred.

Send resumes with cover letter to: Cathy Russell, Principal crussell@setoncatholic.net (518) 561-4031

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Address		

Bishop's Fund assists Catholic School parents

By Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, SSJ Superintendent of Schools

The specific purpose of Catholic education is the formation of students who will be good citizens of this world, loving God and neighbor and enriching society with the leaven of the Gospel and who, one day, will also be citizens of heaven, thus fulfilling their destiny to become saints.

The good news of the Gospel is precisely this, that God sent His Son to live among us and eventually to suffer and die for us so that one day all of us can enjoy eternal life with Him.

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has 13 elementary schools and two Junior/Senior High Schools. They are invaluable instruments for the proclamation of the good news of the Gospel and its integration into the academic program and the environment of the school. The instruction in our Catholic faith, the lived example of the community of faith in which the faith is taught, and the experiences of prayer and liturgy which express and strengthen this faith are vital components of our Catholic schools.

Maintaining schools with outstanding academic programs infused with Gospel values and the heritage of our Catholic Faith depends upon many factors, not least of which is the financial support of parishes through parish subsidies, the Catholic School Financial Support Program, and parents' financial commit-



ment through tuition payments and support of fund raising activities.

The Bishop's Fund provides the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) to aid parents, who meet eligibility requirements, with tuition costs. This year the Bishop's Fund allotted \$179,600 to the TAP initiative. With an additional \$8,850 from the Father Mallette Endowment, a total of \$188,450 will be distributed in tuition assistance.

A total of 515 students or 27% of our student population in grades K-12 will be awarded tuition assistance from these combined resources. Assistance is given according to the criteria established by the Federal Government's guidelines for free/reduced lunch or to meet a request for a special need.

The Bishop's Fund affords the faithful of the Diocese with the opportunity to contribute to the wide reaching needs of the Diocesan family and to provide assistance to individuals and programs within the local parish. The Tuition Assistance Program is one example of money "returning" to the local area.

Local totals

The approximate amount of tuition assistance money to be distributed in each deanery follows:

- \$65,134 will be available for tuition assistance in the Jefferson Deanery (Augustinian Academy, Carthage; Immaculate Heart Central Elementary and Junior/Senior High Schools, Watertown);
- \$50,497 in the Franklin/Clinton Deaneries (Holy Name, AuSable Forks; St. Mary's Academy, Champlain; Holy Family, Malone; Seton Academy and Seton Catholic Central, Plattsburgh);
- \$48,301 in the Saint Lawrence Deanery (St.

Mary's, Canton; St. James, Gouverneur; Trinity Catholic, Massena and St. Marquerite D'Youville, Ogdensburg);

• \$24,516 in the Adiron-dack/Essex Deaneries (St. Agnes, Lake Placid; St. Bernard's, Saranac Lake and St. Mary's Ticonderoga).

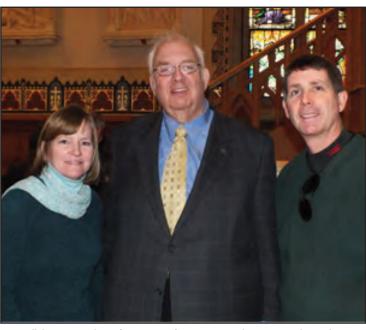
Contributions to the Bishop's Fund are one way that the "entire Catholic community" of the diocese can help to make a Catholic education available and affordable to the parents who have access to a Catholic school for their children.

When you help children to receive a Catholic school education through the Tuition Assistance Program of the Bishop's Fund you are helping them to receive an education that will address the whole person. Not only will they have the opportunity to be a part of a school community which will give them the human knowledge and skills necessary for their growth, but they will also be members of a faith community, where the words and deeds of Jesus, Gospel values, and our Catholic heritage are present and active. In collaboration with parents and guardians, our schools "equip our young people with a sound education, rooted in the Gospel message, the Person of Jesus Christ, and rich in the cherished traditions and liturgical practices or our faith" (United States Catholic Bishops, Renewing our Commitment . . . to Schools). What a wonderful investment in the lives of our children and the future of the Church!

On behalf of the parents and children who receive financial assistance through your generosity, I take this opportunity to express my appreciation for you contribution to this year's Bishop's Fund. This generosity expresses your commitment to the growth of our family of faith.



Ann McGowan and Margaret Choong made the trip from Potsdam to take part in the 38th annual Plattsburgh March for Life held Jan. 16.



Jim Sedlak, vice-president of American Life League, was the guest speaker at the prayer service held at St. John's Church. He is pictured with Colleen and John Miner of Saranac Lake, diocesan directors of respect life ministry.



Students from Tupper Lake were among about 150 pro-lifers who braved six degree temperatures to show their opposition to abortion.

Annual March draws 150 pro-lifers for icy walk

By Colleen Miner Staff writer

PLATTSBURGH - About 150 prolifers braved six-degree temperature and icy sidewalks to participate in the 38th Plattsburgh March for Life Jan. 15.

The march, sponsored by Champlain Valley Right to Life, began at 1:30 p.m. at Blessed John XXIII Newman Center and concluded at St. John's Church where a prayer service was held.

Father Timothy Canaan, pastor of St. John's Church, led an opening prayer reflecting on repentance, resolve and rejoicing: repentance that some waited too long to take action, resolve to act to save lives and rejoicing to reach our goal - "not just to fight abortion but to end it".

Father Canaan prayed that we would "challenge public servants and voters" and reminded that we are "called to do pro-life work, not as a hobby when we have time."

James Sedlak, Vice President of American Life League was the guest speaker at the prayer service.

Mr. Sedlak specializes in fighting Planned Parenthood and shared the newest data with those gathered. Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the US (Almost 1,000 babies die each day in Planned Parenthoods) is hurting financially - especially the North Country affiliates.

Nationally, profits are down 70%. Income fell 4.5% and contributions from corporations and individuals fell 27% last year. The number of clinics dropped from 840 to 785. Sex education programs were down 8%. But one area went up significantly - taxpayer funding. Local, state and federal governments gave 487 million in taxpayer money.

"If there was no taxpayer money, they'd be out of business", said Sedlak.

