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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 72, Number 26

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

NOV. 22, 2017

A time for silence and prayer

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Mass is the highest form of prayer and not an appropriate moment for small talk, Pope Francis said. At church, Catholics should spend their time in silence before Mass, preparing "to meet with Jesus" instead

of engaging in "chitchat," the pope said Nov. 15 during his weekly general audience.

"Silence is so important," he said. "Remember what I told you last time: we are not going to a show.

"Silence prepares us and

accompanies us," he said.

The pope continued his new series of audience talks on the Mass, reflecting on the Eucharist as a form of prayer that is "the highest, the most sublime and, at the same time, the most concrete" way

of encountering God's love. "This is the greatest grace: to experience that the Eucharist is the privileged moment to be with Jesus and, through him, with God and with our brothers and sisters," the pope said.

Bishop appreciates his priests

In an interview for the annual "We Appreciate Our Priests" issue, Bishop LaValley talked about the joys of his own priesthood as well as the love and concern he has for the priests who serve in the North Country.

"When I think about the priests in our diocese, they have a native wisdom," Bishop LaValley said. "They know the lay of the land. They know the hardships, the struggles, the joys, the gifts of the folks who call this place home... it's a gift they give to the parishes."

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On a mission in Massena

Pastor and new parochial vicar talk about their parish work in St. Lawrence County

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WE APPRECIATE OUR PRIESTS



PHOTO BY TOM SEMERARO

Father Donald Robinson, pastor in Carthage, is shown during this year's "Celebrate Christ" in Lake Placid with three Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod with whom he served while pastor at St. Patrick's and St. Anthony's in Wiertown. This week's issue focuses on the priesthood in the diocese featuring interviews with pastors, a newly ordained priest, a campus minister, a military chaplain, a priest from the Philippines and a bishop.

THANK YOU, FATHER: Parishioners share messages of thanks to priests

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Bishop shares thankful homily



CNS PHOTO/NANCY WIECHEC

Families across the country will sit down for Thanksgiving dinner this Thursday. In his homily for the Sunday before Thanksgiving, Bishop LaValley said, "As we approach Thanksgiving Day and the end of another Church year, it is good to reflect on the blessings we have received this past year and to look forward to new opportunities to communicate God's goodness. Out of a sense of profound gratitude may we commit to being ever more alert to creatively invest our time, our very selves, into sharing the news of all that God, in His goodness, has done for us."

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Yes, we appreciate our priests!

In what has become a tradition even sweeter than pumpkin pie, the NCC is once again celebrating Thanksgiving with a paper filled with gratitude.

This year's "We Appreciate Our Priests" issue features a record number of messages thanking priests from one end of the diocese to the other.

We are also publishing interviews of clergymen which every Catholic in the North Country

should find intriguing.



Mary Lou
Kilian

In many ways the Diocese of Ogdensburg is typical of small dioceses across the country but we do have some unique characteristics, thus the need for military chaplains, college chaplains, priests coming from other parts of the world and a bishop who tirelessly embraces the task of making sure everybody is Christ-led, Christ-fed and hope-filled.

Every time we publish this

issue, I feel a little guilty that we don't have personal messages for every single priest in the diocese.

Obviously, some of our most beloved "Fathers" have friends like me, people filled with good intentions who never got around to filling out and mailing the coupon with their message.

But this doesn't make us any less grateful for the priests in our midst who have given their lives to God and to us.

Pope Francis famously called on priests to "be shepherds living with the smell of sheep."

"Bring the healing power of God's grace to everyone in need and stay close to the marginalized," he said.

From my vantage point, the priests in the Diocese of Ogdensburg are about the sheepest smelling priests in the world, led by a bishop who knows he can't possibly be a shepherd by sitting in an office in Ogdensburg.

I'm sure Pope Francis would highly approve of the priests in the Diocese of Ogdensburg... almost as much as the rest of us do.

Thanks, Fathers!

FATHER MUENCH SAYS

So many priests for whom I am grateful

It is time again for the celebration of Priest Appreciation. I would like to focus a bit today on the many priests that I truly appreciate. My thought as I begin is to offer my appreciation for all the priests of my diocese, this Diocese of Ogdensburg.

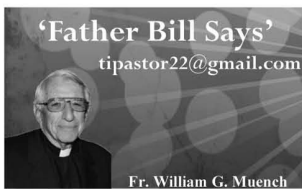
At my ordination as a priest, I truly became part of a family, a brotherhood of the priests of the Diocese of Ogdensburg. So, today, I offer my prayer of gratitude for them all, remembering those who are now with the Lord as well as those now ministering here in the North Country – young and old.

First of all, let me begin with a prayer of gratitude and appreciation for our bishop. Bishop Terry LaValley has proven to be an excellent bishop for the Diocese of Ogdensburg. He knows us all; he is one of our own priests. Bishop LaValley is a truly caring priest and a wise leader for us priests.

Our Diocese of Ogdensburg has been blessed with many fine bishops. Since I was a seminarian I have experienced ten of those bishops.

Today, I pray for Bishop LaValley – may all continue to go well for him.

As a student and a young



priest, I met and became friends with most of the priests of our diocese. There is a wonderful spirit and unity among

the priests of this diocese. Today, let me take a moment to remember in a special way one of my early favorites, Father George Whittaker. During the summer before my last year of study at St. Mary's Seminary in Baltimore, I spent several weeks living with and helping Father Whittaker. I remember the parish – it was St. Henry's, DeKalb Junction. It was a great introduction for me to parish ministry by a very dedicated and loving pastor.

In addition, Father Whittaker was a real help to me in my preparation for ordination. I am truly grateful for Father George's part in my life and in my priesthood.

As I remember this, I also realize what a surprise it all was that I was assigned to be with

Father Whittaker that summer. As a matter of fact, there would be plenty of surprises in my life as a priest.

As a young priest, I was assigned as an assistant pastor to work with several pastors. I thank the Lord for placing me with wonderful priests and pastors. They all certainly helped me to develop into a better priest and pastor.

In addition, over the years, I have worked in ministry together with many of the priests of this diocese. This would include many who I studied with and many others who truly enriched my ministry.

Over my years as a priest, I have worked with many priests, great priests, young and old priests. They were all gifts to my ministry.

I would like to include here the many priests I worked with over the years when I was teaching in our Catholic high schools. They were friends and guides, gifts to my ministry and teaching.

Let's see who I remember – there was Father Grif Billmeyer, Father Maurice O'Neill, Father Bob Manning, Monsignor John Pendergast who are all with the Lord now.

There were many, many others. I consider them all a great

part of my life – friends and guides – and I am grateful for all that they did for me and I appreciate their part in my life.

I would like to mention another note of priest appreciation today. I am thinking of my appreciation for the young priests of our diocese.

I must admit that most of the priests of this diocese are younger than I am but I'm thinking of the young priests who were ordained during the last few years.

I find them enthusiastic and I am impressed with their dedicated ministry. I do believe we must all pray for a new increase in vocations to our priesthood.

I now think of one more I want to mention. I often have the privilege of celebrating Mass for the Sisters at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph. At each Mass – I am joined in celebration by Monsignor Robert McCarthy. Father Mac is a resident in the Priest's Assisted Living wing at the Motherhouse.

Father is well into his 90's and he has dedicated his long priesthood to our diocese. I want to honor him and offer my gratitude for his ministry and priesthood. I truly appreciate his priesthood.

FOLLOW ME

We are called to transform the world

God's creation is in the process of development. The movement is continuous. We can learn from the past, but we cannot live in the past. The change is constant and, inevitably, the world we leave will be a different world than the one we came into.

Jane and Ralph had just returned home from their 50th wedding anniversary party. Jane was feeling pretty nostalgic. "You used to kiss me

very tenderly," she said to her husband. So, Ralph leaned over and tenderly kissed her.

"You used to hold my hand," she said. So, he reached over and took her hand in his. "You used to gently bite my ear lobe," Jane reminisced. Ralph then immediately began to walk out of the room. "Where are you going?" she asked impatiently. "To get my teeth," he replied.

We can cherish past events, but we cannot re-live them. We cannot freeze them. We cannot wrap up life in a neat package and say, "This is the way it always was; this is the way it is; this is the way it always will be."

In today's Gospel, Jesus speaks a parable about a rich man who entrusts three men to take care of some of his money. The parable ends as the rich man praises the two who invested his money and doubled it, and strongly condemns the third man who played it safe.

We would be wrong to imagine that in the parable, Jesus is teaching us how to double our money. It has nothing to do with our 401K's or our stock portfolios, or even our piggy banks. The lesson to be drawn is all about life. The father has given each of us a life to be invested in the

growth and development of His coming kingdom. Jesus is telling us not to bury our God-given talents for advancing His Kingdom on earth.

The Lord is calling us to something new. We love our traditions. We recognize the value of the past. But there are many times when we are called to relinquish the pleasure and comfort and the security of the old, and to risk the emergence of something new.

When St. Paul tells the Thessalonians and us to stay "sober and alert," he does not mean that we should go through life frowning and passive. Christians are the ones who live in the light, who are awake - that means we are called to be lively, creative, and active. In fact, that's what all the best Christians have always been: fully engaged in life, using their talents to the maximum to glorify God and build up His Kingdom. How often Pope Francis urges us to enter into the muckiness of life today.

That's a lesson we take from today's Gospel. The servants praised by the master are the ones who took their talents and went into business. They got involved in the world around them. They took risks and challenged themselves. I suspect they lived with gusto and vigor. The foolish servant was the one who retreated into himself, who refused to make a commitment or take a risk.

As followers of Christ, we are called to transform the world, to spread the Gospel directly and indirectly, to be the best artists, athletes, teachers, business people, politicians, deacons, consecrated religious, priests, bishops, carpenters and scientists the world can find.

To use our God-given talents well, we must develop them fully and then put them into action, glorifying God by serving others and bringing light into this sinful, darkened world.

Out of a sense of profound gratitude may we commit to being ever more alert to creatively invest our time, our very selves, into sharing the news of all that God, in His goodness, has done for us

That's what St. Paul himself did. He didn't build a fortress around himself and passively wait for Christ to come again - that's not what being "sober and alert" means. He tirelessly preached the Gospel, traveling all over the civilized world in order to communicate God's goodness. He didn't stand still when it

came to his faith.

