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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 71, Number 1

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

APRIL 13, 2016

God excludes no one from his love

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Jesus brought humanity God's merciful, saving love, not hatred and animosity, Pope Francis said. "Jesus makes visible a love open to everyone -- nobody excluded -- open to everyone without bounds," he said at his weekly general audience

in St. Peter's Square April 6. The pope also met with and blessed the eyes of 5-year-old Lizzy Myers from Mansfield, Ohio. Struck by a rare disease that is gradually rendering her deaf and blind, Myers was in Rome after a representative from Turkish

Airlines heard about her story and offered her and her family free round-trip airfare to any city in the world. Her parents, Steve and Christine Myers, had created a "visual bucket list" of places and things they wanted Lizzy to see before

she loses her sight due to Usher Syndrome Type II A. They chose Rome and the Vatican to be their special destination because they are Catholic and because of the city's artistic and historical riches, they told Associated Press.

Sister Jennifer received new assignment



St. Joseph Sister Jennifer Votra is leaving her position as Chancellor of the diocese to become Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

No paper next week

The next issue of the *North Country Catholic* will be dated April 27

RECEIVE THE BOOK OF THE GOSPELS



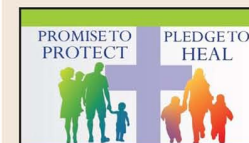
PHOTO BY KRISTINA DEAN

Bishop LaValley hands Deacon Todd E. Thibault the Book of Gospels to signify the office of the deacon to proclaim the Gospel in liturgical celebrations and to preach the faith of the Church in word and deed. Bishop LaValley ordained Deacon Thibault April 2 at St. James Minor Church in Carthage. Shown in back is Deacon Richard Staab. Full story on page 3

THE VOCATION SUMMIT: Putting our money where our mouth is... p. 5

PROTECTING GOD'S CHILDREN

Pledging to heal



The Diocesan Office of Safe Environment, headed by Atonement Sister Ellen Donahue, presents its annual report highlighting efforts made by the diocese to create a climate of safety for children entrusted to their pastoral care.

FULL STORY, PAGES 6-7

NORTH
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Box 326

Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669
USPS 0039-3400

BISHOP TERRY

R. LAVALLEY

President

REV. JOSEPH A. MORGAN

Vice President

SR. JENNIFER VOTRAW, SSI

Secretary-Treasurer

MARY LOU KILIAN

Editor/

General Manager



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

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Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

Telephone:

(315) 608-7556

E-mail:

news@northcountry
catholic.org

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Promise to protect... pledge to heal

Each year in April, the diocese marks Child Abuse Prevention month with a feature in the *NCC* about the efforts to create a safe environment for all children entrusted to the pastoral care of the North Country Church.

The pages include a message from Bishop LaValley, a list of the efforts the diocese has made to protect children, child abuse statistics and more.

While the Catholic Church – with special training sessions and background checks – has done much to protect children in recent years, we can never

become complacent in these efforts.



Mary Lou
Kilian

Clergy sex abuse was back in the news earlier this year with a Pennsylvania grand jury report on abuse of hundreds of children over several decades and an Oscar win for "Spotlight," about the Boston abuse scandal.

These "brought painful, but important, reminders that we must remain vigilant in our efforts to protect children from the scourge of abuse," said Bishop Edward J. Burns of Juneau, Alaska, chairman of the bishops' Committee on the Protection of Children

and Young People.

"We must never lose sight of the fact that every victim/survivor has personally experienced profound injury, suffering and betrayal," he said.

While the Diocese of Ogdensburg hasn't been ravaged by abuse cases like other places in the world, we must be just as mindful as everyone else.

In the words of Bishop Burns: "These moments are a reminder why the 'Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,' adopted by the U.S. bishops in 2002, exists and must be followed. This highlights all the more the importance that we never grow complacent. As stated in the

charter, we are to cooperate with law enforcement agencies, permanently remove those who have offended, and create a safe environment for our children."

"Only with vigilance can we ensure that children are kept safe and so allow the church to help our people in a process of healing and address the mistrust that rises from these cases," Bishop Burns said.

We can all be grateful that this vigilance is part of the fabric of life in the Diocese of Ogdensburg as Bishop LaValley ensures that everything possible is done to keep the "promise to protect and pledge to heal" for all the children in our midst.

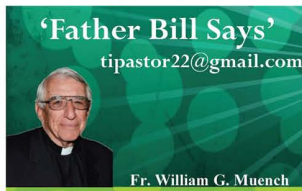
A PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

The story of St. Thomas is our story, too

I think that the reason St. Thomas was not with the apostles the first time Jesus appeared to them was because he was simply depressed. Consider his situation. Thomas had made a decision – a decision to forego a career for himself – a decision to join Jesus. He was captivated with Jesus' vision of all that life should be and what the world could become. He was inspired by the message of Jesus, inspired by his spirituality.

Even at the Last Supper, Thomas found joy being with Jesus and hearing his talk of hope and confidence through faith in God. He found hope for the future with Jesus. Than everything went wrong. Jesus is violently arrested and then we see all of the horrible events of Jesus' crucifixion. Everything was lost – the future seemed empty. Thomas just wanted to be alone. The other apostles found their consolation in being together but not Thomas.

After a while, Thomas decides to see what is going on. So he goes back to the upper room to see the others and make a decision about what to do with his life. When Thomas gets there, he finds the apostles all excited. They tell



Thomas that they have seen the Lord that Jesus lives. Jesus is resurrected. Thomas is still in the dumps; he is still upset and all of this sounds just too good to be true. So, he makes that statement that we all remember: "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

Still, not certain what is going on, Thomas decides to say with the others. As we know, Jesus does appear to the apostles again. Immediately, he approaches Thomas. Come here, Thomas, and touch me, "do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas is truly surprised but does accept it all in faith. Jesus has the last word – "Have you come to believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

This story is also our story. Like Thomas, we lose faith, we

lose trust in Jesus. Jesus has always been present to us, he is like a friend, walking with us. Then something gets in the way and we lose our closeness to Jesus. Some failing, some sin gets in the way. Something blocks our love of Jesus and then, as time goes on, we become rather disappointed in ourselves, even depressed. Life becomes very empty.

Like Thomas, Jesus finds us. Jesus does not give up on us. This is one of the unique realities of our Christian spirituality. God never stops loving us. Jesus was sent to become one of us – human like us in every way, except sin. Jesus understand our needs and hopes. Jesus knows how to enter our lives in ways that rather surprise us. We would believe if we could just touch Jesus - we sound like St. Thomas - but that is not going to happen.

So Jesus must find his ways to become present to us. I suspect you have experienced some of those ways. It may be through friends who are concerned about us and so they come to us in friendship and bring us to the Lord. Again, this is just as the other apostles reached out to Thomas. Or it may be through others, strangers who we meet and in

some way they bring the presence of the Lord to us through their faith and way of life.

Truly, it may be anything that we could imagine, that could bring us the presence of God. It is a matter of surprise; you just cannot schedule a time when the Lord's presence is real. Each time we participate in the Holy Mass, we expect to be close to the Lord. However, that just doesn't happen, every time. However, in faith, we know that sometimes it will so we can't give up.

