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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 74, Number 19

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

OCT. 2, 2019

Twelve sisters celebrate jubilees

OGDENSBURG— Twelve consecrated religious were celebrated as jubilarians for reaching milestone years of service at the Marriage and Consecrated Life Jubilee Mass held Sept. 15.

The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Terry R. LaValley at St. Mary's Cathedral.

This year's jubilarians include Sister Mary Audrey Hallahan, RSM (70 years), Sister Mary Christine Taylor, SSJ (70 years), Sister James Marie Kelley, SSJ (65 years), Sister Stephanie Frenette, OP (60 years), Sister Mary Camillus O'Keefe, RSM (60 years), Sister Mary Rita Kempney, SSJ (60 years), Sister Mary Anne Croitz, SSJ (60 years), Sister Doris Durant, OSM (60 years), Sister Constance Marie Sylver, SSJ (50 years), Sister Ronald Marie Hax, SSJ (50 years), Sister Sharon Anne Dalton, SSJ (50 years), and Sister Rose Soosairaj, SCC (25 years).

SEE STORIES ON PAGES 6 THROUGH 9



JESSE SOVIE/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Jubilarians, clockwise from left, Sister Mary Rita Kempney, SSJ (60 years), Sister Mary Anne Croitz, SSJ (60 years), Sister Constance Sylver, SSR (50 years), Sister Rosie Soosairaj, SCC (25 years), Sister Mary Christine Taylor, SSJ (70 year) and Sister Stephanie Frenette, OP (60 years), attended the Marriage and Consecrated Life Jubilee Mass celebrated Sept. 15 by Bishop Terry R. LaValley. Also in attendance, but missing from the photo, was Sister Doris Durant, OSM (60 years). Other jubilarians honored this year were Sister Sharon Anne Dalton, SSJ (50 years), Sister Ronald Marie Hax, SSJ (50 years), Sister Mary Camillus O'Keefe, RSM (60 years), Sister James Marie Kelly, SSJ (65 years) and Sister Mary Audrey Hallahan, RSM (70 years).

SPEAKER IN WATERTOWN



Author and speaker Chris Padgett will be appearing at St. Anthony's Church in Watertown on Oct. 10 at 6:30 p.m.

Padgett, who has appeared on EWTN's Life on the Rock, The Journey Home and EWTN Live, will share his experience as a convert, a father of nine children and a youth minister.

There is no charge to attend the event, though donations will be accepted.

FULL STORY, PAGE 15

Pope: Calumny, slander is a 'diabolical cancer'

VATICAN CITY (CNS)— The act of bearing false witness to destroy someone is an attack against the body of the church, Pope Francis said.

Christians who engage in calumny are like those responsible for the martyrdom of St. Stephen; they chose "the pettiest solution to annihilate a human being: slander and false witness," the

pope said Sept. 25 during his weekly general audience.

"We know that calumny always kills," he said. "This 'diabolical cancer' of calumny — born from a desire to destroy a person's reputation — also assaults the rest of the ecclesial body and seriously damages it when, for petty interests or to cover their own faults, (people)

unite to sully someone."

The pope continued his series of talks on the Acts of the Apostles and reflected on the life and martyrdom of St. Stephen, one of seven deacons chosen by the apostles to serve the early Christian communities.

The ministry of the diaconate, he explained, was created by the apostles to

serve the community through works of charity, and a person called to be a deacon is "the guardian of service in the church," not "a second-rate priest."

"The deacon is not for the altar, he is there for service," the pope said. "When a deacon likes to go too much to the altar, he is mistaken. This isn't the path."

The harmony that ex-

isted between the apostles, who preached the word of God, and the deacons, who served through works of charity, is "the leaven that makes the ecclesial body grow," he added.

When challenged by the religious establishment of his day, "Stephen doesn't mince words, he speaks clearly. He says the truth," the pope said.

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Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669
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Publish 45 issues per year: Weekly except skipping every other week beginning July through Aug. and skipping one week in Dec. by the Diocese of Ogdensburg. 622 Washington Street, Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

Editorial Office:

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

Telephone:

(315) 608-7556

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news@northcountry
catholic.org

Entered at the

Post Office:
Ogdensburg, NY
13669 and
additional mailing offices as
Periodical Postage.

Subscription:

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

Matters for publication

should be
addressed to
PO Box 326
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
and should be received by
Thursday prior to
publication.
Paper is printed each
Monday;
dateline is Wednesday.
Member, Catholic Press
Association.