Another good example of such growth is your own flexibility and support as our diocesan planning process continues. Growth isn't easy. I'm so grateful to our pastors and their staff for their leadership and your support as we seek to communicate God's love and be nourished by the sacraments in our local parish families. That's the Christian spirit.

Knowing that Christ will come again, that there is a purpose behind human activity, has made Christian culture the most active, creative culture in history. Because we are Christ-led and Christ-fed, we are hopeful.

Christ put it: "I have come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly." As we approach Thanksgiving Day and the end of another Church year, it is good to reflect on the blessings we have received this past year and to look forward to new opportuni-

ties to communicate God's goodness.

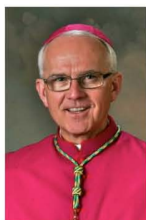
Out of a sense of profound gratitude may we commit to being ever more alert to creatively invest our time, our very selves, into sharing the news of all that God, in His goodness, has done for us.

The lazy servant in today's Gospel would not have been excused by arguing that he didn't have much of a talent for business.

None of us will be excused because we don't have the personality, the confidence or the talent to share our Catholic faith.

While we are each different, we can find ways to talk about and share our faith. We pray for the courage, the energy to invest more of ourselves into spreading the Good News because we know we have each been blessed. A good place to start is within our parishes, indeed, our own families.

May God be praised! Forever may God be praised!



**Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley**

Thank you Father Kevin McEwan for feeding your flock at St. Mary's School and Parish in Ticonderoga



This day he was serving a special meal to the 8th grade class just before their graduation from SMS.

Clinton county pastor helps parishioners face change and challenges with optimism

All politics - even for priests - is local

By Shawn Ryan
Staff writer

PLATTSBURGH - All politics is local, as the story goes. Nowhere is that more true than at St. John's Parish and the neighboring Plattsburgh State University community.

For roughly the last two years, throughout the recent presidential election of a year ago and beyond, Americans of all political stripes have debated and argued over the status of foreigners and foreign students, in this country both legally and illegally.

This past summer during the summer hiatus from classes, Father Timothy Canaan noticed something strange going on in Plattsburgh. He saw a change in the attendance of some of the summer get-togethers that St. John XXIII Newman Center holds for students who take classes or stay in Plattsburgh during the summer months.

Early in the summer he noticed that far more foreign students attended their scheduled get-together than in years past. The reason, he says, was quite apparent.

"It's because of the political climate we're in," he said. "This summer many international students didn't go home because they were fearful that they couldn't come back."

Where they usually host one event during the sum-



PHOTO BY SHAWN RYAN

Father Timothy Canaan, pastor of St. John the Baptist Church in Plattsburgh, is shown in his rectory. The priest, who also serves as diocesan director of campus ministry, has offered pastoral care for international students who fear deportation as well as to parishioners who must adjust to a declining number of priests.

mer, offering a much loved and nostalgic home cooked meal and a chance for fellowship with other students, this year the Newman Center hosted three events.

We had well over 100 students at each event," Father Canaan said, explaining that that is well above the numbers they normally get at one. "That fear is very real. We had to step up our game because there is a definite

need." In fact, he said, one Plattsburgh State student from Russia who possessed a valid student visa was prevented from returning to this country for the fall semester, after she had returned home for the summer.

While those events certainly benefited the students, they also benefit the Newman Center according to Father Canaan, giving exposure to the fact that there is a Newman Center, the only one still operating in the diocese,

right across the road from the campus. "They find a connection here," he said.

With school now back in session, the St. John's community is actively looking for more ways to support both their foreign and domestic students, regardless of the increased numbers of firm mouths they have to feed.

Parish planning

But ministering to the needs of foreign students is far from the only change

going on at one of the diocese's most venerable parishes. Throughout the summer and fall the parish steering committee on the realignment plan has been meeting and pressing forward with their work.

While the work is hard, and touches on aspects of religious life which Catholics hold dear, Father Canaan says that, overall, the plans have been met with a positive response.

"Change is difficult for most people and we're asking them to come out of their comfort zones," he said. "But the people understand the place we're in with the lack of vocations, and they're trying to put their personal feelings aside and look to the good of the Church."

This month the three Plattsburgh parishes of St. John's, St. Peter's and Our Lady of Victory are submitting their long debated plans to Bishop LaValley for his consideration.

On the topic of vocations, and even in the face of the impending realignment plans, Father Canaan sees reason to be up-beat.

With the increase in the numbers of seminarians recently entering the seminary, he feels that the ongoing prayers of countless members of the diocese may finally be answered, signaling a new trend.

"We live in a society that is so counter-cultural to commitment, choosing a religious vocation is against the grain of society," he said.

But he is hopeful that the current trend will continue.

So even in the face of future and current changes, the parishioners at St. John's along with their pastor are pressing on with their Catholic mission, with the unflappable spirit that has shepherded them through nearly a century and a half as one of the most stalwart Catholic communities in the entire Northeast region.

Our pastor, **Father Pierre Aubin**, MSC of The Catholic Community of Cape Vincent, Rosiere, and Chaumont, has served as a gentle and loving shepherd to our parish for 18 years.

As the sole, full-time priest for three different churches, his schedule is demanding, and he manages to minister to those in need without hesitation. He works tirelessly with parishioners and their families to help bring them closer to our Savior, Jesus Christ. He provides reassuring leadership and guidance during difficult times for which his parishioners are very grateful.

Fr. Aubin is a hands-on pastor. We are so blessed and honored to have him as our pastor. We would like to extend our appreciation for his tireless efforts, courage and generosity during his years of service to our parish.

~The Catholic Community of Cape Vincent, Rosiere, & Chaumont

FATHER ALLEN
Deacon Jim and I are so blessed with your
inspiration and guidance!!

God bless you!





Deacon Jim and Christine Chaufy

Thank you
Fr. Reamer
for all your hard
work.


Our Lady of Victory Parish

Msgr. Harry K. Snow
Always in our thoughts and prayers.
~The Cousins

 **Father Howard Venette,**
we honor our dedicated pastor and
supportive chaplain for our
K of C council 3057

 **Father Cline**
Our spiritual leader, good friend
to young and old and a BIG
asset to our family.

- Knights of Columbus Council 7364,
Adams

 **Fr. Timothy G. Canaan,**
Thank you for your unfailing love, commitment,
and service to your parish family.
What a wonderful shepherd you are for all of us.

We are also blessed and thankful for our Parochial Vicar
Father Bill Edwards

And our retired priest, Fr. Norman Cote

**GO RAIBH MILÉ MAITH AGAIBH
RAITH DÉ ORT !**



Thank you
Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin
for your time & dedication to
the parishioners of
St. Patrick's & St. Anthony's
Churches.
We are blessed to have you as
our pastor.

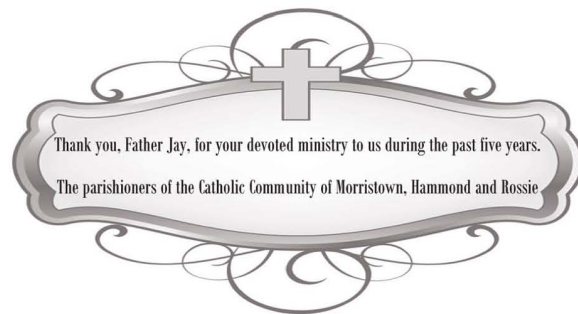




Fr. LaBaff

Thank you for your many years of dedicated service to the people of the Diocese of Ogdensburg and especially to the parishioners of St. Mary's in Clayton and St. John's in LaFargeville.

We, as your Deacons, thank you for your leadership, mentoring, and friendship. You have provided us with many opportunities to use our gifts and talents in serving you and the people of our parishes.



Thank you, Father Jay, for your devoted ministry to us during the past five years.

The parishioners of the Catholic Community of Morristown, Hammond and Rossie

Fr. Donald Manfred

In Thanksgiving and
Appreciation for your
faithful service.

We are blessed to have
you as our Pastor.

St. Stephen's Parish, Croghan



The Seton Schools would like to thank
the priests of our core parishes,

St. Peter's,

St. John's,

Our Lady of Victory

&

St. Alexander's

and their pastors,

Msgr. Duprey, Fr. Canaan,

Fr. Reamer and Fr. Seymour.

We are blessed to have your support
and faith-based leadership.

Thank you for all that you do for the
Seton Schools.



The Seton Schools

Discover the Difference

***Father Scott, we are fortunate to have you
as our pastor. Thank you for all you do.***

Ms. Cecile Filion



Thank you Msgr. Aucoin and Father Steve.

We are grateful for your support.
The sacrifices that you make and the examples that
you set are appreciated.

- The Buskey family

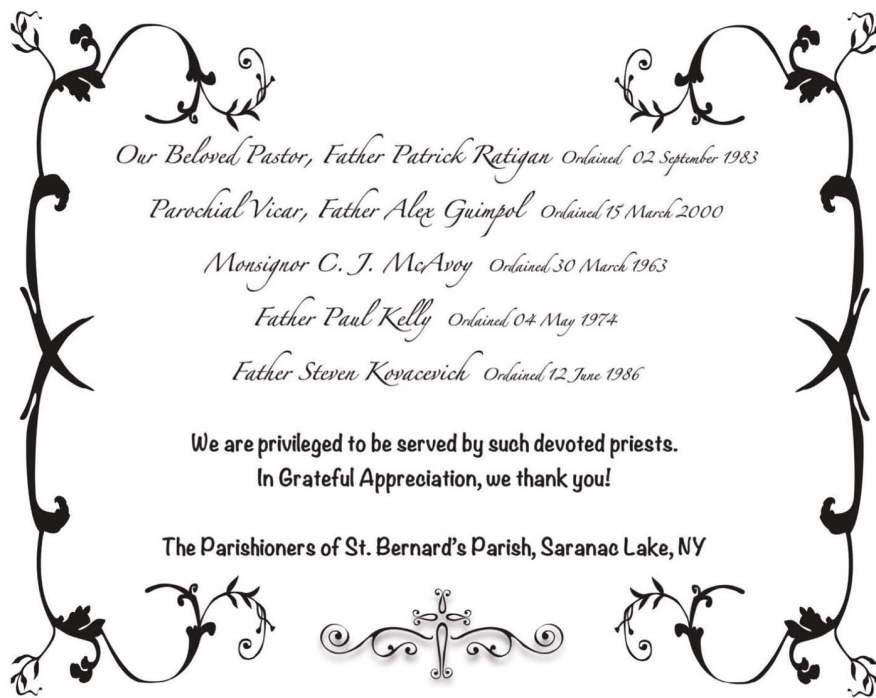


Father Adrian Gallagher

is our pastor.

