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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 71, Number 32

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

DEC. 21, 2016

## CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS



CNS/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Mary and the Christ Child are depicted in this 17th-century painting by Giovanni Battista Salvi. The feast of the Nativity of Christ, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated Dec. 25.

## Christmas: time to open your heart

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Christmas is a time to open your heart to the little and wondrous things found in baby Jesus -- born poor and defenseless so he could be near and bring hope to everyone, Pope Francis said.

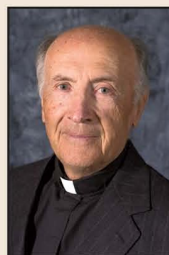
"The most beautiful joy of Christmas is that inner joy of peace: the Lord wiped away my sins, the Lord has forgiven me, the Lord had mercy on me, he came to save me. That is the joy of Christmas," the pope said Dec. 14 at his audience.

With a Nativity scene decorating the stage in the Vatican audience hall, the pope's weekly meeting with visitors and pilgrims was festive with a group of "zampognari," Italian bagpipe players, who played traditional songs and carols.

People also sang and wished the pope a happy birthday, in anticipation of him turning 80 on Dec. 17.

"I thank all of you for these good wishes for my birthday," he later told those gathered in the hall.

### REST IN PEACE



Funeral for Father Paul V. Beyette, 91, to be held Dec. 23 in North Bangor

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

## Bishop's message for Christmas

"As we have concluded a truly graced-filled Jubilee Year of Mercy, we enter this Christmas Season grateful for the blessings bestowed, but also keenly aware of our Christian duty to be the hands and merciful heart of Christ to those who currently warrant scarce attention from us.

This Christmas, let you and me resolve, inspired by our own personal encounter with Jesus Christ, to see His Face in our sisters and brothers who we so often neglect....

May the Christ Child bring you and your loved ones the Gift of Love, the Blessing of Hope and the Promise of Peace....

### Preparing the Way

Reflections for the final days of Advent and the beginning of the Christmas season from several NCC writers

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### Around the Diocese

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FULL STORY, PAGE 3



NORTH  
COUNTRY  
CATHOLIC

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

## Rest in peace, dear 'Solar Priest'

It's not easy when the days before Christmas are marked by death, when we must stop joyful preparations to say goodbye.

This week our diocese is called to say goodbye to a priest who served the God he loved right to the end of his 91 years of life.

Father Paul V. Beyette died Dec. 14 in his winter home of Florida; he will be remembered in his native northern home Dec. 23 as Bishop LaValley and priests of the diocese celebrate his funeral Mass in North Bangor.

Father Beyette grew up in

Franklin County in a devout Catholic family; his brother Francis also became a priest, his sister Jean, a Franciscan Sister of the Atonement.



Mary Lou  
Kilian

Ordained in 1950, Father Beyette served parishes of the diocese for 45 years before his 1995 retirement.

But, the priest certainly never *retired* from service to the church... or the world.

For the past 20 years, he has worked harder than ever to spread the word about the importance of protecting God's creation.

He was particularly passion-

ate about harnessing renewable energy to reduce the environmental problems caused by the burning of fossil fuels.

Bishop LaValley acknowledges that Father Beyette was the force behind the installation of solar panels in the backyard of the Bishop's House in July 2014.

"Father Beyette invited me to meet with the Faith and Ecology Group to discuss alternative energy sources and our Christian responsibility to care for our environment," the bishop said. "They were very knowledgeable and passionate about alternate energy, and convinced me that I could and should model sound environ-

mental and spiritual leadership by going green."

Father Beyette's commitment to protecting creation earned him the nickname "Solar Priest." in his St. Augustine, Florida, home

Never satisfied with the pace of change, he pushed anyone who would listen - including this editor - to proclaim the important principals of faith involved in protecting the environment.

Now we must carry on without his prophetic voice.

Father Beyette never rested in life; may now he find the peace that he has earned.

Well done, good and faithful servant.

## A PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

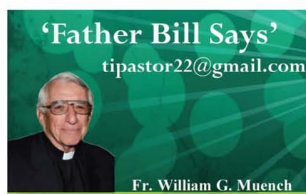
## The miracle of Christmas...miracle of life

I begin today by wishing you all a Happy and Peace-filled Christmas. My prayer for you is that you and your families will discover the joy of Christ's Birth that constantly transforms our world. May our Catholic Church radiate the God's love for all, a love that Jesus brought to this world.

The Christmas story is about the birth of a child. I have seen the happiness that a new born brings to a family: the balloons and banners that decorate the front of a home, the proud and loving displays of joy that the birth of a baby has brought to this family.

Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, entered our world as a tiny baby. We all know the story of our salvation; this infant will grow up and live among us, teach us and then die for us on the cross and rise again to a new life. We celebrate as a Church the life of Jesus that saved us all that began, just as for each of us, as a tiny baby.

This miracle became more understandable for me, when several years ago I was invited by Susan and Paul to accompany them at the time of the birth of their second child. I know I have told you this story



Fr. William G. Muench

many times - you must forgive me - it was a rather exciting day for me. I truly remember every detail. I remember Susan suggesting to me that it might be a rather good experience for a priest to be at their child's birth. I signed on immediately.

On that important day, I was out doing something in the parish. When I returned to the house, my secretary, Diane, alerted me that there had been a phone call from Syracuse. I took right off. I wasn't going to miss this. I made it in plenty of time. And we were off to St. Joseph's. I still remember when I overheard one of the nurses say - as Susan and Paul were checking in - "My goodness, they have even brought their own priest with them."

During the birth, this same nurse stationed herself next to me; she said she would describe everything to me. I actually think she wanted to make certain I didn't do any-

thing outrageous. The first thing I did notice was that this room was truly filled with love, a mother lovingly, yet with pain, bringing this child into the world and a father lovingly standing and supporting his wife at this important moment. I did also recognize that there was loving care there in the actions of the doctor and the nurses.

Many have asked me whether I prayed during this birth. I must admit that I was so absorbed by at that time that I am certain that I didn't pray at all. I was simply absorbed by all that was happening.

After, as all settled down, I was allowed to hold this infant - this tiny baby. It was then that I did offer some prayers to the Creator. I prayed to Jesus, remembering that he had begun his life and ministry, as tiny as this infant, I was holding in the palms of my hands. Did I mention - his name is William.

Jesus came to my world to transform all things as a tiny baby. Jesus came to teach us the peace and love and mercy of God, as a tiny baby. This world of mine was transformed that evening in Bethlehem when the Baby Jesus was born

of Mary, his mother. That birth that I celebrate each year with my parish is so magnificent, a birth like that I was so honored to be part of that night at St. Joseph's Hospital.

I prayer at that moment for this child I was holding, that his life would be filled with so many good things, for happiness and peace and love as he took his place in this family and this world. I prayer that only good things would fill his time. I continue to pray each year as I celebrate Christmas that the infant Jesus will bring new life to us all, that his love may fill this world with peace.

On the way home that night after Paul and I had left Susan - and this new member of their family - Paul suggested that we stop for coffee. What an evening it had been for me. I continue to realize how much I had been touched and blessed by all I experience. Paul shared his thoughts, his joy, his challenges, his hopes and dreams. I found it very special to see how transformative this evening had been for this father. As you know, for me Christmas will continue to be for me this special story. And each year, it continues to make me a new person.



# Funeral for Fr. Paul V. Beyette set for Friday

**NORTH BANGOR**—A Mass of Christian Burial for Father Paul V. Beyette, 91, will be held Dec. 23 at 11 a.m. at St. Augustine's Church.

Bishop Terry R. LaValley will preside and Father William Muench will serve as homilist.

Father Beyette died Dec. 14 at Flaggler Hospital in St. Augustine, Florida.

Burial will be in St. Augustine's Cemetery.

Father Thomas E. Kornmeyer, Dean of the Franklin Deanery, will lead the reception of the body at St. Augustine's Church Dec. 22 at 7 p.m.

Calling hours will follow, concluding with night prayer at 8:30 pm. Calling hours will resume Dec. 23 from 9 a.m. to 10:30.

Father Beyette, who retired in 1995, lived in Loon Lake, New York and wintered in St. Augustine, Florida.

A native of Bangor, he was born May 9, 1925, a son of Horace and Stella (Stone) Beyette. He studied at St. Joseph's Ursuline Academy in Malone, Wadhams Hall Seminary in Ogdensburg and St. Bernard's Seminary in Rochester.