How will Planned Parenthood make up for the decrease in funding?

They will increase the number of abortions (averaging \$500 per abortion) and bring in more customers by going after young people, Sedlak said. "Planned Parenthood Steals Souls" is the title of a new pamphlet by American Life League. They are not speaking about the babies killed by abortion but the souls of young people. "

Planned Parenthood wants society to accept the fact that young people will have sex no matter what; that they have no self control", said Sedlak.

Mr. Sedlak said "Since 1993 there's been a regular presence at Planned Parenthood (at 66 Brinkerhoff St); 19 years of prayer and God is answering your prayers!"

Mr. Sedlak shared that the recent merger between Planned Parenthood of Northern New York (Watertown) and Planned Parenthood Northern Adirondack (Plattsburgh) to become Planned Parenthood of the North Country was "due to lack of money."

The 2007 report said local PP made \$20,000; 2008 report showed a loss of \$51,000; 2009 a loss of \$249,000 and 2010, a loss of \$408,000.

"Planned Parenthood Federation of America came here to accredit the new affiliate who is working hard to get accreditation - if not, they

lose the Planned Parenthood name...Nationally, 26% income was from private donations, it's only 3% here...You are winning!"

Sedlak warned "Planned Parenthood will try anything they can to save it. Increasing the number of abortions will be the effort here...the spring newsletter statement said they will expand medical abortions in Canton and Watertown - they need to do this to make more money."

Sedlak said, "Planned Parenthood doesn't understand you and why you would march in 6 degrees but God understands you. You're doing the right stuff. It's working. Now is the time to do more. Pray for the people at Planned Parenthood. Ask Mary. She can do it."

Sedlak urged those present to "show Canton and Watertown what a bad idea it is" and said "It was an honor speaking to you, to people who are closing down Planned Parenthood - you are on the verge. Keep doing what you're doing. Don't give

"When Planned Parenthood closes its doors here, invite me back for the celebration," he said, "and it would be a great idea to schedule it in June"

Lita Paczak from Seton Catholic School provided the music. Father Scott Seymour, pastor at St. Alexander's in Morrisonville, led the closing prayer.

The final paragraph of the program read "Join us in prayer to end abortion at the only facility where (surgical) abortions are still performed in the North Country, on the day they commit abortions, Thursdays at 10 a.m. in front of Planned Parenthood."





New Anglican ordinariate is led by teacher, granddad

By Jenny Faber and Jonah Dycus Catholic News Service

HOUSTON (CNS)—The first head of a new ordinariate created for former Anglican parishes and individuals is a one-time sportswriter and a pilot and Houston seminary instructor who was ordained a Catholic priest in 2009.

Pope Benedict XVI announced the creation of the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter Jan. 1. It is intended to function like a diocese, but nationwide in scope, for former members of the Anglican Communion who have become Catholic.

The ordinariate will be based in Houston and led by Father Jeffrey Steenson, who was bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande, based in Albuquerque, N.M., for three years before leaving to become a Catholic in 2007. He and his wife, Debra, have three adult children and one grandchild.

"What propels a person to leave his or her ecclesial home and make this journey into the Catholic Church is a desire to be in full communion with everything that the Catholic Church teaches is true," Father Steenson said at a news conference in Houston Jan. 2. "One of those things is to be in communion with the pope. It is that desire to connect with that apostolic rock that will make a person make sacrifices."

Father Steenson will be installed as the ordinary Feb. 19 in Houston. Because he is married, the 59-year-old Father Steenson will not be ordained a bishop and will not be able to ordain priests. He will, however, otherwise function as a bishop and will be a voting member of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, making him the only married member of that body.

At the Houston news conference, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston called Father Steenson "a

wise and prudent administrator who will bring a vibrant intellect and humility to his role as head of the ordinariate."

Since soon after his ordination as a Catholic priest for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, he has taught patristics, the study of the church fathers, at St. Mary's Seminary in Houston.

The day after the announcement in Rome, Cardinal DiNardo introduced Father Steenson at the news conference at Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Church, which will be the principal church for the U.S. ordinariate.

The Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter is the first structure of its kind in the United States and the second in the world. The other ordinariate is Our Lady of Walsingham, which was established in 2011 to serve England and Wales.

The ordinariates are the result of appeals from Anglican communities to become Catholic as groups. In November 2009, Pope Benedict XVI issued an apostolic constitution, "Anglicanorum coetibus," which authorized the ordinariates.

The U.S. ordinariate will include parishes, groups and individuals of Anglican heritage, which in the United States can include Episcopalian individuals and parishes. Parishes will be fully Roman Catholic, while retaining elements of the Anglican tradition in terms of music, liturgy, structure and prayers.

"Particularly in the area of worship and liturgy, Anglicans have a goodly heritage and the Catholic Church has always understood and appreciated that Anglican heritage," Father Steenson said. "We hope the personal ordinariate can bring this Anglican literary culture into the life of the church."

Cardinal DiNardo and Father Steenson said Houston was selected as the base for the ordinariate in part because of St. Mary's Seminary. Father Steenson was a key player in the establishment of a formation program for Anglican priests applying for the Catholic priesthood at the seminary. St. Mary's has developed and the Vatican has approved a nine-month program of priestly formation for Anglican clergy who wish to become Catholic priests.

More than 100 former Anglican priests have applied to become Catholic priests for the U.S. ordinariate. To date, 47 have been accepted for the second stage of a multistage process to become Catholic priests. Most of them will begin their formation at St. Mary's Seminary at the end of January.

In addition to clergy, nearly 1,400 individuals from 22 communities have inquired about entering the ordinariate. Two former Episcopal parishes -- St. Peter of the Rock in Fort Worth and St. Luke's in Bladensburg, Md. -- became Catholic this fall, with the intention of joining the ordinariate once it was established.

Ordained an Anglican priest in 1980, Father Steenserved **Episcopal** son parishes suburban in Philadelphia and Fort Worth before becoming the chief pastoral assistant for the bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande. In 2004, he was elected bishop of that diocese.