We see him; rejected and supported,
loved and resented, pushed away and drawn near.
Still; he cares for our souls, loves Christ
and his Church and for this we are grateful.

Deacon Dennis Monty



Our Beloved Pastor, Father Patrick Ratigan Ordained 02 September 1983

Parochial Vicar, Father Alex Guimpol Ordained 15 March 2000

Monsignor C. J. McAvey Ordained 30 March 1963

Father Paul Kelly Ordained 04 May 1974

Father Steven Kovacsich Ordained 12 June 1986

We are privileged to be served by such devoted priests.

In Grateful Appreciation, we thank you!

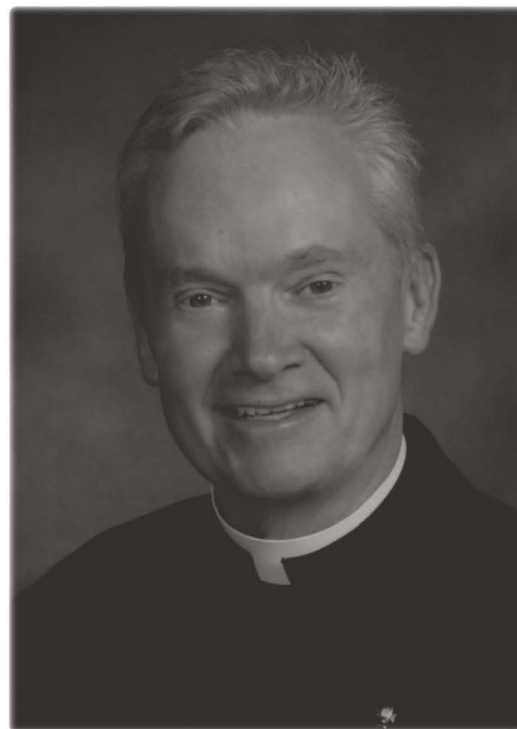
The Parishioners of St. Bernard's Parish, Saranac Lake, NY



*Thank you Fr. Don,
we are blessed to have you with us.*

*From the parishioners of
St. James, Carthage,
St. Mary's, Copenhagen and
All at Augustinian Academy.*

*We are most grateful for your presence and
many kindnesses.*



FR. DECKER,
We appreciate your service!

From the parishioners of
St. Alphonsus-Holy Name of Jesus, Tupper Lake



Father Giroux is pictured with Dennis and Danielle Colterman

The members of St. Lawrence and St. Patrick's parishes are very happy to have this opportunity to express our appreciation for

Father Giroux.

He consistently puts forth his best effort to provide meaningful homilies, reach out to those in need, listen to the concerns of his parishioners, and provide a variety of positive experiences for all of the members of our churches, both young and old. Our children enjoy his attention at Sunday Mass and during Faith Formation classes. He brings joy and entertainment as well as thoughtfulness and concern to us all as needed. Father Giroux has become involved with our local community and has taken the time and energy to get to know us each in a personal way. We have been blessed to have him here in our parishes! Of course, we also enjoy his laugh, jokes, and beautiful singing.



FR. TED CROSBY

Sacred Heart is so
blessed to have you as
our pastor.

Thank you for saying
"YES" when asked to
lead our parish.



Bishop Terry R.
LaValley

Fr. Timothy
Canaan

Msgr. Dennis
Duprey

Fr. Clyde
Lewis

Fr. Kevin
O'Brien

Fr. William
Reamer

Fr. Scott
Seymour

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your commitment, determination, support and helping to establish our second house in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, at Cadyville.

You are important pieces to this puzzle.
God bless you for always being there to cheer and to guide.

-Sisters of the Cross

Bishop's Schedule

Nov. 22 – 9:45 a.m., Episcopal Council Meeting at the Bishop's Residence in Ogdensburg

Nov. 27 – 7:15 p.m., Novena & Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Nov. 28 – 9:30 a.m., Visit to Trinity Catholic School followed by Noon Mass at Sacred Heart Church in Massena

Nov. 29 – 10:50 a.m., Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg

Rest in Peace

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

Nov. 22 – Rev. Bernard Caraher, 1893; Rev. James F. Lamitie, 2010

Nov. 23 – Rev. Louis Brisson, 1963

Nov. 24 – Rev. Bernard McCabe, 1857; Rev. G.P. Berneche, 1950; Rev. Norman E. Poupore, 2014

Nov. 27 – Rev. Joseph Cole, 1929; Rev. Maurice O'Neil, 1999

Nov. 28 – Rev. Edward Gabriel Brice, 1929

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration online is required in order to participate. Participants may pre-register at www.virtus.org by selecting the registration button and following the directions.

Upcoming sessions:

Dec. 2 - 10 a.m., Immaculate Heart Central School, Watertown

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, PO Box 2446, Plattsburgh, NY, 12901; terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: 518-483-3261; or Fr. Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy at 315-393-2920, ext. 1340

Environmental Stewardship

What robs us of a sense of gratitude?

In a recent book entitled, *The Passion and the Cross*, Oblate Father Ron Rohlheiser writes "Nothing robs us of joy more than familiarity. It is the most common cancer that eats away at marriages, families, communities, friendships and simply the joy we might have in living."

What can be said of joy might also be said of gratitude.

How many things that we enjoy each day become so familiar that we do even think about them and thus we are robbed of the joy that these simple things can bring us?

Scott Kelly, the astronaut who spent most of 2015 aboard the International Space Station, reflects in his book, *Endurance: A year in Space, A Lifetime of Discovery* on what he learned during this time and how it changed his view of the life here on Earth.

One reflection: "While I was in space, I saw on TV one day a scene with people sitting down to eat a meal together. The sight moved me with an unexpected yearning. I suddenly longed to sit at table with my family, just like the people on the screen, gravity holding a freshly cooked meal on the table's surface so we could enjoy it, gravity holding us in our seats so we could rest."

How often have you given thanks for the gravity that holds you to the table and makes your everyday living possible?

Another lesson: "I've learned that grass smells great and wind feels amazing and rain is a miracle. I will try and remember how magical these things are for the rest of my life."

As you sit around a table with family and/or friends this thanksgiving day, what will you be thankful for that you may have taken for granted?

The cornucopia is filled with the fruits of the earth. Consider three blessings that fill your life for which you are especially grateful and share them with those at the table in between the dinner and dessert.

Priests on a mission in Massena

By Kristina Dean
Staff writer

MASSENA - Two priests, one freshly ordained six months ago, the other a former Marine officer and helicopter pilot, now a priest for two decades, have the same mission: to reach people through a turbulent sea of changing culture, to engage them in a deep love of Christ and to inspire a desire to live fully as disciples of the Lord. In short, exactly what Jesus asked of Peter and Andrew when he called them to be 'fishers of men.'

Ordained May 27, Father Michael Jablonski's first assignment is as parochial vicar for the Greater Massena Catholic Community, an area that encompasses three churches, a school, and serves the people of Massena and Louisville.

The new priest noted his first assignment allows him to focus on the sacramental end.

"It's been full of beautiful experiences," Father Jablonski said. "People are so full of joy when receiving the sacraments."

While he hopes to bring the church's missionary spirit to as many as he can, aiding them in their faith journey, his main challenge is to fully engage the faithful in the pews.

"We need all hands on deck," he said. "Pray and talk to friends and neighbors around you. Encourage them to come to church. Do what you can do. That's the challenge. Go out of your comfort zone a little bit."

Conversion and renewal

Conversion and renewal of the life of the parish is a focus shared by pastor Father Mark R. Reilly as well.

"I want people on fire for the Holy Spirit," he said. "I would love to see people remain long after Mass because they want to be around together, and not just a 'let's go get this over with' attitude."

"I want that place where people are having a dynamic, loving, joyful relationship with the living God," Father Reilly said, "where people say, 'I want that.' That's what everything in the life of the church should be aimed at. To invite and draw people into that."

The pastor's vision is based on Pope Francis's idea of being a mission church, not just a church in "maintenance mode."

Calling St. Lawrence County a mission field, Father Reilly said Christ intended His church to do



PHOTO BY KRISTINA DEAN

Father Michael Jablonski, parochial vicar for the Greater Massena Catholic Community, and Father Mark Reilly pastor, are shown in Sacred Heart Church. Father Reilly called St. Lawrence County a mission field, noting that Christ intended His church to do mission work.

mission work. "We can't just keep on doing what we've been doing in the life of the church," he said. "We all need conversion, and that starts with me as pastor and leader."

"It's going to be uncomfortable sometimes, but we are called to renewal in the Holy Spirit and in the life of a missionary church," Father Reilly said. "That's what Christ established when He told the apostles to go make disciples," he said.

Although not an attitude shared by all who attend Mass, there are those who have a minimalistic attitude, Father Reilly said. He explained it as people who believe, "just punch my ticket, throw my envelope in the basket, and don't ask much more of me."

Conversion is something needed by everyone, including himself he said, admitting he falls short and works on daily conversion as well.

Besides forming disciples in the pews, the pastor's goal is to evangelize Catholics who only attend funerals, weddings and special occasions, as well as reaching the unchurched, or as Father Reilly calls them, the "nones."

The pastor identifies them as people who, when

asked to specify religion, check the "none" box. This is a symptom of a changing secular culture, he said, and cited the need to understand and translate it.

"The cultural ground keeps shifting under our feet, and we need to understand that cultural shift if we are to be Apostles of Christ," he said.

With fewer priests

This is complicated by fewer vocations and an older population of priests, something Father Reilly is in a unique position to appreciate.

Twenty-one years ago as a seminarian, he lived at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Massena for six months. At that time, there were seven Catholic pastors in the Massena area. Today, there are two. Where there was once eight priests, now there are four in active ministry.

In 2016, the four Massena area churches were united under Father Reilly. In October, St. Joseph's church became an oratory, and is no longer used for regularly scheduled Masses.