Bishop Bryan J. McEntegart, ordained him to the priesthood March 4, 1950 at St. Mary's Church in Canton.

Following ordination, Father Beyette served as assistant pastor at St. John the Baptist in Keeseville and then at St. Mary's Church in Champlain.

In 1962 he was named pastor of St. Ann's Church in St. Regis Falls and later assumed responsibility for the mission of St. Peter's Church in Santa Clara.

While at St. Ann's, he became assistant director of Catholic Charities and managed the Malone Catholic

Charities office.

Father Beyette moved to Burke to serve as the pastor of St. George's Church in 1973.

He remained at St. George's until his retirement in 1995 and continued to serve as pastor emeritus for several more years.

Father Beyette's pastoral interests extended beyond his parish duties. He helped found the first psychiatric out-

reach of the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center. This grew into the St. Regis Falls Adult Center which provides Franklin County's seniors with many services and activities.

He served on the Board and Planning Committee for the Franklin County Office for the Aging, the North Country Center of Gerontology's Elders Planning Board and helped found Pastoral Outreach Service, an ecumenical organization enabling lay service to the homebound.

Father Beyette was a passionate advocate and careful steward of God's creation and natural resources. He helped found and lead the Diocese's Faith and Ecology Committee, and his Loon Lake home went off-grid in 1975.

Father Beyette is survived by his sister Atonement Sister Jean Beyette who resides at Graymoor with the Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement.

He is predeceased by a sister, Grace, and two brothers, Leroy and Father Francis Beyette. In lieu of flowers, donations to Catholic Relief Services are appreciated.

A reflection of the life and ministry of Father Beyette appears on p. 2 of this week's *North Country Catholic*.



Father Beyette

## FOLLOW ME

# Bishop offers wishes for a blessed Christmas

### Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

St. Luke writes: *"And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn"* (Luke 1:7). This poor couple's God was born in a manger because there was no room for him in the inn.

Today, there is no room in our hearts for so many—the unborn, the poor, the alcoholic, those suffering from mental illness, the unemployed, the underemployed, the persecuted, the victim of unjust discrimination, the elderly, the addict, the lonely, the forgotten, the imprisoned, the abused, the terror-stricken refugee. So many women, men and children are hurting. They are members of our families. Our parish census visits reminded us that they are our neighbors. They are us!

As we have concluded a truly graced-filled Jubilee Year of Mercy, we enter this Christmas Season grateful for the blessings bestowed, but also keenly aware of our Christian duty to be the hands and merciful heart of Christ to those who currently warrant scarce attention from us.

This Christmas, let you and me resolve, inspired by our own personal encounter with Jesus Christ, to see His Face in our sisters and brothers who we so often neglect.

We yearn to make room in our hearts and in our lives for the hurting. Their human dignity demands it. Our Christian dignity impels us.

We pray that the beautiful acts of gen-

erosity that so characterize the Christmas Season, will be transformed from seasonal gestures of charity to lifelong acts of justice and mercy. Such personal transformation will give tangible evidence of the fruitfulness of the Jubilee of Mercy.

*Christ-led, Christ-fed, and Hope-filled*, we can do great things in Christ Jesus, the Savior whose birth we celebrate with such joy and gratitude. Our God's unconditional love and boundless mercy became flesh and bones in the Person of Jesus Christ so that we might touch and see God's compassion for every one of us.

In so many ways, the Diocese of Ogdensburg has been especially blessed this year. As your shepherd, I am deeply grateful and continue to feel so privileged to lead the faithful of our North Country. In my pastoral visits, I continue to see such Mercy in Motion in our communities.

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

Faithfully yours in Christ

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley  
Bishop of Ogdensburg

*A Child is Born*

ISAIAH 9:6A

*Like Mary,  
"by virtue of baptism,  
every Christian is a  
"Christopher",  
a bearer of Christ,  
to his/her  
brothers and sisters."  
Pope Francis*

The Vocations Office wishes you the gift of faith, the blessing of hope and the peace and joy of God's love found in the Christ Child this Christmas.



## Capuchin Sisters offer Advent program in Malone

# Preparing the way... in prayer

By Suzanne Pietropaoli  
Staff writer

**MALONE**—On the second Sunday of Advent, Catholics everywhere heard the words of Isaiah: "Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths."

On Dec. 5, parishioners at St. Andre Bessette received special encouragement to prepare their hearts for Jesus' coming. The evening included Adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and a powerful reflection on prayer offered by three Capuchin Sisters of Nazareth from Jackson, Pennsylvania.

Sharing the fruits of their contemplative life, Sisters Grace Marie and Francis provided music while Sister Kelly Francis unwrapped the gift that is prayer.

Sister Kelly asked participants to consider who we are: sons and daughters of God, made in his image and created to share in his divine nature. Yet we, like Adam and Eve, can easily lose sight of this saving truth.

"They listened to the lies of the serpent and forgot who God was, and who they were," she said. "They were like Gollum in the Lord of the Rings, who ceases to look up as the ring takes possession

of him. He even forgot his own name as he was consumed by 'the Precious.' But Advent is a time to remember who we are, and whose we are. Advent reminds us that Jesus is knocking on the door our hearts. We do not want to tell him, like the innkeepers of Bethlehem, that there is no room here."

Love is the key to opening our hearts to Jesus, Sister Kelly pointed out, a love that is expressed in very concrete ways. "If we want to meet God personally, we must, with childlike trust, be willing to be held in the arms of our Heavenly Father in prayer," she said. "We cannot be 'too busy to pray.' To be too busy for prayer is not a virtue, but a vice.

"And prayer is not just talking; any relationship needs listening as well," Sister Kelly said. "Mostly in prayer we seem to hear nothing because God is a gentle whisperer. He speaks quietly and we are very busy. But he is there when we open ourselves to him in prayer! It is never a waste of time to pray. Think about it: how many hours a day do you spend on TV, computers, smartphones—and how many hours a day do you spend listening to Jesus?"

This question can help us prioritize our time and re-



PHOTO BY CATHERINE SUPRENANT  
Three Capuchin Sisters of Nazareth traveled recently to St. Andre Bessette Parish in Malone, where they offered presentations on prayer to religious education classes, young adults, and to other parishioners. They also visited Seton Catholic in Plattsburgh. The Capuchin Sisters of Nazareth is a contemplative charism, but the Sisters are able to share the fruits of their life through occasional parish missions and other efforts.

orient our hearts towards God. After all, said the Sister, "Prayer is giving one's self

and one's time to God. We must remember to stop and pray throughout the day, but we must also set aside time specifically to be alone with the Lord.

"If you haven't been praying intentionally in this way, start with 15 minutes a day," she said. "Read a couple of lines of Scripture and just sit with it. Listen quietly and return to the words if you are moved to. Gradually add five minutes, and then five more to your prayer time. Start small and slowly work your way up.

"Your prayer will deepen and it will change your life," Sister Kelly said. "This personal relationship with God is for EVERYONE. Holiness is not just for priests and nuns; ALL are called to be saints!"

In addition to making time for quiet prayer, Sister Kelly Francis reminded, it is important to treasure the sacraments.

"We come here to give praise and thanks to the Lord as he pours himself into us at the Eucharist," she said. "The Mass is the greatest of all prayers!"

"Another sacrament that is essential to our life with God is confession," she said. "We may be afraid to let God see what is in our hearts, but he always knows it and loves us anyhow. So, go to confes-

sion! Welcome him in!

"It is also important to pray with Scripture, and to pray the Rosary every day," Sister Kelly said, "The Blessed Mother is very powerful! Remember that the devil hates Our Lady because she did what he refused to do. He told God, 'I will not serve.' Mary, at every moment of her life, said, 'Thy will be done.' Saint John Paul II said, 'When you pray the Rosary, you are contemplating the face of Christ with Mary.' What a beautiful description of prayer!"

Praying also opens us to fasting and works of mercy, Sister Kelly explained.

"Fasting is important because it disposes us to live on every word that comes from the mouth of God," she said. "To fast is to say, 'Jesus, I love you more than all these things'; Jesus says the same to us. We need to say 'no' to ourselves in order to say 'yes' to his love.

"Fasting is never just a no," she said. "Be creative when you fast. Fast from food, from talking, from electronic devices. Make it so you really feel it. This important sacrifice of love releases graces into the world."

"Finally, remember to share the love of God with others by praying and fasting for them," Sister Kelly said. "Pray and fast to help bring others back to Christ because Jesus died for you and for them. We can all do something. Give Jesus your heart, your love, your life. Give without counting the cost to the Lord who gave everything for you."

**CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS**

Thank You For  
Taking Care Of And  
Protecting Children.

Sister Ellen Donahue  
Jeannie Grizzuto  
Safe Environment Office

Charter Compliance  
Coordinator:  
Elaine Seymour

Experience  
**TRUE PEACE**  
this Christmas

The Catholic Community of  
Cape Vincent, Rosiere and Chaumont

### The Miraculous Prayer

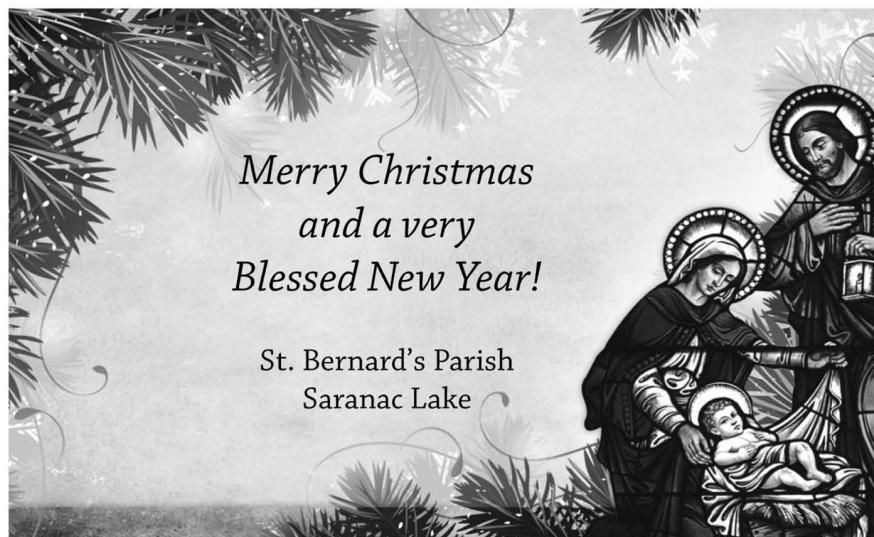
Dear Heart of Jesus, in the past I have asked for many favors. This time I ask you this very special one. Take it Dear Jesus and place it within your own broken heart where your Father sees it. Then in our merciful eyes it will become your favor, not mine. Amen KM



## CHRISTMAS IN CANTON



The fourth grade students at St. Mary's School in Canton have spent the months of November and December collecting food items for the Church and Community Food Pantry. Pictured are Mathew LaPage, Sophia Tartaglia, Matthew Gainey, Marissa Page, and Alexa Romano





LUKE 1:32  
HE WILL BE GREAT AND WILL BE CALLED

# SON OF THE MOST HIGH



Merry Christmas Season  
Father Martin Cline  
and a Blessed New Year ahead  
full of Gods Graces as you shepherd your flock at  
St. Cecilia's and Queen of Heaven.

Thank you for your humor,  
your guidance and support

Queen of Heaven Altar and Rosary Society

## THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

PRAYER SUGGESTION

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

(With ecclesiastical approval)

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

Or whatever the Lord  
inspires you to offer Him

January  
JESUS  
Holy Name  
Of Jesus

DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY							JANUARY 2017							
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
BISHOP TERRY R. LAVALLEY	1 REV. PHILLIP T. ALLEN	2 REV. ANDREW J. AMYOT	3 MSGR. JOSEPH G. AUBIN	4 REV. PIERRE AUBIN MSC	5 REV. TIMOTHY G. CANAAN	6 REV. CHRISTOPHER C. CARRARA VF	7 REV. SCOTT A. BELINA	8 OUR PASTOR	9 REV. PETER M. BERG	10 REV. PAUL V. BEYETTE	11 REV. GILBERT O. BOISVERT	12 REV. TIMOTHY G. CANAAN	13 REV. CHRISTOPHER C. CARRARA VF	14 REV. GERALD A. CERANK
15 POPE FRANCIS	16 BENEDICT XVI POPE EMERITUS	17 REV. TOGO CHACKO HGN	18 REV. DANIEL L. CHAPIN	19 REV. MARTIN E. CLINE	20 REV. DOUGLAS G. COMSTOCK	21 REV. JOHN J. COSMIC	22 RETIRED PRIESTS	23 REV. NORMAND C. COTE	24 REV. THEODORE A. CROSBY	25 REV. DOUGLAS A. DECKER	26 REV. DAVID DELUCA MSC	27 REV. ROBERT L. DECKER	28 REV. GARVIN L. DEMARAIS	
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For more information visit us online at: [www.mpprapostolate.com](http://www.mpprapostolate.com)  
A donation to help support THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS will be appreciated.  
The Monthly Prayer Request for Priests is graciously underwritten by:  Diocese of Ogdensburg Vocations Society [www.myvocation.net](http://www.myvocation.net)

### Bishop's Schedule

**Dec. 21** – 12 p.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral followed by a luncheon with the seminarians of the Diocese of Ogdensburg at the Bishop's Residence in Ogdensburg

**Dec. 22** – 10:50 a.m., Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg

**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 in Ogdensburg

**Dec. 25** – 11 a.m. Christmas Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg

**Dec. 26** – 10:50 a.m. Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg

**Dec. 27** – 12 p.m. Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Dec. 30** – 12 p.m. Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Dec. 31** – 4 p.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Jan. 2** – 6 p.m. Deanery & Clergy Christmas Dinner at Pete's Restaurant in Clayton

**Jan. 3** – 12 p.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Jan. 4** – 10:50 p.m., Mass at St. Joseph's Home, Ogdensburg

### Announcement

The Diocesan Central Offices will be closed in observance of Christmas beginning 12 p.m. on Dec. 22 and will re-open for business on Dec. 27 at 8:15 a.m. The offices will also be closed Jan. 2 for the observance of New Year's Day and reopen Jan. 3 at 8:15 a.m.

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### Rest in Peace

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

**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

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

**Dec. 26** – Rev. Aloysius Hyacinth McMahon, 1936

**Dec. 27** – Rev. Hollis David Burns, 1936; Rev. Henry Gilbeau, O.F.

M.Conv., 1978; Rev. Wilfred L. DeRoche, 2013

**Dec. 28** – Rev. Nicolaus Burtin, O.M.I., 1902; Msgr. John M. Waterhouse, 1995; Rev. Eugene J. Beaudet, 2004; Rev. Howard P. McCasland, 2010

**Dec. 29** – Rev. John A. Mullen, 1887

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

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

**Jan. 1** – Rev. Earl Leo Taylor, 1974

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

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

### To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terrienne Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, PO Box 2446, Plattsburgh, NY, 12901; e-mail: [terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com](mailto:terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com) Phone: 518-483-3261; or Father James Seymour, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy at 315-393-2920, ext. 1340

### No Paper Next Week

The next issue of the *North Country Catholic* will be dated Jan. 4, 2017. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the staff of the *NCC*

### Environmental Stewardship

#### Who gave us this gift?

A vivid childhood memory that comes to mind, as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, revolves around receiving gifts.

On Christmas morning as kids our sole attention was focused on what was in those packages with our names on them.

However, after we had opened one present and before we could open another present, our mother would always ask "Who is it from?" In our haste to open the present and in our delight with its contents, we often didn't know!

She reminded us that we needed to take time to look, so that we could thank them.

In all of the joys that this wonder-filled Feast provides, it might be easy to forget to look at the 'tag' to see who gave it to us. The Divine Mystery who took on our flesh is also the Creator of all life.

The Psalmist tells us "All of creation proclaims your wonders." We sing in the hymn, "Canticle of the Sun," "The heavens are telling the glory of God and all creation is shouting for joy."

So, our traditions for celebrating this Feast are intimately connected with all creation.

Think about the Christmas tree, the holly, the evergreens, the poinsettias, the Christmas rose, the animals - the donkey, the camels, the sheep - as well as the stars in the heavens, these are all part of the Christmas Story and of our traditions.

When we think about all the sweets and other foods that will be part of our Christmas day, we realize that not only does our meal connect us with the soil, water, air but also with the countless people involved in growing, packaging, transporting and selling these foods.

As we enjoy this Feast, perhaps we, too, need to remember "WHO gave us this gift?" so that we can express our gratitude for the precious gift of all Creation by the ways we care for it.



