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NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

DEC. 18, 2013

Papal message to Americas

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Pope Francis prayed that Catholics throughout the Americas would open their arms to the poor, to immigrants, to the unborn and to the aged just as Mary opens her arms to all.

Anticipating the Dec. 12

feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Americas, Pope Francis said, "I ask all the people of the Americas to open wide their arms, like the virgin, with love and tenderness."

Speaking in Spanish during his general audience Dec. 11,

the first pope from the Americas explained that "when Our Lady appeared to St. Juan Diego, her face was that of a woman of mixed blood, a 'mestiza,' and her garments bore many symbols of the native culture.

When the image of the Vir-

gin appeared on the tilma (cloak) of Juan Diego," the pope said, "it was the prophecy of an embrace: Mary's embrace of all the peoples of the vast expanses of America - the peoples who already lived there, and those who were yet to come."

SUPPORT FOR RETIRED PRIESTS

The Christmas collection



PHOTO BY PAT HENDRICK

Father Jack Downs of Raymondville is one of 43 priests of the Diocese of Ogdensburg currently receiving benefits from the diocesan Priests Retirement Fund. The fund is supported each year by parish Christmas collections. Although he officially retired in 2004, Father Downs remains very active in ministry, assisting in parishes and leading retreats. In this week's NCC he reflects on his 58 years of priesthood, which he describes as a life of great joy.

FULL STORIES, PAGES 5, 7, 9

Person of the Year



CNS PHOTO/TIME INC., HANDOUT VIA REUTERS
The cover of Time magazine's Person of the Year issue, featuring Pope Francis, is pictured in this Dec. 11 photo.

FULL STORY, PAGE 13

'Summer Heat' helps in winter

July golf tournament allows parishioners in Wells, Lake Pleasant

to help with heating bills

FULL STORY, PAGE 10

PRO ECCLESIA ET PONTIFICE CROSS AWARDED



PHOTO BY PATTY GALLAGHER

The 14 recipients of the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* cross are shown following the Solemn Vespers service Dec. 8 during which Bishop Terry R. LaValley conferred the papal honors. In front is Catherine Sponable, St. Agnes Parish, Lake Placid; middle, Theresa and Leo Giroux, St. Peter's, Plattsburgh, Bishop LaValley, Grey Nun Sister Mary Teresa LaBrake, St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg; Catherine Denny, Notre Dame, Ogdensburg; and Mary Ann Lepkowski, St. Hedwig's, Houseville; back, James D. Carroll, St. John the Baptist, Plattsburgh; Joseph A. Provoncha, Our Lady of Lourdes, Schroon Lake; Elizabeth Hartzell, St. Anthony's Watertown; Patricia Stabins, St. Patrick's, Watertown; Mary Bezio, St. Mary's and St. Joseph's, Massena; Dr. John Middleton, Our Lady of Victory, Plattsburgh; and Colleen and Roger Snyder, St. James Major Church in Lake Pleasant. More photos, pages 3-4

ABOUT FATHERS: A young Father reflects on his own father... p. 15

NORTH
COUNTRY
CATHOLIC

Box 326
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669
USPS 0039-3400
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Publish 45 issues per year: Weekly except every other week beginning the end of June through August and one issue in December by the Diocese of Ogdensburg.
622 Washington Street, Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

Editorial Office:

622 Washington Street,
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

Telephone:

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catholic.org

**Entered at the
Post Office:**

Ogdensburg, NY
13669 as
Periodical Postage.

Subscription:

For one year:
In-Diocese Rate: \$27
Outside of Diocese Rate: \$30

Matters for publication should be addressed to PO Box 326 Ogdensburg, NY 13669 and should be received by Thursday prior to publication.

Paper is printed each Monday; dateline is Wednesday. Member, Catholic Press Association.

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to North Country Catholic, PO Box 326 Ogdensburg, NY 13669-0326

EDITOR'S NOTE

Thanks, God, for early Christmas gifts

The calendar still says Advent but we certainly have many gifts to celebrate in this week's *North Country Catholic*.

First of all, we can take great delight in the fact that 14 of the best of us were honored by Pope Francis with the *Ecclesia et Pontifice* cross on Dec. 8 at the cathedral.

All the friends and family members who joined in the cathedral celebration know how deserving the recipients are. As Bishop LaValley noted, "they have truly build up our church" with their lives of prayer, faithfulness and generosity.

Thank you God for the gifts of Catherine (Mimo), John, Mary Ann, Catherine (Kay), Elizabeth, Mary, Patricia, Roger, Colleen, Sister Mary Teresa, Leo, Theresa, Joseph and James.



Mary Lou
Kilian

Along with photos of and tributes to these special people, we also offer a salute to a wonderful priest in today's paper.

It's always a great pleasure to present our annual "retired priest of the year" in anticipation of the annual collection for the Priests' Retirement Fund on Christmas.

This year, we're featuring Father Jack Downs of Ray-

mondville who is quick to say that "I retired from administration, not from ministry."

I would guess that Father Downs is nearly as active today as he was before his official "retirement" in 2004.

Almost every weekend, he fills in for neighboring pastors who need to be away. He also serves as the spiritual director of Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer and is a very familiar face among Catholics on the Akwesasne Reservation.

The best part about reading interviews with retired priests is learning – invariably – about the joy these men have experienced in their priesthood.

Father Downs says it beautifully when he encourages young men to consider the vo-

lition: "Young men who sense this call from God need to pray...and pray," he said. "Be prepared to make sacrifices, but be prepared for the greatest joy!"

And, as always, we give thanks for the wonderful gift of our Holy Father

Pope Francis has certainly been a Person of the Year for Catholics; it's gratifying to see how much he is appreciated by Time Magazine and the rest of the world.

The best part about all these Christmas gifts of ours is that they keep on giving.

Through the example of their lives, people will be drawn to God, encouraged to follow the Gospel in 2014 and beyond.

Thank you, thank you, God!

A PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Advent: a time to celebrate... waiting

This is a family time of the year – a very special time – everyone is thinking about Christmas. The Church calls these weeks before Christmas – Advent. Advent is about being family. The spirituality of Advent is a time of prayer and preparation for Christmas, a time for families to draw ever closer together.

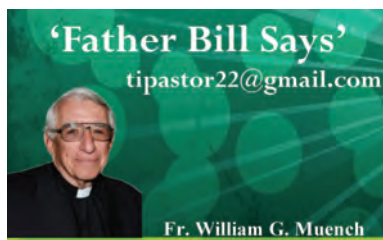
Advent is about "waiting." Scripturally, the time of Advent reminds us of the centuries that the Hebrew people waited for the coming of the Messiah.

For us, Christians, during Advent, we celebrate and remember the weeks of preparation as Mary prepared for birth. She was soon to be a mother – the Mother of Jesus – we believe in her as the Mother of God.

The waiting of Advent is a family event, a joyous and happy time; soon we will celebrate the birth of a child.

As a priest, I have been with many families preparing for the birth of a child – families celebrating a new member for their family.

I want to tell you of a time that I was a bit more involved in waiting. Susan and Paul had invited me to be with them at



the birth of their second child. I must admit – I was excited – I simply couldn't wait.

The days until William's birth were rather anxious for me. Each morning, I wondered, is this going to be the day. My relationship with that young family became rather close – each day I checked in with them.

I prayed often for this, yet, unborn child. We had already a new relationship – I was going to be with him when he entered the world. I wanted only the best for him. This was a real Advent experience.

Advent is a time for each family to celebrate their times of waiting, their experiences of waiting for the birth of their children. Each family has had such times.

Jesus consecrated this time of waiting, the time of preg-

nancy and birth – he, himself, went through this very experience.

So, we wait. Each year, we wait during Advent so that we can again unite ourselves with the Savior. Each Christmas, we celebrate Jesus coming to our world – coming to each of us. So, what is it that makes waiting possible? The answer is trust.

Trust that the Lord really is our Savior that he really has come to us, that he really will

come to me. Trust that he lived for us and died for us and has risen for us, and that he will come again out of love.

Keeping watch means not only being physically awake. It means having that kind of alertness that we have when we are waiting for someone we truly love, someone we truly need.

It is not easy to live like that – to have that alertness that sees glimpses of God everywhere.

Warm up with Good News!

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BISHOP CONFERS *PRO ECCLESIA ET PONTIFICE* CROSS

PAPAL HONORS

Ceremony held during solemn vespers Dec. 8 at St. Mary's Cathedral



PHOTOS BY BETTY STEELE

Bishop LaValley presents the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* cross to Dr. John Middleton of Our Lady of Victory Church in Plattsburgh. Dr. Middleton has been a strong advocate of pro-life ministry through the years. He served as chairman of the New York State Right to Life Committee and was one of the founders of the Champlain Valley Right to Life Committee. Also pictured, at left, is Father Kevin O'Brien, moderator of the curia; and, at right, Mary Ann Lepkowski of St. Hedwig's Parish in Houseville.



Bishop LaValley offers a hug to Grey Nun Sister Mary Teresa LaBrake of St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. She has served the diocese in both education, as a teacher and administrator, and in parish ministry, including 16 years as pastoral associate at the cathedral.



Bishop LaValley welcomes the crowd to the joyous celebration. At right is Deacon John White and Father Douglas Lucia.



James D. Carroll, a parishioner of St. John the Baptist Church in Plattsburgh, accepts the cross from the bishop. Carroll has been described as a "devout man of prayer who lives out his faith and lovingly reaches out to others." He is an active member of his parish who "serves in a quiet, unassuming way."