"I'm facing one little slice of what the bishop is facing across the diocese," Father Reilly said, and stressed this is just one aspect of the changing culture.

Other aspects include the rise of the "nones," people dealing with economic distress, and people struggling with substance abuse.

"These are all symptoms of despair and a profound lack of belonging," he said.

To combat this, he works on his vision of what it means to be a pastor, to be the shepherd and leader of an active and engaged parish, to create priorities and to rethink what the essential tasks are of the pastor.

He admits he is a bit jealous of Father Jablonski.

"That first year or so is pretty awesome, to be able to concentrate strictly on the sacramental and parochial ministry and not to be consumed with administrative duties," Father Reilly said. "Some days I have to fight to get away from the desk and do what a priest should be doing."

Originally from the Albany diocese, Father Jablonski said in his first assignment, he's found people in the North Country to very welcoming. They give the benefit of the doubt to others, and they take care of and love what they have, he said.

"I hope that, God willing, I'll be able to touch as many people as I can and bring the church's missionary spirit to the people of the North Country wherever I go," Father Jablonski said.

Bishop announces assignments for four priests

Bishop Terry R. LaValley has announced the following changes in priest assignments; all are effective Nov. 15, 2017.

- Father James W. Seymour is reassigned from Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Personnel

and pastor of the RC Community of Morristown, Hammond and Rossie to Dean of Lewis Deanery and pastor of St. Peter's Church, Lowville, St. Mary's Church, Glenfield, and St. Hedwig's Church, Houseville

- Father Christopher Carara is reassigned from Dean of the Lewis Deanery and pastor of St. Peter's Church, Lowville, St. Mary's Church, Glenfield and St. Hedwig's Church, Houseville to Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Person-

nel and pastor of the RC Community of Morristown, Hammond and Rossie.

- Bishop LaValley granted Father Thomas J. Higman's request for a six month leave of absence from all priestly ministry.

- Father Todd E. Thibault has been reassigned from parochial vicar at St. Mary's Church in Canton to temporary administrator of St. Edmund's Church, Ellenburg and St. Bernard's Church, Lyon Mountain.

FR. LABAFF,*Thank you for being a good friend and shepherd.*

~The Orvis Family



Trinity Catholic School is fortunate to have not one, but three priests who offer teachings, guidance and love to our staff and students.

Our school is complete with
Fr. Mark, Fr. Tojo and Fr. Michael
 and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

**Msgr. Aucoin, Fr. Murray,
 Fr. Jonas, Fr. Gaffney,
 Fr. LaBaff, Fr. Looby,
 Fr. Cline, Fr. Decker,
 Fr. Robinson, Fr. Comstock,
 and our retired priests:
 Fr. Whitmore and Fr. Wiley**

The students, faculty and staff of Immaculate Heart Central School extend our sincerest appreciation, thanks and prayers for your life of service to the people of God.

You have blessed us in so many ways.



Vocation within a vocation: Fort Drum chaplain talks about his unique mission

By Deacon Kevin Mastellon
 Staff writer

FORT DRUM - Chaplain (CPT) Daniel R. Goulet came to Fort Drum in June to serve as one of three Catholic priests on the installation. He is technically assigned to Headquarters of the 7th Engineer Battalion of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry).

One of the other Catholic priests on post is leaving soon and a second is deployed. When that priest returns there will be two Catholic priests to serve 19,605 active Military personnel, a civilian workforce of 4,700, spouses and dependent children according to the 10th Mountain Division and Fort Drum web site.

St. Michael's Catholic Community is the Catholic parish on Fort Drum. It is difficult to accurately estimate the number of Catholics in the Fort Drum population since that community suffers from the same plague that befalls all parishes; namely inactive, fallen away or Christmas and Easter observers of their faith.

Many of these "Catholics" do not register in their home parish. St. Michael's is no different. But the active community of St. Michael's keeps Father Goulet busy as do the members of the unit he now serves.

Fr. Scott Seymour,
*Thank you for
 being there when
 I needed you!*

~Walma and Ken
 Masters



PHOTO BY KEVIN MASTELLON
**Father Daniel R. Goulet has served
 as chaplain at Fort Drum since June.**

Father Goulet enlisted in the Army after graduating from high school in 1992. "I began to take my call more seriously while in Korea and had a great spiritual director to help me. I thought about priesthood when I was young. It skirted in and out a bit and it came back in when I was preparing for Confirmation in 1997.

"This time the call was a lot stronger and I began practicing my faith more," he said. "Korea was the big year for my discernment."

Father Goulet was ordained for the Archdiocese of Baltimore, Maryland, his home diocese but he, like all military chaplains, is on "loan" to the Military Archdiocese of the United States for as long as the Archbishop of Baltimore permits.

"Chaplains can be recalled to their diocese at almost any time," Father Goulet said.

He was ordained to the priesthood in 2007, became an active duty chaplain in 2011 and was deployed to Afghanistan in 2014.

"I was blessed to have

Catholic chaplains serving wherever I was posted," Father Goulet said. "They inspired me to look at the chaplaincy. It is a vocation within a vocation.

"We are expected to do all the things a Catholic priest is expected to do," he said. "At the same time we serve a unit as a battalion chaplain where our job is to take care of all the families, military, spouses and children regardless of their faith background.

"So we perform and provide," he said. "We perform for our faith group always staying within the limits of our denomination. We provide to the soldiers and their families in the unit. We make sure all soldiers are able to worship their faith freely and make sure they have the means to do so."

Chaplain Goulet has seen his share of mission stress, especially in Afghanistan, where "a unit is a family." If an individual was having a problem coping or dealing with issues back home, the soldier reached out to him as chaplain. He has seen some cases of post-traumatic stress and refers them to behavioral health practitioners. "I am not seeing as many incidents of PTSD as we used to," he said.

Father Goulet concluded the interview with three principles that drive his ministry:

- Serve God first. Live the call serving the vocation within the vocation.

- Smell the sheep. As Pope Francis has suggested he travels with his units in the field and stays with them during training exercises.

- Plant seeds. Father Goulet believes the ministry he is involved in yields results. Perhaps it will yield vocations as it did for him in South Korea.

Father Eduardo Pesigan travels across the globe to serve in diocese

From the Philippines to Plattsburgh

By Shawn Ryan
Staff writer

PLATTSBURGH – Priest Appreciation Week is normally a local or, at most, a regional affair with a parish giving thanks for their local priests.

At St. Peter's Parish however, gratitude reaches half way around the globe, to the Archdioceses of Caceres, to the Archdioceses of Naga City, Philippines. For the past year, Father Eduardo Pesigan has been assigned as parochial vicar at St. Peter's, beginning a six year loan from Caceres to the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

For that, the members of St. Peter's have good reason to be thankful.

For Father Eduardo, whose youthful looks and energy bely his 18 years of priesthood, the decision to come to the United States to help offset the clergy shortage was an easy one to make.

For Father Eduardo, it was all just part of his calling.

"I decided first for the learning experience, to widen your experience. That's my job. That's my mission in life," he said. "It's pastoral charity; giving yourself totally for the service of the Church. If you see others happy, also you are happy."



Father Eduardo Pesigan is shown in St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh

For Father Eduardo the biggest adjustment has been adapting to the weather of northern New York. The food is different too, he added, diplomatically refusing to comment on which side of the globe produced the better fare.

After a brief sabbatical home this past fall, Father Eduardo says he is totally acclimated and ready to head into his second winter in the North Country.

"There are not a lot of strange things," he said. "With our government and your government, they are the same. We thank you for bringing us democracy."

While home Father Ed-

uardo enjoyed a large celebration when he visited his bishop and parishioners, and was able to spend time with his mother, three sisters and one brother.

While he would have adapted to any situation, Father Eduardo was quite happy when he arrived in the North Country, and learned that the Diocese of Ogdensburg practices what he refers to as a traditional form of Catholicism he was familiar with from the Philippines. That made the transition, in his words, "beautiful."

Having a front-row seat to the challenges faced by the Dioceses of Ogdensburg and parishes around the country

by the growing shortage of priests, Father Eduardo remains optimistic. While he believes that the root of the problem is too much secularism and materialism in the United States, he sees the fact that people are aware of the problem as the beginning of the solution.

"It's good that everybody is conscious about the problem," he said. "When you're conscious and dealing with a problem, you can find a solution. The Grace of God is always there. There is always hope."

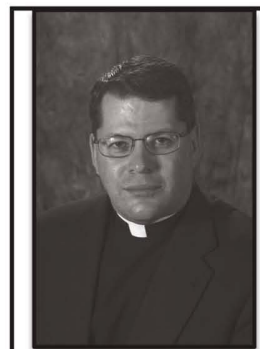
He says that his home dioceses' devotion to Mary is the reason they have so many vocations to the priesthood...good news indeed given Bishop LaValley's recent dedication of the Diocese of Ogdensburg to Immaculate Heart of Mary.

To all young men currently considering the priesthood his advice is both simple and Biblical:

Citing the Book of Jeremiah, Father Eduardo said, "Since I knew you before you were born you were consecrated... You are doing the will of God. In doing the will of God there is more freedom, so say 'yes' to the will of God."

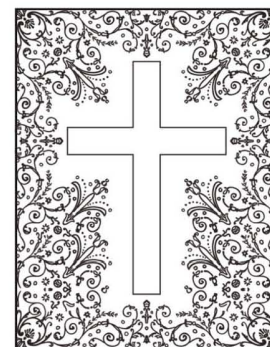
Msgr. Aucoin,
thank you for all that
you do for
St. Anthony's.

St. Anthony's Vocation
Committee



Thank you
Father Doug Lucia
for your prayers,
dedication and
leadership.

**St John the Baptist
Church, Madrid**



God Bless
Father Don Manfred
from all the parishioners
at St. Francis Solanus
Church in
Harrisville.
We are so lucky to have
you as our pastor.



Thank You for Your Faithful
and Loving Service to
St. André Bessette Parish

Rev. Joseph Giroux, Pastor
Rev. Scott Belina, Parochial Vicar



St. Andrew's Parish and
Immaculate Conception Parish honors
Fr. Michael Gaffney and Fr. William Muench
who joyfully shepherd parish life!



Fr. LaBaff

Thank you for
all you do!