## ADVENT REFLECTIONS

# Having an apocalyptic Advent

By Thomas Pietropaoli  
Contributing Writer

When the English poet W.H. Auden wrote the exceptional Christmas-themed poem, *For The Time Being*, World War II was in its early phases, with Nazi Germany in control of much of the European Continent and the Japanese Military Junta making its incredibly violent and initially successful play for an Asian Empire.

**Ultimately, anything or anyone  
that is not God cannot save us.**

It is no doubt in part these historical circumstances which lend the work its peculiar tone, expressed in lines that often feel more appropriate to the Apocalypse than to Advent: "The evil and armed draw near . . . Our plans have all gone awry . . . Nothing can save us that is possible."

Such dire language, so evocative of imminent doom, raises a disturbing question - what possible connection could there be between Advent and the Apocalypse?

At first glance, we may notice only dissimilarity: the time leading up to Christmas tends to focus us in on what we find most familiar and comfortable, a consoling platter of cultural and commercial tropes that fill our ears, our eyes, and our emotions with a sense of plenty and well-being; while the Apocalypse seems the opposite, a shattering storm of severe events which obliterates with frightening force the order our lives normally depend on, initiating the end of all

things. Yet deeper reflection on both the meaning of Advent and the meaning of Apocalypse affirms Auden's audacious linking of them, shedding helpful light on the days that lead us into the great celebration of Christ's birth.

Commercialized consumerism to the contrary, the liturgical season leading up to Christmas is not actually so much a celebration of our prosperity as it is a sustained meditation on our innate neediness.

We are reminded time and again by the readings, especially those from Isaiah, that the works of our hands and the structures we construct and rely on are invariably sown with the seeds of ruination, and that even things we approach as sacred undertakings may well become sacrilegious slippery slopes: "Trample my courts no more! Bring no more worthless offerings; your incense is loathsome to me." (Isaiah 1:13).

Thus, when things don't look good during Advent, whether it be the state of society, the Church, our personal lives, or perhaps all together, we should not feel as if we are failing to get into the holiday spirit. Instead, our awareness of the tragic inadequacy that presses in from every side increasingly evidences the need for wisdom and power far beyond the pale of human endeavor.

Hence events that have a disturbing quality to them, such as the recently ended presidential campaign with its unusually high levels of divisiveness and discontent, need not rack us with anxiety—for as Christians we see in faithful hope the promise of God unfolding amid the rubble of our own fallen plans and projects.

Sadly, though, hearts gluttoned with petty crav-

ings for passing things and ephemeral securities have little room for the great hope that is born by cleaving to the promises made by God.

A blessing of an Apocalypse - a word that is rooted in a Greek term which means 'to uncover' or 'reveal'—is that it exposes false order and discloses the futility of things which counterfeit salvation.

**In Advent we need to return  
with renewed zeal to this truth.**

As Pope Francis put it in a recent Angelus Address, "human structures, even the most sacred, are fleeting, and we should not place our security in them."

Ultimately, anything or anyone that is not God cannot save us. In Advent we need to return with renewed zeal to this truth. And one of the most concrete ways to do this is by being a bit more apocalyptic in our outlook, by acknowledging those things both in the world around us and the world within us that indicate a disorder that nothing possible to human power can restore.

Far from being an inducement to despair, such recognition prepares the way for authentic rejoicing, helping us to wait on the power of God personified in the Messiah of Israel.

So in a subtle but significant way Advent calls us to live apocalyptically; to cease looking with hope and longing at the perennially failing and passing realities which surround us, and turn the eyes of our hearts toward the one true source of salvation, whose quiet coming initiates both the revelation and renewal of all things.



**From the Mission Lands to Main Street.  
Merry Christmas and Peace on Earth!**

**This year, please remember the Missions  
with prayer and sacrifice.**



**Pontifical Mission Societies, Inc.**

Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director  
& Molly McKee Ryan, Bookkeeper



**"Our Lord is our big brother.  
We are the little brothers, and we  
therefore have to love each other  
like the members of the same family."  
St. André Bessette**



**Merry Christmas from all your brothers and  
sisters at St. André Bessette Parish, Malone, NY**



## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

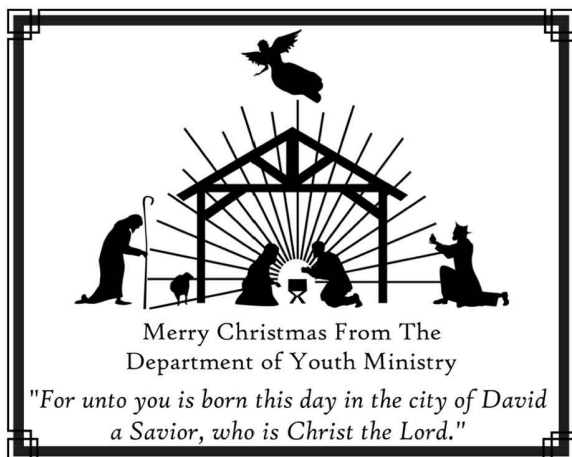


Parishioners of St. Cecilia, Adams, and Queen of Heaven, Henderson, took part in Operation Christmas Child this year, packing shoeboxes filled with gifts for children in need around the world. Laura Mallon, DRE, who organized the project said, "every gift-filled shoebox is a powerful tool for evangelism and discipleship, transforming the lives of children and their families. What enormous participation we had this year." A total of 340 shoeboxes were filled and donations towards the shipping fees totaled \$2,599. Ms. Mallon is shown above with pastor Father Martin Cline.

## BAMBINELLI SUNDAY



Father Stephen Rocker, pastor of St. Patrick's Parish in Colton and St. Mary's Parish in Potsdam offered a Bambinelli Blessing on the children and their nativity Christ child's figure that each brought from home on Gaudete Sunday at Mass at St. Patrick's. Pope Francis also carries out this Advent tradition. Each year on the Third Sunday of Advent, children gather with their families in St Peter's Square for "Bambinelli Sunday." The children bring with them figures of the Christ Child - the "Bambinelli" - from their family's Nativity scene. During the noontime Angelus prayer, the pope blesses the children and the figures they have brought.



May the infant Savior bring many blessings  
and graces at Christmas time and happiness  
for the coming year.



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Fidelis Care is sponsored by the Diocesan Bishops of New York State.





# Christmas Blessings



*Your personal generosity to the Christmas collection in your parish will support all retired priests of the diocese and benefit the diocesan and religious priests serving you today.*

*Your priests - retired and active - will appreciate your support!*



MERRY CHRISTMAS





*Sweet harmonies of Missouri cloistered nuns are fruit of their faith*

# 'Caroling at Ephesus'

By Karen Pulfer Focht  
Catholic News Service

GOWER, MO. (CNS) - Tucked away off a rocky road in Gower in rural Missouri, a small community of cloistered nuns has just come out with a new Christmas album.

**Mother Cecilia, prioress of the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles, is a native of Potsdam**

Their music, which started as private prayer, has become a musical balm for a weary world in search of peace. Their sweet harmonies are the fruit of their faith and they have chosen to share it with the world.

Chances are that this new album, "Caroling at Ephesus," will be a hit. Though the sisters live quietly in near obscurity -- their singing is well-known. Four of their previous albums have topped the music charts.

When they sing, people love to listen.

The Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles at the Priory of Our Lady of Ephesus range in age from 18 to 92. They have chosen to leave the world and spend their days working in silence -- except for when they are singing sacred music.

While many consumers crave simpler holidays, these women, young and old, have made an art of simplifying holidays and keeping them holy.



CNS PHOTO/KAREN PULFER FOCHT

Potsdam native Mother Cecilia, prioress of the Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Apostles in Gower, Mo., works with the sound engineer during a rehearsal Feb. 17 for the nuns' CD. Mother Cecilia was known as Martina Snell when she was growing up in the North Country.

The sisters are drawn to a divine rhythm -- which to the outside and commercial world may seem out of rhythm. They have left their families to follow Jesus.

The community has grown to 31 sisters and draws women from all over the world, including Germany, Netherlands and Kenya. One member is an Algerian-Canadian, and there also women from Texas, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

"We are in a sense reaching back through time and con-

servicing that way of life for the future," explained Mother Cecilia, prioress. "These women really want to be a part of it. It is 1,500 years old, this Benedictine way of life and it has given the church thousands of saints. They aspire to this and want to pass on that ideal."

The nuns milk cows, gather eggs, make vestments and nurture the souls of weary priests. One of their specialties is making church vestments by hand.

When they kick the straw off of their boots and go into the chapel, they align their hearts and voices -- and create harmony. They sound like angels as their voices echo off the walls.

