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NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

FEB. 29, 2012

TODAY, TOMORROW & ALWAYS



PHOTO PROVIDED
Sarah and Eric Sharlow, parishioners of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church in Watertown, were among the hundreds of couples married in Catholic Churches of the Diocese of Ogdensburg during the past year. Here, Missionary of the Sacred Heart Father Richard Kennedy presides at their July 16 wedding. This week's *NCC* focuses on marriage preparation. Among the topics are "The top ten things to consider when planning a Catholic wedding" and a profile of the new diocesan Pre-Cana directors.

Bishop LaValley shares a special message for Lent

Bishop LaValley writes:
I invite you to make the forty days of Lent 2012 a focused journey of faith generously lived.

Join me in prayer, fasting, and acts of charity for those hurting in our family, parish and community.

Lent is a season when Jesus graces us to a new re-

solve and new determination to become the kind of persons our Father in heaven created us to be: brothers and sisters all.

We recommit ourselves this Lent to seek holiness and grow in our love of Jesus expressed in our respect and concern for our neighbor.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

'EXTRAORDINARY' DAY



FULL STORY, PAGE 20

It's time to renew your subscription!

The annual *North Country Catholic* subscription campaign begins March 3-4 in all parishes of the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Bishop LaValley asks every Catholic family in the diocese to subscribe: "Given the urgency of the times, particularly during this election year, it will be essential for each of us to know the Catholic faith and to learn what's happening in the public arena, not through the lens of partisan politics, but through the faith vision of our Church. The *North Country Catholic*, through its dedicated staff, helps us to embrace our faith as informed parishioners.

NCC PATRONS

A salute to the generous patrons of the diocesan newspaper who make it possible for the *NCC* to fulfill its critical mission
FULL STORY, PAGE 10-11

Around the Diocese

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

All in the family

It's always a pleasure to publish the annual NCC Wedding Issue and this year is no exception.

From pages 5 through 9, we offer some good advice and some very good news from the people who are working tirelessly to strengthen family life in our diocese.

For the past three years, the issue has also been a chance to show off one of my own babies since for the third year in a row we've been blessed with a family wedding. (It shouldn't be too hard to find the latest family photo set in the gorgeous Adirondack Mountains last September.)

This week is also the time we ask you to take a minute to renew your subscription to the NCC in anticipation of Campaign Sunday March 4.

I hope you'll allow me to let our bishop give some of the most important reasons why you should continue to welcome his newspaper into your homes:

Beginning this autumn, Catholics around the globe will be asked to participate in a Year of Faith. Pope Benedict XVI declared this to be a special year to help our Church focus our attention on "Jesus Christ and the beauty of having faith in Him."

The Diocese of Ogdensburg will enter wholeheartedly this Jubilee Year of Faith. We will strive for a

renewed conversion to Jesus and seek to strengthen our Catholic faith. One of the most important means we have to assist us is our

diocesan newspaper. The North Country Catholic will be an invaluable source of information and inspiration.

Given the urgency of the times, particularly during this election year, it will be essential for each of us to know the Catholic faith and to learn what's happening in the public arena, not through the lens of partisan politics, but through the faith vision of our Church.

The North Country Catholic, through its dedicated staff, helps us to embrace our faith as informed parishioners.

This weekend, the annual North Country Catholic subscription campaign begins in all the parishes of the Diocese. I know that those who subscribe to our diocesan paper enjoy reading the timely and relevant articles on prayer, Scripture, parish happenings, and Church news that are featured in every issue.

Please accept my invitation to welcome the North Country Catholic into your home. I am thankful for your support as we all seek to follow Him, Who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Thank you, Bishop LaValley!



Mary Lou Kilian

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CHURCH: A FAMILY OF FAITH

The Presence of God
Second Sunday of Lent - March 3-4

By Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ

Director of Evangelization

If we are in the presence of God, walking in His ways, is not God with us and for us? St. Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans that God intercedes for us.

God interceded when Abraham was about to sacrifice his only son Isaac. God was for Abraham because Abraham's trust in God was one of obedience to the covenant promised to him by God. Abraham knew that Isaac was part of the promise. Abraham's trust was shown when Isaac asks the question of where was the sheep for the sacrifice. Abraham's response was "God himself will provide the sheep for the holocaust" (Genesis 22:8).

Against every sentiment of being a father ready to sacrifice his son, Abraham believed that God knew what He was doing. Abraham hears God's voice: "Abraham! Abraham! Do not lay your hand on the boy. Do not do the least thing to him. I know now how devoted you are to God, since you did not withhold from me your own beloved son" (Genesis 22:10-11). Abraham accepted that and acted accordingly.

The sacrifice of Isaac prefigures the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, an act of obedience to the Father's will. Abraham's act of obedience and response is an example of faith for all of us that grow into a deeper relationship with God.

Again, God's voice could be heard by Jesus when His Father called Him "the beloved Son" on Mt. Tabor. This beloved Son is the Lamb of God who will suffer as the Suffering Servant offering Himself as the victim in fulfillment of the Father's plan. The voice continues, "Listen to Him!" The vision ends and there is nothing more to listen to.

What Jesus says to them is not to relate the story until after He has risen from the dead. How were the disciples to interpret the vision they had just experienced? The disciples did not understand what "risen from the dead" meant, let alone, that Jesus would have to suffer and die. Peter had already confronted Jesus with the fact that Jesus would have to suffer and die. And now the light of the Mt. Tabor experience begins to darken as the disciples and Jesus begin to come down the mountain to face the upcoming challenges of the political leaders and Jesus' own people turn against Him.

The experience of Mt. Tabor changed the disciples forever even though they did not perfectly understand it all. It would only be after the Resurrection, with the gift and the power of the Holy Spirit that the words, actions, and presence of God would be with them.

No matter what the darkness is in our own lives, God is always there for us and with us. As St. Paul said in his letter to the Romans, "He who did not spare His own Son but handed Him over for us all, how will He not also give us everything else along with Him" (Romans 8:32)? As disciples of Jesus, as a family of faith, we are called to climb the mountain of the Lord and keep our eyes fixed on Him. We, who follow the Word of God in obedience and in faith, and ascend the mountain, and climb to the top, find Jesus. He is there to transfigure and transform us. If we respond in faith and in obedience, we are changed forever. We can come back down the mountain to continue His mission with His abiding presence.

How do we experience God's presence, His intervention when we need Him most? God's presence surrounds us in the most trying times of our lives, but He never abandons His people.

As Church: A Family of Faith, our faith can be tested and tried. But God is a God of the Covenant who keeps His promises. He asks us to listen, to obey, and to sacrifice, but never without His help and grace. We are valued, chosen, and fought for. What have been your own "mountaintop" experiences of faith? How have you experienced God being for you and with you?

FOLLOW ME

Lent: a focused journey of faith

By Bishop Terry R. LaValley

In his Lenten message this year, Pope Benedict XVI asks us to reflect on a verse from the Letter to the Hebrews: "Let us be concerned for each other, to stir a response in love and good works." (10:24)

As I was reflecting on the Holy Father's words, I was reminded of the many prayer requests that I receive from our sisters and brothers throughout the North Country. Some of the concerns expressed include:

- The forgotten elderly
- The poor and homeless
- The troubled teen
- The cancer patient
- The worried parent and anxious grandparent
- The emotionally, sexually and physically abused
- The fractured family
- Loved ones in the military
- The "un-Churched"

The spiritual pillars of our Lenten practices are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Humble prayer and purposeful fasting lead us to charitable works and concern for the well-being of another.

Each of us is called to walk in solidarity with Christ to the Cross. I do not



On Ash Wednesday in Nicaragua, North Country Mission of Hope volunteer Andrew Petro carries the ashes from various places of where the Plattsburgh-based humanitarian-aid organization serves in Nicaragua and its connected geographic regions in the United States around the morning circle held to start the day. Vicky Ashley puts ashes on Haley Grant's forehead as Emily Mack contemplates the experience. More than 40 missionaries spent a week in February building home shelters, distributing food and medical care to the needy, making improvements in hospitals and schools and performing numerous other tasks on this, the 44th mission of the group. They returned home Tuesday. In his message for this year's Season of Lent, printed here, Bishop LaValley said, "The spiritual pillars of our Lenten practices are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Humble prayer and purposeful fasting lead us to charitable works and concern for the well-being of another."

follow Christ as a "lone ranger," but as a fellow pilgrim. Christ Himself teaches us that no one is strong enough to travel the entire path of salvation unaided.

I invite you to make the forty days of Lent 2012 a focused journey of faith generously lived.

Join me in prayer, fasting, and acts of charity for those

hurting in our family, parish and community.

Lent is a season when Jesus graces us to a new resolve and new determination to become the kind of

persons our Father in heaven created us to be: brothers and sisters all.

We recommit ourselves this Lent to seek holiness and grow in our love of Jesus expressed in our respect and concern for our neighbor. A faith that is lived only internally, with no signs of it by the witness of our lives, is a hollow, shallow faith. Our children suffer from such spiritual neglect and future generations are deprived of the fullness of faith.

I pray that the flame of faith be stirred and made alive in each of us these next forty days so that we are not afraid to witness our faith, walking together in holiness.

Through the graces and spiritual strength we receive from our participation at Eucharist and other Lenten devotional practices, God clears our vision and opens our hearts to see and respond to the needs of those around us.

As a pilgrim people, seeking to follow Jesus, the Crucified and Risen One, we embrace this Lenten summons to strengthen our bond of love and concern for our sisters and brothers. Let us pray for each other this Lent and always!