Catherine Sponable of Lake Placid, affectionately known as Mimo, is surrounded by priests who served in Lake Placid and Ann Moorehead, a friend and co-volunteer at St. Agnes rectory. The priests, from left are Fathers J. Michael Gaffney, Father Joseph A. Morgan and current pastor Father John R. Yonkovig.



Before the service began, the certificates lined the altar rail. They stated: "Pope Francis has determined to bestow the medal of the venerable cross *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*, awarded in recognition of outstanding service distinguished by remarkable zeal to (the recipient) and at the same time granting the aforementioned the honor of wearing the insignia of this award."



Mary Bezio, a parishioner of St. Mary's and St. Joseph's Church in Massena, is pictured with her pastor Father J. Michael Gaffney. Mrs. Bezio served as parish secretary at St. Mary's for 30 years and has been actively participating in the life of the parish since her arrival in Massena in 1947. She is described as a "woman of prayer whose faith is reflected in her humble and gentle dealings with others."



PHOTO BY PATTY GALLAGHER

Leo and Theresa Giroux of St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh were joined by a large contingent of the Giroux Family for the Dec. 8. conferral of papal honors. Among those in the crowd is their grandson Father Joseph W. Giroux, pastor of the Malone Catholic Parishes. Mr. and Mrs. Giroux have been active in St. Peter's Parish for over 60 years. In addition to participation in a number of parish groups, they have actively lived out their faith, attending daily Mass, praying the rosary and participating in special services in their parish. The parents of ten, they are called "role models for Christian marriage, family life and service to the church and community."

Congratulations Roger and Colleen Snyder

We, the Parishioners of
St. Ann's Church, Wells
&

St. James Major Church, Lake Pleasant
are so proud of your distinguished service
and commitment
to our faith
community.



Congratulations
James D. Carroll
Recipient of the
Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross
by Pope Francis

*May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields
and until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.*
(traditional gaelic blessing)

In receiving this special award,
you bring Honor and Irish Pride
to your Parish Family

Sláinte

The Roman Catholic Church
St. John the Baptist
Plattsburgh, New York

Father Jack Downs reflects on his love for the priesthood.

'Retired from administration, not ministry'

By Suzanne Pietropaoli
Staff writer

RAYMONDVILLE - It reads like a litany of love: filling in, 40 of the past 52 weekends, for pastors in parishes throughout St. Lawrence County and beyond; offering 84 daily Masses for such pastors; celebrating 24 funerals on the same replacement basis.

This is only part of the schedule kept during the past 12 months by Father Jack Downs, currently in residence at St. Raymond's Church.

Officially retired since December, 2004, this energetic and enthusiastic priest is very happy to continue to serve the Diocese of Ogdensburg as he has done for the past 58 years.

As he explains, "I retired from administration, but not from ministry."

'I always wanted to be a priest'

The Keeseville native grew up in Immaculate Conception parish; he notes that he and Msgr. Peter Riani remain its only two priestly vocations.

"I always wanted to be a priest," he recalls, "and one of my favorite pastimes was 'playing Mass.' Our pastor had a very strong connection to Brother (now Saint) Andre Bessette, and I was blessed to have received a healing through his intercession. I also think that reinforced my vocation.

"Though I was their only child, my parents were very supportive and enrolled me at St. John's High School in Plattsburgh so I could learn the Latin I would need to study for the priesthood." He said.

Those studies led the young man to Wadhams Hall and later to major seminary at Mount Saint Mary's in Emmitsburg, Maryland.

Ordained in 1955

Father Downs was ordained by Bishop Kellenberg

at St. Mary's Cathedral in 1955. His assignments took him from Sacred Heart in Massena to Holy Name in AuSable Forks and eventually included pastorates in Redwood, Theresa, Adams, West Chazy and Massena (St. Joseph's).

In addition to his pastoral and sacramental responsibilities in these parishes, Father Downs somehow found time to offer various adult education opportunities.

"The people were hungry to know more about their faith, and about the Church," he explains, "and I was more than happy to do what I could to help them learn. The people always responded.

After Vatican II

"That was a very happy and rewarding time in the Church, especially after the Second Vatican Council," Father Downs said. I really jumped right into the changes, always making sure to educate my parishioners along the way.

"It was very rewarding when one or another of them would say, 'You did it right, Father,'" he said.

The priest's passion for adult education found further outlet during "ten wonderful years as director of radio and television for the diocese."

In those years, he remembers, "I co-produced seven films for the Bishop's Fund program. Working with the Buffalo diocese, we created 12 TV programs that aired in Watertown. The topics, and the guests on the show, were always interesting and challenging!"

Involvement in various social justice and formation programs in the 1970's was followed in later years by service to the Marriage Encounter and Engaged Encounter programs.

In the 1980s, Father Downs was asked to pastor a "sister-church" in rural West Virginia.

"There were 59 active

parishioners," the priest relates, "and the poverty in Clay County was our biggest challenge.

"We set up three food programs that ran out of the parish center, part of a multi-functional church building paid for by the Catholic Extension Society," he said. "Many of the people were functionally illiterate at the time, and the food and clothing we were able to provide was really essential for them.

"The three years I spent there were a great privilege," he said.

Serving at Akwesasne

As a retired priest, Father Downs was also privileged to spend substantial time among the Mohawk people at Akwesasne.

"The St. Regis Mohawk Church had Jesuit pastors for hundreds of years," he relates, "but a few years ago the order was unable to continue assigning a priest there. Two years ago, when the last Jesuit pastor left, I covered the six-month interim before Father Pastores arrived.

"It was an enriching experience for me, and it gave me a deep appreciation for the culture and faith of the Mohawk people," he said. "Their long-time devotion to St. Kateri is very moving.

"It is amazing to see how the faith was built there by women religious and the Mohawk women they educated," Father Downs said.

"This is evident in the families descended from the girls who were educated by the Sisters of Mercy there so long ago," he said. "Today one sees the fruit of the great work done by St. Joseph Sister Mary Christine Taylor and other members of her order through the Mater Dei College Extension Program, and through their pastoral efforts.

"When I returned to Akwesasne in September to fill in for a month, I once again found a warm welcome," he said.

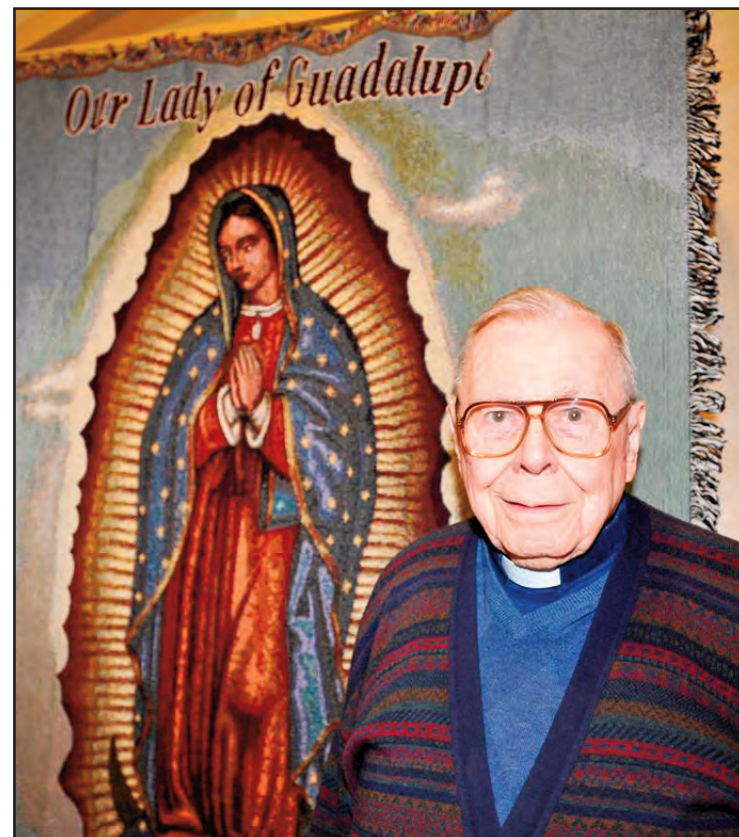


PHOTO BY PAT HENDRICK

Father Jack Downs of Raymondville retired in 2004 but remains active in ministry, assisting in parishes nearly every weekend and serving as the spiritual director at Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer in Ellenburg. Father Downs is one of 43 priests in the diocese who receives benefits from the diocesan Priests Retirement Fund which is funded by the Christmas collection of parishes in the diocese.

Heart of ministry - the Eucharist

But whatever and wherever Father Downs' assignments were, at the heart of them all was - and is - the Eucharist.

"The Eucharist has always been central to my faith and to my priesthood," he explains. "In retirement I have more time to pray; now I have the Blessed Sacrament right here in the rectory."

Not long after retiring, Father Downs made a 30-day Ignatian retreat, and subsequently attended a three-summer program in spiritual direction.

These experiences have led the priest to a fruitful ministry of teaching about prayer and the spiritual life, as well as to retreat work.

Currently the Spiritual Director of Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer in Ellenburg, Father Downs recently offered retreat days

on Ignatian discernment and meditation/contemplation there.

In Massena, 80 people showed up for the meditation/contemplation workshop.

"The response has been so positive," he notes, "that I will certainly continue with this important work."

Loving the priesthood as he does, Father Downs hopes and prays that more young men will embrace it.

"There are more people involved in the work of the Church since Vatican II," he observes, "but we still need priests. There is no lack of vocations today—just a lack of response to the invitation.

"Young men who sense this call from God need to pray... and pray," he said. "Be prepared to make sacrifices, but be prepared for the greatest joy!"