Deacon Neil &
Dee Fuller

Thank You
Pastor Scott Seymour and
Priest in Residence,
Rev. William Gordon,
Retired Priests
Fr. Gilbert Menard
for all that you do for us
here at the
RCC of St. Alexander, St. James
& St. Joseph Church!
Your hard work and dedication
does not go unnoticed.
From your Staff and all your
parishioners.



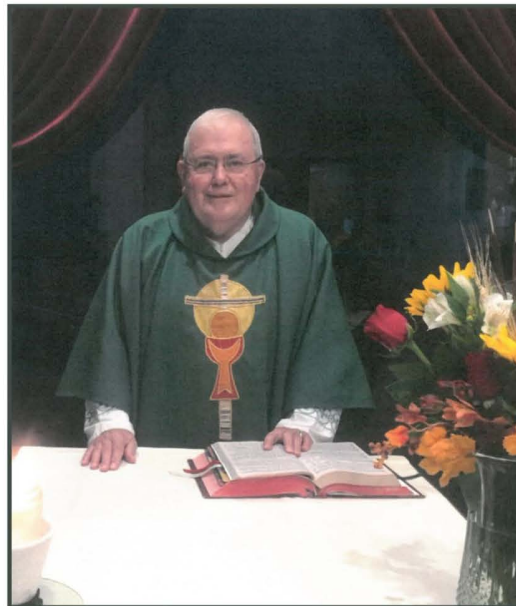
Father Doug Comstock,
We, of the Catholic Community of Alexandria,
are so blessed in having you as our pastor!
You do such an outstanding job shepherding your flock!

From Deacon Bernie, Deacon Joel & Dawn, and your parishioners,
St. Cyril's Church, Alex Bay
St. Francis Xavier Church, Redwood



**Fr. Shane
Lynch**

Thank you!
From
St. James,
Sacred Heart &
St. Hubert's



Father Alan Shnob, St. Augustine's Parish-Peru
In recognition as our Pastor, for your years of
guidance, dedication and devotion to Mother
Mary's Cause, as you lead in service to her divine
son, Jesus.

For your personal care and concern for St.
Augustine's Parishioners and all who seek your
guidance and assistance.

For your unwavering support and personal
participation in all ministries of the Parish,
Catholic Daughters of Americas Court St. Monica
#2598, The Junior Catholic Daughters of Americas,
Court St. Rosalia #2598, The Knights of Columbus,
Council #7273, The Columbian Squires, Jeffery
Provost Circle #3389, The Community Soup
Kitchen and both Auxiliary Stores, St. Vincent
DePaul and Rogers Thrift store.

His master said to him, "Well done, good and
trustworthy servant; you have shown you are
trustworthy in small things; I will trust you with
greater, come and join in your master's
happiness."
~Matthew 25:23



Msgr. Duprey, Msgr. Aubin, and Father Eduardo:

For all you are, all you've done, and all that
you continue to do, with much appreciation,

St. Peter's, Plattsburgh.

May God continue to bless and keep you.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Bishop Dewane disappointed by House passage of tax cut bill

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The chairman of a U.S. bishops' committee concerned with domestic justice issues expressed disappointment over the House of Representatives' passage of "the deeply flawed" tax cut bill. House members "ignored impacts to the poor and families" in passing the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act Nov. 16, said Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida. In a statement Nov. 17, Bishop Dewane cited findings by the nonpartisan congressional Joint Committee on Taxation that show the bill's raising of taxes on the working poor beginning in 2023 while giving simultaneous tax cuts to the highest-income Americans is problematic. A Nov. 9 letter to House members by the chairmen of three U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' committees outlined what they called "many deficiencies" in the bill and that the bill places "new and unreasonable burdens on families." Bishop Dewane credited lawmakers for restoring the adoption tax credit, which was not included in earlier versions of the bill. But he also raised concern that the House measure repeals an exclusion for families assisted by their employer to adopt children in need and eliminates incentives for charitable giving.

Bishops support migrants, worry over 'poisoning rhetoric'

BALTIMORE (CNS) -- The longest and most passionate discussion on the first day of the fall assembly of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Nov. 13 focused on immigrants, on how to help them but also how to drive home the point that they, too, are our brothers and sisters and should not be demonized. During a discussion period after a presentation from a working group on immigration issues, Boston Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley spoke to the bishops about a visit he made over the weekend to a Washington parish where he had served as a young priest. On Nov. 11, he met with young adults at the Shrine of the Sacred Heart who shared their stories of migration, but also shared with the cardinal how they had benefited from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, which is now in peril. "It was very moving to listen to these young people," Cardinal O'Malley said.

Abortion, assisted suicide are pro-life focus, says cardinal

BALTIMORE (CNS) -- Assisted suicide and abortion remain the focus of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, according to Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of New York, the committee chairman. One of those issues was being taken up by the American Medical Association House of Delegates as the U.S. bishops held their fall general assembly in Baltimore Nov. 13-14. Regarding assisted suicide, the AMA House of Delegates at its own meeting was holding a forum to get more input on whether the AMA's decades-long position against assisted suicide should be one of "neutrality." The AMA Council on Ethical and Judicial Affairs has been studying the issue. "In light of the complex and deeply contested nature of the issues at stake, CEJA believes it is wisest to proceed cautiously and allow ample time for thoughtful reflection in developing its report," the AMA has said. "Efforts continue, in collaboration with other groups, to provide CEJA with compelling reasons to maintain the AMA's long-held opposition to assisted suicide," Cardinal Dolan said in a report submitted in advance of the bishops' meeting. "Similar efforts continue with state-level medical associations to urge them to maintain or adopt opposition to assisted suicide."

Says bishops must focus on youth, evangelization, Jesus

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

BALTIMORE (CNS) - There are three things bishops must always keep in mind as they exercise their episcopal ministry, according to Archbishop Christophe Pierre, the Vatican's nuncio to the United States: youth, the mission of evangelization and "the Lord himself."

"The Holy Father has demanded of bishops that their mission requires passion," Archbishop Pierre said in an address to the U.S. bishops Nov. 13, the first day of their fall general assembly in Baltimore. "We need to have the passion of young lovers and wise elders."

Pope Francis has warned that "the biggest threat of all is gluttony," Archbishop Pierre added, in "which all appears to proceed normally while in reality faith is winding down."

"I ask you for passion -- the passion of evangelization - what are we as bishops, totally be passionate about," he said. As the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops celebrates its centennial in 2017, the archbishop added, "I think this is a fundamental question that the illustrious past of your conference gives as Christ as the center of your life and your church."

In focusing on youth, Archbishop Pierre said, "Pastors, parents and teachers know the difficulties of transmitting the faith in our day, which is not so much the nature of change as the change in age. Young people struggle not only with existential questions but practical ones, like finding work."

He noted that "50 percent of Catholics under 30 identify as 'nones' (having no religious affiliation) ... and nearly 14 million Hispanics born Catholic but raised here have become nones."

Archbishop Pierre said,

"Perhaps we could become discouraged. However, we are a people of hope. Our hope is basically in the Lord and the Holy Spirit. Are we passionate about our youth? If so, this means being open to accompanying them personally as spiritual fathers, even if this means demands on our time and our energy."

Papal nuncio's message

The USCCB Committee on Evangelization and Catechesis is beginning discussions on how best to reach out to and address the challenge of the growing numbers of people who are unaffiliated or identify as "none" when it comes to religious affiliation.

"The committee hopes to study the issue and learn more about the 'nones' so as to offer to the bishops a greater understanding of why people are leaving the church and no longer identifying with any religion. This is especially true of younger people who are leaving the church," said Archbishop Leonard P. Blair of Hartford, Connecticut, committee chairman.

On evangelization, Archbishop Pierre reminded the bishops that Pope Francis had sent them a video message last year. In that message, "the challenge is to create a culture of encounter which encourages individuals to share the rich tradition of experience, to break down walls and build bridges," he said. "The church in America

is called to come out of its comfort zone and become a leaven of communion. We need to become fully a community of disciples filled with love and enthusiasm for the spread of the Gospel."

The archbishop gave two recent examples of U.S.-born holy men: Blessed Stanley Rother and Capuchin Franciscan Father Solanus Casey, whose beatification was to take place in Detroit the weekend following the bishops' meeting.

"It was this land that gave birth to Blessed Father Stanley Rother, even in the face of martyrdom even though he gave his life for his people, even though he could have given up," Archbishop Pierre said.

Father Casey "made time for people. He listened to the pilgrims and he touched the sick with great compassion," Archbishop Pierre added. It was, he said, "this love for the Lord and his people (that caused) light to rise in darkness."

Setting the example for Catholics in their dioceses "by example of our personal relationship with Jesus" are among "the most essential activities to be carried out in our pastoral ministry," he noted. "There is always one more task to be done. There is always a risk of being functionally a manager, but Jesus calls us to a lonely place to pray. The need for silence, and contemplation cannot be greater as an antidote to the busyness of life."

*We are so blessed to have you as priests in the
Massena Catholic Parishes.
We appreciate all the challenges you face and
are truly grateful for your vocations!*



*Thank you and God bless you,
Fr. Mark Reilly, Fr. Tojo Chacko
and Fr. Michael Jablonski.*

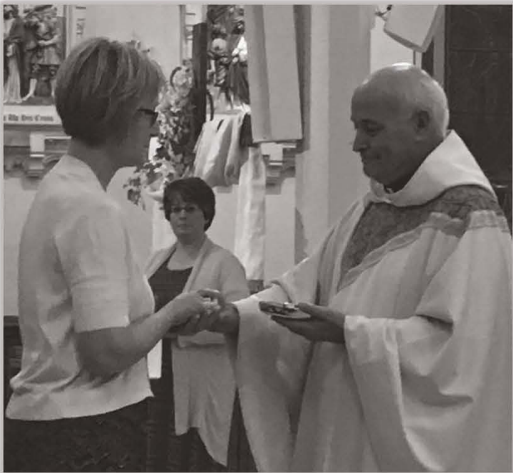
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Father Joseph Elliott

God Bless you for your Priestly Ministry.