POSTMASTER:

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

EDITOR'S NOTE

Finding joy in moments of mischief

To everyone else, she was Sister John Mary Brockway, a Sister of St. Joseph. To us, my sisters and I, she was "Sissy."

Sissy was my grandmother's sister – my great-aunt.

In the latter years of her life, I was away at college and then living for a time out of state. So, my fondest memories of Sissy were from my childhood.

Sissy would often visit my grandparents' home and farm in Bombay, a tiny town in northern Franklin County. Fortunately, my sisters and I

also spent a significant amount of time with my grandparents. My sisters and I – twins and a sister roughly two years older – were a handful. That's actually an understatement.

I remember one occasion when some combination of my sister(s) and I were wreaking havoc of some sort. Grandma was trying to get us back under control. While grandma raised her voice and quickly told us, "no more nonsense," Sissy sat off to the side, trying suppress her laughter – rather unsuccessful-

fully, I might add.

While I understand that part of the situation was that grandma dealt with our shenanigans regularly, and we were more of a novelty to Sissy, I also think that Sissy lived her life with great joy. She even found joy in mischief and mayhem. The more stories I hear about her from other Sisters of St. Joseph, the more I believe that to be the case.

I thought of that moment this week as I read through the biographies of the sisters celebrating jubilees this year.

While the sisters' stories differ greatly, several expressed how much happiness and joy, and how many

gifts and blessings they've been given living answering God's call and living their vocations.

These are sisters who have given their lives in service – service to God, service to their communities, service to the faithful. They've served as teachers, nurses, physical therapists, pastoral associates, leaders in their communities and leaders in our communities.

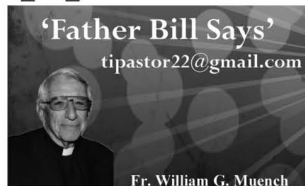
Congratulations to the jubilarians! And thank you to all the consecrated religious in our diocese who show us the joy of following the Lord, the joy of service and even the joy that can be found in moments of mischief.

Darcy L.
Fargo

Feeling appreciated by God, faithful

I was impressed by last week's issue of the North Country Catholic – the Priest Appreciation Issue. It was special to receive this appreciation for being a priest of the Diocese of Ogdensburg. I, as one priest of the diocese, was pleased to see the recognition of so many of the priests of my diocese. On Sunday, I noticed that throughout the many parishes of the diocese, appreciation was afforded by the people to their pastors and other priests serving their parish. Today, I would like to take a moment to offer my gratitude to the people of the Diocese of Ogdensburg on behalf of all of my brother priests for this recognition of their service and concern for the people of their parishes.

I want to begin this gratitude with a special thanks to God for the many ways God demonstrates his appreciation to me and to all priests. We, priests, believe that in various ways God touched our lives and led us to enter the seminary. We believe that



Fr. William G. Muench

then God showed us the way, and He called us to our vocation to choose priesthood. As a priest, I, like all others, was placed in ministry in various parishes of my diocese. We were all given opportunities to bring the love of God, the message of Jesus, and the sacraments of the Church to the people of the North Country. The joy of the priesthood came through the discovery of finding the Spirit of the Living God in those parishes where we all served. These were all signs of God's appreciation to us.

The call of the priesthood involved a dedication filled with many sacrifices. These sacrifices were accepted as part of our vocation – a necessary part that gave us as priests opportunities to truly make this world of ours a

better place. For this, we are grateful.

I think back to the times I was accepted as a pastor. As a priest, this acceptance was truly an act of appreciation. Each time a congregation joins me in Mass for prayer and Eucharist is a moment of appreciation from God and the people for my priesthood.

I believe that God has brought into my life innumerable signs of appreciation. It could be as simple as a sunny day, an enjoyable vacation or a successful parish program. I know that there are many more magnificent gifts from God that show His appreciation for me – times when I find the right ideas for a homily, times when God gives me the proper words to say to a family in crisis or tragedy, even in times when I'm given good thoughts to share with you in this column. I truly recognize all these as God's appreciation that I became a priest.

Today, I offer my gratitude to you for your words and

acts of appreciation to the priests of my diocese. Over the years, the appreciation of so many has been a true blessing and support for me as a priest. So many people have joined with me, worked with me and helped me. For this I am truly grateful. Their appreciation is a gift – a gift for me as a priest. I know well that this brings new life to all that I do as a pastor, as a priest.