Catherine Sponable
An Exceptional Congenial Spirit



St. Agnes Parish of Lake Placid
 Salutes our wonderful
 "Mimo"

+

Honored by Pope Francis I
 and Bishop LaValley

with the

Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross

+

Beloved by all!

"What we have done for ourselves alone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal." *Albert Pike*



PHOTO BY JOHN RYAN

Grand Knight Anthony Andrews of St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus Council 7273 in Peru presented 24 jackets to Peru Elementary School Guidance Counselor Susan Rabideau. This is the first year that the council participated in the Knights of Columbus International's "Coats for Kids" program. Ms. Rabideau accepted the jackets on behalf of the Peru Elementary School and the Peru Association of Teachers.

Coats for Kids

By Shawn Ryan
 Staff Writer

PERU- This winter, the St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus Council 7273 participated in the Knights of Columbus International's "Coats for Kids" program for the first time.

K of C International has had the program in place since 2009, and in that time has distributed 115,000 new winter coats to needy children in the United States and Canada.

The St. Augustine's Council took up the program this year, and was able to provide for the purchase of 24 winter coats through their standing charity account.

"We're very fortunate to be able to provide this service to needy children," said Grand Knight Anthony Edwards. "It was a program that John Ryan brought to the Council this year, and we de-

ecided to go ahead with it."

The coats, 12 each for boys and girls, in various sizes, were presented to Peru Association of Teachers at the Peru Central Elementary School on Nov. 6.

"They accepted us with open arms," said Edwards.

School officials, Edwards explained, are in the best position to know the children who are in the greatest need, and already organize coat distribution program for the school.

Within 15 minutes of the Knights dropping off the coats, one was already given out to a child in need of a warm winter coat.

No plans have been made yet to make this a yearly program, but Edwards says that it is certainly something the Knights are willing to take up in the future.

"If there is a need for it, I think it's going to be able to be enacted for next year," he said.

Fr. Chris Carrara,
the members of
St. Hedwig's Parish Family, Houseville,
as well as the sister parishes of
St. Peter's and St. Mary's
extend our warmest congratulations to our
sister Mary Ann Lepkowski
at receiving the
Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice medal
from His Holiness Pope Francis.
We are very proud of you!



Forty-three priests are beneficiaries of diocesan retirement plan

Christmas collection aids retired priests

By Michael J. Tooley
Diocesan Fiscal Officer

The 31 retired priests of the diocese who currently receive pensions from the Priests' Retirement Fund will be direct beneficiaries of the generosity of Catholics in the North Country who contribute to their parishes in the Christmas collection.

Also, 12 priests age 70 and older who remain active in their ministry in the Diocese of Ogdensburg are receiving partial retirement benefits.

Your gift this year will help support not only priests currently receiving support from the Priests' Retirement Fund but also benefits to be paid to future retirees.

The Priests' Retirement Fund of the diocese receives 100% of the Christmas Collection proceeds given to each parish.

While your gift helps pay pensions to retired priests, it will also help the diocese make provisions for pensions for other priests as they retire in the future.

Actuarial studies are performed annually to assure the diocese is preparing for its future obligations to retired priests. The firm of Frank J. Walters and Associates has determined that adequate provisions are being made in 2013-14 to fully

fund the Plan.

The Priests' Retirement Fund of the diocese currently pays monthly pensions to 31 retired priests and 12 active priests eligible for a partial retirement benefit. Estimated pension payments in this fiscal year amount to \$730,000.

Effective July 1, 2013, retired priests in the diocese received an increase of \$30 per month in their pension benefit. It is the diocese's intention to provide a pension increase in every year in which the diocese is able. Ninety-five percent of the cost of health insurance for retired priests is also funded through the PRF.

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

The value of the investments of the Priests' Retirement Fund increased over a one-year period from \$9,941,245 to \$11,128,546 on June 30, 2013.

Since June 30, the value of investments has increased due to strong market performance. The diocese's Investment Advisory Committee, diocesan admin-

istration, and the investment portfolio's investment managers closely monitor monies invested in support of the Plan.

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

Your personal generosity to the Christmas collection in your parish will support all retired priests of the diocese and benefit longer term the diocesan and religious

priests serving you today. Your priests, retired and active, will appreciate your support tremendously!

Congratulations

Mary Besio



On your well deserved honor receiving the

Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Cross

from your friends at St. Mary's & St. Joseph's Church

Prayer to Blessed Virgin

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful wine splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the sea, help me and show me, herein you are my Mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. Oh, show me herein you are my mother. Oh, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3x). Holy Mother, I place this prayer in your hands(3X).

MD



Congratulations Kay Denny
Thank you for your wonderful ministry.
Parishioners of Notre Dame Church,
Ogdensburg

For all of your years of service and dedication to our Catholic Faith & Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Schroon Lake. We thank you and congratulate you, **Joseph Provoncha.** By the Pastor and Parishioners.



Funeral held Dec. 3 for Filippini Sister Mary Cilurzo

MORRISTOWN, NJ - A Mass of Christian Burial for Filippini Sister Mary Cilurzo, 93, a former second grade teacher at St. Anthony's School in Watertown, was held Dec. 3 at Villa Walsh.

She died Nov. 29 at Saint Joseph Hall, Home Healthcare Facility of the Religious Teachers Filippini, Villa Walsh. Burial was in Ave Maria Cemetery.

Born in Soverato, Italy, Sister Mary came to America as a young child and lived in Syracuse. She entered the Religious Teachers Filippini on July 13, 1949. She received

the religious habit on September 3, 1950 and made her final religious profession on August 17, 1953.



Sr. Mary
Cilurzo, M.P.F.

Sister Mary Cilurzo received an Associate of Arts degree from Villa Walsh College. She was a teacher in the primary grades and also was assigned in parishes where she did mission work. Her ministries were

in the following Archdioceses: Newark, NJ; Hartford, CT; Baltimore, MD; and in the Dioceses of Ogdensburg, NY; Trenton, NJ; Paterson, NJ; Scranton, PA; Pittsburgh, PA;

Providence, RI; and Norwich, CT.

Retiring at Villa Walsh in 1993, Sister Mary assisted in domestic responsibilities and dedicated time to prayer. She became a resident of St. Joseph Hall, Villa Walsh, Morristown, NJ, in 2004.

Sister Mary is survived by her two brothers, Vincent and Joseph Cilurzo and her two sisters, Anne Fitzpatrick and Nicholina Collar. She is predeceased by her parents Joseph and Maria (Viscomi).

Memorial donations may be sent to St. Joseph Hall, c/o Sister Ascenza Tizzano, M.P.F., Provincial Superior, Villa Walsh, 455 Western Avenue, Morristown, NJ 07960 - 4912.

Bishop's Schedule

Dec. 18 – 5:15 p.m., Mass at Church of the Immaculate Conception in Keeseville

Dec. 20 – 12 p.m., Mass at Ogdensburg Correctional Facility in Ogdensburg

Dec. 22 – 11 a.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Dec. 24 – 4 p.m., Vigil of the Christmas Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Diocesan Central Offices will be closed in observance of Christmas beginning 1:30 p.m. on Monday, December 23rd and will re-open for business on Thursday, December 26th at 8:15 a.m.

Environmental Stewardship

Caring for God's creation during Advent

Light a Candle and Change a Bulb" As you light this week's candle in the Advent wreath and change one light bulb, you can know that you are giving a small gift to the earth. Your greenest gift is the energy you don't use. By changing this light bulb you are not using 2 qts. of petroleum and 1,437 cubic feet of natural gas. You have not bought 82 kwh of nuclear generated electricity. By using CFLs and other energy-efficient devices, you are reducing our nation's dependence on nuclear and imported energy as cleaner sources, like wind and solar, become commercially viable. Look for star energy items when purchasing new appliances.

*Thoughts taken from Georgia Interfaith Power & Light

Follow Pope Francis on Twitter!
www.twitter.com/Pontifex

#Pontifex

Rest in Peace

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

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

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terriane Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, PO Box 2446, Plattsburgh, NY, 12901; e-mail: ayc-snn@yahoo.com; Phone: 518-569-0612; Fax: 518-425-0401 or Father James Seymour, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy at 315-393-2920, ext. 1340

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 preregister 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. 1440. Upcoming programs:
Jan. 30 - 8 p.m., Wakefield Recital Hall/SUNY Potsdam, Room C-224.

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Members of Glory Rufa's family are shown at Massena Central High School Awards Night ceremony with Sarah K. Murphy who received the first scholarship from the Glory in our Hearts Foundation. Mrs. Rufa, the former director of religious education at St. Joseph's Church, died in 2011. Her family created the foundation in her memory, "to continue her mission of enriching the communities of Northern New York now and for generations to follow by providing financial assistance to children in pursuit of educational and spiritual endeavors, raising awareness of heart disease, and continuing Glory M. Rufa's charitable work." From left are Glory's daughter Athena Curley, director of outreach for the foundation, holding her son Grant Curley; Ms. Murphy, a student at Harvard University; Glory's son Justin Rufa, chairperson of the foundation; and Glory's husband Robert Rufa.

Foundation honors the life of Massena woman

MASSENA – The children of Glory M. Rufa, director of Religious Education for St. Joseph's Church in Massena for over ten years before her death in 2011, have created the Glory in our Hearts Foundation to honor her memory and continue her charitable works in northern New York.

The foundation website cites "Glory M. Rufa's purpose-filled life and her legacy as she worked tirelessly to support those most in need in her community in Northern New York. Though her life was tragically cut short by undetected heart disease at the age of 52, her spirit will continue to burn bright in the hearts of the countless people whose lives she touched."