EWTN personality to lead local women's retreat

OGDENSBURG - Johnnette Benokovic, executive producer of The Abundant Life seen internationally on EWTN, will be the featured speaker at a Women of Grace retreat to be held April 20-22 at Wadhams Hall Retreat Center.



Johnnette Benokovic

The theme of the retreat, open to all women is "Do Whatever He Tells You" (John 2:5)

Mrs. Benokovic is also Founder of Women of

Grace®, a Catholic apostolate for Christian women.

Members of a local Woman of Grace chapter, based in Evans Mills, have organized the retreat.

After years of being a non-practicing Catholic, Mrs. Benokovic experienced a deep conversion back to her Catholic faith in 1981 and discerned a call to share the Gospel message through the media.

She has been a consistent

presence in Catholic radio since 1987 and in Catholic television since 1988.

In addition, Mrs. Benokovic is a popular conference speaker, retreat conductor, and seminar presenter, and has been published in major Catholic magazines.

She is the author of several books including *Full of Grace: Women and the Abundant Life* (St. Anthony Messenger Press), *Grace-Filled Moments* (Our Sunday Visitor), *Living Life Abundantly: Stories of People Who Have Encountered God* (St. An-

thony Messenger Press), *Experience Grace in Abundance: Strategies For Your Spiritual Life* (Our Sunday Visitor) and *The New Age Counterfeit* (Queenship).

She has been married to her husband, Anthony, since 1973, and is the mother of three children.

Registrations for the local retreat may be sent to: Mary Dillenback, PO Box 4, Fishers Landing, NY, 13641, with the following information: name, address, phone, parish, e-mail, any affiliation with Women of Grace, any special

needs or food allergies.

The cost for the weekend, for registrations received before March 28, is \$195 for single room, \$150 for double, \$215 for single mini suite, \$245 for single suite and \$165 for double suite. After March 28, an additional \$25 is charged. The commuter rate is \$120.

Checks should be made payable to Mary Dillenback, Regional Coordinator WOG

Further information is available from: marydillenback@twcny.rr.com or 315-771-1377

School wins \$15,000 grant to add to funds already raised

IHC Intermediate to get playground

WATERTOWN - IHC Intermediate School will get a new playground. The school won a \$15,000 "Let's Play!" grant from Kaboom.org and the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group.

Last week, the school announced it had raised \$30,000 through its own efforts for the playground and new scholarships.

Construction will begin in the spring.

IHC is now three-fourths of the way to its goal of \$60,000, and will continue to raise funds for soccer and kickball fields at the site. The playground will be open to the community, not just IHC students.

"IHC has a plan to strengthen what parents care about - safe and modern facilities, classroom technology, and high-quality affordable instruction," said Chris Hornbarger, the school

system administrator, "and this project is one piece of that plan."

Gary West, the Elementary School's new principal and a veteran educator, removed the old playground at the start of this school year due to safety concerns.

The latest award continues the school's grant success over the last 16 months, including a grant from the Toshiba America Foundation for two new High School science courses in partnership with Jefferson Community College, a grant from the LEGO Children's Foundation to create a Multimedia Literacy and Graphic Design course at the High School, a grant from Dollar General Foundation to automate the Elementary School libraries, and a grant from the Ronald McDonald House to upgrade the Primary School commu-

nity playground.

The High School is also beginning to integrate Apple iPad technology in its classrooms, thanks to a mobile "smart cart" of computers funded with a gift from Mr. Bruce Grable.

In addition, IHC awarded Danny Graves of Mannsville a \$15,000 check for winning the school's playground raffle, sponsored by Davidson's Auto Group and The Border 106.7 FM.

The raffle also benefited the school's "100 Stars" Full-Tuition Scholarship Fund, made possible by a gift from Dr. Noaman Sanni, which provides K to 12 students of all faiths who have never previously studied at IHC the opportunity to do so based on their scholastic potential and demonstrated financial need.

"100 Stars" applications for the 2012-2013 school year will be available on the IHC website in March.

Registration opens

IHC is beginning to enroll students for next year, with Elementary School open houses at 6:30 p.m. on March 6, 14, and 20, and Kindergarten registration all day on

March 13 at the Primary School on Winthrop Street.

Grades 4-6 registration will be at 1:00 p.m. on March 28 and 29, at the Intermediate School on South Massey Street.

IHC Junior/Senior High School will hold open houses for new families at 6:30 p.m. on March 21, as well as an additional date to be announced.

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

Rest in Peace

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

March 1 - Msgr. Alexander P. Landry, 1955; Most Rev. Stanislaus J. Brzana, 1997

March 2 - Rev. Edward A. Dailey, O.S.A., 1901; Msgr. John J. Bent, 1949; Rev. Joseph E. Tessier, O.M.I., 1952

March 3 - Rev. Francis McCranor, O.S.A., 1914; Rev. John G. Fitzgerald, 1925; Rev. Cyril Stevens, 1963; Deacon David N. Hennigan, 2009

March 4 - Rev. Jeremiah S. O'Brien, 1899; Rev. Thomas D. Hurley, 1934

March 5 - Rev. Edward J. Murtaugh, O.S.A., 1951

March 6 - Rev. Louis F. Lussier, 1915; Rev. John G. Craven, 1921

Bishop LaValley's schedule

March 1 - 11:00 a.m., Priests Committee on Assignments Meeting at the Bishop's Residence in Ogdensburg.

March 2 - 10:50 a.m., Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg; 7:00 p.m., Canon Law Class for Deacon Aspirants at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg.

March 3 - 10:30 a.m., Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting at Church of the Visitation in Norfolk.

March 4 - 9:30 a.m., Mass at Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg; 2:30 p.m., Rite of Election St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

March 5 - 10:50 a.m., Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg.

March 6 - 9:45 a.m., Episcopal Council Meeting at the Bishop's Residence 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.

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

Upcoming programs:

March 5 - 4 p.m., St. Mary's School, Ticonderoga

March 6 - 6 p.m., Seton Academy, Plattsburgh

April 21 - 9 a.m., St. Augustine's School, Peru

Visit our re-designed website

www.northcountrycatholic.org

- Read Bishop LaValley's columns
- Search archived papers
- View diocesan events and much more

Find us on Facebook!



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FROM THE FAMILY LIFE OFFICE

A look at marriage and family life in the North Country

By deacon Gary and Gayle Frank
Diocesan directors, Family Life Ministry

In November when Bishop LaValley came back from his "Ad Lumina" visit to Rome, he stopped in the diocesan Family Life Office to share with us something that the Holy Father had said to him.

Pope Benedict had stressed how very important it was to him that family life was strongly supported in our Church. The pope then asked Bishop LaValley, "what is your diocese doing to support families?"

Family life, despite all its challenges, is very strong in our diocese.

Our bishop then preceded to tell the Holy Father about family life in our diocese.

When the bishop shared this with us we were very excited and very proud indeed. Family life, despite all its challenges is very strong in our diocese.

As directors of the Family Life office we are very proud of the programs and events we offer to strengthen and enrich family life right here in the North Country.

We appreciate the enthusiastic support of our priests and bishop in offering quality programming for our families.

In our diocese we have many dedicated couples who serve in Marriage Preparation ministry. These couples lovingly volunteer their time to see that those who are preparing for Marriage have a quality Pre-Cana program.

We are very grateful to these couples.

To strengthen this program, Bishop LaValley has recently appointed Henry and Dayna Leader from St. James, Gouverneur, to lead Pre-Cana ministry in our diocese. The Leaders, have been involved in marriage preparation for many years. Henry and Dayna are dedicated to strengthening our Catholic families. (See a profile on the Leaders on page 6.)

This addition to our diocesan staff means that more can be done in education and support for our pre-cana coordinators, and our couples preparing for marriage.

We know that strengthening family life and marriage in our diocese involves not only marriage preparation but strong support for marriage for a life time.

Marriage Education is a key component to assist our married couples.

To quote from a recent statement from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops:

"The U.S. Bishops stated that married couples can often be discouraged because of the difficulties that married life brings. They insisted that couples can find hope and confidence in the Church through marriage education and formation programs, but also primarily through the grace of Jesus Christ, who enables couples to be "faithful to each other forever." (Faithful to Each Other Forever, p.138)

The U.S. Bishops' National Directory for Catechesis claims that marriage education and formation is needed specifically for adults in all stages of married life. "(p. 142)

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Today,
Tomorrow &
Always

Love bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.

1 Corinthians 13:7

2012 Wedding Issue

Meet the new diocesan marriage preparation coordinators

Love - at first sight and forever

By Suzanne Pietropaoli
Staff Writer

For Henry and Dayna Leader, it really was love at first sight.

But despite that magic moment, the couple is quick to acknowledge what has kept their love growing during 20 years of marriage.

"We fall, we get up. We have learned to forgive and forgive and forgive," Dayna said. "Above all, we have tried to keep Christ at the center of our lives and of our marriage."

This mix of practical wisdom and deep faith which has strengthened the Leaders' own married vocation also guides their work as Diocesan Marriage Preparation Coordinators, a post to which they were appointed by Bishop Terry LaValley in 2011.

The couple came to marriage with a strong sense of vocation.

"We delighted in our love for one another, and were so happy to receive each other as a gift from God," recalls Dayna. "But we also knew that this love we shared was much bigger than ourselves."

Today they are the parents of eight children ages 3-19, and their Gouverneur home hums with the activities of their large and lively family.

"We have a strong family culture," Dayna explains. "We work, we pray, and we have lots and lots of fun—from SU football games to fishing and swimming to ice cream parties, we enjoy each other's company."