Another one of the indications of the appreciation of parishioners for their pastor and priests is their involvement in the parish community, in the parish family – joining in the life of a parish with their priest in the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. I remember well the involvement and the hard work of so many in parish activities – liturgical celebrations, religious education programs, parish festivals. Wonderful people and great families joining in the work of their parish with their pastor. These are all real notes of appreciation for their priests.

FOLLOW ME

Women and men in blue, God loves you

Editor's note: The following is Bishop Terry R. LaValley's homily from the Blue Mass, a Mass honoring and praying for area law enforcement. The Mass was held Sept. 29. Full coverage will be in next week's edition.

Why a Blue Mass? The blue refers to the blue-colored uniforms often worn by those engaged in law enforcement, firefighting, corrections, and public safety. Back in September 1934, the first Blue Mass was celebrated at St. Patrick's Church in Washington, D.C.

Women and Men in Blue: We need you. We sin. We are weak. Many among us suffer mental, emotional, physical disabilities: the young and not-so-young. We need your help. Others have no respect for the human person, some even seek to hurt us and inflict evil on our neighbors for a host of reasons. We need your protection. Nature lashes storms at us wreaking havoc with our lives and property. We need your assistance. Often, we simply don't have the wherewithal to help ourselves or our neighbor. Yes, in these and in so many other circumstances of life, we need you!

Women and Men in Blue: What can we do? At times today, it seems that you are confronted and harassed in many places in our nation. Sometimes we feel helpless to respond to the unjust verbal mis-

siles hurled in your direction. At this Mass we praise God for your service, your sacrifice, your dedication as you tend to the common good. This is our way of saying, "Thank you." We thank you and your families for your sacrifice. We know that we don't express our gratitude to you enough. Too often, we take your presence among us for granted. Don't lose patience with us. Following God's law and civil law isn't always easy or automatic in our fallen world. Sometimes, being just plain decent and respectful seems out of our reach.

Women and Men in Blue, God loves you! In our second reading today, we hear of Michael, that great warrior against evil who is numbered among the archangels. St. Michael is your patron saint and protector. In your service to us, God looks over you as you make us feel safe and secure. This Mass is our opportunity to recognize you who "protect and serve" us and all who visit our beloved North Country. This is a celebration of our faith, a faith that is tested, to be sure. But, when all is said and done, ours is a faith that believes goodness triumphs over hatred, evil and violence. Goodness wins over what seems at times

to be an overwhelming lack of reverence for human life and disregard for property. Duty, respect and honor are the virtues that energize and motivate your days, yes, even in the most dangerous of situations.

Women and Men in Blue, God loves you! We

are gathered here as a people of faith to look to Jesus and His Gospel for God's truth and for hope. We are so aware of life's evils, sufferings, even death. We commend to God's love and boundless mercy your coworkers who have died in the line of duty as well as all your departed loved ones.

You remember the conversation that our Savior had with the criminal, Dismas, as they were hanging from their crosses, side by side. When sinfulness is confessed and forgiveness sought, the crucified One, promises salvation. Therein lies the hope that draws us together and beckons us to be instruments of God's peace and joy as we follow Him on this journey of life, with all its challenges, joys and sorrows.

Women and men in

blue, you know that each of our vocations is to serve others, as did the Lord Himself. Your service calls for courage, patience, humility, and self-sacrifice. You have the eyes to see and the heart to embrace the dignity of every human person whom you encounter: friend and stranger. Our law enforcement officers, corrections officers, first responders and firefighters offer selfless service for our protection, care for those injured, instilling hope to those among us who feel abandoned, unwanted.

With grateful hearts, we salute you and honor your loved ones who make great sacrifices in order to provide you with the opportunity to serve us so devotedly and courageously. Yes, service is the heart of what you do. Service is not just a nice word for you, but truly a charge, a guiding motivation every time you suit up in blue. I offer you our encouragement, our gratitude as I ask God's special blessing on your efforts on our behalf.

We don't always appre-

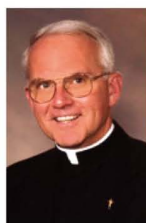
ciate your sacrifice, the great personal price you pay, and the tremendous responsibility placed before you each and every day in providing public safety. May God keep you safe, you who protect and serve us so faithfully.

I also want to ask a special blessing upon your families today because it's your spouses, children, and parents who daily pray for your safety while you are at work, and who love and support you at the end of the day when your duty is done (whatever time that may be).

Finally, again let us remember all those who have fallen in the line of duty, who never failed in their generous service, even when it meant the giving of their very lives. We think, too, of the many who continue to suffer life-long effects of injuries sustained or diseases contracted while responding to life-threatening emergencies.