The Glory in our Hearts Foundation currently offers a variety of outreach activities to provide students of northern New York financial assistance in their academic and spiritual endeavors.

This past April, the foundation sponsored a 5K walk/run.

Glory in our Hearts Foundation created to build on the legacy of Glory M. Rufa

"This brought together 136 community members together on a brisk April morning to share wonderful memories and get some exercise," Glory's son Jonathon Rufa said.

A month later Sarah Murphy, a 2013 Massena Central High School graduate, was awarded the inaugural \$1,000 Foundation Scholarship to help continue her education at Harvard University.

The foundation also awarded one scholarship each to a boy and a girl from the Diocese of Ogdensburg to attend the week-long Camp Guggenheim program.

Rounding out the outreach for 2013 was the second annual Foundation Backpack Drive, in which backpacks were donated to 20 local students ranging from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade.

These recipients were each provided with a backpack filled with school supplies to begin the school year well prepared.

"Building on a successful year, the foundation is excited to host a 5K walk/run on May 3, 2014 and the 3rd Annual Foundation Backpack Drive in 2014 on August 29, 2014," Rufa said.

New in 2014 will be a heart health/heart disease awareness event to educate the community on a health issue touching all.

Further information is available on the foundation's website at www.gloryinourhearts.org and Facebook page.

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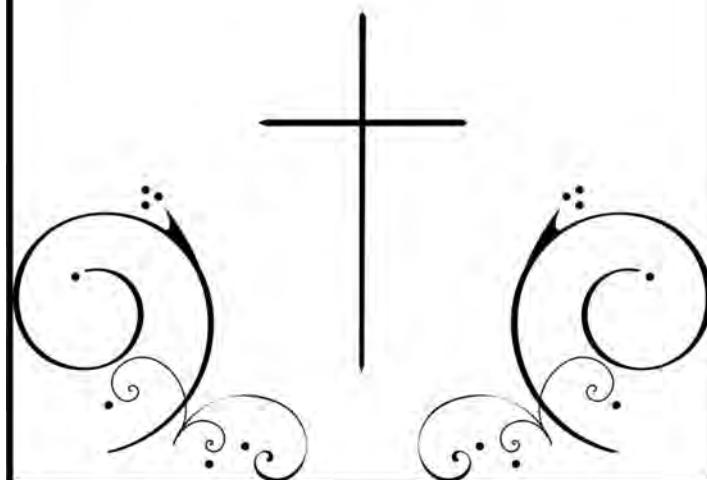
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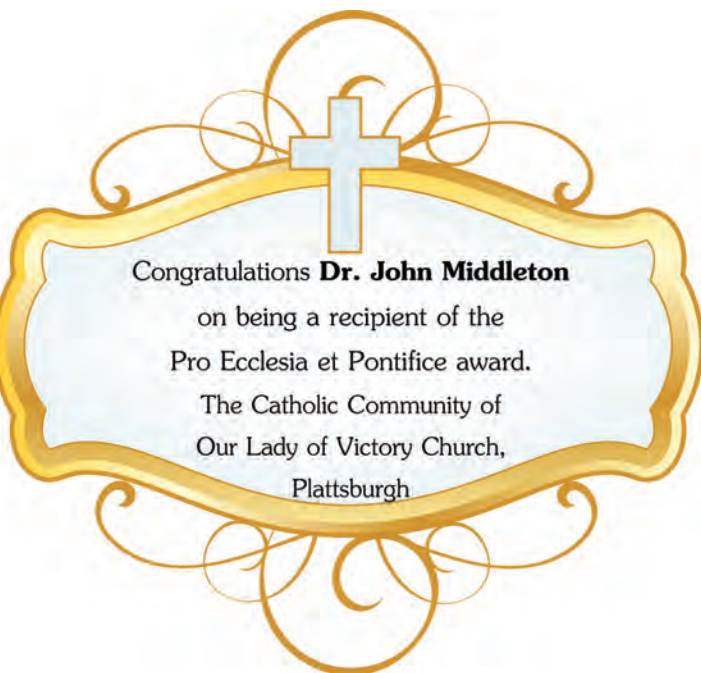
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The people of St. Ann/St. James Catholic communities at Wells and Lake Pleasant, held their annual St. Ann's and St. James "Summer Heat" golf tournament last July. The purpose of this event was to raise funds to assist local people in meeting their winter heating needs. This winter, the parishioners are helping 12 families to pay their heating bills.

St. Ann's/St. James 'Summer Heat' tournament helps 12 families beat winter cold



One of the 74 golfers who took part in the parish tournament takes a swing.

By Edna Rew
 Parishioner, St. Ann's, Wells

For a second year St. Ann's Parish in Wells and St. James in Lake Pleasant held a "Summer Heat" tournament to raise money to assist families in Wells, Lake Pleasant, Speculator and Piseco with their heating bills.

Last year the parish was able to help eight families; this year we will be assisting 12 families.

In spite of the thick fog 74 golfers arrived to play at 7 a.m.

Other parish ministries

This year St. Ann's started a new Altar and Rosary Society. The first order of business was to organize a "Prayer Shawl Ministry".

Evelyn Stephens (our master crocheter) and her ladies have distributed 25 prayer shawls or lap robes to mem-

bers of the community who have been ill or in need of comforting.

The Society also purchased school supplies to help six families this fall.

We are now going to purchase ten turkeys to help our food pantry make up food baskets.

The members of the church will again sponsor two families for Christmas. So many gifts were collected last year for the chosen family that we are collecting for a larger one this year.

President Ronni Royal keeps the group informed where the help is needed.

We are a small group but very active.

Father Sony, pastor, with his sincere feelings of love for all people, is an inspiration to all of us to help the needy where ever we can. His first thoughts are for the people of his parishes and their needs.



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

Father Jack Downs, who currently resides in Raymondville, has been officially retired since 2004 but, he says, "I retired from administration, not from ministry."

Father Downs has filled in at churches for 40 of the past 42 weekends, he celebrates daily Masses and funerals, has spent substantial time among the Mohawk people at Akwesasne and currently serves as the spiritual director for Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer in Ellenburg.


MERRY CHRISTMAS





Thirteen young people from the Diocese of Ogdensburg traveled to Indianapolis Nov. 21-24 to attend the National Catholic Youth Conference. The teenagers are members of parish youth groups in Clayton and Cape Vincent, Rosiere and Chaumont. Front, from left, are Kim Korcz, Emily Copper, Danny Swartz, Katie Beeles, Allison Jones, Danielle Savage and Amity Scoff; second row, Christine Woodley, Claire Sheley, Maura Warren, Elle Oliver, Donna Orvis, Tim Orvis, Reba Gushlaw, Sharon Turner and Phillip Moots; back, Mariah Turner, Erick Lange and Deacon Brian Dwyer

Local teens join National Catholic Youth Conference

Nine members of St. Mary's & St. John's Youth Group of Clayton headed by Christine Woodley along with four members of the Catholic Communities of Cape Vincent, Rosiere, and Chaumont headed by Sharon Turner had the opportunity to attend the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in Indianapolis, IN from Nov. 21-24.

Four other adults including Deacon Brian Dwyer, the youth director for the diocese, accompanied the group.

Each day of the conference began and ended with general sessions in the Lucas Oil Stadium (the Colts stadium)

with keynote speakers and inspirational, interactive music.

During the day, the teens and adults were provided with a variety of activities including workshops on various topics, opportunities to meet with bishops and ask questions, visiting booths of various vendors ranging from music to information on vocations, and attending confession.

The youth and adults mingled and exchanged various items such as hats and pins with 23,000 other youth from all 50 states.

As a group they were able to enjoy each other's company at every meal and while

sightseeing the capital city of Indiana.

The conference ended with an anticipated Mass with a procession of approximately 200 deacons, seminarians, priests and bishops.

"It was amazing to see the young church of today interacting with each other and proclaiming their love for God and their faith," Ms Woodley said.

"The teens are already talking about attending the next NCYC in 2015.

"Our goal is to take a bus load of at least 50 teens from around the diocese," she said. "This is an amazing faith filled experience that will last a life time."



Amity Scoff, Maura Warren and Emily Copper offered "free hugs."



Mariah and Sharon Turner (daughter/mother) are shown with Deacon Brian Dwyer, diocesan director of youth ministry.

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CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Pope calls for action against scandal of hunger in a world of plenty

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- People must stand united against the scandal of hunger while avoiding food waste and irresponsible use of the world's resources, Pope Francis said. People should "stop thinking that our daily actions do not have an impact on the lives of those who suffer from hunger firsthand," he said in a video message Dec. 9, launching a global campaign of prayer and action against hunger. Organized by Caritas Internationalis, the Vatican-based federation of Catholic charities, a global "wave of prayer" was to begin at noon Dec. 10 on the South Pacific island of Samoa and head west across the world's time zones. Pope Francis offered his blessing and support for the "One Human Family, Food For All" campaign in a video message released on the eve of the global launch. With about 1 billion people still suffering from hunger today, "we cannot look the other way and pretend this does not exist," he said in the message. There is enough food in the world to feed everyone, he said, but only "if there is the will" to respect the "God-given rights of everyone to have access to adequate food."

U.S. senator introduces Marriage and Religious Freedom Act

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- U.S. Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, and 11 co-sponsors introduced a measure in the U.S. Senate Dec. 12 that would protect religious organizations from discrimination by the federal government for supporting traditional marriage. The Marriage and Religious Freedom Act "protects the rights of individuals and organizations from religious discrimination by the federal government," Lee said in a statement. "Those who believe in the traditional definition of marriage deserve respect and tolerance. It is critical that we clarify the law to ensure that their fundamental civil liberties are not at risk." The measure would bar the government from denying any person or group tax-exempt status for opposing same-sex marriage for religious reasons. The chairman of two U.S. bishops' committees said in a Dec. 12 statement they support the nondiscrimination bill, saying it is necessary because of intolerance of those who believe marriage is between one man and one woman. "Increasingly, state laws are being used to target individuals and organizations for discrimination simply because they act on their belief that marriage is the union of one man and one woman," said San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone, heads of U.S. bishops' Subcommittee on the Promotion and Defense of Marriage.