Each time, we go to prayer we expect Jesus will find us. But often we are not as open and ready as we should be. However, we can't stop trying.

One more thing – so many wonderful people bring Jesus to us. There will be many times in which you are the person who brings the Lord to someone else because of your faith or your way of life. Live well. You will never know when it is the moment you truly bring Jesus to another person. Again, you can't just decide yourself that this is the time. Live well in the Lord and you will change the world. I suspect you would be surprised right now by the number of times you have brought Jesus to others already.

Diocesan leader to assume new duties

Bishop Terry R. LaValley has announced that St. Joseph Sister Jennifer Votraw, will be leaving her position as Chancellor and Delegate to Pastoral Ministers to assume duties as Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph's Motherhouse in Watertown. Sister Jennifer has served in diocesan administration positions since 1984.

"Sister Jennifer has generously served our diocese in administrative positions and her talents and energy have brought many blessings to our diocese," said Bishop Terry R. LaValley. "In her most recent role as Chancellor and Delegate to Pastoral Ministers, she has provided valuable and much needed service to our diocese," continued Bishop LaValley. "Sister Jennifer brought a wealth of know-how and experience from her life as an educator and applied them well to give support to our Commissioned Lay Ministers and to our staff who maintain our diocesan archives. Sister is first and foremost a teacher and mentor."

Sister Jennifer was born in Au Sable Forks and attended Holy Name School and Au Sable Forks High School. She entered religious life in 1967, received her habit in 1968, and professed her final vows in 1975. Sister Jennifer continued her education at Mater Dei College and received her bachelor's degree from SUNY Plattsburgh, a Master of Arts degree in English from SUNY Potsdam, and a Master's degree in Counseling and Human Development at Villanova University.

Sister Jennifer taught at Holy Family School, Watertown; Sacred Heart School, Watertown; St. Joseph's School, Dannemora, and again at Holy Family.

She served as school administrator at Holy Family

School, Watertown and St. Andrew's School, Norwood before becoming Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools for the Diocese of Ogdensburg, a position in which she served from 1984 to 1989.

From 1989 to 1997, Sister Jennifer served as Major Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Upon completing two terms as Major Superior, Sister Jennifer served as the Director of the Catholic School Administrators Association of New York State.

In 1998, Bishop Paul Loverde created the Diocesan Planning Office and the position of Director of Planning, and appointed Sister Jennifer to that position. In 2004, Bishop Cunningham appointed Sister Jennifer Vice Chancellor of the Diocese, and gave her additional responsibilities as spokesperson of the Diocese and Director of the Department of Communications. Sister Jennifer continued to serve as Director of Planning in conjunction with these new duties.

First woman Chancellor

In a historical appointment, Bishop Cunningham appointed Sister Jennifer as the first woman Chancellor of the Diocese on June 28, 2006. Sister continued to serve as Director of Planning and Communications and diocesan spokesperson. In 2014, Sister Jennifer took on additional duties as Delegate to Pastoral Ministers.

Sister Jennifer will assume her duties as Superior of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Watertown on September 1, 2016. In appointing Sister Jennifer to this position, Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, Major Superior of the Sisters of St. Joseph said, "I am very fortunate to have someone with such impressive cre-

dentials and vast experience to serve the Motherhouse community. We are blessed to have such a competent, generous, and loving superior. Sister's faithfulness to daily prayer, her gentleness, her ability to listen, her warmth, her organization skills and good sense of humor will be a gift to our Sisters as she nurtures and cares for each of the Sisters' needs spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially. Sister Jennifer knows and loves the Sisters. I am deeply grateful to Sister Jennifer for her response to serve as the Motherhouse Superior. She is and will continue to be a blessing for our community."

In addition to official duties for the Diocese, Sister Jennifer has served as a member of the Chief Administrators of Catholic Education for the National Catholic Education Association, the diocesan Finance Council, Board of Directors for Catholic Charities, Board of Trustees for Immaculate Heart Central High School the Board of Trustees of Mater Dei College, New York State Catholic Conference Steering Committee, Diocesan Pastoral Council, New York State Commissioner's Non-Public School Advisory Committee, and the Episcopal Council.

"Sister Jennifer's record of service and faithful leadership speaks for itself," commented Bishop LaValley. "There are big shoes to be filled in Ogdensburg as Sister assumes her new duties in Watertown. I am most grateful for all Sister Jennifer has done for us. The words of the Gospel are so appropriate here: 'Well done, good and faithful servant.' Our prayers, love, and gratitude go out to Sister Jennifer."



PHOTO BY KRISTINA DEAN

Bishop LaValley lays hands on Deacon Thibault at the moment of ordination

Deacon ordained

By Kristina Dean
Staff writer

CARTHAGE - With words of encouragement, prayers, and a call to radiate confidence in hope and joy of the Risen Christ, Bishop Terry R. LaValley ordained Deacon Todd Edward Thibault as a transitional deacon April 2 at St. James Minor Church.

The Colchester, Vermont native who is completing seminary studies at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus Ohio, agreed to carry out his office in accord with the mind of the Christ and the church, under the direction of the bishop.

In his homily, Bishop LaValley said there was much to do, with no time for "sighs, moans or groans."

"Ours is a Gospel of joy that must be proclaimed and lived," he said.

He encouraged Deacon Thibault to be an intimate friend of Christ, and to never allow himself to be turned away from the hope offered by the Gospel.

"Today there are many angry, sad and frustrated people who need inspiring, hope-filled leaders," he said.

The bishop said the new deacon must always ask himself if his life is in accord with his beliefs and said this requires closeness to the Church and prayer.

He thanked the deacon's parents and brother for the gift of their son and brother.

"You have worked hard tending the land and providing sustenance in the Green Mountain state," he said to them. "You have nurtured the soil for this vocation of your son to take root. Now he will provide spiritual nourishment and sustenance for your neighbors in this church."

During Mass, the candidate prostrated himself before the bishop, who afterward laid his hands on Deacon Thibault's head and prayed.

Immediately following, the new deacon was vested in the stole and dalmatic by Monsignor Richard LaValley of the Diocese of Burlington.

St. Joseph Sisters Annunciata Collons and Mary Ellen Brett read the scripture readings while Deacon Richard J. Staab proclaimed the Gospel.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Good Shepherd Sunday

Every year, the Fourth Sunday after Easter is called Good Shepherd Sunday. This year the emphasis is on the voice of Jesus.

We can imagine how that voice must have stirred the hearts of all who were disposed to listen to it. How it must have moved people with its authority and its power to persuade.

The voice of Jesus was at times so loving, and at other times so challenging.

It was that voice saying to Peter, "Feed my sheep" that still rang in his ears as he preached boldly to the Sanhedrin; it was that voice crying out, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" that echoed still in the heart of Paul as he and Barnabas preached in the synagogues of Perga and Antioch and Iconium.

It was the voice of Jesus which drowned out the vicious lies of all those enemies of truth that tried to choke off the Good News so bravely proclaimed by Peter and Paul.