He grew up on a family farm in North Dakota and received his theological training at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School near Chicago, Harvard Divinity School and the University of Oxford, where he received his doctorate in patristic studies in 1983. He spent a sabbatical year in Rome as he prepared for the Catholic priesthood, studying with seminarians from the Pontifical North American College and living with his wife at the Pontifical Irish College.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Life, liberty at 'core of our national character,' Boehner tells rally

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Americans "as a people are pro-life" because life and liberty "are intertwined and form the core of our national character," House Speaker John Boehner told the crowd gathered on the National Mall Jan. 23 for the 39th annual March for Life. "God who gave us life gave us liberty," said the Ohio Republican, who is a Catholic. He added that his pro-life stand isn't political, "it's just who I am." He and the other members of Congress who spoke at the rally said they were proud they had passed the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act and the Protect Life Act and voted to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and defund Planned Parenthood. But now, said U.S. Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., "we must work to change the Senate and reclaim the White House, which not only obstructs pro-life legislation but has for the past three years advanced abortion in so many ways." Smith, a Catholic who is chairman of the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, told the rallygoers that they were "an important part of the greatest human rights movement on earth -- the selfless struggle by prayer, fasting and works to defend and protect all weak and vulnerable persons from the violence of abortion, infanticide and euthanasia." He also told the crowd he had a message for President Barack Obama: "The violent destruction of children in the womb -- killing babies -- is not an American value."

Catholic schools are looking at new ways to keep afloat, thrive

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The phrase "show me the money!" from the 1996 movie "Jerry Maguire" could certainly be a mantra for today's Catholic schools struggling to stay open or facing closure. Reports of school closures often point to escalating costs of operating schools coupled with the inability of parents to pay tuition especially in inner cities and the lack of available resources from parishes or dioceses to keep these schools afloat. Schools that are thriving have had to seek other forms of revenue from foundations, local businesses and alumni. Mary McDonald, superintendent of schools in the Diocese of Memphis, Tenn., knows all about needing money -- and getting it -- to keep Catholic schools open. In fact, she sought out funds from non-Catholic sources to completely reopen eight diocesan elementary schools that had been closed. The resurrection theme of these Jubilee Schools, in the poorest areas of Memphis, came about through multimillion-dollar contributions, foundations, grants, corporate funding and private donations. When McDonald first started her job as school superintendent in 1998, Memphis Bishop J. Terry Steib told her he wanted Catholic schools back in the city. "He also told me there was no money to do this," she recounted to Catholic News Service Jan. 19. She knew local Catholics, who made up only 4 percent of the population, could not finance these schools alone so she turned to the broader community and convinced them that restoring Catholic education in the city was a worthwhile investment. Since these schools began re-opening in 2000, she has continued her quest for funding and to prove to those who provide financial help -- whom she calls investors, not donors -- that their funds are making a difference. She frequently gives tours of schools and shows their test scores to reinforce the message that Catholic education is improving the lives of the young people it's serving, which in turn helps the community at large. When she asks for help, she said, it is never with the mentality of asking for money for a sinking ship. Instead her plea has always been: "Here's our plan, come along with us," which she follows up with proving schools are "worthy of people investing in us" by showing what they do now and their future plans.

At the annual March for Life held Jan. 23 in Washington DC

T-shirts, balloons, banners show convictions

By Julie Asher Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Mark Hosbein stood on the corner of a busy Washington intersection under the steady rain Jan. 23 with a small duffle bag at his feet and a simple message for passers-by: "Please consider spiritually adopting an unborn baby who is in danger of abortion."

Handing a reporter one of his brochures, Hosbein said as president of Hearts For Life, he is following the lead of the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, who promoted the idea of spiritual adoptions for the unborn years ago.

People who commit to such an adoption agree to pray once a day for a year for an unborn child, he explained. "Our belief is God will save the life of the baby. It's a simple and powerful devotion."

Hosbein, a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, said in the past five or six years, his organization has passed out 100,000 of his brochures.

He was among several people giving signs and literature to pro-lifers as they walked toward the March for Life rally on the National Mall near the Smithsonian Castle.

See next week's NCC for full coverage of the local participation at the national March for Life

From the castle, the Washington Monument in one direction and the Capitol in the other were shrouded in fog and barely visible.

The weather in Washington was uncooperative, with intermittent rain and temperatures hovering in the high 30s.

But as in most years when the weather was bad, the tens of thousands of pro-lifers, a majority of them high school and college age, were undeterred.

Donning rain gear and holding umbrellas, they descended on the nation's capital to mark the 39th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision legalizing

abortion. The Supreme Court handed down the decision Jan. 22, 1973.

As they streamed toward the rally site from various points, rallygoers carried signs that declared their prolife views. Among the messages were: "Adoption is an option," "Every time a baby is aborted, love is denied," "Praying for a culture of life," "If it's not a baby, you're not pregnant," and "Abortion survivor: Daughter of rape."

One woman wrote her message in bold black letters on the back of her yellow rain poncho: "God is pro-life: Thou shalt not kill." One group carried yellow balloons that simply said, "Life."

Earlier in the morning, gathered at a Washington hotel before the March for Life activities got under way, young members of a Catholic Daughters of the Americas junior court in Framingham, Mass., talked to Catholic News Service about why they were there.

"Abortion is something we shouldn't do," said Tiffany Andino, 14. "If you have the guts to do things that what



PHOTO BY COLLEEN MINER

Gina Fiorile, Ellen Miner, Anna Izzo and Nathan Miller, all parishioners of St. Bernard's Parish in Saranac Lake, proudly wear t-shirts designed by Colleen Miner, diocesan director of respect life ministry, for students who traveled from the diocese on the Youth Buses for Life.

takes to get pregnant, you should have the guts to keep the child. Bringing new life into the world is a very big thing. My mom always taught me if you break the rules you pay the consequences. ... I don't agree with abortion and I want it to stop."

Added Laura Jaime, who turns 13 Jan. 30: "Girls (treat) it like a game and do things

and get rid of the baby. That should change. If it doesn't change, we're going to make the world worse."

Valerie Valdivia, 12, said she was participating to send "a message to people not to kill a creature of God." Fourteen-year-old Natalia Mendez echoed Valerie's remarks, adding that everyone needs "to cherish and love" God's creation.