You have our trust, our continuing gratitude, and our promise of prayers. Thank you.

May God be praised... forever may God be praised!



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Terry R.
LaValley

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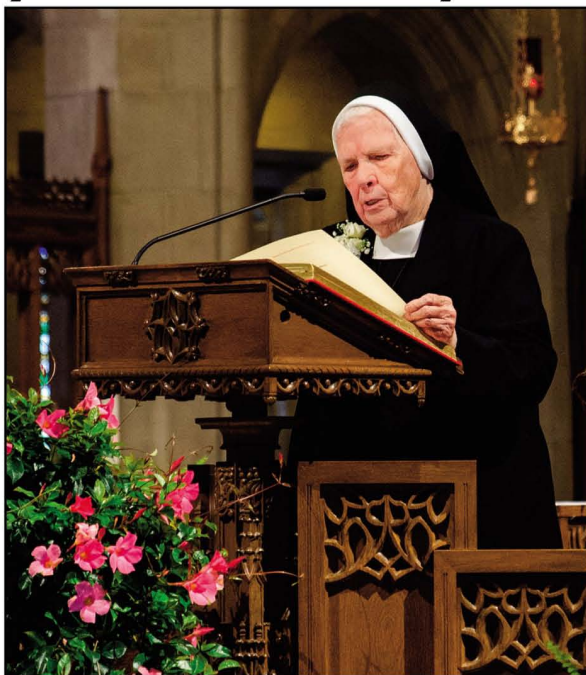
CHEVROLET

Sister Mary Christine Taylor reflects on 70 years

By Sister Mary Christine Taylor
Sister of St. Joseph

My father, Richard Taylor, died of cancer on Dec. 2, 1934, leaving our mother, Rose Boyle Taylor, an Irish immigrant, to raise nine children. It was the Great Depression – no insurance, Social Security, welfare, or means of income. We had a home that previously sheltered the parents of our Dad, when they arrived from Ireland in 1861.

Sheer hard work in the kitchen, garden, and home was mom's lot as she raised the nine of us. Eldest brothers, James, Richard, William and Michael brought home the little they earned from helping Buggy Marlow on his farm, peddling newspapers, and, eventually, digging ditches on the Works Progress Administration. Joseph, John, Ann, Mary and I were too small to be of much help, except to pick the bugs off the potato plants in the garden! Our faith-filled mother, as well as an excellent education by the



JESSE SOVIE/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Sister Mary Christine Taylor, a Sister of St. Joseph, served as lector at the Marriage and Consecrated Life Jubilee. She was also celebrated as one of the jubilarians, having hit the 70-year milestone.

Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart at St. Mary's Academy, prepared all of us for life.

My first acquaintance with sisters at the time of

our father's death was with Sister Margaret Taylor, G. N.S.H., who had entered the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in 1901. With 138 others, she had transferred to become a Grey Nun of the Sacred Heart in 1921, when the Ottawa sisters split to form the American division of the order at Melrose Park, PA.

Sister Mary Margaret was elected first councilor of the new community and lived in the new Motherhouse in Philadelphia. However, she came home for our father's funeral in 1934, and with another Grey Nun walked down to our Linden Street home for the wake. I was 4 years old and remember that Sister always carried some candy in her big pocket to give to a little girl. After Sister Mary Margaret returned to Pennsylvania, other Grey Nuns from the Cathedral would come down to our home, to see our mother. I would tell them, "Sister Mary Margaret always brings me candy!" Although they did not have any to give me, I still greatly admired them. When I was in first grade, at age 6, I wrote to the Motherhouse at Melrose Park (probably with the help of Sister Naala) and asked if I could then become a sister! Of course, I was too young!

Meanwhile, the 12 years at St. Mary's Academy sped by, and when I finished high school, I still desired to become a sister. By that time, my sister Mary, had entered the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart to become a sister, becoming Sister Rose Ann.

I expected to follow her, but when I went to her religious profession in Pennsylvania, God told me He had other plans for me.

The Sisters of St. Joseph had come to SMA to teach English, French and science. Sister Mary Evarista invited me to visit the Motherhouse in Watertown. I immediately fell in love with the sisters. Upon graduation from high school on June 27, 1948, I wrote to those sisters, and entered the religious community on September 8, 1948. After six months postulancy, I received the holy habit of the Sisters of St. Joseph on April 24, 1949 – 70 years ago! Thank God.