How gladly those great Apostles suffered persecution and even death "for the sake of the Name." No wonder we call Peter and Paul the great pillars of the early

Church who inspired so many others not to fear contempt and bodily harm because the Holy Spirit was with them. Those who followed that voice would be rewarded with a glorious crown.

No wonder that literally millions of Christians have suffered for their faith down through the ages. Millions even today are deprived of human rights, imprisoned and killed

just because they are loyal to that voice of the Good Shepherd.

Racial hatred, abuse of women, child slavery, and exploitation of the poor, to name but a few, are the effects of strident, angry, and evil voices which constantly try to drown out the loving voice of the Good Shepherd who proclaims justice for the oppressed.

In Jesus' lifetime on earth as preacher and healer, He was known for His compassion and love.

Shortly before His Passion and death, he stopped on his way to Jerusalem to weep over the city, crying out, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who were sent to it, How often have I desired to



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

APRIL 17

Fourth Sunday of Easter READINGS

Acts 13:14, 43-52
Revelation 7:9, 14b-17
John 10:27-30

gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood together under her wings, and you were not willing!"

Like a shepherd, Jesus leads His flock to eternal life. He called himself the door, the gate, the sheepfold itself. The shepherd knows each individual sheep by name, and each one of his flock are safe when they follow his call. "My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they never perish."

Today, we hear the voice of Jesus in the voice of His vicar, Pope Francis. Over and over, He is urging us to bring the power of our love and mercy to all without exception, especially to the poor, the persecuted, and the powerless. In faith, may we listen ever more obediently to this good Shepherd.

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact: **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terrianne Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, 413 Ryan Road, Churubusco, NY, 12923; e-mail: terriannayanulavich@yahoo.com. Phone: 518-483-3261; or Father James Seymour, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy at 315-393-2920, ext. 1340

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Bishop's Schedule

April 15-17 - Jubilee of Mercy Pilgrimage to Italy

April 18-19 - Pontifical College Josephinum Board of Trustees Meeting in Columbus, OH

April 21 - 9:45 a.m., Episcopal Council Meeting at the Bishop's Residence in Ogdensburg

April 22 - 11 a.m., Bishop's Fund Priests Advisory Committee Meeting at the Bishop's Residence in Ogdensburg

April 23 - 9 a.m., Mass at the Gouverneur Correctional Facility

April 24 - 8 a.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

NO PAPER NEXT WEEK

The next issue of the *North Country Catholic* will be dated April 27

Rest in Peace

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

April 14 - Msgr. Richard F. Pierce, 1935;

April 15 - Msgr. Peter O. LaRose, 1918; Rev. Alfred J. Chevalier, 1996

April 16 - Deacon Vernon J. Chamberlain, 1993

April 17 - Rev. Peter J. Devlin, 1915; Rev. Vernon L. Doe, 1975; Rev. C. Albert Richardson, 1988; Msgr. Joseph G. Bailey, 2000

April 19 - Rev. William S. Kelly, 1908; Rev. Edward C. Laramee, 1932; Rev. William P. Fraser, 1961

April 20 - Rev. James Igo, 2007

April 21 - Msgr. Michael E. Fogarty, 1936

April 22 - Rev. Daniel M. Sullivan, 1933

April 23 - Bishop Henry Gabriels, 1921

April 24 - Rev. Thomas Egan, S.J., 1994

April 26 - Msgr. David Stinebrickner, 1998

Environmental Stewardship

Catholic Climate Ambassadors

What are Catholic Climate Ambassadors and what is their mission?"

Catholic Climate Ambassadors were established in 2006 by the Catholic Climate Covenant, five years after the U.S. Catholic Bishops had written the letter "Global Climate Change, A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good."

Their mission is to deliver Catholic teachings on the environment. They are people well-versed in the long history of Catholic social teachings about ecology.

In addition, they bring to this role a wealth of individual experiences from their professional backgrounds.

Catholic Climate Ambassador, Dr. Gerry Gacloch, chief of cardiology and Rochester General Hospital is a familiar face in the North Country having made several presentations on Catholic teachings on care for the environment at diocesan gatherings.

He and Dr. Curt Stager, Paul Smith's College professor of natural resource management and ecology, will be speaking to the challenge of caring for "our common home" in light of Laudato Si in Canton April 23 at noon at Nevelidine North Hall, Room 102, SUNY Canton.

On April 24, Dr. Gacloch will be speaking on this same topic at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Gym, 320 West Lynde St., Watertown, from 9:15 a.m. to 11.

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. Further information is available from Atonement Sister Ellen Donahue, 315-393-2920, ext. 1440. Upcoming sessions: April 14 - 6:30 p.m., Church of the Holy Name, AuSable Forks

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Ogdensburg
Directory



2016

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The Official 2016 Directory of the Diocese of Ogdensburg includes detailed information about parishes, schools and other Catholic organizations.

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The Vocations Summit

Putting our money where our mouth is... the need is urgent!

By Father Garry Giroux
Chair, Vocations Summit Committee

The message and goal of the Vocations Summit, *INSPIRE: Called to Love*, is **urgent**.

Our world *needs* the holiness of Christian married couples and parents to remind us of the beauty and possibility of generous love and commitment; our human society, broken by greed and violence, *needs* the holiness of women and men in the single state who model the challenging adventure of living the Gospel of Christ; our world family, spiritually parched and starved, *needs* the holiness of consecrated religious and ordained priests and deacons to lead families and in-



dividuals to Jesus who feeds our deepest hungers and quenches our greatest thirsts.

The need is **urgent**.

Bishop LaValley and his consultative councils, deeply aware of the urgency of this need decided that the Vocations Summit would carry no cost for any of the participants.

It was decided we need to put our money where our mouth is!

The cost of a registration fee and the cost of a midday meal *will not* be an obstacle to people participating in the Vocations Summit. The cost of childcare or babysitting *will not* be a deterrent from parents taking part in *INSPIRE: Called to Love*. Childcare will be provided in 7Lake Placid for the Summit; there is no cost to any participant for the Vocations Summit.

To be sure, the financial

expense to the diocese for the Vocations Summit is high; the budget for *INSPIRE: Called to Love* is \$230,790. But, the Church in the North Country is putting its trust in God's providence and hoping for generous people to help in funding this event.

Bishop LaValley is calling upon all the parishioners of the diocese to *recognize* the urgency of the need and *help* him in offering the Vo-

ocations Summit to all, without cost.

While Bishop LaValley has committed some of the diocese's financial resources to the Summit, there is an active effort at fundraising for *INSPIRE: Called to Love*.

One aspect of this fundraising is a special second collection which will take place on the weekend of April 16 & 17 in all the churches of the diocese. Special offertory envelopes have been provided to all the parishes; these envelopes were distributed to parishioners over the weekend of April 9 & 10. Please be generous in your support of the Vocations Summit because its message and goal is **urgent!**

Let's put our money where our mouth is.