Christmas lights reflect truth that Christ is light of world, pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The lights glowing on the Christmas tree in St. Peter's Square, like Christmas lights everywhere, are reminders that Jesus is the light of the world, Pope Francis said. While he did not attend the Vatican's tree-lighting ceremony Dec. 13, the pope personally thanked the German donors and their Czech neighbors for the tree during an audience earlier in the day. The 82-foot-tall tree was a gift of the German city of Waldmunchen, but it grew just over the border in the Czech Republic. "This tree is international," the pope told the 350 pilgrims who traveled to the Vatican for the tree-lighting ceremony. The Gospel story of Jesus' birth tells how the shepherds tending their flocks nearby were surrounded by a "great light," the pope said. "Today, too, Jesus continues to dispel the darkness of error and sin and brings humanity the joy of blazing divine light. We should let ourselves be enveloped by the light of his truth so that the joy of the Gospel would fill the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus," he said.

Pope Francis is third pope to win Time's Person of the Year honor

By Carol Glatz
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Pope Francis is not seeking fame or accolades, but being named Time magazine's Person of the Year will make him happy if it helps attract people to the hope of the Gospel, said the Vatican spokesman.

"It's a positive sign that one of the most prestigious recognitions in the international press" goes to a person who "proclaims to the world spiritual, religious and moral values and speaks effectively in favor of peace and greater justice," said the spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi.

The choice of Pope Francis "is not surprising, given the wide appeal and huge atten-

tion" to his pontificate so far, Father Lombardi said in a written statement Dec. 11, shortly after Time announced it had named the pope for the annual feature.

"Rarely has a new player on the world stage captured so much attention so quickly - young and old, faithful and cynical - as has Pope Francis," Time said on its website. "With a focus on compassion, the leader of the Catholic Church has become a new voice of conscience."

Blessed John Paul II was named Person of the Year in 1994 and Blessed John XXIII in 1962.

Other past honorees include several U.S. Presidents, Mahatma Gandhi, Adolf Hitler, Josef Stalin and Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook. The magazine says the title goes to the person or

idea that "for better or worse ... has done the most to influence events of the year."

Blessed John Paul II was named Person of the Year in 1994 and Blessed John XXIII in 1962

The pope "does not seek fame and success, because he serves to proclaim the Gospel and God's love for everyone," Father Lombardi said. But if the recognition "attracts women and men and gives them hope, the pope is happy."

The spokesman added that Pope Francis would also be pleased if the magazine's decision "means that many have understood, at least implicitly, this message" of hope.

Constant criticism of preachers is usually sign of fear, pope says

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Christians who find something to criticize in every preacher they ever hear are not simply fussy, Pope Francis said, they usually are afraid.

"They are scandalized that God speaks through human beings who have limits, human sinners. And they are even more scandalized that God speaks to us and saves us through a man who says he is the son of God, but ends up dying like a criminal," the pope said Dec. 13 at his early morning Mass.

According to Vatican Radio, Pope Francis focused his homily on the day's Gospel reading from St. Matthew where Jesus describes many of his contem-

poraries as being like spoiled children and says they criticize St. John the Baptist because he didn't eat or drink, while they criticize Jesus because he did.

"The people of his time preferred to take refuge in a very elaborate religion: for the Pharisees, it was moral precepts; for the Sadducees, political compromise; for the Zealots, social revolution; and for the Essenes, gnostic spirituality," the pope said. "They had very clean, very organized systems."

However, he said, they didn't want preachers and they definitely didn't want prophets.

"Jesus reminds them: 'Your fathers did the same with the prophets,'" the pope said. "The people of God have a kind of allergy to preachers of the word. They persecuted

and even killed the prophets."

The people "preferred to be caged up" with their own precepts or plans, he said. And there are Christians today who are equally "caged up, these sad Christians."

"They are afraid of the freedom of the Holy Spirit, who comes through preaching," he said. Through preaching the Holy Spirit "admonishes you, teaches you, may even slap you, but it is precisely what makes the church grow."

Jesus' description of the "children who are afraid to dance, to cry, who are afraid of everything and want security in everything makes me think of those sad Christians who always criticize those who preach the truth because they are afraid to open the door to the Holy Spirit."

Pope: God speaks in whispers

By **Cindy Wooden**
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - If silence is not one of the sounds associated with Christmas preparations, chances are people will miss an experience of the love and tenderness that is at the heart of the holiday, Pope Francis said.

So 'hush a bit before Christmas'

Celebrating Mass Dec. 12 in the chapel of his residence, Pope Francis offered a reflection on the tone of voice and the endearments God uses to speak to people and communicate his love.

It's not so much what God says as how he says it, the pope said in his homily.

"When a child has a bad dream and wakes up crying," he said, "Dad goes and says, 'Don't be afraid, don't be scared. I'm here.'"

"The Lord speaks this way, too," he said, pointing to the day's reading from Isaiah 41, in which the Lord reassures Jacob, affectionately calling him a little worm.

"When we watch a dad or mom talking to a child, we see how they become small, using the voice of a child and the gestures of a child," he said.

"From the outside one can think, 'Oh, how ridicu-

lous.' They make themselves smaller, don't they? That's because a father's or mother's love needs to be close. I'd say this: They need to crouch down to enter the world of the child."

Pope Francis said it is obvious that parents don't have to talk baby talk to their children to be understood, but sometimes it helps if they "make themselves children. The Lord is like that, too."

"And so, the father and the mother say ridiculous things to the child, like, 'Ah, my love, my toy,'" the pope said. "The Lord says these things, too: 'You worm, Jacob,' 'You are like a worm to me, a tiny little thing, but I love you so much.'"

The language of the Lord is the language of love and tenderness, of whispers and extreme simplicity, he said.

When the Lord spoke to Elijah, the pope said, it was not in the roar of the wind or the rumble of an earthquake, but in "the sound of that silence that is proper to love" and "doesn't make a spectacle."

This is the music of the Lord's language and, as we prepare for Christmas, we must listen for it. It will do us good to hear it," Pope Francis said.

Usually, Christmas seems like a very noisy feast," he said, but "we can use a bit of silence to hear these words of love, closeness and tenderness."

Health care law rollout met frustrations, moral objections

By **Carol Zimmermann**
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) - The Affordable Care Act, signed into law in 2010, was a major topic of discussion throughout 2013, when some of its provisions began to take effect.

The federal government's troubled website frustrated the general public and the law's final rules for implementing its contraceptive mandate applying to most religious and other employers did not satisfy the U.S. Catholic bishops, who repeatedly criticized the mandate and its narrow religious exemption, saying it erodes religious liberty rights.

When the federal government rolled out its website -- healthcare.gov -- in October, allowing people to shop for insurance coverage, the frustration with technical glitches on the site likely raised the national blood pressure levels.

On Dec. 1, the U.S. Health and Human Services Department announced that the worst of the website's problems have been fixed, but said there were still some software bugs in the system.

To help people through the maze of understanding the law and shopping for and buying health insurance, the federal government provided more than \$67 million in funds to more than 100 organizations to train navigators and counselors.

St. Louis-based Ascension Health received two of the federal grants distributed to Via Christi Hospital in Wichita, Kan., and Providence Hospital in Mobile, Ala.

Connie Brooks, a senior director for Ascension Health, said the grants "allow us to do more of what we do," stressing that Catholic hospitals are "very much committed to and compassionate about care for the poor and access to health care; it is at the core of who we are."

Father Fredrick Adamson, vicar general of the Phoenix

Diocese, advised Catholics there, in a letter sent to all parishes this fall, not to be navigators for the new health care law.

The priest's letter included a link to the National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia, which urged Catholic agencies not to sponsor or assume assistance roles with the health care law "because of the implications of these actions for cooperation with evil." The center cautioned against such help "not just because of the morally illicit drugs and procedures which will be facilitated by implementing" it but also "because of the violation of religious liberty" in the law's contraceptive mandate.

The mandate was a major problem with the health care law for the U.S. bishops from the start and remained one even after HHS made an accommodation for religious employers.

The bishops, who have long advocated for health care reform, were against final passage of health care measure because of its use of federal funds to pay for elective abortions and its failure to protect conscience rights for workers in the health care industry and for employers who have moral objections to the law's requirement that most religious and other employers provide free health coverage of contraceptives, sterilization and abortifacients for their workers.

The final rules issued in June to implement the mandate include an exemption for some religious employers that fit certain criteria.

For nonprofit religious organizations -- including charities, hospitals and universities -- that do not fall under the exemption but are morally opposed to providing the coverage, HHS has stipulated an accommodation: The coverage will be provided separately through health insurance companies or third-party administrators who must ensure that payments for contraceptive serv-

ices come from outside the objecting organization's premiums.

But the U.S. bishops and many Catholic universities and institutions argue the accommodation still does not solve their objections to being involved in providing coverage they reject for moral reasons.

Currently, there are more than 70 lawsuits against the mandate filed by Catholic and other religious entities and some for-profit companies working their way through the courts.

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed Nov. 26 to take up two cases that challenge the contraceptive mandate of the law for secular, for-profit businesses whose owners object to all or part of the mandate on moral grounds.