And clearly others enjoy the family as well: on a recent weekend Dayna counted eight "extra" children in the Leader home!

This mother of many laughingly admits that high-volume tasks like laundry can sometimes seem overwhelming - but then, so can the blessings the children bring.

"Hearing our children pray



PHOTOS PROVIDED

Dayna and Henry Leader of Gouverneur, the new diocesan marriage preparation coordinators are shown on their Wedding day 20 years ago and, at right, with their eight children, front, Hope, 8; Zack, 19; holding John-Michael, 3; and Faith, 5; middle, William and Robert, 13; back, Henry, Grace, 14; Joy, 16; and Dayna.

the rosary is one of our great joys. All of them can lead the rosary from the age of five.

Then there are the moments when we see how they love one another," she said, "moments that just take our breaths away."

Still, Dayna remembers, there was a time when they struggled with what it meant to be open to life in their marriage.

"We had three little ones, ages 5, 2, 1, when we had twin boys," she said. "With four in diapers, and my health problems following their birth, things were intense."

"Many couples we knew had been sterilized after the first few children, but so many came to regret it," she said. "We were so grateful to God for the gifts of our children - how could we turn our backs to him and slap God in the face by destroying our fertility?"

"At this point," says Henry, "we pored over *Humanae Vitae* and met with many doctors and priests. We knew we were not complete,



that God had more children for us - and he obviously did!

"Most people told us that we were insane," he said, "there were so few who could understand. But our children have made us rich in blessings!"

Yet Henry and Dayna have never hugged their blessing to themselves.

Despite their busy family life, Henry (a partner in the law firm of Case and Leader) and Dayna (a full-time mom with a background in public health and education) have long been active in their home parish of St. James - in religious education, fundraising, youth activities, parish council and the parish school.

In addition, Henry is in his second year of diaconate formation; he has a built-in cheering squad because his children are so excited about Dad becoming a deacon!

The entire family works together on the staff of Family Guggenheim, which Henry and Dayna have served as directors for the past three years. In fact, Guggenheim

has been a second home to the Leader family for the past 19 years.

"It is one thing in our life that never changes," Dayna explains. "Our kids missed plenty of games and events along the way so that we could be at Family Guggenheim."

"Guggenheim gave our children an extended Catholic family, and they learned that this team - family and Church - was the most important," she said. "At Guggenheim we have been loved, accepted, and encouraged. Through it, God has brought so many wonderful people into our lives."

"I cannot imagine where we would be today without this support," she said.

This spirit of faith and family inspired Henry and Dayna to join the Syracuse team of Worldwide Marriage Encounter, where they served for 10 years.

"It was wonderful," they recall. "We saw marriages enriched, and many saved, by this experience. But it also got us thinking: what could

be done to save couples from the pitfalls and disillusionment they encountered?

"We realized the need for good catechesis, Henry said. "If young people do not know what they are saying 'yes' to, how can they keep their vows? It is so essential to help young people understand what the sacrament of marriage really is, that it is a foreshadowing of the heavenly banquet, and God's greatest natural gift to us."

"If they do not understand God's role in their one-flesh union, they will be eaten up by the cultural misinformation that is all around us," he said. "Very often there seems to be a general idea that 'I promise...until things fall apart.' This works against the permanent faithfulness of marriage, and so undermines the couple's relationship."

"By contrast," he said, "if you realize that you are promising to be Christ to your spouse all the days of your life, it is hard to stay mad and selfish and stubborn."

"In fact, your love will grow throughout life as you forgive each other, over and over and over," Dayna said. "We tend to focus on 'being happy,' when what we need to focus on is being committed."

With this in mind, the Leaders hope that, in the future, marriage preparation will "use the language of all that the Church understands and teaches about marriage."

"We hope to concentrate more on God's plan for married love, and give a bit more time and emphasis to helping couples understand and embrace the sacramental life to which they are called," Dayna said.

"When we talk to young people, we tell them: 'God needs your marriage for the world,'" she said. "That opens their eyes to the truth that their marriage is not just about the two of them."

CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

What Catholics believe about marriage

- *Marriage is a sacrament; one of the seven sacraments through which Christ makes us holy.*
- *It is a lifestyle of total dedication and self-giving to each other that reflects God's love for humanity and Christ's love for the Church.*
- *Because God's love is always faithful and his covenant unbreakable, the marital bond that represents it is also indissoluble.*
- *Marriage is a vocation, a call by God to be collaborators with Him in bringing new life into the world and creating a family that is the first school of faith and love.*
- *As collaborators with God, husband and wife are guided by the Church to responsible parenthood through natural means of birth regulation that conform to God's design for human sexuality.*
- *Through the Holy Spirit, Christ is present in the relationship and gives spouses the graces to endure the challenges of their vocation.*

John Bosio

Author "Happy Together" and Six Dates for Catholic Couples

Family life

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

"A growing body of social science data confirms the beneficial effects of marriage education. The Church encourages couples at all stages, starting at the pre-marital, to take advantage of marriage education programs.

It also calls on parishes and church organizations to use the resources of marital education so that married couples may recognize and live out the sacramental nature of their relationship, a human love that shares in and represents divine love."

To that end, building a strong team of faith filled couples to strengthen marriage and family life is a priority.

Our diocese is blessed to have a strong Natural Family planning office under the leadership of Angelo and Suzanne Pietropaoli. NFP assists couples in planning their families in accordance with church teaching. The Pietropaolis and the Leaders believe in strong marriage education. This is a top priority for our office.

In our diocese we offer many different ways to educate our couples and families; Marriage Enrichment programs such as "Dinner for Two" and "Six Dates for Catholic Couples," offers parishes opportunities to strengthen married life.

Our diocesan Marriage Jubilee is a time to

say "thank you" and support those couples who have been married many years. We married couples gain strength and encouragement by witnessing the sacrament of marriage being lived out in the lives of these couples.

The Diocese of Ogdensburg is one of the few dioceses in the country to offer a retreat program to strengthen and educate its families. Our diocesan family retreat program Family Guggenheim was started in 1980 by the diaconate community.

This program's goals are to enrich and provide families; traditional, grandparent centered, or single parent families a time and opportunity to celebrate and to educate their families.

"Family Forums" have been held in several parishes to look at the needs of the families in parishes and provide opportunities to educate and enrich family life. Our Bishop has been present at these events to "listen to the needs" and offer his wisdom and support of family life.

The key to building strong family ministry in our diocese and to be the best stewards of our Bishop's Fund monies is to work collaboratively with the other diocesan offices and parishes. Working together, all of us can strengthen family life, not only in our homes, but in our diocese.

Love

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Based on what they have learned and what they have lived, what advice would the Leaders offer to couples just beginning their married lives?

"The surest way to stay married and live a happy life is to have God in the center of your life and marriage," Dayna said. "At the altar, you are making those promises

with him and for him - not just each other - to be open to help your best friend get to heaven.

"To do that, you need to be Christ to the other person," Henry said. "You make that vow and perform that sacrament every day.

"Remember that every day is an opportunity to make a gift of yourself in love to your spouse," he said.



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Top ten things to consider for planning the celebration of Marriage

Planning a Catholic Wedding

By Fr. Rick Hilgartner, Associate Director
USCCB Secretariat of Divine Worship

Marriage is a sacrament!

The celebration of Marriage is not just a religious ceremony. A marriage between two Christians is a sacrament, which means it is an encounter with Jesus Christ.

In a particular way, the bride and the groom, in offering their lives to each other (symbolized in their vows), pledge their selfless love for each other. This selfless love embodies and makes present the love of Jesus, who gave himself in love for his people.

The ministers of the sacrament

In some ways, marriage is less about the ceremony or the sacramental celebration than it is about the daily living of marital life. The priest (or deacon) is not the minister of the sacrament. He merely acts as the official witness of the church and the state (of course if the wedding takes place at Mass, the priest is the celebrant of the Mass).

The bride and the groom marry each other, and as

such, they are the ministers of the sacrament.

Marriage is a matter of faith

As a sacrament and an action of the Church, marriage both presupposes faith and renews and strengthens faith. The process of preparation for marriage invites couples to reflect on God's presence in their lives. In the Sacrament of Marriage, God "enriches and strengthens" the husband and wife by giving them his special gifts of grace to enable their daily living in marriage "in mutual and lasting fidelity."

The scriptures:

Couples are invited to choose the readings from the Bible that will be proclaimed at the wedding Liturgy. The Church provides many choices for each, and most parishes provide resources with background on each possible choice.

The Scripture is the very Word of God speaking to the Church. Couples should reflect on what they believe God is speaking to them as they enter into Marriage, and they should also consider what they want to communicate about their own faith to

those who will gather to celebrate with them on their wedding day.

Vows: what you promise, live

The heart of the Rite of Marriage is the exchange of consent between the bride and the groom. In this moment, they, as ministers of the sacrament, express their lifelong commitment to love and honor each other, as the priest (or deacon) acts as a witness. It is often suggested that couples memorize their vows not only to experience the exchange of consent in a more powerful way, by speaking them from the heart, rather than repeating them phrase by phrase after the priest. In this they will also spend time pondering what the vows mean, and hopefully remember the words for years to come, as the words take on more and more meaning in their day-to-day love and care for each other.

Music: stir the soul, lift the mind

Music for the celebration of Marriage not only adds beauty and dignity to the ceremony, but it has a more important liturgical function. Music should reflect and

communicate, above all, the mystery of God's love in Jesus, especially as it pertains to the couple joined together in marriage.

Procession: Here comes the groom!