Catholics urged to press gov't to rescind mandate

By Andy TelliCatholic News Service

NASHVILLE, TENN. (CNS) -- It will be up to Catholic voters to convince the federal government to rescind a recent decision by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to go forward with a mandate that all health insurance plans cover contraceptives and sterilization free of charge, said Archbishop Charles J. Chaput.

"Bishops can't tell politicians what to do, but Catholic voters can," the Philadelphia archbishop said during a visit to Nashville. Political leaders respond to pressure from citizens, he added, and Catholics ought to demand respect for religious values.

Archbishop Chaput joined fellow bishops in urging Catholics in the pew to be more politically active.

"The very principle of religious freedom, the first freedom in the Bill of Rights, is at stake here," the archbishop said. "That's a lot to be at stake. Once it's lost, you don't get it back."

In an interview with the Tennessee Register, Nashville's diocesan newspaper, Archbishop Chaput addressed the contraceptive mandate and the Jan. 20 announcement by HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius that religious organizations could delay but not opt out of the required coverage and that the religious exemption as first released would go into effect unchanged.

Catholic and other reli-

gious leaders have objected that the exemption is written so narrowly that institutions such as hospitals, schools and social service agencies would not qualify.

The mandate and the narrow exemption are examples of society's growing indifference to religious values, the archbishop said.

Society's hostility to faith and religion comes "from a secularized people who don't see the importance of respecting the moral values of other people if those values stand in the way of their goals," he said.

Bishops across the U.S. condemned the HHS regulations when they were first proposed and worked to persuade federal officials to change them and to broaden the religious exemption.

They have been forceful in their condemnations of the latest announcement as well.

"The bishops as a body are very committed to taking a firm stance on this," as evidenced by the establishment of the new Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, Archbishop Chaput said.

Because the church did not work harder to combat indifference to religious values in society earlier, "now it's come back to bite us in the face," he said.

The regulations leave Catholic institutions with few options.

One option would be to stop offering health insurance as an employee benefit, Archbishop Chaput said. Catholic institutions presumably would increase employees' pay so they could buy insurance on their own, he said, but that would mean their health insurance premiums would most likely be more expensive.

"Or we can stop helping people who aren't Catholic, but Catholics always take care of other people," Archbishop Chaput said. "The church has to live in the broader world or else it's not living its values."

Catholic leaders might be forced to choose the option of civil disobedience, Archbishop Chaput said. Catholics are good citizens, he said, "but we're God's citizens first."

The best outcome would be for public pressure to force the government to change the contraceptive mandate, Archbishop Chaput said. Monsignor

Whitmore

Paul E.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Looking to the cross when life just isn't fair

woman in the hospital whose whole body was covered with burns suffered in an accident. She could barely talk, but when she saw who I was, she made the effort to whisper to me, "Please tell me the story of Job"

Many weeks later, she told me that this had been her only consolation in en-

during the severe pain that racked her body for many weeks.

When we think of Job, we

Many years ago, I visited a think of a once prosperous landowner, sitting

on a dung heap, scraping his sores.

Meanwhile, wellmeaning friends are trying to convince this totally innocent man that he must have sinned grievously, and God is now punishing him.

At first, his faith prompts him to cry, 'The Lord gives, the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name

of the Lord!" Eventually, though, he has to work through a great period of depression and near-de-

spair. While acknowledging his innocence and the seeming injustice of his present condition, he eventually bows his spirit in total and complete trust in God.

His powerful story has comforted thousands upon thousands of people who have lost everything, but have held tenaciously to their faith in a loving God.

In our own lives, when we feel that God has acted cruelly or unjustly, then we need to look at the crucifix.

Was it fair for Jesus whose only crime was loving us. to be killed on a cross after severe humiliation and torture? Was it fair for his

FEB.5

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS Job 7:1-4,6-7 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23 Mark 1:29-39

mother, Mary, to suffer the terrible pain that only mothers can know and appreciate?

Our second reading from Corinthians give us the example of St. Paul who endures daily trials because of the compulsion of love and zeal, urging him to preach the Word of life every day,

in season and out of season. In the Gospel, Jesus helps Peter's mother-in-law to her feet after curing his fever.

What a touching scene when this now healthy woman asks for her apron and starts preparing dinner for Jesus and his followers.

Although we do not know the name of Peter's wife, we feel sorry for her! Not only does Jesus take her husband away to be an apostle, he even makes a follower out of the girl's mother.

Who could resist the power of His love flowing into both her body and her spirit? May we too surrender our hearts to His power.

PURSUING JUSTICE

NYS Catholics support: conscience protection

Second in a series

The bishops of the eight dioceses of New York have release the New York State Catholic Conference 2012 Legislative Agenda. Among the legislative priorities is to "Support Comprehensive Conscience Protection for Individuals and Organizations.'

Summary

Current New York State Civil Rights law protects medical personnel who do not wish to be involved in abortion procedures. State regulations protect Catholic hospitals from being compelled to allow abortions in their facilities. But these policies are limited and do not provide adequate protection to individuals or institutions with religious and moral objections to activities/procedures/mandates such as abortion, euthanasia, embryo research/human cloning and same-sex "marriage.

Conference Position

Comprehensive religious liberty protections are urgently needed as religious organizations and individuals are increasingly being coerced into accepting standards and participating in activities which violate their deeply-held religious and moral beliefs.

Rationale

The Catholic Church teaches that "society and the state must not force a person to act against his

conscience or prevent him from acting in conformity with it." (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, #42) Religious-affiliated providers must have the right to operate and provide services in accordance with their mission statements and fundamental ethical principles. (Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care, fifth edition)

Yet recent legislative actions and judicial decisions highlight the urgency of establishing comprehensive conscience protections for religious institutions and individuals in New York State. A state mandate for contraceptive insurance coverage, a requirement for adoption agencies to place children in same-sex coupled homes, and a same-sex "marriage" law are a few of the recent legal changes in our state. and legislative threats such as the extreme abortion bill (the "Reproductive Health Act") loom on the horizon and present a multitude of new threats to freedom of conscience.

Failure to follow such state mandates, and provide employment benefits or services, would render religious organizations and persons "discriminatory," and may lead to prosecution or the loss of tax-exempt status.