Archbishop William E. Lori of Baltimore, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, said the court's review "highlights the importance of this conflict between the federal government and people seeking to practice their faith in daily life."

At the congressional level, Boston Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley urged members of Congress in early November to support the Abortion Insurance Full Disclosure Act, a measure that would require health plans to disclose if they subsidize abortion coverage. The cardinal, who is chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities for the USCCB, said the legislation would address one part of the abortion-related problem in the Affordable Care Act.

He noted that under the federal health care law -- unless state law requires otherwise -- each insurer may choose whether to include coverage of elective abortions in health plans it offers on a state health exchange. He also pointed out that if the insurer does cover such abortions, the overall health plan may still receive federal tax subsidies.

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ADVENT REFLECTION

Fathers clear the path for God

By Father Thomas J. Higman
Parochial Vicar, Malone Catholic Parishes

"You've been "Dad" to me, so now I can be "Father" to so many."

With these words, I gave my Dad the stole I wore when I heard a confession for the first time. This has become a custom of newly ordained priests in recent times as it's often the case that a son first learns mercy and justice from his father.

And did we learn!

The inspiration came to write this reflection, after looking through pictures from my brother Mike's graduation from the Police Academy last May. Included amongst them was the picture included here of Mike, Dad, and me. It was the first picture taken of the three of us since I entered the seminary in 2004.

Clad in roman collar and a new police shield, we stood with the man, I believe, responsible for the men God is asking Mike and me to become.

In recent times, there has been a great call for renewed fatherhood - both physical and spiritual. Too often pictured as a goof, absentee, or the punch line of every joke, fatherhood as portrayed by Hollywood or modern media has become the antithesis of everything it needs to be!

Arguably, both physical and spiritual fathers have not always gotten it right in the past - but this is no reason to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Instead, it's a call for renewed holiness for those who have accepted this responsibility.

Everyday, I remember my Dad kissing my Mom good-bye and telling her that he loved her as he headed out to work; it was the same routine upon returning home at the end of the day.

As fathers, we need to show our love for our brides.

For husbands, this means outwardly showing love for your wife, "just because" and making sure your children know your first love, after God himself, is their mother.

Secondly, as the cold temperatures roll in, the memories of Dad spending long hours snow-blowing our driveway come blowing in! Often seven days a week, Dad made sure the driveway was clear so that he and Mom could get to work, and Mike and I to school. However, this was particularly significant on Sundays, as it became possible for us to attend Mass.



PHOTO SUPPLIED

Father Tom Higman, left, and James Higman of Carthage, right, are pictured with brother/son Mike Higman on the day Mike graduated from the Police Academy this past May. In this article, Father Higman reflects on three critical attributes of physical and spiritual fatherhood which he saw in his own father.

Fathers clear the path for God. Jesus tells his disciples that no one knows the Father, except the Son (cf. Matthew 11:27)

Therefore it becomes necessary for men, by virtue of their baptism to realize their identity as "sons-in-the-Son"—thereby clearing way to the Father's identity by what they say and do.

As fathers this means the public witness and practice of prayer and it means clearing the distractions from his home, in order that others realize that for himself and his family—"they will serve the Lord." (cf. Joshua 24:15)

Finally, (and perhaps my favorite) Fathers provide the bacon!

What do I mean?

Well, after those snowy starts to Mass on Sunday morning, after Church Dad would take to making breakfast for us. For us it was our big breakfast for the week. Bacon, eggs, home fries, and toast—we had a regular diner right in our own kitchen.

This simple, yet memorable action was important as it shows a father's need to provide substantial nourishment to his family—and not just bacon!

There's a great need for sons and daughters to hear about God's actions in the life of their father. Honesty when it comes to realization that choices in life were not always well made and the witness of God's saving action at those times need to be shared by dads. This is substantial nourishment, which cannot be overlooked.

Recently, while attending the Clergy Day of Prayer in November the presenter spoke to us about the authority of our experiences. These experiences do come with a sense of authority as they train us to be attentive to God's action, which then allow us to teach others this same attentiveness, and what to look for and observe.

If not first from parents, our children will search for this witness from other outlets - many of which only provide shallow resources for the task at hand.

During this season of Advent, let's turn to an often quiet and overlooked figure—Saint Joseph, who I believe embodied, these three attributes of fatherhood.

He loved Mary "just because"—and after God himself, was his first love.

He cleared the way for God. He quietly surrendered himself to God's plan, taking Mary into his home, clearing the way for God's will to be done.

And finally, he provided substantial nourishment. (Okay, probably not bacon, as they were devout Jews!) As a carpenter, he worked to provide a home for Jesus and Mary, and quite likely shared with them his own desire to follow God's will along with the accompanying struggles and joys.

For men who have accepted the responsibility of fatherhood, both physical and spiritual—the time for the renewal of this vocation is now!

As we begin this new liturgical year, and hear the stories of so many courageous saints—may it be our intention to one day be numbered among their company and behold the source of fatherhood face-to-face.



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SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

God is asking for complete trust in his plans

Today's readings on this Fourth (and last) Sunday of Advent describe how God very dramatically and lovingly intervenes in human history when "there is no way out".

In the first reading, God directly invites King Ahaz to ask for a sign that God would protect the southern kingdom of Judah from enemies that threaten to destroy it.

Now, a wise leader would eagerly grasp at the opportunity. Not Ahaz, who in his pride has already decided on his own political solution!



Monsignor
Paul E.
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Isaiah decides to give him God's sign anyway, saying "the virgin shall conceive a child and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel".

Ahaz was not interested in God's help. He foolishly trusted his own wisdom. As a result, the whole nation was defeated and sent into exile in Babylon.

The Gospel tells us of another man faced with a grave dilemma who did listen to God.

Joseph, already bound by a solemn betrothal ceremony to take Mary as his wife, discovers to his dismay that she is with child.

He can only suppose that she has been unfaithful to him, and is now subject to very severe laws that could result in her death if he exposes her. He takes the compassionate way out. He will divorce her quietly, exposing himself, not her, to shame.

God intervenes through a dream in which an angel tells him the whole story. The angel tells Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife, for her child has God Himself as the Father! With incredible trust and humility! Joseph obediently agrees to the plan. What a contrast between this just man and crafty Ahaz.

At Christmas, God is asking of us what He asked of Mary and Joseph- complete

DEC. 22

The Fourth Sunday of Advent

READINGS

Isaiah 7:10-14
Romans 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-24

trust in his plans.

He wants each of us to help Him save His world again!

He richly rewards those who say "Yes!" and accept His plans for their lives.

It's even more incredible that Jesus the God-man, in turn, entrusted His life to Joseph and Mary. Again, a God entrusts the success of His plans this year to those who can love enough and

sacrifice their plans for His own.

Advent, has been all about getting our hearts ready to agree to let Joseph and Mary use our hearts for a manger. From there, Jesus can help our poor country and our poor world to rebuild his kingdom. He needs our witness, our courage in speaking His truth, and sharing His love.

He so wants us to be part of a much larger Advent, when all those prophecies we heard read in the last few weeks will be brought to fulfillment..

If we can only give a simple, unqualified "yes" as Mary and Joseph did, some amazing things to happen through us in the world we live in.

[MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

Care of pregnant women in Catholic hospitals

At the beginning of December, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a sweeping federal lawsuit against the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops over its Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic hospitals, alleging that the Directives, with their prohibition against direct abortion, resulted in negligent care of a pregnant woman named Tamesha Means.

Ms. Means' water broke at 18 weeks, leading to infection of the amniotic membranes, followed by spontaneous labor and delivery of her child. The child lived only a few hours.

During the course of these events, Ms. Means went to a Catholic hospital in Michigan several times, and, according to the lawsuit, was sent home even as contractions were starting. The lawsuit not only suggests that she should have been given a drug to induce labor early on but claims this wasn't possible precisely because the hospital was Catholic

and bound by the Directives. It further asserts that Catholic hospitals are not able to terminate a woman's pregnancy by inducing premature labor "even if necessary for her health," because to do so would be "prohibited" by the Directives.

In point of fact, however, the Directives would not prevent the early induction of labor for these cases.

Not infrequently, labor is induced in Catholic hospitals in complete conformity with the Directives. Directive #47 (never mentioned in the lawsuit) is very clear: "Operations, treatments, and medications that have as their direct purpose the cure of a proportionately serious pathological condition of a pregnant woman are permitted when they cannot be safely postponed until the unborn child is viable, even if they will result in the death of the unborn child."

Deciding about whether to induce labor involves the recognition that there are

two patients involved, the mother and her in utero child, and that the interests of the two can sometimes be in conflict.

In certain situations - for example, when the child is very close to the point of viability and the pregnancy is at risk - it may be recommended to delay early induction of labor in the hope that the child can grow further and the pregnancy can be safely shuttled to a point beyond viability, allowing both mother and child to be saved. Sometimes expectant management of this kind is not possible.

Each case will require its own assessment of the risks, benefits, and likely outcomes before deciding whether it would be appropriate to induce labor.

When a woman's water breaks many weeks prior to viability and infection arises, long term expectant management of a pregnancy is often not possible.

In such cases, induction of labor becomes medically

indicated in order to expel the infected membranes, and prevent the infection from spreading and causing maternal death.

Early induction in these cases is carried out with the foreseen but unintended consequence that the child will die following delivery, due to his or her extreme prematurity.

Such early induction of labor would be allowable because the act itself, i.e. the action of inducing labor, is a good act (expelling the infected amniotic membranes), and is not directed towards harming the body-person of the child, as it would be in the case of a direct abortion, when the child is targeted for saline injection or dismemberment.