What the movies depict isn't necessarily what the Church envisions. The bride and the groom enter freely and equally into marriage, and the entrance procession symbolizes that, as the couple approach the altar to stand before the Lord. The Rite of Marriage suggests that the liturgical ministers (priest, deacon, reader, servers) lead the procession, followed by the bride and bridegroom, each escorted by "at least their parents and the witnesses."

Ministries: More than bridal party

One of the important tasks couples undertake in planning their wedding is the selection of the bridal party. Couples invite siblings, cousins, and close friends to stand by them as attendants, who show their support by their close presence. They also perform a liturgical function as official witnesses of the marriage rite. There are other liturgical ministries

to consider as well: readers to proclaim the readings from Scripture or friends to present the offertory gifts.

The liturgical assembly

Couples invite their closest friends and members of their families to be part of their wedding day. That gathering also represents the community of the Church, as they surround the couple with their encouragement and their prayers. Above all, it is an occasion for worship: in celebrating the sacrament, the couple, together with their family and friends, forms a liturgical assembly, who stand before the Lord with hearts open to his loving power.

Above all, pray!

The wedding liturgy (whether celebrated at Mass or apart from it) is an act of worship. As such, it is a time to offer praise and thanks to God for his gifts, and to seek his continued blessings and help in your lives. In particular, thank God for the gift of your spouse, and pray to the Lord to bless you and guide you together as you become witnesses of his love for each other and for the world.

NFP: safe, effective, part of God's loving plan

By Angelo and Suzanne Pietropaoli
Diocesan natural family planning directors

"Why wouldn't people be interested in a safe, effective, low-cost, environmentally-friendly method of conceiving and avoiding pregnancy that also has health and relationship benefits?"

As long-time Natural Family Planning educators, we often puzzle over this question posed by Dr. Gregory Popcak in *Family Foundations* magazine (September/October 2011).

Couples who choose Natural Family Planning tend to

have given quite a bit of thought to these very issues; they have done their homework and want a family planning method that will not harm the woman's health.

It is inspiring, for example, to hear a young man explain that he loves his wife too much to expose her to the risks of chemical contraception - a class which includes not only the Pill, but patches, rods, injections, vaginal rings, and IUDs.

The young man's fears are not unreasonable: consider the words of Rebecca Peck, MD, as she discusses her article in the February 2012

Quarterly. "The Pill is not a warm little fuzzy harmless object. It causes significant harm and the American people have been deceived for long enough. As a practicing physician, I see the fallout every day - young women with blood clots in their legs, strokes, early breast cancer, HPV and cervical cancer."

As shocking as this may sound, what Dr. Peck says is not new: any Pill user who takes the time to read the (very) fine print in her drug's patient information insert will discover the link between this drug and cardio-

vascular problems.

A bit harder to track down is the well-documented connection between Pill use and the development of breast cancer.

Several years ago the World Health Organization actually identified estrogen in combined oral contraceptive pills as carcinogenic.

Women who began taking COC's before age 20 increased their risk of dying from breast cancer by 820%. (Check the website of the Breast Cancer Prevention Institute to learn more: www.bcpinstitute.org)

It is sobering to consider

the risks to which women are exposed in the name of family planning, not to mention the billions of dollars they pay each year for the privilege.

Women who learn Natural Family Planning, on the other hand, pay a modest fee for instructional materials and the charts and thermometer which help them track their fertility.

The knowledge they gain will last a lifetime, and its effects will be quite positive as the couple comes to understand and appreciate the gift of their combined fertility.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

NFP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

In fact, the co-operative dimensions of NFP empower women: family planning is no longer a female "problem," but a responsibility shared by husband and wife.

The understanding, respect, patience, and communication fostered by Natural Family Planning do much to strengthen a couple's relationship; studies consistently show that couples using NFP have a divorce rate of less than 5%.

At the same time, NFP is 99% effective in preventing unplanned pregnancy.

Because it educates couples to identify and interpret the signs of fertility, NFP - unlike any other method of family planning - can also be used to achieve pregnancy.

Natural Family Planning is a way of life in which couples work with nature, rather than treating fertility as a disease to be medicated or surgically removed. In this way, they cooperate with the plan of God for married love and reap the benefits of obedient faith. They live as good stewards of their own health and fertility - and of the earth, since they are not contributing to the destruction of the environment that results from massive amounts of human reproductive hormones in rivers, lakes, and ground water.


To learn more about NFP, contact the Diocesan NFP Office (518)483-0459. Email: apietropaoli@dioogdensburg.org; or from the website www.dioogdensburg.org/nfp

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Helping to build strong families with programs and activities that strengthen family life.

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- "Six Dates for Catholic Couples"

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- "The Beatitudes' for Couples"
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For more information on Marriage Enrichment Programs for your parish contact the Family Life Office

Marriage Jubilee

September 30th
St. Mary's Cathedral



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Session 3:
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Marriage Preparation Programs



For more information or to download a registration form go to:

www.dioogdensburg.org/familylife
or contact Henry and Dayna Leader at dleader@dioogdensburg.org

Natural Family Planning information
call NFP services at 518-483-0458 or email: apietropaoli@dioogdensburg.org

FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

www.foryourmarriage.org

Special note for anyone who is preparing for marriage or is married please check out the USCCB's web site. The materials and helpful articles are designed for helping build strong marriages. Every marriage matters, because marriage comes from the hand of God.

For more information on these events, please contact Deacon Gary and Gayle Frank at the Family Life Office 315-393-2920 or visit our website at www.dioogdensburg.org/familylife





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ADIRONDACK

IHC MYSTERY PLAYERS

Saranac Lake – St. Bernard's Parish is sponsoring a presentation of the IHC Mystery Players.

Date: March 15

Time: 8 pm.

Place: St. Bernard's Church

Features: A venerable tradition observed by Christians during Lent is making the "Stations of the Cross," popularized by St. Francis of Assisi in the Middle Ages. The Immaculate Heart Central High School Mystery Players from Watertown have carried on a tradition of their own, presenting the centuries old Stations of the Cross in a contemporary and creative way since 1981. Drawing inspiration from the Mystery Plays of the Middle Ages, the IHC Mystery Players bring the stations anew to audiences and congregations through the use of special lighting, music, pantomime and reflective narrations.

"CATHOLICISM"

The Parishes of the Mountains and Lakes are presenting the Father Robert Barron's "Catholicism" series on Tuesdays evenings at St. Bernard's Chapel at 7 p.m. and Thursday mornings at St. John the Wilderness Church hall at 9:30 a.m. They will continue throughout Lent.

CLINTON

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

West Chazy - St. Joseph's Men's Club presents their Annual All-You-Can-Eat Pancake Breakfast.

Date: March 11

Time: 8 a.m. to Noon

Place: Parish Center.

Cost: \$6; Children 5 and under, free.

SETON OPEN HOUSE

Plattsburgh – Seton Catholic is holding an Open House.

Date: March 14

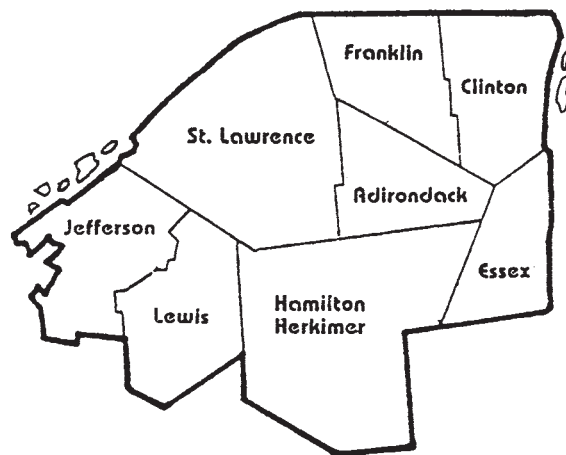
Time: 5 p.m. to 7

Features: Accepting registrations for grades 7-12. Our Catholic faith is woven into our entire program. Middle States accredited program; Conveniences for families; Extracurricular Activities.

Contact: 518-561-4031 or visit the website at www.setoncatholic.net

LENTEN ADORATION

Plattsburgh – St. Peter's Church will offer weekday adoration during Lent after the 7 a.m. daily Mass ending with Benediction at 7 p.m. on Wednesday of Holy Week .



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

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

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

Schedule: Mondays only – After 7 a.m. Mass until 9 p.m.; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays & Fridays, after 7 a.m. Mass until 7 p.m.

Contact: To sign up for one hour a week of adoration or for more information, call the rectory at 563-1692 or contact Ceil Johnson 566-0527 or email kjeshouse@verizon.net

LENTEN REFLECTION SERIES

Ellenburg – Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of prayer will have Lenten Reflection Series the Fridays of Lent.

Date: Feb. 24-March 30

Time: 1 p.m. to 3

Features: Meditating on the Sunday Bible readings, Adoration, Rosary.

RSVP: By Feb. 21 to olaprayrhouse@gmail.com or 518-594-3253

CORNED BEEF AND CABBAGE

Peru – CDA 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: \$8; Children ages 12 and under, \$4
Contact: Helen Bisallion at 643-2638 or Christa Reyell at 566-6404

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

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: "I adore You, my Eucharistic God. You are there exposed in the... [monstrance]. The rays are the rays of Your love for me, for each individual soul." (St. Katharine Drexel) "Could you not watch one hour with me?" (Mt. 26:40)

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

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.