Vocations Pilgrimage

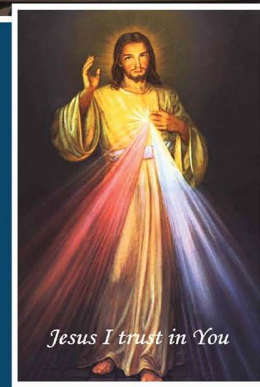
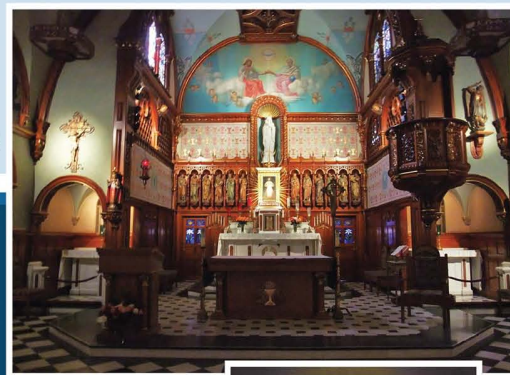
For the Year of Mercy
October 11-13

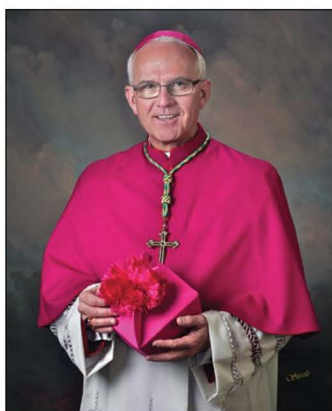
Join Bishop LaValley, Father Bryan Stitt, the Diocese of Ogdensburg Vocations Society, and Catholics from across the Diocese.
Single Occupancy \$460, Double Occupancy \$335/each

Call Anne at (315) 353-2950
or Connie at (315) 265-2762

Itinerary includes: Mass and tour at Divine Mercy Shrine in Stockbridge, MA, Holy Hour, Mass and tour of Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Albany, visit to Norman Rockwell Museum, 2 dinners, 2 breakfasts, and 1 lunch, buses with pick ups in Watertown, Potsdam, Schroon Lake, Ogdensburg, Plattsburgh. Space limited, sign up today!

Non-refundable payment due August 27. Any proceeds from the trip will be used for the promotion of Vocations within the Diocese of Ogdensburg



PROMISE TO
PROTECTPLEDGE TO
HEAL

Dear Friends in Christ:

The Diocese of Ogdensburg continues our efforts to create a climate of safety for all the youth entrusted to our pastoral care. We remain committed to fulfilling our pledge: to promote healing and reconciliation with victims/survivors of sexual abuse; to guarantee an effective response to allegations of sexual abuse; to implement procedures that protect the faithful in the future; and to hold accountable those who have harmed our children.

The Church offers immediate and ongoing pastoral care to those who have suffered such abuse. I encourage these individuals to contact our Victims' Assistance Coordinator, Ms. Terriane Yanulavich at 518-483-3261 ext. 2267 to report such abuse and for assistance with the healing process. We are deeply sorry for any past failures in addressing properly the sinful acts that have been perpetrated against our youth by Church leaders.

Because We Care deeply for the vulnerable among us, the Church of Ogdensburg continues to review our policies and explore ways to ensure that our children are protected from all who would harm them. Under the direction and fine guidance of Sister Ellen Donahue, SA, Diocesan Safe Environment Coordinator, we are diligently working to ensure that the national and diocesan policies established to provide safe environments for our children are implemented fully here in the North Country. With the strong support and cooperation of our pastors and pastoral staff, we have taken seriously this important responsibility.

Since 2003, independent audits have been conducted in the Diocese of Ogdensburg to determine compliance with the national and our diocesan policies. Every year, the Diocese has been found to be compliant. This year, with the coordinating efforts of Mrs. Elaine Seymour, our Charter Compliance Coordinator, the Diocesan on-site audit included audits in five of our parishes.

I am grateful to all those individuals who assist with the implementation of our safe environment programs in our Diocese. Many individuals spend countless hours in our parishes and schools training adults how to provide safe environments for our children and youth. Their continuing cooperation and prayers help us all keep the promise to protect and the pledge to heal. As Jesus, the Good Shepherd, showed constant care for the vulnerable, your local Church, working with our parents, is seeking to do likewise.

With a Shepherd's care and concern,

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg



WHAT HAS THE DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG DONE TO PROTECT CHILDREN?

Our Commitment to Children's Safety:

- Safe Environment Policies & Procedures
- Mandatory Background Checks/References
- Annual Training for Staff, Parents and Children
- Reporting Procedures Implemented
- Children's Activities Supervised
- One-on-one Instruction Monitored



Roman Catholic
Diocese of Ogdensburg

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Precious little girl addressing Pope Francis, visiting Manila. **Her Message:** "The children are not guilty of anything."

DIOCESAN STATISTICS 2015 NATIONAL AUDIT JULY 1, 2014 - JUNE 30, 2015

- 4,182 students attended Christian Formation
- 2,002 students attended Catholic schools
- 351 youth attended Guggenheim Summer Camp
- 131 adults and children attended Family Guggenheim
- 46 Safe Environment training sessions were held
- 591 Background checks were performed

CHILD ABUSE STATISTICS

- 1 in 10 children suffer from child maltreatment.
- 1 in 16 children suffer from sexual abuse.
- Nearly 1 in 10 children are witnesses to family violence.
- The youngest children are the most vulnerable to maltreatment. Over 25% of abused children are under the age of three, while over 45% of abused children are under the age of five.
- 1,593 children in the United States died because of abuse or neglect in 2012.
- Of the number of children who died because of abuse or neglect, 70% were younger than three years of age, and 44% were younger than one year of age.

WHAT HAS THE CHURCH DONE TO PROTECT CHILDREN NATIONALLY?

The Church has done more to protect children than almost any other organization in the U.S. Of the 195 dioceses/eparchies, 188 participated in the National Audit.

- Trained 98% of our two million volunteers, employees, educators, clergy, and candidates for ordination in parishes in how to create safe environments and prevent child sexual abuse.
- Prepared more than 4.4 million children to recognize abuse and protect themselves.
- Ran background checks on close to two million volunteers and employees, 51,314 clerics, and 6,568 candidates for ordination.

The Church has worked hard to protect children, but more needs to be done.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

➤ **YOU can be trained in safe environment practices.** Free Virtus safe environment training dates are printed in the North Country Catholic weekly with locations across the Diocese. Or, go to www.rcdony.org, scroll down to the bottom of the page and click on Safe Environment Office, then click on Virtus trainings. PARENTS ARE WELCOME TO REGISTER.

➤ **YOU can monitor the computer use in your home.**



www.youtube.com/user/childluresprevent



"Child Lures Prevention/Teen Lures Prevention"

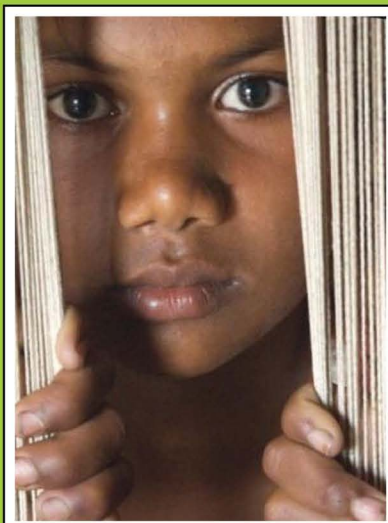
Use an internet filter and/or parental control software:

www.netnanny.com OR www1.k9webprotection.com (free)

Protect any device connected to a single home network:

www.opendns.com

Most importantly, spend time with your children, helping them to know safe places on the Internet.