The medical intervention, in other words, is directed towards the body-person of the mother, using a drug to

induce contractions in her uterus. One reluctantly tolerates the unintended loss of life that occurs secondary to the primary action of treating her life-threatening infection.



Father Tadeusz
Pacholczyk Ph.D.

On the other hand, direct killing of a human being through abortion, even if it were to provide benefit for the mother, cannot be construed as valid

health care, but rather as a betrayal of the healing purposes of medicine at its most fundamental level.

Such an action invariably fails to respect both the human dignity of the unborn patient and his or her human rights.

It also gravely violates a mother's innate desire and duty to protect her unborn baby. If she finds herself in the unfortunate situation of having a severe uterine in-

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

AT THE MOVIES

THE HOBBIT: THE DESOLATION OF SMAUG

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

It seems unlikely that Pope Francis will decide to shatter yet another papal precedent by visiting a multiplex anytime soon. Should he do so, however, he'd probably approve of the underlying themes in director Peter Jackson's lively sequel "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug" (Warner Bros.).

Just as the pontiff himself has repeatedly done, Jackson's second installment in a trilogy of films based on Catholic author J.R.R. Tolkien's 1937 novel warns against the corrupting influence of wealth and power.

Such Gospel-aligned messages, together with the peppier pace of this outing, compared to its 2012 predecessor, "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey," will likely please teens and adults. But, as with Jackson's original journey into Tolkien's fictional world of Middle-earth, this follow-up is too intense for the smallest viewers.

In fact, the movie could be taken as a primer in creative ways to kill Orcs. Those evil creatures are the principal

adversaries the once-timid hobbit Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman) encounters as he courageously continues the quest entrusted to him by the good wizard, Gandalf the Grey (Ian McKellen).

Bilbo's mission is to help a group of Dwarves recapture their ancestral stronghold, the Lonely Mountain, from the terrifying dragon Smaug (voice of Benedict Cumberbatch) who long ago displaced them from it.

The Dwarves' doughty king in exile, Thorin Oakenshield (Richard Armitage), proves himself skilled at dispatching Orcs. So, too, do the dwarf-averse Wood-elf warrior Legolas (Orlando Bloom) and his female comrade in arms, Tauriel (Evangeline Lilly).

Though she initially shares Legolas' hostility toward Bilbo's vertically challenged traveling companions, Tauriel's attitude softens considerably after she meets the best looking of their number, Kili (Aidan Turner). A bit of humorous back-and-forth between these two accounts for the only element in the film that might register as inappropriate for adolescents.

As the Orc casualties mount, and Bilbo and his band get closer to their destination, Gandalf separates from them to pursue even bigger game than Smaug. He's out to prevent darker forces than any mere fire-breather from consolidating their power in a way that could threaten all of Middle-earth.

Along with the critique of greed implicit in the story of how Smaug came into possession of the Lonely Mountain and its vast store of gold, Bilbo's ambiguous relationship with the magical ring he acquired in the first part of his adventure illustrates the dangers posed by a thirst for power.

Though Bilbo can use the ring for good -- while wearing it, he's rendered invisible, which frequently comes in handy -- its presence exerts a beguiling but negative influence over him. Similarly, Thorin is shown to be temporarily bewitched -- and morally compromised -- by the horde of wealth stored in the Lonely Mountain.

The ordeal of these two fundamentally good but easily tempted characters



CNS/COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Martin Freeman stars as Bilbo and John Callen as Oin in a scene from the movie "The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug."

adds weight to the drama of their journey. More straightforward, but equally congruent with Judeo-Christian values, is Gandalf's battle with outright evil. In fact, the manifestation of this malignancy chillingly echoes Scripture when he boasts of his followers, "We are legion."

The film contains much vivid but bloodless action violence, some occult undertones and a brief instance of mildly sexual

humor. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Pregnant women

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

fection during pregnancy, she, too, would appreciate the physician's efforts to treat her without desiring to kill her child, even if the child may end up dying as an unintended consequence of treating the pathology.

The application of Catholic moral teaching to this issue is therefore directed toward two important and specific ends: first, the complete avoidance of directly killing the child, and, second, the

preservation of the lives of both mother and child to the extent possible under the circumstances.

Based upon these ends, the Ethical and Religious Directives of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provide important ethical parameters for framing the appropriate treatment of both mother and unborn child in high-risk pregnancies, while simultaneously safeguarding the fundamental integrity of medical practice in these

complex obstetrical situations.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at

Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncb-center.org.

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CLINTON

MARCH FOR LIFE

Plattsburgh – Champlain Valley Right to life will be sponsoring a March for life.

Date: Jan. 12, 2014

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Place: March starts at The Newman Center, 90 Broad Street and ends at St. John's Church, 20 Broad Street (Signs will be provided.)

Features: The march will be followed by a prayer service with Kathleen Gallagher as our Guest Speaker. Kathleen is the director of pro-life activities for the New York State Catholic Conference and the co-founder of the non-denominational group, New Yorkers for Life. Come hear about the interesting events which led to the defeat of the New York State Abortion Expansion Act and what we should be doing as we move forward. Light refreshments will be served in the church basement after the service.

HEALING MINISTRY

Morrisonville - The Catholic Community of St. Alexander's and St. Joseph's announces the addition of Living Waters Healing Ministry to the Parish.

Date: First Thursday each month

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: St. Alexander's Church

Features: Healing Mass, Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and an opportunity to receive individual prayer.

QUILT SHOP OPEN

Ellenburg Center - Lost Sheep Quilt and Fabric Shop is now open!

Place: Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer,

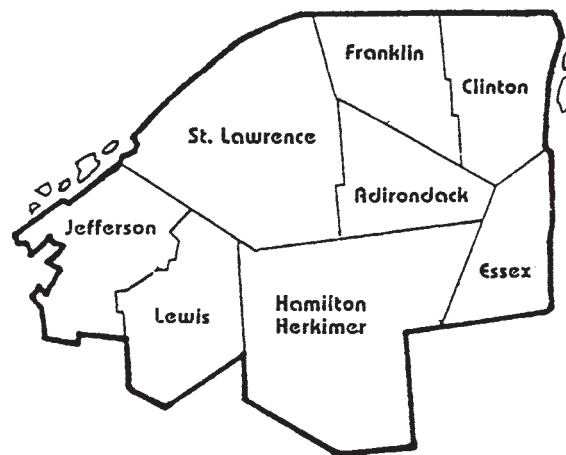
Hours: Tues. - Sat, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Evenings and other times by appointment. Phone 594-3253 or email olaprayerhouse@gmail.com to come at other times

Prayer to Blessed Virgin

Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, fruitful wine splendor of Heaven, Blessed Mother of the son of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity. Oh, Star of the sea, help me and show me, herein you are my Mother. Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth. I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity. There are none that can withstand your power. Oh, show me herein you are my mother. Oh, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3x). Holy Mother, I place this prayer in your hands(3X).

EM



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.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

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

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

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

Theme: "O God in swaddling clothes,/You delight the angels./ Word made Child,/ Trembling, I bow before You./ Who then will comprehend this mystery,/A God Who made Himself a little child?.../I want to respond to Your love,/To witness how much I love You,/I shall watch over You forever." (St. Therese of Lisieux)

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

Features: May be pre-ordered starting on Nov. 4 by calling 518-529-6580.

JEFFERSON

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Watertown – Holy Family Church is holding holy hours of Eucharistic Adoration for Vocations

Schedule: Monday through Friday following the 9 a.m. Mass at Holy Family Church (9:30 - 10:30 a.m.),

LIFERIGHT MEETING

Watertown – Liferight of Watertown meets third Wednesday of the Month.

Time: 4 p.m.

Place: 312 Sherman St.

Features: The office has materials on infanticide, assisted suicide, euthanasia and chastity.

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

LEWIS

INTERNATIONAL CRÊCHES

Houseville - All are welcome to an exhibit of Christmas Crèches- Nativities from around the world.

Date: Dec. 15, 22, 29, Jan. 5

Time: After 11 a.m. Mass or between 1 p.m. and 3

Place: St. Hedwig's

Features: The exhibit is free and open to the public. Help keep Christ in Christmas. Bring family and friends and experience the universality of Christ and Christmas through the eyes of many different cultures. Contact 348-6260

OPLATEK CHRISTMAS WAFER

Houseville - The Polish Christmas Wafer or OPLATEK is available.

Place: St. Hedwig's Church.

Cost: \$3 per packet plus postage.

Features: The Christmas Wafer or OPLATEK, is part of a beautiful Polish, Lithuanian and Slovak custom that is observed during the Vigil of Christmas

(Wigilia). After the first star is visible, family and friends gather around the dinner table to share the OPLATEK, which symbolizes the presence of Christ, the Newborn Child. The OPLATEK is sent and shared with family and friends all over the world as a symbol of love, unity and forgiveness while wishing God's Blessing on each other this Holy Night.

Contact: 315-348-6260.

ST. LAWRENCE

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

Ogdensburg – The Ogdensburg Knights of Columbus Council 258 is holding its annual Children's Christmas party.

Date: Dec. 21

Time: 12 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Place: K of C Hall

Features: Soup, hot dogs, hot cocoa, chips, candy, games and fun. Lunch is set for noon. Santa and Frosty will visit around 1 p.m. Please call the clubrooms with age (s), gender and number of children at 393-7990 by Dec. 18 and any day after 4 p.m

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Massena – Sacred Heart/St. Lawrence holds a Bereavement Support Group last Tuesday of each month.

Time: 2 p.m.

Place: Sacred Heart Convent

Features: A gathering of those who have had a recent loss of a loved one.