"We work in silence; it's a full silence, we are waiting there for something very beautiful to come. The voice of our Lord, comes to us in

whispers, so we have to be quiet so we can hear it," Mother Cecilia said.

On Christmas Eve, in the still of the night, they will gather by the Christmas tree for a little ceremony before midnight Mass, with Sister Emmanuel uncovering a baby Jesus figurine to be laid at the foot of the tree. They will sing "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" one last time.

At midnight, the women will process into their tiny chapel, singing, "O Come Divine Messiah," and the youngest woman in the growing community will place the baby Jesus in the waiting manger in the creche.

"Then Mass starts with its Gregorian chant and carols to follow. It's enough to put a shiver down every spine," Sister Scholastica said with heartfelt emotion. "There are

frequently tears at the end of midnight Mass, hearing Christmas carols sung with so much interior joy, and for the first time all year."

The nuns spend the 12 days of Christmas enjoying one another's company. With a little extra recreation and time together, they often spend the days singing Christmas carols around the fire.

They draw one another's names at the beginning of Advent. The sisters are not allowed to own anything and they do not exchange much in the way of material gifts. They exchange spiritual gifts instead, praying in a special way for the sister whose name they chose.

"It really enhances the celebration of Christmas because we are reminded that true Christian charity is not a matter of gifts, but of love, and helping each other get to heaven behind the lead of the Christ Child," the sister explains.

The sisters chant in Latin every day. When it came time to choose carols for their new album, they looked for music that expressed devotion to the Christ Child most beautifully, according to Sister Scholastica.

This latest album includes the debut of their eldest sister, 92-year-old Sister Wilhelmina, who sang with them as they recorded "O Come All Ye Faithful."

The sisters are in the process of raising money to build their priory church and they thought a Christmas CD would be fitting.

Said Sister Scholastica, "We are seeking to build a house for Our Lord, and remembered that on Christmas night he had no place to lay his head."

(More information about the album and a video of the Benedictine nuns singing can be found at <https://music.benedictine-sofmary.org/node/73>.)

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# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Put aside ideology and work to rebuild Aleppo, say Catholic leaders

BEIRUT (CNS) -- Mideast Catholic leaders are urging people to put aside ideology and blame and work to rebuild the city of Aleppo, Syria. "The world is divided. Each one is accusing the other," said Syrian-born Catholic Patriarch Gregoire III Laham. "Between the superpowers bickering, a whole country got destroyed. Hospitals, schools, churches, mosques and so many people were killed or were displaced. Accusing each other is not going to help the situation. This is the time to work with each other so we can end the war and rebuild Syria. It's not the time to accuse each other. It's the time for worldwide powers to be united and to work together for peace. Now is the time for reconciliation," he told Catholic News Service Dec. 16, the day after he returned from Damascus, Syria. "We are praying for the victims. We are praying for Aleppo and all of Syria to have peace again," Patriarch Laham said. "As Christians, we cannot have hatred in our hearts. Even the ones who attacked us, we have to pray for them that they may have a new life and not to continue with war, violence, hatred and terrorism. We must pray for them to go toward the path of peace."

## Marriage advice: Make time for each other, especially at Christmas

DUBLIN (CNS) -- People who work with married couples have urged them to make time for each other, especially during the often-stressful Christmas season. Several groups said statistics show what seems innocent -- spending less time together -- increasingly is leading to breakups in relationships. Father Sean Healy, a Cork-born priest who is also co-founder of the think-tank Social Justice Ireland, urged couples to prioritize each other and their families over the Christmas holiday period. "The changing world of work has brought higher expectations of people's time, and this is very different to what the situation was 30 or 40 years ago. Back then, people had jobs for life, and most households had someone working. Now all that is gone, and what we have are ... increased work pressures, with an expectation in many cases that workers will be available 24/7. "All of this is putting huge pressure on the time couples have to spend with each other and their children. It's very bad for both the family life and for the health of a relationship. So I would urge couples to make an extra effort to spend time with each other over Christmas," he said.

## USCCB forms working group to monitor needs of migrants, refugees

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is establishing a working group charged with developing spiritual, pastoral and policy advocacy support for immigrants and refugees. Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, USCCB president, has named members of the working group, with the mandate of closely following developments related to immigrants and refugees in the United State. Archbishop Jose H. Gomez of Los Angeles, USCCB vice president, will chair the group. Members include the chairman of USCCB committees and subcommittees involved in immigration concerns. The groundwork for the working group was set during the bishops' annual fall general assembly in Baltimore when several bishops suggested the conference closely monitor actions by the federal government that affect immigrants and refugees.

# Pope: the world needs politics built on peace

By Carol Glatz  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Calling for a new style of politics built on peace and nonviolence, Pope Francis also called for disarmament, the eradication of nuclear weapons and an end to domestic violence and abuse against women and children.

"Violence is not the cure for our broken world," he said in his annual message for the World Day of Peace Jan. 1.

"It is a challenge to build up society, communities and businesses by acting as peacemakers. It is to show mercy by refusing to discard people, harm the environment or seek to win at any cost," he added.

The message, released Dec. 12, said building a world of peace requires a "willingness to face conflict head on, to resolve it" and to make it part of a new process of choosing solidarity and building friendships.

"Active nonviolence is a way of showing that unity is truly more powerful and more fruitful than conflict," the pope said. While differences will sometimes lead to difficulties, "let us face them constructively and non-violently," so that tension and opposition can turn into "diversified and life-giving

unity," preserving "what is valid and useful on both sides."

His message, which the Vatican sends to heads of state around the world, invited everyone "to banish violence from our hearts, words and deeds, and to becoming nonviolent people and to build nonviolent communities that care for our common home."

Building a new politics of nonviolence starts in the human heart and the home, he said.

It is in the family that people can learn how to communicate, be generous and caring, and resolve conflicts "not by force but by dialogue, respect, concern for the good of the other, mercy and forgiveness."

From within the family, "the joy of love spills out into the world and radiates to the whole of society," he said.

This "ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence" can never be "based on the logic of fear, violence and closed-mindedness, but on responsibility, respect and sincere dialogue."

"Hence, I plead for disarmament and for the prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons: nuclear deterrence and the threat of mutually assured destruction are incapable of grounding such an ethics," he said. "I plead with

equal urgency for an end to domestic violence and to the abuse of women and children."

The church contributes by seeking to limit the use of force by applying moral norms, and many Christians contribute by drafting legislation. "To be true followers of Jesus today also includes embracing his teaching about nonviolence," he said, and follow his practice of tackling evil with love and truth.

In fact, an important "manual" for peacemaking, he said, is Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, where he presented the Beatitudes.

Applying the Beatitudes, which outlines how to be blessed, good and authentic, "is also a program and a challenge for political and religious leaders, the heads of international institutions, and business and media executives," the pope said.

The "politics of nonviolence," he said, also begins with each individual, who will never miss an opportunity to offer a kind word, smile or simple gesture that "sows peace and friendship."

*Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,*

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*

*When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."*

LUKE 2:13-15

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year  
Matrimonial Tribunal, Office of Canonical Affairs

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## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

# For a child is born to us this day

It's Christmas! Ready or not! The Infant is looking for a place to be born. For those who offer Him their faith and love, He has so many gifts to give!

Isaiah's words to God's people of his day and to us from the first reading of the Mass for Midnight give us hope.

They tell us: "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwell in the land of gloom, a light has shone."

And then the great news: "For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace."

His birth had been pre-

dicted ever since Adam and Eve were thrown out of Paradise. Now, he's born again, through the power of the

Covenant with Abraham, and now the power of the New Covenant He earned by Jesus' death on the Cross and His resurrection. That's God's Word!

Turning to the Mass at Dawn we find words of great beauty in the Responsorial psalm "A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us."

Then the third Mass for this feast, the Gospel for the Mass during the Day which is one of the most beautiful pieces of poetry and theology in all of the Bible. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

It also speaks of the strug-

gle God had to find a place of welcome in our darkness, a place He could call home.

As Jesus looked around his manger bed, he must have known a little fear - it was all so different from the heaven He had just left.

But He brings His light into our darkness just the same!

Are we ready to follow His rules, His values?

Are we ready to continue His mission that He began two thousand years ago?

All the wise philosophers and leaders of nations and economists who reject God's wisdom haven't done a very good job of bringing peace and prosperity.

In our own beloved country, there is such a corruption of ethical and moral principles. Greed and selfishness prevails.

Everyone is following their own individual ideas of what is right for them, and what is wrong for them.