The refusal of religious organizations could also cost them exclusion from government contracting decisions or their state licenses to perform important services, such as education, health care and social service. This has already happened in the United States, Canada, and Britain. For example, New York State's new law redefining marriage, with only a very narrow religious exemption, has already resulted in county clerks facing legal action for refusing to participate in same-sex unions. At the national level, the government has withheld a grant from the United State Catholic Conference's Migration and Refugee Services Department because in providing services to human trafficking victims, they do not provide abortion and contraception. Such decisions will end up costing the government additional

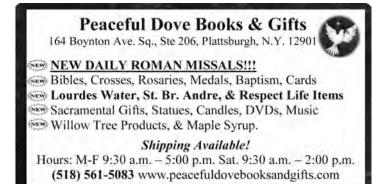
The Catholic Conference

The New York State Catholic Conference was founded to translate Catholic teachings into action in the public policy arena. These teachings, which are centered on the innate dignity of every human person made in the image and likeness of God, form the basis of the Conference's legislative agenda.

This agenda and supporting documentation is intended to illuminate the rich teachings of our faith as they relate to public policy, and to help Catholic citizens and public officials to understand and put into context our positions on a wide range of issues.

money to render critical services to poor, needy and vulnerable populations.

Protections for individuals and organizations must be established to ensure there are no adverse employment, licensing or certification actions, no denial of government grants or contracts, and no disciplinary actions for professional misconduct.(*This message is* reprinted from WWW.nyscatholic.org)



AT THE MOVIES

EXTREMELY LOUD & INCREDIBLY CLOSE

By John MulderigCatholic News Service

Few events in recent history have exerted as deeply personal an impact on the lives of millions of Americans, and of people across the globe, as the attacks of 9/11.

So it's odd and a little baffling that a film based on our national tragedy of a decade ago should register for most of its two-hourplus running time, at least as uninvolving.

Yet such is the case with "Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close" (Warner Bros.), director Stephen Daldry's grim screen version of the best-selling novel by Jonathan Safran Foer.

Though his drama focuses on community, shared suffering and familial solidarity, and upholds positive, humanistic values, various factors within it seem to conspire to keep the audience at a distance.

To begin with, there's the eccentric personality of the movie's main character, introverted grade schooler Oskar Schell. While newcomer Thomas Horn does an admirable job of inhabiting Oskar, this young Manhattanite is anything but an Everyman - or perhaps Everyboy.

Oskar may or may not have the mild form of autism known as Asperger's syndrome; tests, he tells us at one point, were inconclusive. But he is undeniably pan-phobic, and the only thing that seems to soothe him - as he runs the gauntlet of such fear-inducing elements of New York life as subways, elevators and loud noises - is his ever-present tambourine.

Of course, Oskar has more reason to be fearful than most, given that his devoted father, Thomas (Tom Hanks), perished in the World Trade Center.

Devastated by his sudden loss, Oskar seeks diversion, as well as a prolonged sense of closeness to his dad, in an unusual quest. He's out to identify the purpose of a mysterious key he discovered among Thomas' belongings.

His search gains him the friendship of the traumatized German immigrant (Max von Sydow) who lodges with his grandmother. And it ultimately brings him closer to his seemingly grief-paralyzed mom, Linda (Sandra Bullock).

But the diffuse nature of his journey, which brings him into contact with a whole series of strangers including, among others, a



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sympathetic transvestite -- is another alienating, or at least distracting element for viewers.

While not suitable for Oskar's real-life peers, his story is presented in a way that most adults will find acceptable, a few rude puns exchanged with his building's doorman Stan (John Goodman) notwithstanding. But, as scripted by Eric Roth, his tale is likely to prove more emotionally trying than genuinely cathartic.

The film contains mature themes, some disturbing images, a transvestite character, a couple of crude terms and occasional vulgar wordplay.

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.



YOU can be part of this gathering!

Save the Date Tuesday, March 13, 2012

Catholics at the Capital Day

Come to Albany for the

New York State Catholic Conference 2012

Over 1,000 Catholics from all over New York State will raise their voices for public policies that: † recognize the sanctity and dignity of human life †

The day will include delegations to legislators, workshops on the issues, a special prayer gathering with the Knights of Columbus, and a Rosary Procession from the Convention Center to the Cathedral for Mass.

Register on line at: www.nyscatholic.org

Once you have registered, you will be contacted by a local representative from Catholic Charities. You will be provided with all of the information you will need for the day.

Copies of the 2012 Legislative Agenda are available at: www.nyscatholic.org

Imagine being part of a day that focuses on building the kingdom of God through advocacy for a society that is just, compassionate and welcoming to all of God's people. Join us!



CLINTON

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Treadwell Mills – RCC St. Alexander & St. Joseph's will hold a Pancake Breakfast (all you can eat).

Date: Feb. 12 **Time:** 12:30 p.m.

Place: St. Joseph's Church Hall **Cost**: \$6; Children 6-12, \$3; under 5, Free

LITTLE ROCK SCRIPTURE STUDY

Plattsburgh — St. Peter's Parish will hold the Little Rock Scripture Study this Lent with the "Letter to the Hebrews".

Date: Tuesdays Feb. 20 — April 3

Time: Group one at 10 a.m. in the Emmaus Room and Group 2 at 7:05 p.m. in the chapel

Cost: \$15

Features: In this study you will examine and enter into the priestly ministry of Jesus and consider your role in the Kingdom of God today.

Contact: Parish Office at 563-1692 before Feb. 12

CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE

Peru – The Catholic Daughters of Court St. Monica will hold a Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner.

Date: March 10

Time: 4 p.m. to 6:30

Place: St. Augustine's Parish

Cost: Adults, \$8; Children ages 12 and under, \$4

Contact: Helen Bisallion at 643-2638 or Christa Reyell at 566-6404

HEALING MASS

Plattsburgh – St. Peter's parish will offer a Healing Mass the first Wednesday of every Month.

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Features: Also included in the service is the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. After the mass is an opportunity to receive individual prayer with members of Living Waters Healing Ministry.