Contact: 315-769-3137

NOVENA FOR MILITARY

Ogdensburg - Notre Dame Church is holding a Weekly novena for the safety of U.S. military personnel at a new time.

Date: Tuesday afternoons

Time: 1:30 p.m.

LATIN MASS

Potsdam – A Tridentine (Latin) Mass is celebrated each Sunday with Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin as the celebrant

Time: 12:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church

COMMUNITY FREE LUNCH

Ogdensburg – The Knights of Columbus Council 258 is starting its community free lunch program again.

Date: Every Wednesday

Time: Noon

Features: Free hot lunch

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Massena – St. Mary's & St. Joseph's hold Benediction and Adoration every Friday.

Time: 9 a.m. to Noon

Place: St. Mary's Family Room

HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS

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

Date: Thursday before the First Friday

Time: 7 p.m. concluding with Benediction at 8 p.m.

Place: Deacon Winter Chapel

DIOCESAN EVENTS

PILGRIMAGE TO SPAIN

Father Donald Robinson, pastor of St. Anthony's and St. Patrick's in Watertown, will be leading a pilgrimage "Best of Spain and Portugal".

Dates: Feb. 18-28, 2014

Cost: \$2899 per person from NYC

Included: Roundtrip Air from NYC, First Class/Select Hotels, Most Meals, Comprehensive Sightseeing and much more. Features: Madrid, Salamanca, Lisbon, Seville, Granada & Toledo

Contact: Fr. Robinson at 315-782-1190 or e-mail donrob4@twcny.rr.com

2014 BUS FOR LIFE

Plattsburgh - The Lake Champlain 2014 bus to Washington D.C. for the national March for Life is set

Date: Jan. 21-22

Schedule: Meet at St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh on Tues. Jan. 21 at 7:30 p.m. Arrive in Washington, D.C. early morning Jan. 22; Free Time in the morning to attend Mass, sightsee, lobby representatives, etc; Rally and March start at noon on The National Mall; Meet at St. Peter's Church in Washington at 4:45 p.m. for the trip home

Cost: Reserve a seat on the bus is \$30

Contact: To reserve a seat or to obtain more information, please contact Karen Smith at 518-566-6229. To sign up for a seat on the bus or to make a donation—please mail your check to St. Peter's Church 114 Cornelia Street Plattsburgh, New York 12901. Make a note on the memo line: "Bus for Life."

DIOCESAN ECUMENICAL SERVICE

Saranac Lake - The annual Diocesan Ecumenical Service is set.

Date: Jan. 12

Time: 2 p.m.

Place: St. Bernard's Church

Features: Priests and clergy from other faiths will participate. The service is held in advance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Jan. 18-25

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the NCC for Christmas!*

Call 315-608-7556





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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director
622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296
mbrett@rcdony.org

Word of gratitude from Alaska

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

Each summer, the Missionary Cooperative program of the Diocese of Ogdensburg introduces "real life" missionaries from places both near and far.

Most summers, representatives from the Diocese of Alaska send an advocate to represent them in our Diocese and discuss the plight of their people.

This past summer, they did not participate but I thought I would share with you their kind words of gratitude just so you our readers can appreciate how they feel about the donations and sacrifices you make.

Dear Sister,

It is hard to believe that 2014 is within sight. Soon this year of ours will reach its finale and we will rejoice at the birth of Our Savior. My heart is filled with deep gratitude to every one of you who have helped us fulfill the trust God has placed in us, that is to be true shepherds to His Flock of the Arctic.

We couldn't have made it through this year without you – you never can do it without you. You and you alone make our work for God possible in the Northern Regions.

My little thank you note seems inadequate. However, I leave it to the good Lord to reward your goodness for your latest so, so generous donation, which I know He will. We know that the Lord is never to be outdone in generosity.

In addition to my expression of thanks, I do want you to know that you and all your intentions are remembered in Daily Masses offered by our Missionary priest on your behalf.

I write you these expressions of sincere gratitude no only on my own behalf, but also on behalf of Archbishop Roger Schwietz, OMI, our administrator, and all up here, benefited by your assist.

Wishing and praying you all the joys and blessings of the Advent Season.

All my best
Patty Walter, Alaskan Shepherd"

Thank you once again to all the good people in our diocese for your prayers, sacrifice and support of the 2013 Mission Office's fundraising efforts.

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

OBITUARIES

Chateaugay - Kay (Jackson) Lavoie, 71; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2013 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Champlain - Maurice Racine, 91; Funeral Services Dec. 9, 2013 at St. Mary's Church

Chazy - Lorna J. (Barber) Parrotte, 81; Funeral Services Dec. 11, 2013 at Sacred Heart Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Lake Placid - Mary Lou (LaPlante) Duffy, 72; Funeral Services Dec. 11, 2013 at M.B. Clark Inc. Funeral Home.

Lake Pleasant - Barbara S. (Bobbie) Wag-ner, 86; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2013 at St. James Major Church; burial in Higgins Bay Cemetery.

Louisville - Terrance J. "Terry" Tyo, 58; Funeral Services Dec. 10, 2013 at St. Lawrence Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Malone - Barbara A. Tutino, 80; Funeral Services Dec. 14, 2013 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

Massena - Laurel May (McGregor) Bissonette, 75; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2013 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena - William F. Brainard, 92; Funeral Services Dec. 12, 2013 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena - Georgette L. (Legault) Francia, 83; Funeral Services Dec. 10, 2013 at the Donaldson Funeral Home; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena - John M. Viskovich, 66; Funeral Services Dec. 12, 2013 at St. Mary's

Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Mineville - Lorraine V. (Cook) Kordziel, 85; Funeral Services Dec. 7, 2013 at All Saints Church.

Plattsburgh - Sharon G. (Trombly) King, 59; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2013 at St. Peter's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Port Henry - Sierra Daha, 22; Funeral Services Dec. 10, 2013 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Potsdam - Rita Alma Durham O'Connor, 95; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2013 at Garner Funeral Service; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Saranac Lake - Marie Alena Tupper Darrah (Piency), 58; Memorial Services Dec. 10, 2013 at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home.

Ticonderoga - Richard F. "Dick" Arthur, 75; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2013 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Valley View Cemetery.

Ticonderoga - Raymond C. Thatcher, 69; Funeral Services Dec. 9, 2013 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Valley View Cemetery, Ticonderoga

Treadwells Mills - Funeral Services Dec. 9, 2013 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in St. Alexander's Cemetery, Morrisonville.

Watertown - Margaret J. (Baker) Coppola, 85; Funeral Services Dec. 10, 2013 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown - Julie Ann Storino, 50; Funeral Services Dec. 11, 2013 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

With love and appreciation for her cheerful, faith-filled, indefatigable service to both us and the Ogdensburg Community, the Saint Mary's Cathedral family warmly congratulates Sr. Mary Teresa LaBrake, GNSH on receiving the Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice Award.



GO GREEN!

Receive the NCC in your e-mail every Monday where ever you are in the world.
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FELLOWSHIP... FAITH... FUN IN THE NORTH COUNTRY CHURCH

FACES OF FAITH



Father Scott Belina, parochial vicar of St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg, visited classrooms at St. Marguerite D'Youville Academy on St. Nicholas Day to tell the children the story of St. Nicholas.



The Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton Chapter of the National Honor Society held its 25th annual induction ceremony of new members Dec. 4 at Seton Catholic Central School in Plattsburgh. Students were evaluated based on the virtues of scholarship, (achieving a 90% or better average) character, virtue, and leadership by the Faculty Council. Altogether, this year's inductees performed over 400 hours in community service last year. As members of the National Honor Society, they will participate in multiple service projects throughout the year including creating a Thanksgiving basket, holding a blood drive, and hosting a spaghetti dinner to support Seton Catholic Central's Lenten Project "40 Days of Hope." The inducted members were Samantha Bashaw, Kaden Baugh, Shannon Goldfeder, Hailey Moore, Madeleine Armani-Munn, Olivia Nachbauer and Fangyuan Wang.



PHOTO BY SHAWN RYAN

Father William Reamer, chaplain at Champlain Valley Physician's Hospital in Plattsburgh, says a prayer during the recent Circle of Healing and Hope Candlelight Ceremony. The ceremony honored departed family and friends with songs and a reading of the names of departed loved ones. After the ceremony, flowers were placed at the base of the Angel of Hope as a remembrance of the departed. The Circle of Healing and Hope, on the lawn in front of CVPH, offers a quiet place for family or friends of someone who is sick or departed to come to pray or just have a moment of contemplation.



St. Nicholas (aka Father Kris Lauzon) visited the students of Seton Academy in Plattsburgh on his feast day. Thomas Murray and Luke Moore assisted him in distributing Advent buttons and candy canes to the students.



Ireland pilgrims led by Father Andrew Amyot of Norfolk gathered in front of Prince of Peace Church in Killarney, Nov. 2. In front, from left are Doris Premo, Cecilia Gourley, Margaret Boyle, Mary Nocerino, Patricia Irwin, Father Amyot, Mary Jane Bryne, Joan Kimmis, Ann Cavellier, St. Joseph Sister Anne Hogan, Sheila Curtis, Suzanne Ward, Laura Grant, and driver and guide Michael Redmond; back, Rita Foley, Joan Bola, Mary Fobare, Martin Amyot, Molly Pressey, Joan Eurto, Dennis Bryne, Donald Curtis, Francis Sharlow, Grace Vesper, Evelyn Biber, David Vesper, Vivian Fleenor, Father John Looby, Almeda Larock. Absent: Christine Paige, Joyce Wood and Lori Campbell.