## DEC. 25

## Christmas

## READINGS

(At midnight)

Isaiah 9:1-6

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14

(At dawn)

Isaiah 62:11-12

Titus 3:4-7

Luke 2:15-20

(During the day)

Isaiah 52:7-10

Hebrews 1:1-6

John 1:1-18



Monsignor  
Paul E.  
Whitmore

## MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

## 'I know it's not wrong if it feels right'

Many people today believe that moral judgments and values are merely expressions of sentiment. They deny that moral values are fixed or universally true, and instead, argue that we have changing emotions that may or may not correspond to the moral feelings of those around us.

This can play out in various real-life situations when people say, for example, "You can't really know what it's like to have an unexpected pregnancy if you haven't been in the situation yourself, so you can't tell me it's wrong to get an abortion."

The morality of terminating a "problem pregnancy," according to this view, depends on "being in the moment," and experiencing the mother's desperation, fears

and sentiments.

Most of us, in fact, have probably granted our emotions leeway to trump our better moral judgment somewhere along the line.

We can relate to stories of friends who make various solemn declarations like: "You don't know how hard it's been for me in this painful marriage, and you don't understand how it feels to fall in love with somebody who really cares for you, so you can't say it's wrong for me to be in a relationship with someone else."

Philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre notes that this emotive approach to moral thinking has gained broad societal approval: "To a large degree people now think, talk and act as if emotivism were true, no matter

what their avowed theoretical standpoint may be. Emotivism has become embodied in our culture."

In light of our tendency to try to justify our misdeeds, it can be appealing to imagine that ethics are always "first person" - from my vantage point - and to suppose that no one else can identify moral obligations regarding another's situation.

"How do you feel about it?" becomes the guiding principle, and leads to the view that morals are relative, context dependent, and subject to emotional confirmation.

Reducing ethics to feelings, however, is a seriously

deficient approach to thinking about right and wrong.

It also, in the final analysis, doesn't work.

Imagine what would happen to the practice of medicine if physicians could treat patients only if they personally experienced and felt the diseases their patients had. Consider the miscarriage of justice that would occur if judges ruled only

when they could feel and experience everything the perpetrator felt and experienced at the time the crimes were committed, and had to decide cases in line with those feelings.

Such sentimentalism completely misses the objective

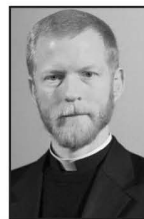
any trust in the authority of the Church to speak for the dignity of every human person, and the rights of the individual conscience.

Many would like to keep God out of public life completely.

What kind of world is Christ being born into again! It won't get better until those who believe that the Child whose birth we celebrate tonight is God.

Let us celebrate by taking up with courage His mission of truth, His goal for unity for all peoples based on the power of love and respect. It starts with our faith, with the strength of our families' faith, and with that faith reflected in the influence we have in our communities.

What a beautiful feast this is. Let us really enter into the spirit of joy and thanksgiving, take it will us into our family celebration, and share its power through the year ahead.



Father Tadeusz  
Pacholczyk Ph.D.

foundations and concerns of morality.

Those objective foundations begin with the recognition that all men and women have a shared human nature, so whatever is always morally bad for one of us will also be bad for any of us. If it is immoral for me to steal the electronics out of your house, it will likewise be wrong for you to rob me or anyone else; and it will be equally wrong for the president of the United States or the Pope to do so.

If I rob others, it is objectively bad because it harms others by depriving them of their goods, and it transforms me into a thief, the kind of person who cheapens his humanity and degrades his integrity by

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



## AT THE MOVIES

# ROGUE ONE: A STAR WARS STORY

By John Mulderig  
Catholic News Service

With "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story," last year's promising reignition of the iconic franchise, "The Force Awakens," gains a worthy -- and equally family-friendly -- companion.

Interstellar derring-do is once again the order of the day as this latest film in the series provides a rousing prequel to writer-director George Lucas' 1977 original, subsequently dubbed "Episode IV - A New Hope."

"A New Worry" might be an apt subtitle for "Rogue One" since its plot is driven by the fact that the evil Empire -- served, most prominently, by Grand Moff Tarkin (a computer-generated projection of the late Peter Cushing) and Orson Krennic (Ben Mendelsohn) -- is on the verge of deploying a game-changing new weapon, the Death Star.

With its potential to wipe out entire planets, the Death Star could doom the efforts of the gallant Rebel Alliance, headed by Mon Mothma (Genevieve O'Reilly), to resist subjugation.

This crisis draws the movie's main character, Jyn Erso (Felicity Jones), to center stage. As the daughter of Galen Erso (Mads Mikkelsen), the brilliant scientist who unwillingly developed the technology behind the Death Star while being held captive, she has reason to believe that the armament can be sabotaged from within.

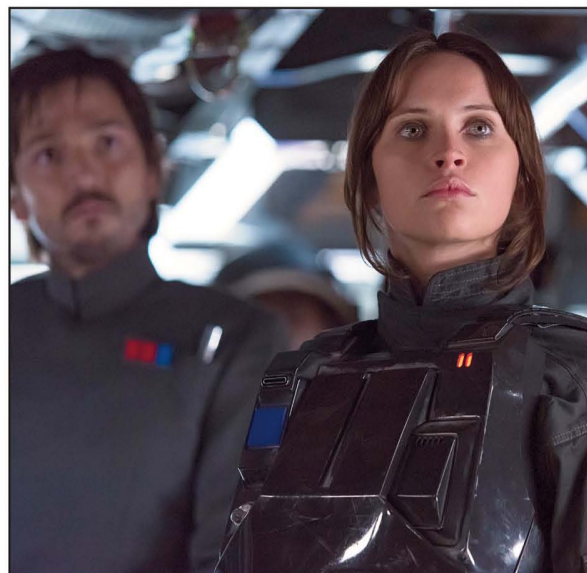
To prove this, she'll need the help of intrepid Alliance officer Capt. Cassian Andor (Diego Luna) as well as that of his mechanical sidekick, K-2SO (Alan Tudyk). An amusingly straight-talking android, K-2SO is the source of most of the movie's wry comic relief.

In crafting an exciting epic, director Gareth Edwards keeps the mayhem

inherent in his story of armed conflict virtually bloodless. And the script, by Chris Weitz and Tony Gilroy, celebrates altruism while also briefly tackling the morality of obeying some military orders.

But the ambiguous nature of the spiritual "Force" cultivated primarily, in this installment, by blind Buddhist-style monk Chirrut Imwe (Donnie Yen) may be a source of concern for the parents of some teens. Since the Force can be interpreted in any number of ways, including a vaguely Christian one -- the famous blessing it inspires having an almost liturgical ring to it -- youngsters may need guidance to arrive at sound conclusions.

For all others, "Rogue One" offers old-fashioned entertainment in the best sense: an engaging showdown between plucky goodness and elegant villainy with a bit of delightfully innocent romance thrown in for good measure.



CNS PHOTO/LUCASFILM LTD

Diego Luna and Felicity Jones star in a scene from the movie "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story."

The film contains frequent but thoroughly stylized combat violence, religious elements requiring mature discernment and some frightening images including a scene leading up to mental torture.

The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents.



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## 'I know..

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

stealing the goods of others. Even those who believe in a "feelings-based" morality are quick to decry certain actions as always wrong, at least when it comes to their own vehicles and homes being plundered, irrespective of whether the robbers might have their own moral sentiments favoring the practice.

To think clearly about morality, we need to start by acknowledging that certain moral duties do not depend on context or emotion, but are universally binding on us, having even a "commandment-like" quality.

Professor William May, a

remarkable teacher of moral theology at the John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, had a penchant for choosing clear and memorable examples when he would lecture. He used to tell his students that we all know certain actions are wrong, regardless of circumstances.

One of his most graphic examples, recounted by his students even decades later, was his undeniable assertion that we all know barbequing a baby is wrong.

Similarly, he stressed that everyone recognizes the wrongness of adultery, an act, so often shrouded in secrecy, that attacks the good

of our spouse and seriously violates an important and defining personal commitment we have made.

Even if something "feels right" in the moment, it can be very wrong for us to do it. Quite apart from the context or circumstances, certain kinds of acts, without exception, are incompatible with human dignity because, by their very nature, they are damaging and destructive to ourselves and to those around us.