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

Place:

ESSEX

ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER

Elizabethtown - St. Elizabeth's Church, will hold a St. Patrick's Day Dinner, featuring corned beef and cabbage or ham

Date: March 11

Time: 2 p.m. to 6

Place: parish hall

Cost: Adults: \$9. Children under 12: \$5. Take-outs be available after 1:30 p.m

ADULT FAITH SHARING GROUP

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

Dates: ; March 8 & 22

Time: 7 p.m. to 8:30

FRANKLIN

MYSTERY/DINNER THEATER

Brushton – St. Mary's Church is to present "The Hilarious Hillbilly Massacre", an interactive murder mystery/dinner theater performed by The North Franklin Theater Group.

Date: March 3 and March 24

Time: 6 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: \$25 per person

Contact: Eileen Miller at 518-529-7713 (leave message) to make reservations by Feb. 22 (for March 3 show) and March 14 (March 24 show).

ANNUAL BREAKFAST

Burke – St. George's Church will hold their Annual Breakfast Fund Raiser.

Date: March 4

Time: 8 a.m. to noon

Cost: Adults, \$6; Children 12 and under, \$3.50; under 5, free

Features: Take-outs available. Raffle tickets available.

TESTIMONY AND HEALING SERVICE

Brushton – An evening with Richard Bingold, internationally known Catholic lay evangelist. has been planned

Date: March 19

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church

Features: Those seeking physical or spiritual healing will be prayed over with the 'Miraculous Pilgrim Rosary' ad 'Relic of the True Cross'.

Contact: St. Mary's at 518-529-7433

JEFFERSON

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

Evans Mills – The Indian River Knights of Columbus will be having a Spaghetti and Meatball dinner.

Date: March 10

Time: 4 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

DOLLAR DINNER

Watertown – The Watertown Council of Knights of Columbus will be preparing a Dollar Dinner.

Date: March 14

Time: 5 p.m. to 6

Place: IHC Intermediate School

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.

BEREAVEMENT MEETING

Watertown – An ecumenical bereavement meeting will be held.

Date: Feb. 27

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse

Program: Sister Mary Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ who is currently involved in adult spiritual formation, will speak on "Finding a Way through Grief."

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.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

THE HOLY FATHER



CNS PHOTO/POOL VIA REUTERS

Pope Benedict XVI elevates the Eucharist during Ash Wednesday Mass in Church of Santa Sabina in Rome Feb. 22.

Pope: charitable works are key for new evangelization

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - An authentic Christian faith is demonstrated through concrete acts of charity and those acts are an essential part of the Catholic Church's new evangelization effort, Pope Benedict XVI told members of a Rome-based charity.

"The witness of charity touches human hearts in a special way," the pope said, and "the new evangelization, especially in a cosmopolitan city like Rome, requires a great openness of spirit and a wise readiness to help all."

The pope made his remarks Feb. 24 during an audience with members of the Circolo di San Pietro, which operates soup kitchens and a shelter in Rome, but also raises money for papal charities.

"We know that the authen-

ticity of our fidelity to the Gospel is verified in part by the attention and concrete care that we try to show our neighbors, especially the weakest and the marginalized," he said.

True concern for others means trying to meet all their human needs, "physical, moral and spiritual," and "overcoming the hardness of heart that makes us blind to the suffering of others," the pope said.

"The service of charity," he said, "is a privileged form of evangelization in the light of the teaching of Jesus, who will count what we have done for our brothers and sisters -- especially the smallest and most overlooked -- as something done for him."

When Christians reach out with loving concern for the suffering, the pope said, they are sharing the Gospel by showing them the infinite love and mercy of God.

Myths abound about HHS contraceptive mandate

By Nancy Frazier O'Brien
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Exaggerations and outright misrepresentations about the Department of Health and Human Services' contraceptive mandate have been appearing in White House "fact sheets" and mainstream media. Here are some of the more frequently cited claims and the facts to counter them:

Here are the facts

- **Myth:** Self-insurance is a seldom-used method of providing health insurance to employers, used mainly by church organizations to avoid having to pay for abortions or birth control.

Fact: A majority of Americans who have private health insurance are in self-insured plans, according to separate reports by the Congressional Research Service and the Kaiser Family Foundation and Health Research & Educational Trust. The percentage was 44 percent in 1999, 55 percent in 2008 and had increased to 60 percent by 2011.

Employees in large companies (those with 200 or more employees) were even more likely to be covered by a self-insured plan. Eighty-two percent of workers at large firms -- and 96 percent of those who work for a company with 5,000 or more workers -- were in a self-insured health plan.

There is no precise count of how many of the employees working for Catholic organizations or institutions are in self-insured plans, but the number is believed to mirror that of the general population.

- **Myth:** Twenty-eight states already require employers to cover contraceptives for their employees, so the situation in those states will not change.

Fact: Self-insured plans are excluded from state contraceptive mandates, but not from federal requirements. In addition, all but three states -- California, New York and Oregon -- include a broader religious exemption than the HHS one, which sets four criteria for an exemption: that an employer's purpose is to inculcate religious values, that it primarily hires and serves people who share its religious tenets, and that it is a nonprofit organization under certain sections of the tax code.

Twelve states do not require that the organization's purpose be the inculcation of religious values, 12 do not mention a requirement to hire people who share the organization's religious tenets and 13 states have no requirement that the exempt organization serve only those who share its religious tenets. Sixteen states do not mandate

that the exempt organization meet the tax code criteria.

Eight states exempt virtually any religious employer with moral objections to providing coverage of contraceptives to its employees. Illinois and Missouri extend that exemption to nonreligious employers who object.

Other states have passed laws that do not define what constitutes a religious organization or have declined to enforce existing laws.

- **Myth:** Adding contraceptive coverage to health plans will be net cost-neutral, because those covered by the mandate will have fewer unintended pregnancies.

Fact: Pharmacy directors disagree. An online survey by New Jersey-based Reimbursement Intelligence of 15 pharmacy directors representing more than 100 million employees or their dependents found that nearly 50 percent thought the mandate would increase costs, 20 percent thought it would be cost-neutral and none predicted that it would save money. More than 30 percent said they didn't know what the effect would be.

Several respondents also raised the question of whether the mandate to provide contraceptives free of charge would require them to give away brand-name medications, even when generics are available.

In addition, the assumption that greater contraceptive use results in fewer pregnancies and fewer abortions has not been proved. A 2003 study in the journal *International Family Planning Perspectives* purported to show such a link, but found that levels of abortion and contraceptive use rose simultaneously in Cuba, Denmark, Netherlands, the United States, Singapore and South Korea.

Abortions went down as contraceptive use increased in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Bulgaria, Turkey, Tunisia and Switzerland, the study found.

- **Myth:** Ninety-eight percent of Catholic women have used contraceptives.

Fact: The figure comes from an April 2011 Guttmacher Institute report based on the 2006-2008 National Survey of Family Growth. Twenty-five percent of the respondents to the survey self-identified as Catholics, but 40 percent of those said they never attended Mass or attended less frequently than once a month.

The survey looked at women between the ages of 15 and 44 and asked about contraceptive use only among those who had had sex in the three months prior to the survey and were not pregnant, postpartum or trying to get pregnant. Ninety percent of those women -- and 98 percent of the Catholic respondents -- said they had used some form of contraception at least once in their lives.

The survey did not ask the women about their current contraceptive usage.

Those devoted to Blessed Kateri are 'walking on air'

By Katherine Long
Catholic News Service

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (CNS)-- Since first learning in December that Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha was to be canonized, the head of a committee named for her in the Syracuse Diocese said those who have a devotion to the saint to be "are walking on air."

"I can't tell you how excited we are," said Emily Garrow-Stewart, a Mohawk who grew up hearing Blessed Kateri's story in her home.

"She has been a part of my life since I was a child," she said. "There was always a picture of her in the house. She is such a good role model and example. In my mind, there is always such a light about her."

Blessed Kateri, known as "the Lily of the Mohawks," was born to a Christian Algonquin mother and a Mohawk father in 1656 along the Hudson River in what is today upstate New York. She was baptized by a Jesuit missionary in 1676 when she was 20. A year later she fled to Canada and died there in 1680.

Her sainthood cause was opened in 1932, and she was declared venerable in 1943. In June 1980, she became the first Native American to be beatified.

In December, Pope Benedict XVI advanced the sainthood causes of Blessed Kateri and Blessed Marianne Cope of Molokai by signing the decrees recognizing the miracles needed for their canonizations. On Feb. 18, the pope announced they would be canonized at the Vatican Oct. 21, along with five others.

Sister Patricia Burkard, general minister of Blessed Marianne's order, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities, said in a statement released the same day that the sisters "have been in joyful anticipation of hearing

the date" since December. Learning of it, she said, "completes the cycle of 37 years of efforts to get us to this moment. We now go forward in joyful anticipation with the next steps of planning."

Upon the news of her Oct. 21 canonization

Blessed Kateri will become the first Native American saint. This is the fulfillment of a long-held dream for many in the United States and Canada.

In the Syracuse Diocese, the Kateri Tekakwitha Committee was formed in 1978 as part of an initiative to engage the Native American community in the diocese.

The committee, made up of Native American and non-Native members, works to evangelize in Blessed Kateri's name by caring for the sick, elderly, bereaved and lonely, and through outreach to young people.

Garrow-Stewart, who chairs the committee, said she has seen many examples of her intercession in her own life, most recently when her son faced a serious medical procedure.

"I never prayed so hard," she told The Catholic Sun, the diocesan newspaper, in an interview before the pope announced the canonization date. "That is when she is with you, though, when you are really down. I know she is always around me. I feel her in my life always." Her son, she said, is on the mend.

Others connected with the committee have known Blessed Kateri's presence as well.