LIVING WATERS HEALING MINISTRY

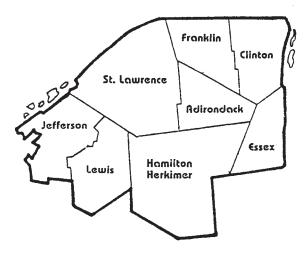
Plattsburgh – A weekly prayer meeting will be held every Wednesday (except the first Wednesday).

Time: 7 p.m. to 8 Place: St. Peter's Church

SOAKING PRAYER

Plattsburgh – Soaking Prayer is offered every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month under the direction of the Living Water's Healing Ministry.

Time: 10 a.m. to 11:30
Place: Upper room at St. Peters



The **North County Catholic** welcomes contributions to "Around the Diocese".

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to: **North Country Catholic**, PO Box 326,

Ogdensburg, NYE 13669; fax, 1-866-314-7296; e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Plattsburgh — Eucharistic Adoration is held throughout the year every Wednes day, Thursday, and Friday.

Place: St. John's Adoration Chapel, **Time:** 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Theme: "Adoration is primarily an act of faith... [God] is present. And if he is present, then I bow down before him." (Pope Benedict XVI, Christmas Address to Curia, Dec. 22, 2011) Pray for vocations!

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

BLESSED SACRAMENT ADORATION

Keeseville – The Keeseville Altar Rosary Society to sponsor Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Date: Every Sunday **Time:** 1 p.m. to 4

ESSEX

ADULT FAITH SHARING GROUP

Port Henry – The Adult Faith Sharing Group will be viewing Fr. Robert Barron's video series "Conversation".

Dates: Feb. 9 & 23; March 8 & 22 **Time**: 7 p.m. to 8:30

FRANKLIN

BREAKFAST BUFFET

Brushton — St. Mary's Catholic Church events committee is sponsoring a Breakfast Buffet.

Date: Feb. 5

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

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$7; Seniors, \$6; Children 6-

12, \$4; under 5, Free' Immediate Family of 5 or more, \$20; Take-outs available call 518-529-6580

JEFFERSON

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Evans Mills — St. Mary's Parish will be having a Spaghetti Dinner to benefit the Indian River Council 7471 Knights of Columbus.

Date: Feb. 11 **Time**: 4 p.m.

Cost: Adults, \$7; Seniors, \$6; Children under 12, \$5; under 5, Free

GET OUT OF DEBT

Clayton – A 13 week program will be held to help you get out of debt.

Date: beginning Feb. 29 **Place:** St. Mary's Church **Cost:** \$99.50

Features: Through this program you will learn how to clear up your debt, pay off your mortgage and get debt free and plan for the future. Classes run for 13 weeks and those enrolled will learn the secrets to living debt free. Classes taught by Dave Ramsey.

Contact: Bruce and Liz Daugherty at 315-686-4884 or e-mail norwichrugby-mom@gmail.com. Enroll by Feb. 15.

PARKINSON GROUP

Chaumont – The Parkinson Group meets every Tuesday.

Time: 11 a.m.

Place: All Saints Church

Features: Sharing new information and developments to provide hope; strengthening excises; and lunch

Contact: Sister Anne Hogan, SSJ, phone 315-649-2717

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.

LEWIS

SPAGHETTI SUPPER

Lowville — A Spaghetti supper will be held at St. Peter's Church Hall.

Date: Feb. 2

Time: 5 p.m.; Take-outs start at 4:30 **Cost:** Adults, \$7; Children 5-10, \$3.50; under 5, Free

DIVINE MERCY DEVOTIONS

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

Date: Feb. 5 **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 (sung) and Benedictions. All are welcome. Refreshments will follow in the church hall.

Contact: 348-6260.

MARDI GRAS

Constableville — The 7th Annual Spaghetti Dinner (Mardi Gras) to be held sponsored by St. Mary's Parish Council.

Date: Feb. 19

Time: 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Place: St. Mary's Church

Cost: Adults, \$8; Children 5-8, \$5; under 5, Free; Take-outs, \$8

ST. LAWRENCE

SUNDAY BRUNCH

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

Date: Feb. 12

Time: 8:30 a.m. to Noon

Place: Visitation Parish Center; Takeouts available

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

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Massena- St. Mary's & St. Joseph's has Adoration every Friday.

Time: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church.

Features: First Friday of each month is preceded by Benediction.

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

Massena - St. Mary's Church is holding a special rosary to mark First Saturday.

Date: Feb. 4 **Time:** 3:15 p.m.

Features: Rosary to Our Lady of Fatima in reparation to Her Immaculate Heart and for World Peace. A 15 minute private meditation on the Luminous Mysteries will follow. Confessions available.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

YOUNG ADULT ONLINE RETREAT

Diocese Young Adult Ministry will be sponsoring an "ONLINE" Lenten prayer group Sunday nights at 9PM each week during Lent. Busy schedule? Children? Life holding you back from adding prayer during Lent? Jump on line Sunday nights and join others as we pray our way to the Cross. Easy to join.

Contact: If interested please call or Email Lorraine Turgeon Director of Young Adult Ministry 315-323-4989 Iturgeon@dioogdensburg.org for more information.

METANOIA RETREAT

Ogdensburg - The second Young Adult Metanoia Retreat will be held.

Date: Feb. 10-11 **Place**: Wadhams Hall

Features: Are you needing to take some time away from your busy schedule? Are you needing to hear what God is saying to you? You are invited to the Metanoia Retreat

Contact: Lorraine at 315-323-4989 lturgeon@dioogdensburg.org

2012 YOUTH RALLY

Mark your calendars: April 28 At IHC High School in Watertown on.

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL

Clifton Park, NY — Catholic Lay Healers and Evangelists to offer healing and Renewal Days on two weekends in 2012.

Dates: April 20-21, 2012 featuring Maria Vadia of Glory God Ministries and Oct. 12-13, 2012 featuring Bob Canton.

Place: St. Edward the Confessor, 563
Clifton Park Center Rd, Clifton Park, NY Information: 518-237-7391 or 518-

371-7911 or dcn.jmgrigaitis@aol.com



A salute to Catholic schools

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

This week the Catholic Schools honor their annual Catholic Schools Week. The theme for Catholic Schools Week 2012 is "Catholic Schools: Faith. Academics. Service." The annual observance starts the last Sunday in January and runs all week.