*Father Pacholczyk, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See [www.ncc-center.org](http://www.ncc-center.org)*

The Word  
became Flesh

and dwell  
among us

Christmas Blessings

From the Natural Family Planning Office



## CLINTON

## SPAGHETTI DINNER

**Morrisonville** – St. Alexander's Church and the Knights of Columbus 7248 will host a spaghetti dinner fundraiser.

**Date:** Jan. 14

**Time:** 4 p.m. to 7

**Place:** St. Alexander's Jubilee Hall

**Cost:** Adults, \$8; Children 6-12, \$3; under 5, Free

## MARCH FOR LIFE

**Plattsburgh** – March for Life to be held.

**Date:** Jan. 22

**Time:** 12:15 p.m.

**Place:** Gather at Newman center and March to St. John the Baptist Church

**Features:** Guest speaker, Dale Barr, RN, Silent No More Coordinator to speak at 1 p.m. Reception follows in the Parish Center. Sponsored by Champlain Valley Right to Life.

## EUCHARISTIC 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.

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

## FRANKLIN

## SATURDAY DEVOTION

**St. Regis Falls** – First Saturday Devotion and Holy Hour to be held the first Saturday of each month.

**Time:** after 4:30 p.m. anticipated Mass

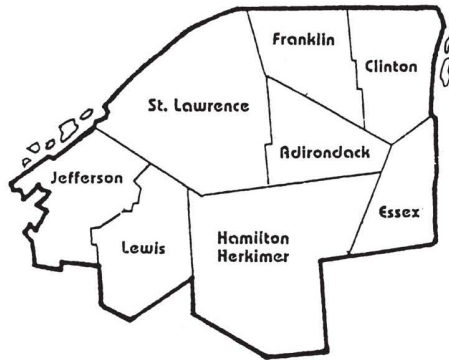
**Place:** St. Ann's Church

## HAMILTON-HERKIMER

## CHRISTMAS CHEER

**Lake Pleasant** – St. James Altar Rosary Society is spreading Christmas cheer to elderly and homebound by putting together care packages.

**Suggestions:** A list of suggested items to donate include: Christmas card with cheery and encouraging message, prayer or devotion book, puzzle, large print



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.

crosswords, word search or Sudoku, stress ball, travel pack or box of tissues, disinfecting wipes, hand sanitizer, lotion, personal care items, potpourri, slippers, throws, shawl, scarf, stationary with pen and stamps, ice gripper for bottom of cane or any items you think an elderly person might enjoy. Also, if you know of someone who would like to have a care package let us know.

**Contact:** 518-548-6275

## CHRISTMAS MASS

**Wells/Lake Pleasant** – Christmas Mass schedule for St. Ann's and St. James is set

**Schedule:** Dec. 24, 4 p.m. at St. Ann's Church. Children's pageant followed at 4:20 by Christmas Vigil Mass; Dec. 25, 8 a.m. at St. James Church

**Features:** Please note there is no Sat. 4 p.m. Mass at St. James and NO 10 a.m. Mass at St. Ann's Church.

## DAYS OF DISCERNMENT

**Old Forge** – Discerning men are invited to consider the call to the priesthood.

**Dates:** Jan 29; Feb 12; Mar 5; Apr 2 and 23; May 7

**Time:** 3 p.m.

**Place:** St. Bartholomew's Rectory

**Features:** Reflection, Vespers & dinner. Juniors in high school and older.

**Contact:** Fr. Howard Venette, pastor.st-barts@roadrunner.com/ 315-369-3554;

## JEFFERSON

## BLOOD DRIVE

**Evans Mills** – Community Blood Drive to be held.

**Date:** Dec. 21

**Time:** 1 p.m. to 6

**Place:** St. Mary's Church

**Features:** Appointments encouraged and appreciated. Walk-ins welcome. Consider a Power Red Cell donation if you are 0 Neg, A Neg, B Neg or 0 Pos.

**Contact:** Please call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit redcross-blood.org and enter Sponsor Keyword IndianRiverCatholics to schedule your appointment to donate.

## LIFERIGHT MEETING

**Watertown** – Liferight of Watertown meets the first Wednesday of the Month.

**Time:** 1 p.m.

**Place:** 870 Arsenal Street.

**Features:** The office has a variety of pro-life videos, books and educational materials which may be borrowed.

**Contact:** Phone 315-788-8480

## CURSILLO MEETINGS

**Carthage** – The Jefferson/Lewis Cursillo holds its monthly meeting on the third Tuesday of every month.

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

**Place:** Community Room of St. James Church

**Features:** All Cursillistas are encouraged to attend. We also welcome those interested in deepening a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Contact:** Anne Seegebarth  
ams2962@gmail.com, 315-783-4596

## WEEKLY EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

**Sackets Harbor** – St. Andrew's Church has scheduled weekly exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on every Friday.

**Time:** 5 p.m. to 6

## HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS

**Watertown** – Holy Hour for vocations

**Date:** Mon.-Fri.

**Time:** 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

**Place:** Holy Family Church

## LEWIS

## INTERNATIONAL NATIVITY EXHIBIT

**Houseville** – An international exhibit of Christmas Creches-Nativities Will be seen at St. Hedwig's Church.

**Schedule:** The display may be seen on Dec. 11, 18, and 25 and Jan. 1 and 8 (2017), after the 11 a.m. Mass, or between 1 p.m. and 3 on the above dates with the exception of Christmas Day when the exhibit will close at 1p.m. The exhibit may also be seen by appointment. Contact 348-6260.

**Features:** The exhibit is free

## OPLATEK CHRISTMAS WAFER

**Houseville** – The Polish Christmas Wafer or *Oplatek* is available from St. Hedwig's Church.

**Cost:** \$3 per package plus postage.

**Features:** The Christmas Wafer of *Oplatek* is part of a 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.

**Contact:** 348-6260.

## DIVINE MERCY

**Houseville** – Divine Mercy Devotions for the month of January to be held.

**Date:** Jan. 1

**Time:** 3 p.m.

**Place:** St. Hedwig's Church

**Features:** The program includes: Vespers (Evening Prayer), Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Adoration, The Di-

vine Mercy Chaplet and Benediction. All are welcome.

**Contact:** 348-6260 for information.

## ST. LAWRENCE

## DAYS OF DISCERNMENT

**Potsdam** – Discerning men are invited to come together & consider the call the Roman Catholic Priesthood.

**Dates:** Jan 29; Feb 12; Mar 5; Apr 2 and 23; May 7

**Time:** 3 p.m.

**Place:** St. Mary's Rectory

**Features:** Reflection and vespers. No reservation necessary. Open to men who are Juniors in high school and older.

**Contact:** Your Catholic Campus Minister or Father Stephen Rocker, pastorsmsp@gmail.com, 315-265-9680; or Fr. Doug Lucia, frdoug@twcny.rr.com

## EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

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

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 10

**Place:** St. Mary's Family Room

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

## VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

The Vocation Office has scheduled a women's discernment retreat day.

**Date:** Jan. 7

**Place:** Morrisonville

**Contact:** Cathy Russell, diocesan Vocation Coordinator: 315-393-2920 or crussell@rcdony.org

## NEIGHBORING DIOCESES

## SILENT RETREAT

**Syracuse** – Silent Directed Retreat Weekend to be held.

**Date:** Jan. 6-8

**Place:** Christ the King Retreat Center

**Cost:** \$250, \$25 non refundable fee

**Features:** The retreat begins with supper at 6 p.m., and concludes at noon on Sunday. Each retreatant will meet individually with an assigned director from the Center staff several times over the weekend. The director will suggest material to guide the retreatant's times in prayer. The fee includes a two-night stay, meals, snacks and individual direction. A Catholic liturgy will be available on Saturday evening. Directors will be Ms. Lana Riley, Rev. Lou Sogliuzzo, SJ, Sr. Mary Ellen Schopfer, CSJ, Mr. Jim Krisher, and Sr. Marise May, OSF.

**Contact:** register online at spiritualrenewalcenter.com/events or contact the center at (315) 472-6546 or mail@spiritualrenewalcenter.com



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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

# Christ's light shines in the North Country

As the season of Advent prepares us to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we have seen natural disaster, terrorism at work, continued war and economic trials. We are experiencing unrest in domestic politics and uncertain times in our economy. As we reflect upon these things, we come to realize what millions of people in developing countries have endured for their lifetime. We perhaps at times take for granted peace in our lands and an easy-going lifestyle. We only come to this realization when hard times fall upon us. We are blessed to work together to peacefully work through the strife.