Now it is time to celebrate 70 years of religious adventure - Watertown, AuSable Forks, Massena, Carthage, Immaculate Heart Academy, St. Louis, Mater Dei College, Wadhams Hall Seminary College and Akwesasne. Throughout 45 of those years, I duplicated jobs, working nights on the St. Regis Mohawk Reservation as coordinator of the Mater Dei Branch Campus and as Eucharistic Minister to the sick and elderly Mohawks, and days at Mater Dei and Wadhams Hall. Sometimes I added other jobs, including research and the writing of four books, The Foundations of Catholicism in the North Country; The Diocese of Ogdensburg Centennial; Mary's Parish; and Under Four Flags.

I thank God for the wonderful blessings and opportunities He has given me to teach, administer, outreach to the poor and neglected, minister to the Mohawk Indians, write histories and to enjoy the thousands of students, friends and elders. May God always be praised!



To Our Jubilarians who love God and the "dear neighbor"

Sister Sharon Anne Dalton, SSJ (50 years)

Sister Ronald Marie Hax, SSJ (50 years)

Sister Constance Sylver, SSJ (50 years)

Sister Mary Anne Croitz, SSJ (60 years)

Sister Mary Rita Kempney, SSJ (60 years)

Sister James Marie Kelly, SSJ (65 years)

Sister Mary Christine Taylor, SSJ (70 years)

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Sister Mary Audrey Hallahan celebrates 70 years of service

By **Sister Mary Audrey Hallahan**
Religious Sister of Mercy

I am daughter of the late Carl and Vivian N. (McLaughlin) Hallahan. They had nine children, three sons and six daughters.

My brother, Joseph, died at birth. My brother, Michael Daniel, died in 1905 and my sister, Mary (Sister Mary Hallahan OSU), died in 2012.

We were brought up on a farm, Meadowlark Farm, in North Lawrence. I attended Norris Grammar School, a one room schoolhouse, which was across the road, then North Lawrence Public High School. I can remember when someone asked me what I would like to be when I grew up. I would

answer, "a nurse and a sister."

After graduation from high school, I went to Mercy School of Nursing in Watertown. It was there that I got to know the Sisters of Mercy. My Mentor was Sister Mary Enda Kegins, RSM.

I entered the Convent in 1949 in Tarrytown. I took my first vows in 1952 and made my final profession in 1955.

I Graduated from Mercy School of Nursing in Watertown as a Registered Nurse in 1954.

I also took courses from Fordham University. I received a Bachelor of Science Degree from Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry in 1979. I was stationed in Watertown as director of Nursing, and in Tupper

Lake, Gabriels, and St. Francis Hospital and Mercy Community Hospital in Port Jervis for 33 and a half years.

I held many positions, including director of Nursing, head nurse and supervisor on all three shifts, as well as assistant Operating supervisor. I was Supervisor of the Emergency Department for 13 and a half years. When I retired from nursing in 1984, my ministry was in pastoral care.

I came to Uihlein Mercy in 1997, where my ministry was in pastoral care until my retirement in 1999.

My Ministry at present is sacristan at Elderwood of Uihlein.

I thank God every day for my vocation.

Sister Mary Camillus O'Keefe: 60 years caring for others

By **Sister Mary Camillus O'Keefe**
Religious Sister of Mercy

The only child of David and Catherine O'Keefe, I was born and raised in New York City.

I entered the Sisters of Mercy in Tarrytown. During my novitiate, we moved to the newly erected Motherhouse in Dobbs Ferry.

I have always been grateful for the experience of living in both places, since it has enabled me to share memories with many more Sisters.

After receiving an education degree from Mercy College Dobbs Ferry, I was given the opportunity to

further my education by attending St. Louis University, where I received a degree in physical therapy.

In the Fall of 1965, I was assigned to Uihlein Mercy Center in Lake Placid. The Autumn foliage was a breathtaking welcome to the city girl. I was to be the first Physical Therapist in the center, which was not yet opened. This was the beginning of a wonderful Career in healthcare. After seven years, I had the privilege of becoming the center's administrator, serving in that position until 1992.

Currently, I continue to be the coordinator of St. Margaret Convent, a posi-

tion I have found to be even more life giving with each passing year.

Another God giving gift has been my involvement with Mercy Care for the Adirondacks (A Sister of Mercy sponsored work) since its inception in 2007.

As a Board of Director and a member of several committees, I am continually inspired and energized by the accomplishments as well as the vision.

Remembering these past 60 years, I can only give thanks to God, the Sisters of Mercy, my family and friends for making all the days of those years so very special.