IF YOU SUSPECT A CHILD HAS BEEN HARMED OR IS AT RISK:

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DIAL 911**

**Mandated Reporters
1-800-635-1522**

**Non-Mandated Reporters
(can remain anonymous)
1-800-342-3720**

How do I sign up to receive AMBER Alerts? **AMBER ALERT**

www.missingkids.com/AmberSignUp

For information about how AMBER alerts are distributed to cell phones, visit:

www.missingkids.com/AMBER/wea

Pope asks for new Catholic institutions of mercy, charity

By Cindy Wooden
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Pope Francis asked Catholic dioceses around the world to set up a permanent memorial of the Year of Mercy by establishing a hospital, home for the aged or school in an under-served area.

Celebrating Divine Mercy Sunday with an evening vigil April 2 and a morning Mass April 3, the pope said the idea came to him during a meeting with a charitable organization and he decided to mention it at the vigil with participants of the European gathering of the World Apostolic Congress of Mercy and followers of the Divine Mercy devotion.

"As a reminder, a 'monument' let's say, to this Year of Mercy, how beautiful it would be if in every diocese there were a structural work of mercy: a hospital, a home for the aged or abandoned children, a school where there isn't one, a home for recovering drug addicts -- so many things could be done," the pope said.

"Let's think about it and speak with the bishops," the pope told thousands of people gathered in St. Peter's Square to pray the Divine Mercy chaplet of St. Faustina Kowalska, and also to remember St. John Paul II, who

promoted the devotion and died April 2, 2005.

Reciting the "Regina Coeli" prayer at the end of Mass the next day, Pope Francis said the Divine Mercy Sunday celebration was "like the heart of the Year of Mercy," and he announced that Catholic parishes throughout Europe would be asked to take up a special collection April 24 as a sign of closeness and solidarity with people suffering because of the war in Eastern Ukraine.

The war has caused thousands of deaths and forced more than 1 million people to flee their homes, he said. Pope Francis prayed that the collection, a sign of solidarity and closeness, "could help, without further delay, promote peace and respect for the law in that harshly tried land."

The more one receives mercy, Pope Francis said at the vigil April 2, "the more we are called to share it with others; it cannot be kept hidden or kept only for ourselves."

God's mercy should drive people to love others, "recognizing the face of Jesus Christ above all in those who are most distant, weak, alone, confused and marginalized," he said.

"It pains the heart" when people talk about refugees and say, "Let's throw them out," or speak about the poor and say, "Let them sleep on the street," the pope said. "Is this of Jesus?"

Reflecting on the Gospel account of Thomas, who came to faith in the risen Lord when he was able to put

his hands in Jesus' wounds, Pope Francis said, "a faith incapable of entering the wounds of the Lord is not faith. A faith unable to be merciful as a sign of the merciful wounds of the Lord, is not faith. It's an idea, an ideology."

"If we want truly want to believe and have faith," he said, "we must draw near and touch those wounds, caress those wounds, but also lower our heads and let others touch our wounds."

Celebrating the Divine Mercy Sunday Mass the next morning, Pope Francis said the Gospel story of God's mercy "remains an open book" to which people can add good news by being heralds of the Gospel and engaging in works of mercy, "which are the hallmarks of the Christian life."

Just as the disciples were afraid but nevertheless set out as the risen Lord commanded, he said, many times Christians today experience "an interior struggle between a closed heart and the call of love to open doors closed by sin."

"Christ, who for love entered through doors barred by sin, death and the powers of hell, wants to enter into each one of us to break open the locked doors of our hearts," the pope said. Where people are wounded, fearful and uncertain, Christians are called to reach out with Jesus' peace, mercy and healing power.

"In Christ, we are born to be instruments of reconciliation, to bring the Father's forgiveness to everyone, to reveal his loving face through concrete gestures of mercy," Pope Francis said. "Truly, God's mercy is forever; it never ends, it never runs out, it never gives up when faced with closed doors, and it never tires."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Saint's relics found in rubble of church destroyed by terrorists

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The relics of Syrian St. Elian, which originally were thought to have been destroyed by members of the so-called Islamic State militia, have been found amid the rubble of the desecrated Mar Elian Church in Qaryatayn, Syria. The sanctuary was bulldozed in August 2015, according to Fides, the news agency of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. Father Jacques Mourad, the prior of the Syriac Catholic monastic community, was kidnapped three months earlier when the terrorists initially raided the church. Father Mourad, who was freed Oct. 11, reported the discovery of the relics to Fides April 5. "The fact that the relics of Mar Elian are not lost is for me a great sign: It means that he did not want to leave the monastery and the Holy Land," the priest said. The relics of St. Elian, a third-century martyr, were discovered after Syrian military forces had retaken control of Qaryatayn. Even while the Islamic State forces controlled the area, however, local Christians preserved their veneration of St. Elian, Fides said.

Caritas official urges Burundi not to threaten church

OXFORD, England (CNS) -- A Catholic aid official urged the government of Burundi not to threaten the church, which he said plays an important role in sustaining society. "The church is engaged in peacemaking by bringing communities together and explaining to politicians the importance of talking to each other," said Patrick Nicholson, communications director of Caritas Internationalis. "But it's also giving crucial support to agriculture, schooling and multiple social services, including health care, which would be in a dramatic state without the church's 101 hospitals and clinics. People would face great hardships if the church's work was discontinued." Burundi was plunged into chaos in 2015 following President Pierre Nkurunziza's acceptance of a third term in apparent violation of the constitution. The government banned demonstrations and restricted the media, and thousands of Burundians -- including the vice president of the constitutional court -- fled to neighboring countries. The bishops said the constitution was clear that the president could not serve more than two terms, insisted the media should be allowed to do its job, and urged young people not to be manipulated. This March, the bishops' conference said Burundi stood "at a crossroads," adding that its future would depend on dialogue "between politicians with a vision for the country, who love the nation and its citizens more than their own interests."

Villanova basketball team's strength is its humility, chaplain says

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- More than 70,000 people attended the NCAA men's basketball championship game at Houston's NRG Stadium April 4, but no one had a seat quite like Augustinian Father Rob Hagan. Father Hagan, associate athletics director at Villanova University, had a front-row seat to the historic game on the Villanova Wildcats' bench. The priest, chaplain of the university's football and basketball teams and known by players as Father Rob, also spoke with the team hours before the championship game during their traditional prayer service. The 1987 Villanova alum, who was a lawyer before joining the priesthood, reminded the Wildcats -- no matter their religious background -- of their ability to find strength in each other and God. He reiterated St. Paul's message to the Philippians: "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me" and he also reminded the team of the biblical passage where Jesus says: "I am the vine, you are the branches. We do our best when we connect to each other and the vine," the priest said he told the team.