Knights of Columbus Council
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The parishioners of
**St. Mary's Clayton and
St. John's LaFargeville**
would like to thank
Fr. LaBaff

for his dedicated service to our parish's
Your friendship and care for our
spiritual needs, and enabling those
called to serve in so many ways has
truly enriched our lives. And as you say
to us so often — we say to you—

**"May the Lord bless us and teach
us to be grateful!"**

Papal message for priests

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Sincere, harmonious unity is needed in the world and in the church, Pope Francis told an international association for Catholic priests.

"It's very sad when we find

in a presbyterate that this unity doesn't exist," and, instead, gossip and backstabbing are the rule, he said. "Gossip destroys the diocese, destroys unity among priests - between themselves and

with the bishop," he said.

The pope spoke during an audience Nov. 16 with participants in the international assembly of the Apostolic Union of the Clergy, a global confederation of groups promoting brotherhood and mutual support among members of the diocesan clergy whether they are bishops, priests or deacons.

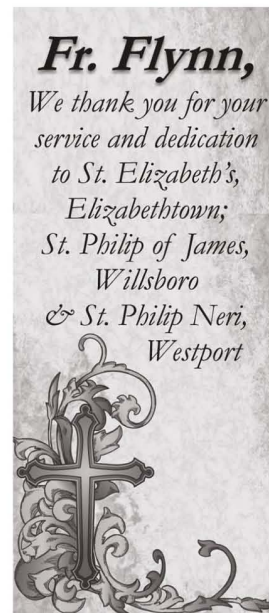
"We always see the bad in other people, always," he told the priests, but extreme care must be taken so that those observations do not turn into "terrorist" attacks where one plants gossip that destroys another person, then walks away unscathed.

"If I see terrible things, I pray, or, as a brother, I talk" to the appropriate person, he said. "Please, no gossip," which is like a moth larva that "eats the fabric of the church."

"We are in great need of communion in the church and the world," he said. This "spirituality of communion" is fostered by conversion, by being open to the work of the Holy Spirit and by being welcoming to others.



The Sisters of St. Joseph are grateful for the support of Bishop Terry R. LaValley, the priests of the Diocese and to the priests of the Watertown parishes, especially Msgr. Robert McCarthy, Fr. Leo Wiley, Fr. William Muench, Fr. Vincent Freeh and Fr. Douglas Comstock who minister to the Sisters.

**Fr. Flynn,**

We thank you for your
service and dedication
to St. Elizabeth's,
Elizabethtown;
St. Philip of James,
Willsboro
& St. Philip Neri,
Westport

Thankful and Blessed to have you as our priests!

- ◆ Father Stitt is nice and funny when he does his homily. — Emma
- ◆ Father Stitt is a good role model to me and I hope I can be like him when I grow up. — Emma
- ◆ I am thankful for our school's two priests, Father Todd and Father Stitt, because they are nice and they preach God's word. — Tate
- ◆ Father Stitt and Father Todd also tell God and Jesus to watch over us. — Alex
- ◆ I like my priests at St. Mary's School because they jumped on the bouncy pillow (at Fobare's orchard). — Mateo
- ◆ Fr. Stitt is nice, funny, grateful for what he has, gentle, a good priest and the perfect addition to St. Mary's School. Now let's talk about Fr. Todd. He teaches us religion and he is nice, funny, and good at mass. He is a good priest. — Emily
- ◆ Father Stitt is the most energetic priest we have had. I like to quiz him on war vehicles. Sometimes he is right. — Everett
- ◆ Fr Todd and Fr. Stitt teach us about Jesus. They are helpful. — Dean
- ◆ Fr. Todd teaches about God in religion and Fr. Stitt is funny. They both have a good sense of humor. They make me feel happy. — Hailey
- ◆ I like Fr. Todd because he teaches us all about Jesus. We also have another priest named Fr. Stitt. I like Fr. Stitt because he talks a lot! I mean, they both do. — Nicole
- ◆ I like our priest Fr. Todd. He is super fun. He likes to teach us religion too. I like Fr. Todd so much. We have so many memories. — Eleanor
- ◆ I like Fr. Stitt because when we were getting a tour of the church he showed us how they ring the bells. He is kind, caring and funny. — Ross
- ◆ Fr. Stitt teaches us how to have a truly Christian life. He shows good examples and he shares sacraments.
- ◆ Priests are very special and they don't stay in one parish their whole life. They get moved to different parishes about every nine years. They are holy, yet sin, like every human since Eve. Let's face it, priests are special in their own way. — Matt
- ◆ A priest is more than just a priest: he is a gift from God, a friend, a teacher and much, much more. — Sophia
- ◆ Father Stitt and Father Todd are the best priests in the whole entire world and we are very lucky to have them here with us at St. Mary's School. — Gavin



Fr.'s Tim & Bill
 We appreciate your
 service and
 friendship.


From the Garran & Ludewig
 Family



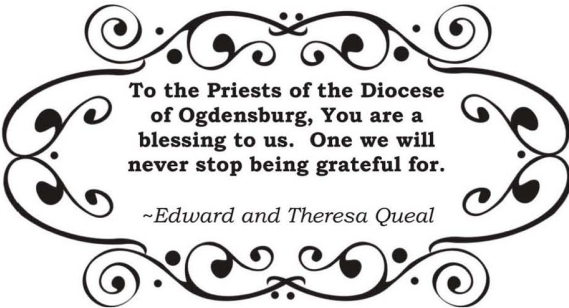
Fr. Patrick Ratigan and Fr. Alex Guimpol.
 We appreciate everything you do.



Love and Prayers, Jimmy and Robin Law




*All the parishioners of St. Andrew's Church
 would like to thank **Fr. Mike Gaffney**
 and **Fr. Bill Muench**
 for all the good work they do in our parish.*



**To the Priests of the Diocese
 of Ogdensburg, You are a
 blessing to us. One we will
 never stop being grateful for.**

~Edward and Theresa Queal

Father Lawrence Marullo,



The Parishes of St. John's, Lyons Falls;
 St. Martin's, Port Leyden;
 St. Mary's in Constableville and
 St. Mary's Nativity, West Leyden –
 thank you for all you do for our
 Parishes!!
 Thank you for being a priest!!




**Fr. Christopher
 Looby**




Thank you for guiding us on
 a journey to heaven and
 everlasting paradise.

*Parishioners of St. Joseph,
 St. Mary's and St. Theresa's*





**The parishioners of
 Holy Family
 Watertown
 love and pray for all
 of our priests.**

*Thank you,
 Fr. Ray Moreau*



*For all you have done and continue
 to do for our churches and the
 parishioners of
 St. Augustine's in North Bangor and
 St. Mary's in Brushton*




*A man of his
 word, thank you
 Fr. Martin Cline
 for setting an
 example for all.*

*The Ladies of
 St. Cecilia*

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Christ, our King

NOV. 26

Feast of Christ the King

READINGS

Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-17
 Corinthians 15:20-26, 28
 Matthew 25:31-46

for our "final exam". Jesus will say to us, "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you ... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me..."

It all seems so simple. Anyone can share what they have, or take time out to visit a sick and lonely relative or acquaintance. If we welcome a stranger, then they can easily become our friend.

All we have to do is to recognize Christ in everyone we meet.

All we have to do is to listen more to the voice of Jesus speaking through the church and through the Holy Father, and through our really good friends whom we can trust.

If we are alert and really follow His love, then we are promised Heaven in the company of the King Himself!

This week marks the end of the Church year, it's the end of one journey and the beginning of the new one next Sunday as Advent begins.

Today is the last Sunday of the Church year, the Feast of Christ our King.

The readings sum up what we need to remember the most about living as a Catholic Christian, and how God (who is also our judge), will measure our success of failure in living with God for all eternally.

First, how does God like to think of Himself?

Of all His titles, He wants to be known as a "shepherd" who guides and lead us all to His kingdom.

The first reading from the prophet Ezekiel, reveals God's displeasure with the ancient leaders of Israel. "I myself will look after and tend my sheep." Tenderly He will watch out for our every need—"twenty-four seven"! "I will rescue them from every place where they were scattered when it was cloudy or dark," He says.

Further, this perfect shepherd will seek out the lost,

the injured, and the sick.

Can you imagine how much loving care our Good Shepherd takes of each one of us?

We know how often we have strayed away from one or other of the commandments, and how often we have strayed away from prayer? How did we ever get back?

It was through the whisperings in our heart and the love of the Shepherd guid-

ing us back. He is a Good Shepherd guiding us all the time. How fortunate we are!

(No wonder our present Holy Father, Pope Francis, is so upset with clergy and laypeople, who think of their own comfort first and neglect to care for beggars and the crippled and the needy. He's upset when we don't think of them as children of God, the same as we are, and as our brothers and sisters).

What a King we have! How lovable and just!

The second reading from St. Paul to the Corinthians shows us how we are promised resurrection and a share in the treasures of heaven through the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the Son of God. We could have no richer inheritance.

In the Gospel, we have all the guidelines spelled out



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore



We thank you for your warm and friendly personality with a deep love of God and a Zeal for the house of God.

~Your Friends




The Catholic Community of Keeseville would like to thank Fr. Kris Lauzon for his unwavering Faith & Christ like leadership.



FATHER GARRY
GIROUX

With thanks and appreciation for your priestly ministry.

Knights of Columbus Council
2176, Brasher Falls

Monsignor Whitmore, 
 It was you and the Holy Spirit that brought us together 16 years ago and Deacon Jim being called to the Diaconate. God bless you!
 ~Deacon James and Christine Chaufy

AT THE MOVIES

THOR: RAGNAROK

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

There's plenty of combat but relatively little bloodletting in the sweeping Marvel Comics adaptation "Thor: Ragnarok" (Disney). So at least some parents may deem this second sequel to the 2011 original acceptable for older teens.

As for adult viewers, they will likely appreciate the healthy dose of humor that keeps the proceedings on the boil. Still, at two hours and 10 minutes, the film does register as a bit overlong.

The sibling rivalry that has long pitted Thor (Chris Hemsworth), the straight-shooting Norse god of thunder, against his ever-wily brother, Loki (Tom Hiddleston), takes on a new dimension with the emergence of their older sister, Hela (Cate Blanchett), the goddess of death. Released from a long captivity by the demise of their father, Odin (Anthony Hop-

kins), Hela aims to dominate the family's home planet, Asgard.