65th Jubilee for Sister James Marie

By **Sister James Marie Kelly**
Sister of St. Joseph

Known in religion as Sister James Marie, I was christened Eileen Theresa Kelly in St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg. I was of preschool age when my family moved to Watertown, so my education was received from the Sisters of St. Joseph at Holy Family School and at Immaculate Heart Academy.

After graduation from high school, I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph and received the religious habit on April 25, 1954. The major I pursued in college was secondary math, so I spent many years teaching math related subjects in high school and in middle school.

Administrative duties were fulfilled at Augustinian Academy High School in Carthage, Holy Family High School in Massena, and St. Mary's School in Ticonderoga. I also had the opportunity to teach at St. Mary's in Massena, St. Patrick's in Port Henry, and St. Patrick's in Watertown.

In 1995, I was transferred to Immaculate Heart Central where I taught math and religion in high school. When the four Watertown schools merged their junior high with IHC high school in

2003, I assumed a new role as religion teacher in junior high. I still enjoy my teaching career.

Through the years, I have had the privilege and responsibility to serve my community, on the Leadership Team for several terms.

Some light and frivolous memories of my past, include swimming across the St. Lawrence River before I entered, since I mistakenly thought I would never swim again, gliding down the bobsled run at lake Placid at the Augustinian senior winter class trip, and riding as a passenger on my nephews motorcycle on a major highway.

Among more elegant memories that I treasure are my trip to the Vatican and the Holy land, a workshop at Notre Dame University, retreat at Niagara Falls, two Papal Masses at Yankee Stadium and a vacation with my sisters to Washington, DC.

I treasure my family, friends, and Community members who have all enriched my life in so many ways, for so many years.

In addition to the religious values that I hold dear, I maintain great loyalty to America, to Notre Dame football, and to my Irish heritage.



**Attention
Snowbirds**
going south for the winter!

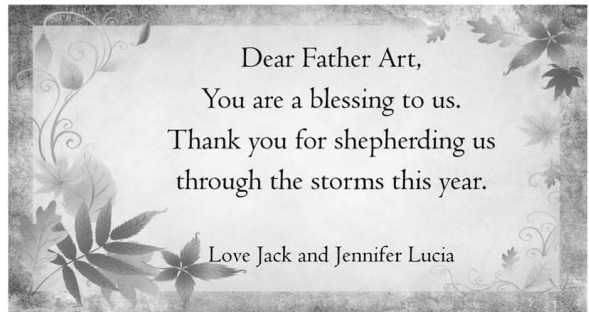
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RENEWING COMMITMENT



JESSE SOVIE/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Sister Mary Anne Croitz, SSJ, Sister Mary Christine Taylor, SSJ, Sister Doris Durant, OSM, Sister Constance Marie Sylvester, SSJ and Sister Rosie Soosairaj, SCC renew their vocational commitment at the Marriage and Consecrated Life Jubilee Mass.



"May God Creator bless you,
May Christ Redeemer heal you, and
May God the Holy Spirit fill
you with light"

Congratulations
Sister Stephanie Frenette, OP
Thank you for your dedication
and 60 years of service.



Sister Mary Stephanie reflects on 60 years service

By Sister Mary Stephanie Frenette
Dominican Sister of Hope

I was born in Detroit, Michigan on July 11, 1941. My birth name was Barbara Ann, and I am the oldest of three children born to Irene and Arthur Frenette, whose roots were from Mooers Forks, New York and Winooski, Vermont. Both of my parents are deceased.

For the first 16 years of my life, I lived in Royal Oak and Detroit, Michigan. At the age of 16, my family moved to Northern New York, and I attended St. Mary's Academy in Champlain for one year. For my senior year of high school, I attended the prep school at Dominican Academy in Fall River, Massachusetts.

In 1959, at the age of 18, I decided to enter the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine of Siena in Fall River, Massachusetts. During this process, I was given the Religious name of Sister Mary Stephanie. During the next three years of postulancy and novitiate, I also taught at Dominican Academy and began my pursuit of my bachelor's degree at Providence College during the summers. I graduated with a bachelor's degree.

In 1962, I was assigned to St. Peter's School in Plattsburgh. Following this time as a classroom teacher, I also taught religious education in multiple parishes in the North Country, including Altona, Chateaugay, Chazy, Ellenburg, Mooers, Mooers Forks, Sciota and West Chazy.

In 1972, I was transferred to teach at St. Bernadette's School in New Haven, Connecticut

for five years. I then returned to St. Peter's School in 1977, continuing to teach for many more years in first grade, second grade and Pre-K. In fact, I've actually taught every grade level from Pre-K to grade 12, either in school classroom teaching or in religious/catechetical programs.