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AT THE MOVIES

MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING 2

By Kurt Jensen
Catholic News Service

The close-knit Portokalos family - loving, clingy, earthy and in your face at all the most inopportune moments -- returns in "My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2" (Universal).

Unfortunately, this follow-up lacks the zest of the 2002 romantic comedy that launched the formula "My Big Fat (fill in the blank)" into the American lexicon.

The moral structure is still there -- these folks look after each other with admirable ferocity. And, as in the first film, not a lot really goes on.

Self-sacrificing Toula (Nia Vardalos, who also wrote the

screenplay) is back working in her parents' Greek restaurant in Chicago, the bad economy having shuttered her travel agency.

Her daughter, Paris (Elena Kampouris), now a high school senior, finds their family a constant source of embarrassment. As Toula notes, "They don't know the difference between closeness and suffocation."

Toula and husband Ian (John Corbett) are having difficulties rediscovering marital intimacy. Paris wants to go to college in New York to gain some distance from the clan.

And then there's paterfamilias Gus (Michael Constantine). While researching his genealogy online in an at-

tempt to prove that he's a descendant of Alexander the Great, Gus digs out his marriage license, only to find that the priest forgot to sign it. Meaning - according to the logic of the script anyway - that he and spouse Maria (Lainie Kazan) have not been legally married all these years. So they must plan a wedding.

That's pretty much it. The real problem, though, isn't with the ambling plot. It's the fact that Vardalos only manages the occasional adept gag, while director Kirk Jones can do little with the rest of the project.

As a result, the story comes down to a few pithy quotes interspersed with half-hearted physical com-



CNS PHOTO/UNIVERSAL

Nia Vardalos and John Corbett star in a scene from the movie "My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2."

edy that has the taste of stale moussaka.

The film contains sexual references and light banter. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults.

The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

BETWEEN THE BOOKENDS

Pope writes tender answers to kids' questions

By Michelle Frand-Donnay
Catholic News Service

The car was always the place for the hard conversations when my sons were young. The questions would come from the back seat when I least expected it. I can still remember the rainy night I was driving down Montgomery Avenue when my oldest son, then 12, asked me why God let evil things happen.

That remains the toughest question my children have ever put to me, bar none.

In his newest book, "Dear Pope Francis," the pope takes on the tough and direct questions that kids will

ask. There is 9-year-old Michael from Nigeria wondering, "How can you settle conflicts in the world?" and Thierry, who wants to know why so many people are poor and hungry: Can't God feed them?

The book lists the authors as Pope Francis and the children of the world, and it's clear from the start that this was a collaborative work between the leader of the church and its members. More than 250 children from 26 countries sent letters and drawings to Pope Francis. Jesuit Father Antonio Spadaro met with the pope and recorded his answers to the questions posed in the letters. He then transcribed and edited the responses. The children's drawings are reproduced alongside the pope's answers, which truly bring the young writers alive.

Father Spadaro writes in

the afterword that he found transcribing the conversation an extended meditation, and I found reading the book to be a similar experience. I ended up reading it in a few sessions, stopping when I wanted to spend time with an answer - or a question.

I don't have young ones at home any longer, so I couldn't try it out on its intended audience. But I do know that my sons would have appreciated the pope's directness and humor, and I would have treasured his wisdom when faced with tough questions from my passengers.

Some of the questions are poignant. One young boy wonders if his mother in heaven has grown angel wings. No, Pope Francis tells him. She is still your mom, but she is beautiful and full of light and love for you. Others wonder about who

gets into heaven and whether bad people still have guardian angels.

We learn a lot about Pope Francis and his job as we go. He can pray in a dentist's chair. He loves to play soccer, but hasn't a nimble foot, so he's not very good at it. We learn he is happiest in his job when he is with other people, and why he needs such a tall hat. But in each answer, the pope takes the children, and us, a bit deeper. Would that we could all learn to pray wherever we were, and to more fully express our joy in God.

I sense Pope Francis' awareness of the parents and other adults who are listening in the background to these exchanges, nudging them to think again about the tough questions, the questions that as adults we fear have no answers, that we might long ago have given up even asking.

I found myself returning again and again to the pope's answer to young Thierry about poverty and hunger. "The real problem is that some of those who have plenty do not want to share it with others." What do I have more than enough of? Where am I unwilling to share?

Reading this book I was struck by Pope Francis' tenderness. He is never saccharine, he never speaks down to the children, he is direct and firm. Above all his joy in the Gospel and his deep love of God comes through in every response.

When 11-year-old Clara, from Ireland, asks him if he thinks that he is really a father to us all, he tells her that he does feel like a spiritual father to us all, and that he likes being a dad. This is a book by a holy father, indeed, who clearly loves all his children, young and old.

About the book

"Dear Pope Francis" by Pope Francis. Loyola Press (Chicago, 2016). 76 pp., \$11.55.

ADIRONDACK

FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING

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

Date: May 3 and May 10

Time: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. (both mornings are required to complete the training)

Features: If you are able to give some of your time to make elders' lives a little happier, help them enjoy their community more, or make things somewhat easier for them to live independently, please consider becoming a Mercy Care Friendship Volunteer. Anyone in the Tri-Lakes, Keene, Keene Valley, Wilmington, or other surrounding communities who is interested in becoming a Mercy Care Friendship Volunteer is invited to take the training in Saranac Lake. Mercy Care's Friendship Volunteer Training Program is free of charge but pre-registration is required.

Contact: To request registration information, please contact Jenn Grisi at Mercy Care by calling 523-5583 or e-mail jgrisi@adkmercy.org.

CLINTON

SPAGHETTI DINNER

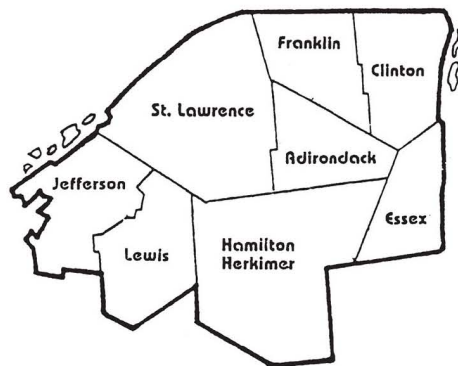
Peru – St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus Council 7273 will host an "All You Can Eat" spaghetti dinner.

Date: April 16

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

Place: St. Augustine's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$7.50; Children 6-12, \$2.50; under 5, Free; Take-outs available.



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@northcountycatholic.org.

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

JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT

Peru – Christian Music Pioneer and TV Host, John Michael Talbot, is coming to Peru.

Date: May 5 & 6

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: St. Augustine's Church

Cost: \$15 donation

Features: John Michael Talbot is a Christian music legend, best-selling author and host of The Church Channel's popular TV show "All Things Are Possible". A love offering will be received each evening to support the ministries of John Michael Talbot & the Brothers and Sisters of Charity.

Contact: Jackie Torterilli 518-643-2435

SPAGHETTI DINNER FUNDRAISER

Morrisonville – St. Alexander Church and the Knights of Columbus 7248 and 6067 will host a spaghetti dinner fundraiser for vocations to the priesthood.