Schools typically celebrate Catholic Schools Week with Masses, open houses and activities for students, families, parishioners and the community at large.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Mission Office is happy to send the students, faculty and administration our best wishes for a successful Catholic Schools Week.

This year's theme, "Faith. Academics. Service. " embodies to a great extent what the Holy Childhood Association, HCA, stands for too.

HCA is a program conducted in Catholic schools and catechetical programs to teach students here about the Missions there.

Parents, guardians, parish priests, Religious Brothers and Sisters and lay people, especially teachers and catechists, play a vital role in HCA's mission.

With support from these people, children can learn about children in other countries through HCA programs and learn too the message of HCA -- that children are and can be missionaries today, called to share their faith and their love, in prayer and sacrifice, with the poorest of the world's children.

In addition, financial contributions from adults help to underwrite the cost of education materials for children in the United States and also help support the Church's service to children in the Developing World.

Faith. Academics. Service.

These three words sum up not only Catholic Schools Week 2012, but they also represent what students should strive for each day.

Let us stand together and support our Catholic schools as they prepare our students for a life as young Catholic adults.

It does take a village to raise a child.

With efforts like HCA and Catholic Schools Week, together we can all make sure that the children in our village, both near and far, are ready to animate others to share their faith and to be missionaries themselves by supporting the missionary work of the Church worldwide.

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

OBITUARIES

AuSable Forks — Marcia Ann Reichly Gero Aubin, 80; Funeral Jan. 25, 2012 at Holy Name Church; burial in parish cemetery.

AuSable Forks — Howard "Porky" Seguin, 78; Funeral Services Jan. 19, 2012 at Holy Name Church; burial in St. Matthew's Cemetery, Black Brook.

Brasher Falls — JoAnne (LaLone) Carr, 70; Funeral Services Jan. 17, 2012 at St. Patrick's Church.

Cadyville — Catherine J. Rock, 76; Funeral Services Jan. 23, 2012 at St. James Church.

Canton — William N. Clark, Jr., 90; Funeral Services Jan. 21, 2012 at St. Mary's Church.

Chateaugay — Marjorie M. (Cassavaw) LaFlesh, 89; Funeral Services Jan. 23, 2012 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Clayton — Teresa H. (Hall) Mitchell; Funeral Services Jan. 28, 2012 at St. Mary's Church.

DeKalb Junction – Sylvia L. (Bush) Spadaccini, 71; Funeral Services Jan. 21, 2012 at the Allen-Denesha Funeral Home; burial in Union Cemetery.

Ellenburg – Maurice "Moe" Decoste, 67; Funeral Services Jan. 21, 2012 at St. Edmund's Church; burial in Whispering Maples Memorial Gardens.

Gouverneur — Beatrice E. (Burke) Ptak, 88; Funeral Services Jan. 21, 2012 at St. James Church; burial in New St. James Cemetery.

Lake Placid — Joseph W."Joe" Brooks, 69; Funeral Services Jan. 19, 2012 at St. Agnes Church.

Louisville – Margaret I."Peggy" (Senecal) Wyman, 89; Funeral Services Jan. 23, 2012 at St. Lawrence Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Lancaster Ontario.

Lowville — John C. Aubel, 69; Funeral Services Jan. 20, 2012 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Martinsburg Cemetery.

Lyon Mountain — John C. Noel, 104; Funeral Jan. 19, 2012 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in parish Cemetery.

Malone — Ralph M. Cardinal, 98; Funeral Services Feb. 3, 2012 at Notre Dame Church.

Massena – Jeffrey R. Horan, 58; Funeral Service Jan. 25, 2012 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – June A. (Carter) Kirkey, 75; Funeral Services Jan. 21, 2012 at Sacred Heart Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Lillian D. (Corpron) Loffler, 71; Funeral Services Jan. 28, 2012 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Massena Center Cemetery.

Massena — Evelyn B. "Evey" (Brainard) White, 92; Funeral Jan. 17, 2012 at St. Mary's Church; burial, Calvary Cemetery.

Mineville — Beatrice M. Kent, 87; Funeral Jan. 17, 2012 at All Saints Church.

Morrisonville – Robert J."Bob" Duquette, 79; Funeral Services Jan. 16, 2012 at St. Alexander's Church: burial in St. Alexander's Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Eleanor M."Honey" (Carter) Cutwa, 79; Funeral Services Jan. 24, 2012 at Frary Funeral Home; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Ogdensburg — Anita M. (Banchard) Kline, 89; Funeral Jan. 19, 2012 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in parish c emetery.

Ogdensburg – Mary M. (Williams) Mc-Carney, 72; Funeral Services Jan. 23, 2012 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Ogdensburg — Charles D. Pearson, Jan. 27, 2012 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Foxwood Memorial Park.

Peru – Doris M. (LaDuke) Favreau, 83; Funeral April 14, 2012 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Peru – Francis M. Kinnelly, 76; Memorial Services Jan. 28, 2012 at St. Augustine's Church.

Plattsburgh — Dolores H. (Powers) Adams, 83; Funeral Services Jan. 18, 2012 at St. John's Church.

Plattsburgh — Martha Rose(Yelle) Bushey, 82; Funeral Services Jan. 25, 2012 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, West Chazy.

Plattsburgh — Regina M. (Defayette) Rollier, 88; Funeral Jan. 19, 2012 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh — Clifton J."Cliff"Torrance Jr., 62; Funeral Services Jan. 18, 2012 at Our

Lady of Victory Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh — Frances "Tootsie" (LeGoy) Vidol, 71; Funeral Services Jan. 17, 2012 at Heald Funeral Home; burial in Holy Angels Cemetery, Altona.

Potsdam — Paul R. Austin,; Funeral Services Jan. 27, 2012 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Potsdam — Catherine M. Kilroy, 71; Funeral Jan. 16, 2012 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery, Norwood.

Potsdam — Roger A. Miller, 61; Funeral Services Jan. 25, 2012 at the Garner Funeral Home.