Glowing, festive candles of all sizes in traditional Christmas colors are familiar decorations. We become mesmerized by their flickering flames. We find comfort in the steady glow. Candles remind us of the warmth and the love the Christmas Season brings into our lives. This warmth is something that we need in our lives, surrounding us with a barrier of protection and joy. People caring for each other in special ways are a familiar sight throughout the Diocese of Ogdensburg which is truly letting Christ's light shine through generosity. Every Christmas season, the Mission office is often overcome by the generosity by so many of you, throughout the year.

There is light coming out of the darkness in the developing lands because of missionaries. Yes, missionaries like you, let the light of Christ shine in the lives of people in the missions as they receive your generous donations. By virtue of our baptism, we are called to be missionaries. On behalf of missionaries and the people they serve who benefit from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Missionary Childhood Association and the Missionary Projects of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, I thank you for your generosity and the gifts that bring Christ's light into the darkness of the suffering and the poor in mission lands.

Yet, there is so much yet to do. There is still unthinkable suffering. We continue to reach out for your help and we pray for the strength and courage to do God's work. Tomorrow is another day. Another crisis can occur at any time. For now, we hope and we celebrate the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The Mission office wishes you all a very blessed Christmas and happy new year. Again, thank you for your generous support. God Bless.

Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.  
<http://www.rcdony.org/mission-office.html>



## OBITUARIES

**AuSable Forks** – Alice Elizabeth (Craig) SantaMaria, 72; Funeral Services Dec. 17, 2016 at Holy Name Church.

**Brushton** – Vivian (Mayville) Charette, 68; Funeral Services Dec. 13, 2016 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery, Malone.

**Canton** – Rick L. Bartlett, 53; Funeral Services Dec. 17, 2016 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Fairview Cemetery.

**Cape Vincent** – Sarah Constance Docteur, 79; Funeral Services Dec. 12, 2016 at St. Vincent of Paul Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Champlain** – Kenneth B. Phaneuf, 91; Funeral Services Dec. 10, 2016 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Clayton** – Vivian (Farley) Black, 90; Funeral Dec. 12, 2016 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Hogansburg** – Elizabeth "Bessie" (Roundpoint) Cole, 78; Funeral Services Dec. 14, 2016 at St. Regis Church.

**Fort Covington** – Bruce W. Gratton, 48; Funeral Services Dec. 14, 2016 at the Cappiello-McKenzie and Cosgrove Fu-



neral Home; burial in Pine Grove Cemetery, Westville.

**Moers** – Andre J. Bedard, 91; Funeral Services Dec. 16, 2016 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** – Roy "Nippy" Provost, 77; Funeral Services Dec. 12, 2016 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, West Chazy.

**Port Henry** – Jason William Grant, 42; Funeral Services Dec. 10, 2016 at St. Patrick's Church.

**Potsdam** – Terry K. Tiernan, 71; Funeral Services Dec. 14, 2016 at the Garner Funeral Home.

**Pyrates** – Rogene J. Coughlin Bessette, 85; Funeral Services Dec. 16, 2016 at St. Paul's Oratory; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Canton.

**Redford** – Thomas E. Islas, 85; Funeral

Services Dec. 17, 2016 at Assumption of Mary; burial in parish cemetery.

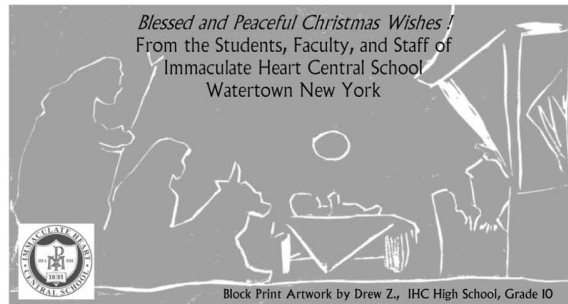
**Redford** – Dorothy "Dot" May Bruce Miner, 90; Funeral Services June 10, 2017 at Assumption of Mary Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Saranac Lake** – Shirley Elizabeth (Terry) LaHart, 84; Funeral Services Dec. 15, 2016 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Bernard Cemetery.

**Saranac Lake** – Harlie L. Rascoe, 12; Funeral Services Dec. 17, 2016 at St. Bernard's Church.

**Watertown** – Geraldine (Spaziani) Lettiere, 82; Funeral Services Dec. 14, 2016 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

**Watertown** – Daniel J. McCarthy, 47; Funeral Services Dec. 15, 2016 at Sacred Heart Church; burial in Martinsburg Cemetery.



Blessed and Peaceful Christmas Wishes!  
 From the Students, Faculty, and Staff of  
 Immaculate Heart Central School  
 Watertown New York

Block Print Artwork by Drew Z., IHC High School, Grade 10

## Holiday Schedule for ST. MARY'S CHURCH Canton, New York

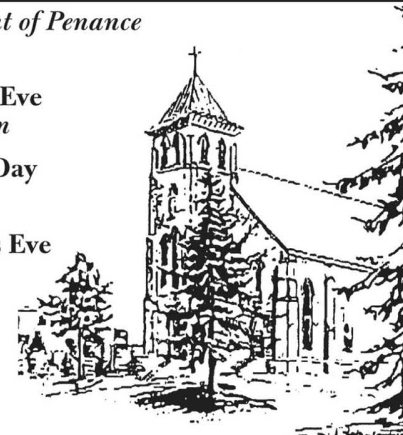
**Thursday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, Sacrament of Penance**  
 from 4:00-5:00 pm and 6:30-7:30 pm

**Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve**  
 Masses at 4:00 pm; 6:00 pm; 10:00 pm

**Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Day**  
 9:00 am - Mass only

**Saturday, December 31<sup>st</sup>, New Year's Eve**  
 5:00 pm Vigil Mass

**Sunday, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017,  
 New Year's Day**  
 (Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God)  
 9:00 am, 11:15 am, & 5 pm





A VOICE OF FAITH

# MY CHRISTMAS MOMENT

by Kathleen M. Gallagher  
NCC columnist

This year, my Christmas Moment came on Thanksgiving Day.

It was not a typical Thanksgiving. My mom was dining out with my brother and his family four hours away. One son was working and the other was over his future in-laws' house for the big meal. That left me and my husband in a quiet, lonely house on a dank and dreary day.

I spent most of the day cleaning the house in preparation for when the kids came home on Saturday to celebrate the holiday weekend with us. It was during the dusting that the Moment struck. I took each framed photo off the hutch to clean them individually, and I paused to absorb each one. First, the black and white wedding photos of our parents, their history intertwined with ours, their love responsible for our joy. I held our own wedding photo, almost 30 years old, and the elation of that day was still palpable.

There were the photos from the delivery rooms when each of our children was born, the euphoria of those moments still fresh



CNS/BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

The adoration of the Magi is depicted in a 14th-century painting by Giotto di Bondone. The feast of the Nativity of Christ, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated Dec. 25.

decades later. The relief I felt at knowing they were healthy remains today. I noticed that our babies' eyes reflected their grandparents, even the ones they never knew.

I cleaned the sports photos, tons of them – baseball, basketball, football – from elementary school through college...I laughed out loud recalling how our house would smell like a locker

room after each game or practice (which was most of the time!)

There were photos from First Communions, Confirmations, prom dates, graduations, an entire history of the life we have been so fortunate to live. It was our Family Album.

And when I had finished and stepped back to admire their cleanliness, the Christmas Moment came. That

Moment I get once a year, when the essence of Christmas rushes into my body, penetrates the center of my being, and swells my heart with gratitude. It was unexpected, but there it was: I felt full. Complete. Overflowing. Like I had eaten the entire meal with all the trimmings, even though we weren't cooking the turkey until Saturday.

And in that Moment I fell

on my knees in thankfulness to my God, a God who loves me so much he sent his Son to be born in the dirt and stench of a stable, the Word made flesh. A God who loves me so much he sent the Prince of Peace to show me wisdom and prudence and compassion, and help me pass those qualities on to my children. A God who loves me so much he allowed His Son to endure the dark humiliation of condemnation, torture and death so that I might know the Father's love for me, so that I could be redeemed and live my Family Album.

My abundant blessings made this year's Christmas Moment truly overwhelming for me. The tears streamed down my cheeks as I thanked the Lord for entering into the messiness of our lives, with all of its challenges, struggles and growing pains.

There was no tree up yet, no decorations, no presents, no lights on the outside of the house. But Christmas came anyway -- bam! -- right into my heart. Like the Whos down in Who-ville discovered, "it came without ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes or bags." All it took was a dust rag and a can of Pledge.



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