Date: April 30

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

Place: St. Alexander's Jubilee hall

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

JEFFERSON

MYSTERY PLAYERS TO PERFORM

Watertown – The IHC Mystery Players will do one last play/prayer, "Jesus' Story is Our Story".

Date: April 17

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: IHC Jr./Sr. High School

Features: This will be a fundraiser for the Leikam family whose son, Parker, recently passed away. The play focuses on the healings of Jesus and how we can bring that to our world today. We hope you can join us.

SPAGHETTI SUPPER

Watertown – The Altar Rosary Society will be having a spaghetti supper.

Date: April 28

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Anthony's Church, Msgr. Sechi Hall

Cost: Adults, \$8; Children, \$4.50; under 3, Free; Sauce, \$5 per quart; Meatballs, \$.75 each

Features: Take-outs begin at 4 p.m., please bring your own containers.

ENVIRONMENT PRESENTATION

Watertown – A program on "Care for our Common Home: Inspired by Pope Francis' Laudato Si'" will be given.

Date: April 24

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 11

Place: Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

Speaker: Dr. Gerry Gacich, NYS Catholic Climate Ambassador and Chief of Cardiology at Rochester General Hospital

Features: This opportunity to learn more about the Encyclical and what we can do to better care for God's Creation is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be available. Sponsored by the Parish, Diocesan Faith and Ecology Groups, and Sisters of St. Joseph Social Justice Committee.

Contact: To reserve a seat, please call: 315-212-6592 or 315-782-1474.

IHC OPEN HOUSES

Watertown – IHC and St. John Bosco Pre-School to have open houses.

Primary School: May 23 at 6:30 p.m.; call 315-788-7011 to make an appointment for Kindergarten screening

Intermediate: July 19 and Aug. 9 at 6:30 p.m.

LEWIS

BRUNCH

Lyons Falls – Fr. Pascal Rys Knights of Columbus will be having an all you can eat pancake brunch.

Date: April 17

Time: 8 a.m. to Noon

Place: St. John's Church Hall

Cost: Adults, \$7; Children 5-12, \$4; under 5, Free

ADORATION AND BENEDICTION

Lowville – Adoration and Benediction to be held.

Date: April 21

Time: 4 p.m. to 5

Place: St. Peter's Church

Features: One hour of Exposition, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Silent Adoration, & Benediction. St. Lawrence Deanery

ST. LAWRENCE

RUMMAGE SALE

Norfolk – Rummage sale to be had to benefit the Altar Rosary Society.

Date: April 22, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and April 23, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: Parish center behind Church of the Visitation

Features: Baby items, household goods, tools, dishes, books, puzzles, clothes for men, women and children. And much more!

SPRING RETREAT

Morrisonville – Spring Retreat Day... "Nurturing the God-Seed Within" has been set.

Date: May 7

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Place: Cedarhaven located along the St. Lawrence River

Features: In springtime the gardener plants seeds and cares for them; at this retreat We day will consider ways that we might tend the God-Seed that the Sower has planted in us.

Cost: \$25 for retreat day (lunch included)/Additional \$25 for overnight with dinner and breakfast included.

Contact: Space is limited. To register call 315-212-6592 or email srbethsjs@gmail.com by May 4

ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT

Canton – A program on "Care for our Common Home: Inspired by Pope Francis' Laudato Si'" will be given.

Date: April 23

Time: 10 a.m. to 12

Place: SUNY Canton in Nevaldine Engineering Building, Rm 102

Speakers: Dr. Gerry Gacich, NYS Catholic Climate Ambassador and Chief of Cardiology at Rochester General Hospital and Curt Stager, ecologist, paleoclimatologist, author, and biology professor at Paul Smith's College

Features: Discussion of the role of religion and science in response to the challenge to "care for our common home." This opportunity to learn more about the Encyclical and what we can do to better care for God's Creation is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be available. Sponsored by the Parish, Diocesan Faith and Ecology Groups, and Sisters of St. Joseph Social Justice Committee.

Contact: To reserve a seat, please call: 315-212-6592 or 315-782-1474.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

DAYS OF DISCERNMENT

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

Dates: April 17

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Rectory

Features: Reflection and vespers.

Contact: Your Catholic Campus Minister or Father Howard Venette, pastor stmaryspatrick.net, 315-265-9680; Father Douglas Lucia, frdoug@twcny.rr.com or Father Bryan Stitt, diocesan vocation director bstitt@rcdony.org

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Clockwise from above left: St. Peter's Basilica ~ Rome; Duomo ~ Florence; Grand Canal ~ Venice; Basilica of St. Francis ~ Assisi
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Protecting God's children

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

Six years ago, we initially shared this piece with you. All these years later, the Mission Office is still helping to try to make a difference in our developing lands. We are making a difference in places where hunger and poverty and disease still make it so hard for so many. Sister Debbie Blow is a long time friend of the Missions and is in South America making a difference. I thought it was time to share her words once again. This summer, our annual plans to share our Mission Coop program and Missionary Projects of the Diocese appeal will roll out in June/July. Sr. Debbie plays a role in this every year. We must work together to protect our most precious gift: children. God Bless!

Protecting God's Children from Hunger

By Sister Debbie Blow, OP,
North Country Mission of Hope

I believe that Hunger is the most extreme form of poverty. It is a situation where the families of hungry and malnourished children cannot even provide the most basic human needs, i.e., food and water.

In many ways, the people with whom we minister in these situations, live their Good Friday, each and every day of their lives. Imagine the pain and sadness created by the reality for a mother who cannot feed her baby.

For those who suffer from Hunger, they live an ongoing Good Friday or a modern day crucifixion. It is this image which we experienced in our Good Friday Christian services. It is this image that can either lead us to a deep sense of despair or to a realization and belief that the God we love and believe in, calls each of us to live in the Hope of the Resurrection, not only the despair of Good Friday.

Through Hope and Faith and Love, we bring the promise of the Resurrection to the children of the world in need. We are the ones who are standing by the "tomb" of pain, loss and despair.

We are the ones who are being beckoned to announce the good news that people care. There is a Resurrection! There is Hope!

With all of this said, it is important that while we assist in many different needs, we must continue to sustain our Mission projects, especially those feeding the hungry children of our world.

Thank you to one and all for helping the Mission of Hope. Thank you to those who bear the Good News of the Resurrection and of Hope.

God Bless!

OBITUARIES

Alex Bay – Helen Lees Fitzsimmons, 89; Funeral Services April 5, 2016 at St. Cyril's Church; burial in St. Francis Xavier Cemetery, Redwood.

Chaumont – Eileen Marion (Yott) Doc-teur, 99; Funeral Services April 7, 2016 at All Saints Church.

Copenhagen – Anna (Surace) Adams, 81; Funeral Services April 7, 2016 at St. Mary's Church.

Dereriet – Antoinette D. "Donna" (Ger-ace) Schneider, 94; Funeral Services April 2, 2016 at St. Rita's Church; burial in Old St. James Cemetery, Carthage.