Rouses Point – Florence M. Gooley, 90; Funeral Jan. 23, 2012 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Star Lake — Maxwell J. Searles, 28; Funeral Services Jan. 14, 2012 at St. Hubert's Church; burial in Woodland Cemetery, Fine.

Tupper Lake — Anna G. Mack, 74; Funeral Services Jan. 18 at the Stuart-Fortune-Keough Funeral Home; burial in St. Alphonsus Cemetery.

Tupper Lake – Paul A Charland, 79; Funeral Jan. 19, 2012 at St. Alphonsus Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Watertown – Illma M. (Phillips) Archer, 99; Funeral Jan. 21, 2012 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Copenhagen

Watertown — Korleen G. "Kaye" (Gallagher) Brady, 85; Funeral Services Jan. 21, 2012 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Roger E. Bull, 53; Funeral Services Jan. 22, 212 at Holy Family Church; burial in Maple Hill Cemetery, Rutland.

Watertown – Richard D. Faulknham, 86; Funeral Services Jan. 28, 2012 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Joseph P. Scordo, 90; Funeral Jan. 18, 2012 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

West Chazy – Geraldine L. (Wheeler) Gagnier, 83; Funeral Services Jan. 24, 2012 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

YOUNG CATHOLIC VOICE

The Baking Miracle



Rachel Daly, front right, graduate of Seton Catholic Central in Plattsburgh and now a sophomore at the University of Dallas, and her friends display eight of their 24"miracle cakes."

QUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

PRAYER SUGGESTION

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name a priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own dispositions and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess

Replace him with yourself.

personality and life.

his soul: take over his entire

Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this February intimate union always. O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (...)

The Passion

of our Lord

OGDENSBURG NY FEBRUARY 2012

SUMMY	MONDAY	RESDAY	WEISHAY	THURSDAY	FROMA	SATERIOAY
DIOCESE OF PO BOX 369 OGDENSBUR	OGDENSBURG		BISHOP TERRY R. LAVALLEY	REV. DAVID DELUCA MSC	REV. GARVIN L DEMARAIS	REV. RICHARD D. DEMERS
REV. JOHN M. DEMO	REV. J. EVERETT DENESHA	MSGR. LAWRENCE M. DENO	OUR PASTOR	REV. WILFRED L. DEROCHE	REV. JOHN L. DOWNS	MSGR. DENNIS J. DUPREY
REV. 12 GUY F. EDWARDS		REV. 14 ALFRED H. FISH	15 POPE BENEDICT	REV. 16 FRANCIS J. FLYNN	REV. 17 SCOTT D. FOBARE	REV. 18 VINCENT FREEH MSC
REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY	REV	REV. 21 HARRY E. GIROUX	22 RETIRED PRIESTS	REV. JOSEPH W. GIROUX	MSGR. JOHN R. MURPHY	REV. L. WILLIAM GORDON
REV. 26 STEPHEN H GRATTO	REV. 27 ROLLAND A HART	REV. 28 ALBERT J. HAUSER	29 DECEASED PRIESTS			

A donation to help support THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS will be appreciated The Monthly Prayer Request for Priests is graciously underwritten by

By Rachel Daly Contributing Writer

Never have I known anvone quite like my roommate Gretchen.

We met as hallmates in Theresa Hall, the dorm building at my college known for warmth and community. Gretchen was a tall figure, often seen wearing a billowing skirt and breezing about the dorm kitchen. She was responsible for the delicious smells that wafted down the hallway and for bringing warm cookies from room to room just when you needed them most. My favorites were her oatmeal ones-cooked to perfection with just the right amount of chewiness. She often served up a complimentary backrub if you were looking particularly stressed, which for me seemed to happen a lot.

Gretchen wasn't especially outgoing, but her baking was her gift, and it no doubt brought people together. Which is why it was such a shame when the building we moved into this year didn't have an oven.

However, that didn't stop Gretchen. She founded a baking club, received school funding, and got permission to use the campus ministry ovens.

Shortly afterward, the club was asked to provide twenty-four cakes for Family Day, a carnival our school puts on annually as part of our Charity Week. The proceeds were to go to two pro-life charities in Dallas. Never one to turn down a cause like that, Gretchen accepted.

It was only afterward that she found out that one of the campus ministry ovens was broken, and she didn't have pans, plates to put the cakes on, a place to store them, or a car to go buy ingredients. Twenty-four cakes is an awful lot of cakes to pull out of thin air.

Well, somehow Gretchen pulled everything together and made it happen. The first two nights of baking, not many members of the baking club were able to be there, so I went over to lend a hand. We made seven cakes the first night and seven the second, and though we hadn't even gotten to the frosting yet, already it seemed like a huge endeavor.

The next day was Saturday, the day before the carnival, and the rest of the baking club could then join her, so I retreated to our room to work on some homework. I saw Gretchen only briefly throughout the day, and as the time grew later, she grew more and more stressed, although she scarcely showed it. At last, around nine o'clock, the baking was done, and they could begin the frosting. There were six cans of frosting, and Gretchen said to me, "If there isn't enough frosting, I'm going to cry."

Half an hour later, she texted me to tell me they were ten cakes in and almost out of frosting. I felt horrible for her.

Some time passed, and I

finally decided to swing down to the lounge where they were working on the cakes to see how bad it was. When I got down there, however, instead of the frenzy I was expecting, everyone was smiling.

"The frosting held out!" someone said. "We have twenty-eight cakes, and we didn't run out!'

Sure enough, I watched with my own eyes as they consolidated what remained of the frosting, and there was over half a can left over. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It was the loaves and the fishes—or rather the frosting!

Was it a miracle what happened that night? We like to think so. But more importantly, I think it was an affirmation that if you are called upon to give of yourself and you say yes in faith, God will supply all the grace you need, and then some.

Gretchen, like our mother Mary, agreed to something without knowing how it could possibly work out, and extraordinary things resulted. It was truly an incredible witness, and the kind of thing that inspires me to say yes to God all over again every time I get up in the morning.

God has so much good, so much grace in store for us if only we put ourselves at His disposal. Let us be unafraid to step out and embrace all to which He has challenged us, with the faith that He will provide an abundance of grace to enable us to get the job done.