Worryingly, Hela's bid for power has the potential to unleash the cataclysm of the title, a prophesied apocalypse that would spell ultimate doom for Asgard. Accordingly, Thor and Loki will have to patch up their differences if they are to defeat Hela's schemes.

Along with Loki's shifting loyalties, Thor must also contend with Hela's destruction of his trademark hammer and with being taken prisoner by Valkyrie (Tessa Thompson), an Asgardian warrior-turned-bounty-hunter. Embittered by her experiences on Asgard, heavy drinker Valkyrie thinks nothing of handing Thor over to the Grandmaster (Jeff Goldblum), the decadent impresario of a series of gladiatorial games.

The mythological elements blended into director Taika Waititi's superhero adventure -- which also features Mark Ruffalo as Bruce Banner, aka the Hulk -- are

not for impressionable kids. But grownups will find relatively little to object to along the path of this spiffy intergalactic quest.

There are also some serious themes underlying the flashy fun. Loki, for instance, remains a morally ambiguous figure, but one more given to mischief than outright evil.

In dealing with him, Thor gradually moves away from trying to win him over to the side of goodness and begins to settle for the potentially more effective strategy of accepting Loki as he is and making what use he can of his brother's positive qualities.

Banner finds himself in a similarly ambivalent situation. Though he's anxious to use his alter ego's fighting prowess for the cause of right, he fears that spending too long in the guise of the Hulk may eventually leave him powerless to return to his human form.

Sakaar, the world over which the Grandmaster presides, is a giant garbage



CNS PHOTO/DISNEY

Tessa Thompson and Chris Hemsworth star in a scene from the movie "Thor: Ragnarok."


dump inhabited by a diversion-hungry populace whose taste for ritual fighting recalls that of the ancient Romans. Eccentric, effete and indifferent, Goldblum's Grandmaster conjures up some of Rome's less reputable emperors as well as the cruelly corrupt spectators of the tournaments from which the "Hunger Games" franchise took its title.

Hela's wish to ride roughshod over Asgard's dependent realms echoes the worst instincts of real-

world imperialism. The script, penned by Eric Pearson, Craig Kyle and Christopher L. Yost, contrasts Hela's destructive attitude with Thor's vision of enlightened cooperation.

The film contains constant stylized violence with little gore, occasional crass language and mature wordplay.

The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned.



Fr. Chris Looby,



You are such an inspiring "Good Shepherd!" We, of the Diocese of Ogdensburg are so blessed in having you as a Priest!

Thank you,
Deacon Bernie

Fr. Clyde Lewis

Many thanks for all that you continue to do for St. Mary's, Champlain and St. Patrick's, Rouses Point

From all of your parishioners

Fr. John Kennehan

With gratitude for your service!

Knights of Columbus
Council 2176,
Brasher Falls



Rev. Douglas Comstock

Thank you for your support During the Formation for Ministry Program.

Gene Kleinhans, Jr.

Queen of Heaven Church thanks **Fr. Martin** for his faithful care of our parish family. God Bless him always.



~Queen of Heaven Altar & Rosary Society

ADIRONDACK

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Lake Placid – St. Agnes School Christmas Bazaar and Craft Show to be held.

Date: Dec. 2

Time: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Place: St. Agnes School

Features: Trees, wreaths, holiday plants, toys, gifts, crafts, baked goods raffle items. Vendor space is available

Contact: Kathleen Murphy at the school at 518-523-3771 or by email at info@stagneslp.org for more information or to reserve your space.

CLINTON

FALL INTO WINTER CRAFT FAIR

Peru – St. Augustine's Spectacular Annual Craft Fair to be held.

Date: Dec. 2

Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: St. Augustine's Parish Center

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

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

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

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

SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

Plattsburgh – The Sacred Heart Fraternity Secular Franciscan Order meets the second Sunday of the each month.

Time: 2 p.m.

Place: St. John's Holy Family Chapel.

FRANKLIN

CHRISTMAS TEA

North Bangor - St. Augustine's to have a Christmas Tea "Hometown Country Christmas".

Date: Dec. 3

Time: 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: Parish Hall

Features: crafts, baked goods, cake walk, a Chinese auction, raffle and free coffee, tea, punch and cookies. A lunch of soup and sandwiches will be available. Santa visit around 2 p.m.

FIRST SATURDAY DEVOTION

St. Regis Falls – First Saturday Devotion and Holy Hour to be held

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

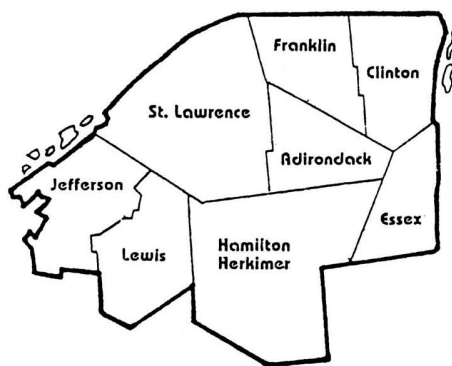
Place: St. Ann's Church

HEARTS ON FIRE

Malone – Hearts on Fire to be held the first Friday of the month.

Schedule: 7 p.m., Praise & Worship Holy Hour; 8 p.m., Bonfire, snacks

Place: Notre Dame Church



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.

JEFFERSON

BEREAVEMENT MEETING

Watertown – Bereavement Meeting to be held.

Date: Nov. 27

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: SSJ Mother house

Topic: How Christmas Memories can Bring Healing to Your Grief

Speaker: Sister Norma Bryant, SSJ

SPAGHETTI AND MEATBALLS

Evans Mills – Spaghetti and Meatball dinner to be held to benefit Indian River Knights of Columbus.

Date: Dec. 2

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

SPAGHETTI SUPPER

Watertown – St. Anthony's Parish Altar Rosary Society has planned a spaghetti dinner.

Date: Nov. 30

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Place: Msgr. Sechi Hall

Cost: Adults, \$8, Children, \$4; Children under 3, Free; Sauce, \$5 per quart; Meatballs, \$.75

Features: Take-out available at 4 p.m., please bring your own containers

LIFERIGHT MEETING

Watertown - Liferight meets the first Wednesday of the month.

Time: 1 p.m.

Place: 870 Arsenal Street.

Features: pro-life videos, books and educational materials for borrowing.

Contact: Phone 315-788-4359

HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS

Watertown – Holy Hour for vocations

Date: Monday-Friday

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 10:30

Place: Holy Family Church

EUCCHARIST PRAYER GROUP

Watertown – Our Mother of the Eucharist Prayer Group to meet the 2nd Thursday of every month.

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 8

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

WEEKLY ADORATION

Sackets Harbor - St. Andrew's has scheduled exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on every Friday.

Time: 5 p.m. to 6

LEWIS

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Port Leyden – Christmas Bazaar to benefit the Port Leyden Food Pantry set

Date: Dec. 2

Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: St. Martin's Church Hall

Feature: Crafts, 50/50 drawing, Chinese Auction, bake sale Lottery Wreath drawing and raffle of an Emeril Air Fryer. Homemade doughnuts and coffee available in the morning with lunch consisting of chili, hot dogs and beverages.

DIVINE MERCY DEVOTIONS

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

Date: Dec. 3

Place: St. Hedwig's Church
Schedule: At 2:25 p.m., before the monthly devotions, we will view the

10th and final DVD entitled "The Final Question" from the DVD Series: Divine Mercy Devotions in the Second Greatest Story Ever Told by Fr. Michael Gaitley MIC. At 3 p.m. the program includes: Vespers (Evening Prayer), Exposition of the most Blessed Sacrament, the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Benediction.

ST. LAWRENCE

IHC MYSTERY PLAYERS

Gouverneur - The Immaculate Heart Central Mystery Players from Watertown, will present an Advent program

Date: Dec. 10

Time: 6 p.m.

Place: St. James Church

Features: Through the use of special lighting, pantomime, and liturgical readings, this group of high school seniors and adults presents a moving, dramatic and prayerful meditation for the season of Advent.

CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR

Gouverneur – Craft Fair to be held.

Date: Dec. 2

Time: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: St. James School

Features: Jewelry, woodcrafts, ceramics, stuffed animals, homemade dolls, leather goods, candles, knitted items, country crafts, Christmas ornaments and decorations, baskets, etc. Over 50 vendors will be there. Lunch will be available. Admission is a donation. Santa will be there at 1:30 p.m.

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Massena – St. Mary's & St. Joseph's hold Benediction, Adoration on Fridays

Time: 9 a.m. to 10

Place: St. Mary's Family Room

ST. RAPHAEL'S FOOD PANTRY

Heuvelton - St. Raphael's Food Pantry will be open every Friday.

Time: 9 a.m. to 11

Place: Parish Center

FIRST FRIDAY ADORATION

Massena - Friday Devotions are set featuring Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Hour for Vocations.

Date: First Friday of every month

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 7:30

Place: St. Mary's Church.

SPIRITUAL BOOK CLUB

Massena - The Massena Catholic Community Book Club meets once a month

Date: Third Thursday of each month

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Sacred Heart Rectory

Features: Copies of book are often available on Kindle through our parish's Formed.org subscription

Contact: www.massencatholics.com or :smarion@massencatholics.com

DIOCESAN EVENTS

OPERATION ANDREW

Malone - An Operations Andrew dinner has been set.

Date: Nov. 30

Time: 5 p.m.

Place: St. John Bosco Church

Features: Prayer, dinner and discussion on vocations for young men, middle school age and older, and parents. Holy Hour, vespers and dinner to follow with Bishop LaValley and area priests.

Contact: RSVP to: Cathy Russell, Vocation Coordinator at crussell@rcdony.org or 315-393-2920

COLLEGE MARCH FOR LIFE

Washington, D.C. - A pilgrimage to the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., for those between the ages of 18 and 35 is set

Date: Jan. 18-21

Cost: All-inclusive \$185

Features: Father Bryan Stitt, Chaplain and Mary Skillan, Campus Minister, Will accompany the group. The Pilgrimage will include the Vigil Mass for Life at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, the March for Life and participation in the Cardinal O'Connor Conference on Life. The fee covers hotel, meals, and stops at shrines and memorials.

Contact: For more information, or to get a registration form sent to you, please email: Father Timothy Cnaan, Diocesan Director of Campus Ministry frtim@broadstreetcatholics.org Space is limited. Registrations are only complete with payment and must be submitted no later than Dec. 15.