Jim Howe, a parishioner at St. Ann's Church in Manlius, knew something of Kateri when growing up, but said his first real experience with her came when his infant daughter was diagnosed with cancer.

"I'm not sure why, but in those dark days of dealing

with her illness and hospitalization, I said a prayer to Kateri, asking for her help. My daughter survived ... and today is a healthy college student who hopes to be a pediatric cancer specialist herself," he said.

Though he can't prove any divine intercession, Howe said the experience led him to spend about 10 years on the committee, where he was able to learn more about her life, the life of Native Americans in the region, and the importance of Kateri in the lives of the Mohawk community.

In other reaction, Sister Kateri Mitchell, a Sister of St. Ann and executive director of the Tekakwitha Conference National Center in Great Falls, Mont., said hearing the date announced for the canonization for Blessed Kateri "was for me one of great joy."

She told Catholic News Service in a Feb. 22 email that it also brought "a real sigh of relief that at last many of her sisters and brothers will gather as church at the Vatican to give praise and thanksgiving to our Creator who has gifted us with a model in the person of this young indigenous woman who emulates a life of holiness by her deep faith, prayer life and close relationship for a God who is her all."

Father Wayne Paysse, executive director of the Washington-based Black and Indian Mission Office, noted in a Feb 21 statement that her canonization will be "one of the first actions of the church during the Year of Faith, which begins next Oct. 11."

"Surely this is a signal to us that soon-to-be St. Kateri Tekakwitha is for all of the church both a model of faith and of the new evangelization," he said.

"For now, let us continue to pray to God for all we need, firm in the knowledge that Blessed Kateri is interceding for us from her place in heaven.," he said.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

HHS mandate: problems of principle, practicality, bishop says

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The Department of Health and Human Services' contraceptive mandate and its extremely narrow religious exemption present problems both of principle and of practicality, according to the bishop who heads the Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty. Bishop William E. Lori of Bridgeport, Conn., said in a Feb. 23 telephone interview with Catholic News Service that the "accommodation" announced Feb. 10 by President Barack Obama represents "an intrusion into the internal life of the church that we think is a violation of religious liberty." On a practical level, he added, the mandate as revised by Obama "does not really address how we are organized" as church institutions. "It seems to me that for the government to ask us to override our teachings, whether popular or not, there has to be a compelling government interest," Bishop Lori said. But he said 90 percent of insurers already cover contraceptives, with companies that object to contraception representing a "relatively small number" of employers. "The insurance plans that are in question are good benefits packages, but they don't include these things that are abundantly available elsewhere and at a reasonable cost, despite what is being said," he added. Obama's revised mandate says religious employers could decline to cover contraceptives if they were morally opposed to them, but the health insurers that provide their health plans would be required to offer contraceptives free of charge to women who requested such coverage. Bishop Lori questioned why the federal government would compel coverage of contraception but leave other decisions on "essential health services," such as coverage of high blood pressure medication or HIV/AIDS drugs, to the states under the health reform law. "It's hard to see how that is a compelling government interest" when other important treatment decisions are left to the states, he said.

Lent should be time of grace, defeating temptation, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The 40 days of Lent are a time of spiritual renewal in preparation for Easter, but they also are a time to recognize that evil is at work in the world and even the Catholic Church faces temptations, Pope Benedict XVI said. The pope explained the meaning of Lent during his weekly general audience Feb. 22, Ash Wednesday. Like the people of Israel during their 40-year exodus and like Jesus during his 40 days in the desert, the Catholic Church and its members experience the grace of God, but also are besieged by evil around them and are tempted by power and selfishness, the pope said. Jesus, before beginning his public ministry, withdrew to the desert for 40 days. Fasting, "he nourished himself on the word of God, which he used as a weapon to defeat the devil," the pope said. Pope Benedict said experience of God's grace and of temptation is not unique to modern Catholics or to the church. During their 40 years in the desert, the people of Israel were guided by God, fed with manna and given water from a rock, but they also were tired, complaining and tempted to return to idol worship, the pope said. And, spending 40 days in the desert before beginning his public ministry, Jesus experienced the closeness of God, but also faced the devil's temptations of "power, success and dominion. This ambivalent situation also describes the condition of the church journeying through the desert of the world and history. In this desert, we believers certainly have the opportunity of having a profound experience of God, who strengthens our spirit, confirms our faith, nourishes our hope and animates our charity," the pope said.

FOR THE JOURNEY

The journey of conversion during Lent

By Effie Caldarola
Catholic News Service

With Lent's arrival, we're once again reminded that we're called to conversion. But what does it mean to be converted?

I've written before about my mom's journey to the Catholic Church. She was raised in a family that did not attend church. But as a teenager, she felt called to visit all of the churches in the town where she lived.

Her mother was tolerant of this quest but drew the line at an old-fashioned fire-and-brimstone tent revival, the kind popular in early 20th-century America. My mother would always remember her mother, marching down the main aisle of the tent and pulling my mom and her little brother out of the front row and marching them back out.

At 16, Mom made her choice and joined the Catholic Church with her little brother.

For some Catholics, that's what the word "conversion" used to denote. You joined the church, case closed, problem solved.

For my mother, no doubt, joining the church wasn't an end in itself but the place where conversion started.

It was the home where she would struggle and journey with mystery until the end of her life.

Although many people, including some of the great saints, have electric moments of conversion, the Catholic attitude is that conversion, in general, is an ongoing event.

For most Christians, as we acknowledge our salvation in Christ, we recognize that each day calls us to another decision for Christ.

When I visited the Vatican,

I climbed the stairs to the top of St. Peter's Basilica. It's a lengthy hike, with the stairs winding and narrow, particularly as you near the top. But to emerge and view St. Peter's Square and the city of Rome beyond makes it well worth the effort.

That's why great spiritual writers sometimes illustrate the faith journey as stair steps. It can occasionally tire us, this daily climb, but it's the only way to get there.

That's conversion, joyful step by sometimes-weary step.

But we trust the outcome is worth it. We trust that God makes all things new, including us, even though we arrive still not perfect. God provides the perfection.

Of course, history is full of wondrous moments of conversion. St. Paul provides the classic example,

being struck blind on the road to Damascus.

Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero provides a beautiful moment of conversion within conversion. He already was a good and holy man when the death of a Jesuit friend opened his eyes to the political and economic plight of the poor in El Salvador.

Within his vocation, he changed yet again, a change that led to his murder while celebrating Mass.

Sometimes, we all desire a road-to-Damascus experience, a moment of certainty. Sometimes we receive one. Nevertheless, we're all invited to conversion, even though sometimes we lack fire or direction. Sometimes, we are weary of the journey.

That's why I like Lent. I'm a person who appreciates structure. The 40-day time frame of Lent is a perfect opportunity for a short course in conversion.

Our church abounds with resources for Lent: Parishes and Catholic websites provide guides, books, classes and special prayer opportunities. Take advantage. Make a plan.

For 40 days, I can commit to a daily prayer time, listening in silence for the God who wants to change me. For 40 days, I can commit to one positive daily action for another in Christ's name.

For 40 days, I can observe my growth by journaling. Lent provides the structure. I provide the commitment to conversion.

OUR READERS WRITE

Where are the faith and values?

In the President's remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast, President Obama said that "faith and values" should play a role in tackling the nation's challenges. Abortion is a major issue in our country. If faith and values are so important, why does the Obama Administration not advocate that our young people abstain from sex outside of marriage?

Many thousands of young people have been motivated to practice Chastity after listening to dynamic, young Chastity speakers such as Jason Evert and his wife Crystalina. Students have support groups in their churches, schools, and universities.

Why don't they also have support from their government?

Neither the President nor the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) does anything to support the Chastity movement. However, the government embraces and funds Planned Parenthood which is in the business of selling abortifacients and performing abortions with an acceptance of a culture where young people have intimate sexual relations without being married. That organization even sends speakers

into our public schools. Planned Parenthood's values are definitely contrary to the Christian faith and values which President Obama says he espouses.

In addition, Christian love for women and unborn children was lacking when the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops was denied a grant to assist victims of human trafficking, even though its record and program received higher scores than those to whom HHS gave the \$2.5 million grants. The Bishops received the grant money in the past and have assisted 2,800 trafficking victims and family members since 2006. However, this year HHS disqualified the Bishops' grant application because of their moral objections to abortion, contraception, and sterilization.

Likewise, where were the Obama Administration's Christian values when, showing disrespect for religious institutions, it told military chaplains that they must not read their Bishop's letter to faithful Catholics in the military? Thank God the Obama Administration was told to rescind that directive because it blatantly violated the freedom of religion guaranteed by our Constitution. It is hard for faithful Catholics to see how President Obama lets "faith and values" play a role in his decision making on these matters.

However, the Diocesan Respect Life Fund could do what the U.S. Government refuses to do. It could use some of our contributions to get Chrystalina and Jason Evert into our Catholic High-Schools to speak to our youth.

KATHLEEN ST. DENIS
PLATTSBURGH

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters from readers of the NCC

•We cannot accept letters which support ideas which are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

•Send letters to North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY, 13669 or e-mail to news@northcountycatholic.org



Natural Family Planning

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SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

A time for total surrender to and trust in God

Lent is a time to give more to God than we have ever given before.

It's a time to really "trust and obey".

It's the path for true wisdom and happiness in liv-

MARCH 4

The Second Sunday of Lent

READINGS

Genesis 22:q-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18

Romans 8:31b-34

Mark 9:2-10

ing. As the song says, "What do you want of me, Lord? Where do you want me to serve you?"