Hogansburg – Margaret M. (Tarbell) Ja-cobs, 81; Funeral April 5, 2016 at St. Regis Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

Long Lake – Norman Joseph Galvagni, 68; Funeral Services April 2, 2016 at St. Henry's Church; burial in Long Lake Vil-lage Cemetery.

Malone – Lucille M. (Reome) Tatro, 86; Funeral Services April 5, 2016 at St. John Bosco Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Massena – Lorraine (Vallance) Zappia, 87; Funeral April 6, 2016 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Norwood – Edward F. "Eddie" McCauley, 76; Funeral April 4, 2016 at St. Andrews Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Peru – Nancy L. Ward, 69; Funeral Serv-ices April 4, 2016 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – James L. "Jym" Recore, 71; Funeral April 7, 2016 at St. Peter's Church;

burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Port Henry – Clarence Supernault, 91; Fu-neral April 1, 2016 at St. Patrick's Church.

Watertown – Eunice A. (Merkley) Snider, 82; Funeral Services April 1, 2016 at Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home; burial in Fairview Cemetery.

Watertown – Mary (Affinati) Spicer, 98; Funeral Services April 1, 2016 at St. An-thony's Church; burial in Brookside Cemetery.

Westport – Ruth Helen (Martin) Lawrence, 99; Funeral Services April 2, 2016 at St. Philip's Neir Church.

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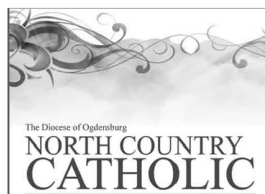
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Saranac Lake rehabilitation center adds program for those scarred by War

Veterans find hope at St. Joseph's

By Chaz Muth
Catholic News Service

SARANAC LAKE, N.Y. (CNS) - Daniel Courtney could feel the tightening grip that drugs and alcohol had on him in the years after he served in the war in Iraq.

Though the facility is no longer operated by the Franciscan Friars, its Catholic roots are deep

The former altar server from Rockaway Beach, New York, and Navy war veteran was increasingly using alcohol and cocaine as a way of coping with his war experience and life's other traumas.

Courtney had short-term stays in military and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals in the past to be treated for substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder and he enjoyed brief periods of sobriety.

However, by 2014, a happy, sober, stable civilian life seemed far out of reach to Courtney, who had been offered a 90-day stay at another VA rehabilitation center, which didn't seem like enough treatment time to him.

So, VA counselors told him about a recently opened in-

patient substance-abuse rehabilitation facility in Saranac Lake specifically designed to care for military veterans, where patients participated in a six- to 12-month-long treatment program.

The information about the Col. C. David Merkel, MD Veterans Residence at the St. Joseph's Addiction Treatment & Recovery Centers in the Adirondacks got Courtney's attention.

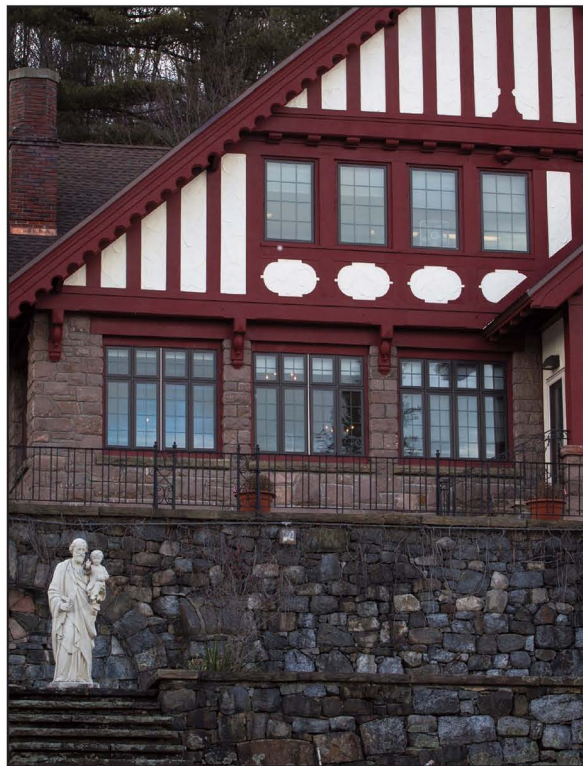
The then-34-year-old Courtney traveled to St. Joseph's and he was mesmerized by the beauty of the area.

As he settled in, the spiritual nature of the place reminded him of his Catholic upbringing.

"I let out this big sigh of relief," Courtney told Catholic News Service during a February interview at St. Joseph's. "I knew I was in the right place."

With the help of a \$3 million grant from New York state, St. Joseph's built a 10,000-square-foot, 25-bed facility in 2014 to house its new veterans program, tailored to focus on the specific vulnerabilities and emotional triggers for members of the military, said Bob Ross, CEO of the 45-year-old treatment center.

The addition of the veterans program is "consistent



CNS PHOTO/CHAZ MUTH

A statue of St. Joseph is set in front of the main building at St. Joseph's Addiction Treatment & Recovery Center in Saranac Lake in this Feb. 5 photo. St. Joseph's opened its long-term residential facility for military veterans in 2014.

with our mission to find and identify the people most in need of addiction services who are not now receiving them with easy access," Ross told CNS. "It's an honor to be in a position to support our veterans who have supported us."

St. Joseph's was established in 1971 by the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement to treat alcoholics who lacked the financial resources for treatment.

The friars steadily expanded the center to include chemical dependency and family co-dependency care.

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care if they have the financial resources to do so, but if they don't, the cost of their treatment is covered by ongoing support from the state, Ross said.

"We don't want to take money that they need to support their family," he said. "On the other hand, we want to encourage them to make a contribution that allows us to have enough resources to serve the full compliment of people who are there."

The new center made it possible for Theodore Fendick of Johnson City, N.Y. to really delve into the source of his alcoholism in the nine months he stayed there.

The Air Force veteran had been to rehab seven times before he went to St. Joseph's, but said he now feels better equipped to manage his disease.

Fendick also decided to stay in Saranac Lake to live and work in the serene setting and take advantage of the close proximity to the treatment center.

It's not uncommon for patients who complete their program to remain in the area, said Zackary Randolph, the veterans program director at St. Joseph's.

As part of their treatment, the veterans are encouraged to volunteer as cleanup crew members throughout the town, work in the local food pantries and help out on the grounds of St. Joseph's, Randolph said.

The work is therapeutic and provides the men with a sense of engagement with the community, he told CNS.

"That's starting a legacy of relocating these heroes into our community who can give back," said Randolph, who also is a military veteran and recovering substance abuser.

"We have so many of them who come back," he said. They mentor the residents who are going through the program currently," he said.

"They are such a blessing to our population and to the community."

Though the facility is no longer operated by the friars, its Catholic roots are deep and the independently run treatment center has carried on the tradition of providing more than \$300,000 in charity care annually, said Deacon Steven DeMartino, chairman of the board of directors for St. Joseph's.

"Catholic social justice has been very clear for a very long time, going all of the way back to the Gospel, that we have an obligation in our discipleship to reach out to those on the margins, to those who are suffering," Deacon DeMartino told CNS. "So, there's a very obvious connection with our tradition."

Veterans who are treated in St. Joseph's new program are asked for a donation for their

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