One of my greatest blessings and contributions to thousands of children was teaching them to read and sharing my love of God in various ways as a teacher. I always asked to take the most difficult and/or challenged children in my classroom. During these years as a teacher, I also was engaged in outreach ministry in the area, visiting and serving some of the most vulnerable and poorest families in the area where I was assigned.

After teaching, I also became a home health aide for a few years, until very serious medical issues forced me to retire. Of my 60 years of vowed life, I have spent 52 of them serving the people of the North Country in upstate New York.

Along with my congregational responsibilities as infirmarian for many years in various convents, I also served as a Hospice volunteer, Eucharistic minister at St. Peter's, and I have been a multiyear traveler and Leadership Team member of the North Country Mission of Hope, where I still

serve as an ex-officio member of the Mission of Hope Leadership Team today.

In 1995, along with hundreds of my Domini-

can Sisters, I became a founding member of my present Congregation, the Dominican Sisters of Hope. In 1998, I had the blessing of being able to go on Sabbatical and attended Berakah, a place of renewal in Pittsfield, New Hampshire. This experience was an incredible blessing in my life.

During my years of ministry as a classroom and/or religious education teacher, I taught nine young men from the Diocese of Ogdensburg who became priests: Bishop Terry LaValley, Bishop Douglas

Lucia, Paulist Priest Richard Colgan, Rev. Ivan Boyea (deceased), Msgr. Dennis Duprey, Rev. Alan Shnob, Rev. Garvin Demarais, Rev. Howard Venette and Rev. Joseph Giroux. I also taught Sister

Debbie Blow, OP as a junior high and high school student as well.

Among my many interests, I love to travel, (preferably by car so I can "see more"). I also love to go on Mission to Nicaragua, where I have a strong commitment to the disabled orphans and have also assisted and trained many volunteers in the tasks of kitchen duty. I believe that I am a wonderful listener and I also love hearing from my past students. My greatest and most cherished moments are when I am with children.

It is humbling to be celebrating 60 years of vowed commitment as a Dominican Sister and I am

grateful for all the support and prayers which have sustained me throughout those years.

Sister Mary Anne Croitz celebrates 60 years

By Sister Mary Anne Croitz
Sister of St. Joseph

Sister Mary Anne Croitz received the habit as a Sister of St. Joseph in Watertown, with Bishop James J. Navagh officiating. At that time, she was given the name Sister M. Stanislaus.

The daughter of John and Mary Kicak Croitz, she was born in West Carthage, attended Herring's Grade School, and graduated from Augustinian Academy in Carthage as valedictorian.

She was a member of St. Rita's Parish in Deferiet, where she was the organist. While in high school, she was a member of the Sisters of St. Joseph Con-

servatory of Music Orchestra in Watertown.

Her teaching assignments have been at St. Patrick's School in Watertown, at Mater Dei College in Ogdensburg, at Holy Family High School in Massena, and at Immaculate Heart Central High School, where she is presently teaching and chairing the Mathematics Department.

She was also Academic Dean of Mater Dei from 1979 to 1984, and taught math courses for Mater Dei at the Akwesasne Indian Reservation.

She has taught at IHC from Fall 1965 to 1969, Fall 1974 to 1979, and from Fall 1984 to the present. While at IHC, she

has been moderator of the Cavalier Yearbook and has been one of the senior class moderators.

Sister graduated from SUNY Potsdam with a Bachelor of Arts Degree and earned a Master of Science degree in Secondary Mathematics Education from the University of Dayton in Ohio, where she had a National Science Foundation Grant. In addition, she took graduate courses in computer science at Clarke College in Dubuque, Iowa, and at SUNY Albany. She is a current member of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics and the Association of Mathematics Teachers of New York State.

Sister Mary Rita Kempney: 60 years educating, serving

By Sister Mary Rita Kempney
Sister of St. Joseph

Sister Mary Rita Kempney presently resides at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse in Watertown, where enjoys more time for prayer with her spouse. She is grateful to God for allowing her to live her life as a Sister of St. Joseph, as well as for all the people who have touched her life for these 60 years. Sister continues to keep these many people in prayer.

Sister Mary Rita, daughter of Cyril and Hannah Kempney, was born at home, in Lewis County, and grew up as a member of St. James Church, in Carthage. Sister attended Augustinian Academy for grades one through high

school. She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in Watertown in 1958 and was officially received into the community on June 24, 1959.