Thousands of years ago, Abraham found the answer to those questions in a way he could never forget!

God tells him to take his son, Isaac, the "child of promise", and to travel to the land of Moriah, up a mountain there, where he is offer Isaac in sacrifice!

This request must have devastated Abraham in heart and mind.

He must have felt that God had tricked him years ago when He promised himself and Sarah that their descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky.

Nevertheless, he obeys God to the point of raising his knife to kill his son.

How was he to know that this was only a test?

An angel stops his arm, and God, now satisfied, renews the covenant He had made. And Abraham is really convinced that, if he is

to please God, he must offer him absolutely everything of himself, of his dearest possessions, and his every hope of future joy.

God is a jealous lover!

In prayer, today, as we ask God how much He wants of us, we can hear Him say to us, "I want your whole life. Trust me, and I will give you all of Myself!"

Another great encounter with God is offered us this in this Sunday's Gospel.

It was offered first to Peter, James, and John on a mountain, Mt. Tabor, which rises almost two thousand feet about the level land of Lower Galilee.

Tired from the climb, the three disciples wake from a snooze, only to find Jesus who has been praying, suddenly radiant before them, talking with two men.

They recognize these strangers as Moses and Elijah, Moses represents the

Law, and Elijah represents the prophets.

As Jesus is talking with them, He is radiant with glory. He is glowing even more with the Father's love as the thunderous words sound out, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him!" There is the key for our Lenten observance: listening to God.

God demanded total surrender from Abraham, although

He spared Isaac. He did not spare His only Son, Jesus, but, as the second reading says, He gave him up for us and for our salvation.

God's extreme love for us is seen when St. Paul says, "...how will He not also give us everything else along with him?"

May our prayer this week be one of total surrender, total love, and trust that God will, in return, give us His Son "and everything else along with him!"

What an incredible bargain!



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

2012 PRE-CANA SCHEDULE

DEANERY	DATES	TIMES	LOCATIONS	AREA COORDINATORS
Adirondack	March 10*	9:00 am to 6:00 pm (limited to 15 couples)	St. Bernard's Grade School 63 River Street Saranac Lake	Chip and Kathy Samperi 72 Vista Drive Saranac Lake, NY 12983 (518) 891-7208
Clinton	April 21st* or November 3rd*	9:00 am to 5:30 pm 9:00 am to 5:30 pm	TBA TBA	Tom and Claudia Sanders 97 Rooney Road West Chazy, NY 12992 (518) 561-3283
Franklin	March 10* or April 28*	9:00 am - 4:00 pm 9:00 am - 4:00 pm	St. Augustine's Church 2472 State Route 11 N. Bangor	Notre Dame Parish PO Box 547 Malone, NY 12953 (518) 483-1300
Lewis	March 4* or May 10 and 17**	9:00 am to 5:30 pm 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm (dinner provided)	St. Peter's Church 5441 Shady Avenue Lowville	Tom and Linda Yousey 7718 North Shore Road Glenfield, NY 13343 (315) 376-7633
Jefferson	March 7 and 14** June 6 and 13** September 12 and September 19**	7:00 pm to 9:30 pm 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm	Holy Family Church 129 Winthrop Street Watertown St. Anthony's Church 850 Arsenal Street Watertown St. Mary's Church 521 James Street Clayton	David and Diana Sherman c/o Family Life Office PO Box 369 Ogdensburg, NY 13669 (315) 393-2920
St. Lawrence	Jan. 11 and 18** March 21 and 28** May 2 and 9th**	7:00 pm to 9:30 pm 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm 7:00 pm to 9:30 pm	Newman Center Canton Newman Center Canton Newman Center Canton	Henry and Dayna Leader c/o Family Life Office PO Box 369 Ogdensburg, NY 13669 (315) 393-2920
Essex, Hamilton, and Herkimer	Please contact the Deanery Coordinator nearest your parish			
Please note: * Attendance for the entire session is required. Lunch is provided ** attendance at both is required				

PURSUING JUSTICE

'Catholics at the Capitol' is coming

There's still time to register for the New York State Catholic Conference's 2012 public policy day, Catholics at the Capitol, to be held on March 13, at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany.

Registration should be made online at www.nyscatholic.org

Participants will join with the Bishops of New York State for a day of workshops and advocacy on issues of grave importance.

These include: opposition to the "Reproductive Health Act" which expands abortion and support for the Maternity & Early Childhood Foundation; preservation of Catholic schools and equity for all school children; support for emergency food programs, affordable housing and increased employment opportunities for low-income families and individuals; support programs that prepare and assist incarcerated individuals to successfully return to the community;; and support for English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, direct legal services and assistance to recent immigrants on the path toward citizenship.

AT THE MOVIES



CNS PHOTO/UNIVERSAL STUDIOS

Paul Rudd and Jennifer Aniston star in a scene from the movie "Wanderlust."

ALSO PLAYING



CNS PHOTO/LIONSGATE

Tyler Perry and Gabrielle Union star in a scene from the movie "Tyler Perry's Good Deeds." 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.

WANDERLUST

By Adam Shaw
Catholic News Service

When one of the lead characters in "Wanderlust" (Universal) asks rhetorically why he can't seem to go more than a short period of time without another man's private parts being waved in his face, he might as well be speaking on behalf of viewers.

For a gauntlet of such childish attempts to shock, as well as relentless lashings of tawdry language, await in director and co-writer David Wain's insubstantial and distasteful comedy.

The proceedings center on young New Yorkers George (Paul Rudd) and Linda (Jennifer Aniston), unremarkable urbanites who -- through a convoluted plot point -- find themselves living in a hippie commune lifted straight out of the 1970s.

They have stumbled on Elysium, a rural community

where drugs, free love and an absence of boundaries are the order of the day.

The picture does provide some amusing moments, and its relatively pleasing wrap-up affirms the beauty of monogamy. However, this acceptable conclusion is preceded not only by the above-cited gross-out humor, but by an incident of adultery treated more like a harmless mistake than an assault on the bonds of marriage. In sum, the script, penned in collaboration with Ken Marino, demeans human sexuality far more than it celebrates loving fidelity.

The film contains strong sexual content, including full nudity and explicit vulgar dialogue, adultery theme, drug use, occasional profanity, frequent rough and some crude language as well as an obscene gesture. The Catholic News Service classification is O -- morally offensive. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is R -- restricted.

NOW - THE TRUTH OF THE EUCHARIST REVEALED AS...

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This DVD presents a fascinating journey as the Catholic Church invited Science to test a modern-day Eucharistic Miracle. The astounding results support belief in the **REAL PRESENCE OF JESUS** in the Eucharist!



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To view a short clip of the Science Tests Faith DVD or order for \$16 with credit card, visit our web site at: www.loveandmercy.org or mail your order with \$16 to: Love & Mercy Publications, P O Box 1160, Hampstead, NC 28443

Around the diocese

LEWIS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER

Harrisville – St. Francis Solanus Church will be having a St. Patrick's Day Dinner.

Date: March 10

Time: 4 p.m. to 6

Cost: Adults, \$8; Children ages 12-5, \$5; under 5, free

Features: Take-outs available. "Fraser Family and Friends" will be there to entertain with Irish music.

DIVINE MERCY DEVOTIONS

Houseville - Divine Mercy Devotions for the month of March have been set

Date: March 4

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: St. Hedwig's Catholic Church

Features: The program includes: Vespers (Evening Prayer), Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, The Divine Mercy Chaplet (sung) and Benediction. All are welcome. Refreshments will follow in the church hall.

Contact 348-6260.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY DINNER

Harrisville – The annual Irish Dinner by the Fraser/Miller families to be held.

Date: March 10

Time: 4 p.m. to 6

Place: St. Francis Solanus Church

Cost: Adults, \$8; Children under 12, \$5; under 5, free

Features: Music provided by the Fraser Family, take-outs will be available.

ST. LAWRENCE

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

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

Date: March 3

Time: 3:15 p.m.

Features: Rosary to Our Lady of Fatima in reparation to Her Immaculate Heart and for World Peace will be prayed. A 15 minute private meditation on the Sorrowful Mysteries will follow. Confessions will be available, Saturday Anticipated Mass at 4 p.m.

K OF C BRUNCH

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

Date: March 11

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

CORN BEEF/HAM & CABBAGE

Heuvelton – Msgr. Robert Giroux Knights of Columbus will be sponsoring a St. Patrick's Day dinner of corned beef, ham and cabbage.

Date: March 17

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

Cost: \$8 donation, under 5, Free

LENTEN SOUP MEAL

Heuvelton - St. Raphael's Parish is holding a Lenten soup meal.

Date: March 12

Time: 11:45 a.m.

Place: St. Raphael's Parish Hall

Features: Fr. Jay Seymour, Pastor, will speak about his 500 mile journey across northern Spain to the tomb of St. James. Donations Accepted by not required

FISH & SHRIMP FRY

Gouverneur – St. James School will be having a Fish & Shrimp Fry every Friday during Lent.

Time: 4:30 p.m.

Cost: Adults, \$10; Children 12 and under, \$5; under 5, free; Take-outs and delivery available, phone ahead for faster services at 287-0130.

EUCCHARISTIC 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.

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.

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 continues through the night

DIOCESAN EVENTS

METANOIA RETREAT

Ogdensburg - A Young Adult Metanoia Retreat will be held

Dates: April 13-14

Place: Wadhams Hall Retreat Center,

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: For more information call or email Lorraine at 315-323-4989. Iturgeon@dioogdensburg.org

SINGING PILGRIMAGE

Alexandria Bay - St. Cyril's Church is sponsoring a Pilgrimage to Italy hosted by Peter's Way Tours featuring St. Cyril Church Choir in Liturgy and performance in Rome, Vatican City, and Assisi.