YOUTH BUSES FOR LIFE

Washington D.C. – Registration for High School Pilgrimage to the March for Life in Washington D.C. has begun

Date: Jan. 18 to 20

Cost: \$150, includes transportation,

hotel, breakfast, two dinners and shirt.

Features: Three coach buses will depart the North Country. Pickup locations - Northern bus - Massena, Canton and Gouverneur; Western bus - IHC in Watertown and Eastern bus - Our Lady of Lourdes in Schroon Lake. Bishop LaValley will be joining the buses in DC.

Contact: Online registrations at www.rcdony.org/pro-life or call 518-524-0774/518-891-2309



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

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

Thanksgiving thoughts

The Diocese of Ogdensburg is blessed to have wonderful priests: grace-filled, hard-working and devoted men who are deeply rooted in faith in Jesus Christ.

They are aware and open to the needs of our people in the North Country as well as service to the developing lands.

Appreciation for our priests

They walk through daily tasks with care and forgiveness. Priests witness the impossible, guide our hearts, heal the broken and discourage hostility while showing the way to peace.

They minister with prayer by trusting that people will grow in their faith journey.

The Mission office is so grateful for the Priests in our Diocese and for all the assistance they give us in doing good things here and around the world.

On the Mission's office behalf, we are so grateful for your generous missionary hearts and promise special places in our prayers at this Thanksgiving season.

Today, a growing number of men from Asia and Africa are responding to our Lord's call to the priesthood. These men responding to the call of priesthood, are also providing service outside the seminary, in local parishes, hospitals, prisons and even on farms.

The seminarians in Developing Lands belong to a "mission club," praying for all Missions and for those who bring to the world the "Good News" of Jesus.

We are also so thankful for them since there are so many making the move the USA after completion of studies in the Mission Lands.

This Thanksgiving, we are encouraging thoughtful prayer and reflection as you take in all that surrounds you and your loved ones.

Take the time to recognize that giving thanks can mean giving back. When you give back, you get more.

The Mission Office is wrapping up another year complete with answered prayers and achieved goals set forth in our annual appeals and collections. We are grateful for the opportunity to thank you all for your support, prayers and sacrifices.

We wish you all a safe, prayer-filled and blessed Thanksgiving holiday. Take a moment to thank a priest. Take some time to be filled with gratitude. Enjoy the peace and love of our Lord around you and this wonderful time of year in the North Country.

"Mission is never the fruit of a perfectly planned program or a well-organized manual. Mission is always the fruit of a life which knows what it is to be found and healed, encountered and forgiven." — Pope Francis

OBITUARIES

Canton — Marion (Smith) Kotz, 93, Funeral Service Nov. 18, 2017 at O'Leary Funeral Home

Carthage — William J. Walseman, 31, Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 16, 2017, at St. James Church, burial in St. Stephen's Cemetery, Croghan

Malone — Grace (Buckley) Gravelle, 98, Mass of Christian Burial, Nov. 18 at Notre Dame Church, burial in parish cemetery.

Ogdensburg — Evelyn (Sovie) Cardinal, 92, Mass of Christian Burial, Nov. 13, 2017 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery

Ogdensburg — Gary R. Cooke, 66, Mass of Christian Burial, Nov. 20, 2017 at Notre Dame Church, burial in Foxwood Memorial Park

Ogdensburg — Timothy E. Harper, 72, funeral services Nov. 16, 2017, at Fox and Murray Funeral Home;

Ogdensburg — Jeanne Duprey Sharpe, 89, funeral services Nov. 15, 2017, at Frary Funeral Home, burial in Foxwood

Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, you who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the Divine Gift to forgive the wrong that is done to me and You who are in all instances of my life with me. I in this short dialogue thank you for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from you no matter how great material desire may be. I want to be with you and my loved ones in your perpetual glory, Amen. Thank you for your love toward me and my love ones. EM

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*Support And Pray
For Vocations*

Mausoleum.

Peru — Stacey (Miner) Rock, 34, funeral services, Nov. 10, 2017 at Hamilton Funeral Home, burial in Church of the Assumption Cemetery, Redford.

Peru — Roy C. "Rick" Morse, 66, funeral services Nov. 16, 2017 at Hamilton Funeral Home Chapel,

Port Henry — William Thompson, 88, Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 17, 2017, St. Patrick's Church.

Plattsburgh — Douglas Edward Durocher, 69, Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 10, 2017 at Our Lady of Victory Church, burial in St. Peter's Cemetery

Plattsburgh — David J. Rivers, 89, Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 18, 2017 at St. John's Church, burial in Mount Carmel Cemetery

GO GREEN!

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315-393-5899

CHEVROLET

Plattsburgh — Suzanne Valin, Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 11, 2017 at John XXIII Newman Center.

Redford — Donald F. Nelson, 72, Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 18, 2017 at the Church of the Assumption, burial in parish cemetery

Saranac Lake — Robert Tomlinson, 59, Funeral services Nov. 16, 2017, Fortune-Keough Funeral Home, burial in Harriestown Cemetery

Watertown — Francis S. Guardino, 81, Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 17, 2017 at Holy Family Church, burial in Glenwood Cemetery



Prayer to Blessed Virgin

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

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Bishop LaValley appreciates his own priesthood... and appreciates his priests

Our Fathers who art in Ogdensburg

By Mary Lou Kilian
Editor

OGDENSBURG – As Bishop Terry R. LaValley looks back on nearly 30 years of priesthood, he still finds his greatest joy in just being called “Father.”

“It’s such a privilege to be allowed into the hearts of so many people, to share in their joys and their sorrows,” Bishop LaValley said in an interview with the *NCC* for the annual “We Appreciate Our Priests” issue.

“I have loved being ‘Father’ with all that that means,” he said.

“There have been events that have been particularly special for me,” he said, “but living the life of a parish priest has brought a joy that I would never have imagined.”

When Bishop LaValley was ordained in 1988, his greatest hope was to be assigned to “that parish tucked away somewhere in northern New York where I could be the parish priest.”

That dream took a turn in 2010 when Father LaValley was installed Bishop LaValley and moved from shepherding a single parish to an entire diocese.

Now he has responsibility for the priests who are leading parishes across the North Country

What’s special about these men?

Bishop LaValley remembers when Bishop Paul S.



PHOTO BY TOM SEMERARO

Bishop LaValley is joined by Father Alan Shnob, pastor in Peru; and Msgr. Leeward Poissant, a retired priest now living in Plattsburgh, for the celebration of Confirmation this past spring in AuSable Forks.

Loverde asked him to serve as chancellor for the diocese and told him “you have a certain native wisdom.”

“When I think about the priests in our diocese, they also have that native wisdom,” Bishop LaValley said. “They know the lay of the land. They know the hardships, the struggles, the joys, the gifts of the folks who call this place home.”

“I think there’s a uniqueness to rural, northern New York,” the bishop said, “and the priests who have grown up here, are all part of that. That’s the gift they give to the parishes.”

Concern for priests

As the number of priests serving in the Diocese of Ogdensburg decreases, Bishop LaValley finds that his concern for them increases.

“I worry about their health because of the distances they have to travel from one church to the other,” he said. “And, I want to do what I can to dissuade any sense of discouragement in their ministry because of the sometimes difficult challenges they have to tackle.”

“Not only do they have to

lead their parishes, they have to struggle with the changes (as parishes close or merge, for example) personally,” Bishop LaValley said. “They are not immune to many of the same struggles and worries that the folks in the pews have.”

“I want to be a source of encouragement, not discouragement, as they conduct their ministry,” he said.

For priests, young and old

Bishop LaValley was asked to offer advice for the young, middle aged and senior priests in his charge.

• For the newer priests: “I hope to encourage them to embrace all that it means to be Father,” he said.

“In the parish it’s important that they weave their lives into the parish life, the lives of families,” he said, “not that they are Father and there’s a certain distance between them and the people in the pews.”

“I don’t want them to function as a priest, doing priestly things, but somehow be removed from the parishioners,” the bishop said.

“It’s not a job but a ministry that is enhanced by the

graces they received in ordination,” he said. “I want the priests to just plain *love* the people, be gentle with the people.”

• For priests who have been ordained for 20 or 30 years: “I’m going to get back to the phrase I used in our envisioning process,” Bishop LaValley said.

“I believe that the more we truly are Christ-led and Christ-fed, the more we are hope-filled,” he said.

“It’s during those middle years, we can become overcome by all the worries, the tasks: I gotta get more people in the pews, I gotta raise more money...”

“But I think if we really stay focused that Christ is the one who leads us, Christ is the one who feeds us, we can become more filled with hope, which is Christian hope, which we call a virtue,” he said. “So I say: stay focused, stay focused.”

• And to the priests who are retired, Bishop LaValley says, “relax in the Lord.”

“With a sigh of ‘thank you,’ I ask them to continue to pray for us, pray for our priests, pray for our people,” he said.

Personal inspirations

As he looks back on his own priesthood, Bishop LaValley credits his parents, grandparents, family, parish priests and Navy chaplain, for their influence in his decision to enter the seminary.

“Faith heroes’ who have made their mark on his priesthood today include persecuted Christians in the Middle East.

“Their faith under fire makes me take a look at my own faith, my courage and I want some of that,” Bishop LaValley said. “This has led to move forward with the Syrian twinning. I would say they would be front and center when it comes to my heroes in the faith.”

Among his favorite prayers is Psalm 139 “Lord you know when I sit and when I stand.”

“I get great comfort from that when I feel uncertain, lost confused,” the bishop said. “It gets me back, pulls me in. Also the prayer of Cardinal Newman ‘Help me to spread your fragrance wherever I go.. which gives me the sense of getting filled up with Jesus and with his love and care.’”

Advice for future priests

Finally, Bishop LaValley shared advice for young men considering the priesthood.

“The bottom line is take the time to pray,” he said. “In the middle of that praying, they’ll realize how they’ve been blessed. The more we count our blessings the more open we are to hear whatever it is that the Lord asks us to do whether to be a doctor, a carpenter, a priest, a religious.”

“But you have to be open – name your blessings – and then when you do that it’s an automatic response to how blessed you feel,” Bishop LaValley said. “This is what I give to the Lord because I have been so blessed. Out of that giving, that’s where you’ll get the happiness.”