Date: Aug. 16-23

Cost: \$2595 + \$550 taxes/fuel surcharge (\$350 deposit due by 5-5-12)

Features: Experience Ancient Rome, Christian Rome, the Catacombs, Vatican Museums and a Papal Audience. Explore Assisi of St. Francis.

Contact: Beck Rose at becky.a.rose@gmail.com f

YOUNG ADULT ONLINE RETREAT

Diocese Young Adult Ministry will be sponsoring an "ONLINE" Lenten prayer group

Schedule: Sunday nights at 9p.m. each week during Lent.

Features: 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 315-323-4989 Iturgeon@dioogdensburg.org for more information.

2012 YOUTH RALLY

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

NEIGHBORING DIOCESES

2012 TEKAKWITHA CONFERENCE

Albany – The annual Tekakwitha Conference has been planned

Date: July 18-22

Place: Airport Holiday Inn, 205 Wolf Road, Albany, NY 12205

Theme: "Walking in her footsteps in Kateri Country"

Contact: For more information or to register for the conference, go to website www.tekconf.org

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

CATHOLIC MEN'S CONFERENCE

Syracuse – The Diocese of Syracuse will be sponsoring Ignite 2012, Catholic Men's Conference.

Date: March 31

Time: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Place: SRC Arena on the campus of Onondaga Community College

Speakers: Mass begins at 9am with Bishop Cunningham as celebrant; Mike Piazza, major league catcher; Sean O'Hara, a successful entrepreneur; and Fr. Thomas Williams, LC, a professor at the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical Athenaeum in Rome.

Cost: \$45 before March 5 and \$55 after. **Contact:** www.ignitecatholicmen.org



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What we're hearing about the newly designed www.northcountrycatholic.org:

"Excellent job on the new website. It's clean and easy to navigate. And, you now have the capability to provide news daily and hourly. Good work!"



**The Society For
The Propagation Of The Faith**

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director
622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 393-2920; fax (315) 394-7401
mbrett@dioogdensburg.org

SPOF gives thanks to the NCC

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

There is no doubt that the *North Country Catholic* is the best means of informing people across our 12,000 square miles about the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

Weekly as the *NCC* arrives in homes in Jefferson, St. Lawrence, Adirondack, Hamilton/Herkimer, Lewis, Essex, Clinton and Franklin Deaneries, stories unfold about life in the mission countries.

Through the generosity of Mary Lou Kilian, *NCC* editor and Christine Ward, editorial assistant, there's a place in each edition to foster a missionary spirit by informing the people of the North Country about the life and needs of the Catholic Church in the missions.

I'm very grateful for the opportunities to seek prayers and financial support for pastoral and evangelizing programs in mission dioceses.

The *North Country Catholic* has always been there for us to say thank you to our readers for their many contributions.

Throughout the year, each week the *NCC* is there to feature our on-going appeals or inform the readers of where their donations are helping to make a difference.

Often individuals who go on Mission enjoy writing down their experiences. We always encourage those who have been on Mission to forward their words and experiences to us here so that we may share them through the *North Country Catholic*. There is no better way to share the human experience of the Mission than to share the words of those who have gone and done the work and deeds of our Lord.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith is blessed to each week to share a thought or experience from the Missions.

The *North Country Catholic* and their amazing staff is the vehicle that we express these words through. God Bless the North Country Catholic, Mary Lou and Christine for spreading our good deeds and kind words for us each week.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

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

OBITUARIES

Altona – Genevieve B. "Gen" (Therrien) Miller, 88; Funeral Services Feb. 23, 2012 at Holy Angel's Church; burial in Whispering Maples Mausoleum, Ellenburg Depot.

Brushton – Leonard A. "Lenny" LaClair, 65; Funeral Services Feb. 21, 2012 at St. Mary's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Canton – John M. Maroney, 80; Funeral Services Feb. 25, 2012 at St. Mary's Church.

Gouverneur – Carol A. Pastizzo, 77; Funeral Services Feb. 25, 2012 at St. James Church.

Madrid – Rebecca A. (Snow) French, 75; Funeral Services Feb. 24, 2012 at St. John's Church; burial in St. John's Cemetery.

Massena – Annette R. Plante, 90; Funeral Services Feb. 23, 2012 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Morrisonville – Stanley B. Rose, 85; Funeral Services Feb. 25, 2012 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in St. Alexander's Cemetery.

Norfolk – Richard J. Gero, 87; Funeral Services Feb. 24, 2012 at Church of the Visitation; burial in Visitation Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Glenna B. (Baker) Killop, 82; Funeral Services Feb. 18, 2012 at the Fox & Murray Funeral Home; burial in Ogdensburg Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Gerald A. Love, 70; Funeral Services Feb. 22, 2012 at Frary Funeral Home; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Mary May (Howe) Carpenter, 85; Funeral Services Feb. 21, 2012 at St. John's Church; burial in Mt. Carmel Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Virginia "Ginny" A. (Doyle) Galarneau, 83; Funeral Services Feb. 23, 2012 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Whispering Maples Mausoleum.

Plattsburgh – Nila J. (Bushey) McCorkell, 67; Funeral Services Feb. 24, 2012 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Julie Ann McGaulley, 52; Funeral Services Feb. 20, 2012 at St. John's Church.

Plattsburgh – Roseann (Tremblay) Soucy, 100; Funeral Services Feb. 27, 2012 at St. Peter's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Potsdam – Ellen M. (Burkum) Russell, 84; Funeral Services Feb. 22, 2012 at St. Mary's Church; burial in West Stockholm Cemetery.

Ticonderoga – Robert H. Vannier, 92; Funeral Services Feb. 22, 2012 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Paul's Cemetery, Hudson Falls.

Ticonderoga – Betty Marie (Hughes) Vosberg, 91; Funeral Services Feb. 20, 2012 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Valley View Cemetery.

Watertown – Rudolph A. "Rudy" Cozzi,

83; Funeral Services Feb. 27, 2012 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

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

St. Joseph

DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY							MARCH 2012
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YOUNG CATHOLIC VOICE

In the company of cardinals!

By Rachel Daly
Contributing writer

When I heard that Archbishop Dolan of the Archdiocese of New York was being made a cardinal, and I realized I would be in Rome at the time of the ceremony, I decided right then that I had to go.

The entire experience was a blessing, and I carried everyone from back home in my heart, knowing that so many people would have loved to have been there to share in that experience with me

Having encountered Archbishop Dolan at the New York State Catholic Conference in 2010 and then again at World Youth Day just this past summer, I knew him to be a sound teacher, a courageous leader, and a joyous and humble example of faith, and it didn't escape my awareness just how momentous his elevation to the College of Cardinals would be.

Everyone I asked agreed that it would be next to impossible to get tickets to the event, but with a laugh I told them that I would gate crash if I had to.

Not even I believed that I would actually get to go.

But God had other plans for me. I somehow found myself in St. Peter's Basilica on Saturday, February 18th, amidst an eagerly expectant crowd of people, waiting for the consistory of the cardinals to begin.

My friends and I had scraped tickets to the event, fought all-out mobs, and by some miracle made it inside the basilica. Not only that,



Rachel Daly, graduate of Seton Catholic in Plattsburgh and current student at the University of Dallas, is spending a semester in Rome. On Feb. 18, she was able to attend the Consistory during which Pope Benedict XVI elevated 22 to the College of Cardinals. After the ceremony, "I had the extraordinary privilege of meeting Cardinal Dolan and personally assuring him that the Diocese of Ogdensburg sent their congratulations," Rachel writes.

but we had also landed aisle seating, within eight to ten feet of where the pope and cardinals-to-be would soon be processing in.

While we waited, bishops and cardinals casually strolled the aisles, shaking hands and receiving congratulations from the crowd.

Soon-to-be-Cardinal Dolan even made a pre-ceremony appearance, showing off his new red colors with his characteristic humor.

The crowd was abuzz with excitement at the day's events and what

they signified for the Catholic Church.

Throughout history, God has raised up saints to help carry the Church through times of adversity, and these men being elevated to the status of cardinal were among those He had raised up to lead us through the challenges of the here and now.

The recent health care mandate regarding contraception stands out as a vivid example of the difficulty that the Church now faces, and the bishops in the US have taken the

lead in defending against this threat to our freedom and our faith.

Though I won't presume to call any of these men saints just yet, I will say that there is ongoing renewal happening within the Church, and that seeing these new faces joining the ranks of the cardinals in Rome only served to make this renewal more apparent to me.

The Church is alive and dynamic, and despite the daunting challenges we face, we have every reason to hope that God will supply sufficient grace to lead us through.

The ceremony was beautiful, and afterward, I had the extraordinary privilege of meeting Cardinal Dolan and personally assuring him that the Diocese of Ogdensburg sent their congratulations.

I also got to meet Cardinal O'Brien of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, and the following day, I attended Mass with the pope and all the new cardinals.

The entire experience was a blessing, and I carried everyone from back home in my heart, knowing that so many people would have loved to have been there to share in that experience with me.

But what I learned from this was that however extraordinary it was to witness the raising up of new people to lead the Church in the Vatican, this kind of renewal is not limited to what goes on in Rome.

God is raising up new people to carry His Church across the globe. We can look to those who serve us in positions of leadership for inspiration when the going gets tough, but in the end we ourselves must be willing to be raised up, and no matter how small we are, to stand side by side with them as members of the same body, the same spirit in Christ.

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