Sister Mary Rita received a bachelor's degree in liberal arts from SUNY Potsdam, and master's degree in education administration from SUNY Plattsburgh, and a master's degree in religious studies from St. Charles Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Sister taught junior high school throughout the diocese and was also principal of various schools in the diocese. In addition, she worked in the diocesan Department of Christian Formation for 10 years. Sister Mary Rita has also been pastoral associ-

ate in a number of parishes.

For 15 years, Sister was the diocesan Director of Catholic Scouting. She also served on various committees and in various roles for the Sisters of St. Joseph, including vocation director in the 1980s; she began the Lay Association Program of the Watertown Sisters of St. Joseph in 1994, and was the director of the program until 2005. She also initiated the Advent and Lenten retreats for laity, at the Motherhouse during that time. She was a member of the General Council for the Watertown Sisters of St. Joseph from 2001-05; and a member of the Diocesan Council of Religious for many years, as well.

1. Publication Title		2. Publication Number		3. Filing Date	
North Country Catholic		0 0 3 9 3 4 0 0		September 25, 2019	
4. Issue Frequency		5. Number of Issues Published Annually		6. Annual Subscription Price	
Weekly except for the following weeks skipped: Jan. 2, June 12 & 26, July 10 & 24, Aug. 7 & 21, Oct. 23		44		\$27 Inside Diocese \$30 Outside Diocese	
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®)				8. Contact Person	
622 Washington Street, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY 13669				Christine Ward	
9. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer)				Telephone (include area code)	
622 Washington Street, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY 13669				315-608-7556	
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)					
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None					
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months					
<input type="checkbox"/> Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)					
13. Publication Title		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below			
North Country Catholic		9-25-2019			
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months		No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date	
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		2427		2267	
b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		1807		1664	
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		2352		2192	
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		50		50	
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))		50		50	
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		2402		2242	
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))		25		25	
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		2427		2267	
i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)		97.92%		97.77%	
16. Electronic Copy Circulation					
a. Paid Electronic Copies		264		260	
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)		2616		2452	
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)		2666		2502	
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100)		98.12%		98.00%	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I certify that 80% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.					
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership					
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the <u>October 2, 2019</u> issue of this publication. <input type="checkbox"/> Publication not required.					
18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner					Date
Christine Ward					9/25/2019
I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).					

Sister Doris celebrates 60 years with Servites

By Sister Doris Durant
Order of the Servants of Mary

My earthly life began on the Durant Dairy Farm on Saturday, October 22, 1938. I was the oldest of the eight children of Guy and Lucy Durant. My dad was also born on the farm and accepted it from his parents, letting his brothers find their own way of life. I am sure dad was disappointed that I wasn't a

Boy, but after three years he and mom had twin boys. I think he discovered his girls were just as

helpful with the farm work as the boys. Mom was his best farmer of all!

I met the Sisters Servants of Mary when I entered first grade at Sacred Heart School in Massena. Sister Collette was a favorite person, so I immediately wanted to be just like her.

Our childhood was full of cows, books, cleaning stables, school and field work. Once in a while, we welcomed one of the sisters to the farm. In the summer, with a wagon full of neighbor kids, we would scoot off to Plum Brook for a swim in the water between chores. School, church and Grange functions made our time more interesting. Through it all, my desire to serve the Lord as a Sister Servant of Mary remained unbroken.

In August of 1957, at the age of 18, with a bag packed as recommended, I took the two-day plus train ride to Omaha, Nebraska. Living with the sisters at Our Lady of Sorrows Motherhouse, the

work, prayer, college and some daily recreation proved the biggest change of my life. Sister Margarita in 6th grade had already taught me to pray personally to our loving God. Spiritual and scriptural classes from the sisters and Jesuit priests from Creighton University deepened my love of God and opened a new window of faith for me. Also, those first two years prepared me for the ministry of teaching.

In August 1958, 16 of us received the habit and a new religious name. I am St. Mary Carmela, of the

Sacred Heart. On August 16, 1959, I made first vows and within a week moved to my first mission, teaching 6th grade at Immaculate Conception School in Sioux City, Iowa. For the next 29 years, I taught in grades four through 12 in three states. After Vatican Council II in the 1970s, we were able to change back to our Baptismal name and wore a more climate agreeable, modified habit.

After continuing education, I changed to a parish ministry in 1988, followed by appointments as director of Planning for the Diocese of Salina, Kansas, assistant provincial of the Servants of Mary and a return to Parish Adult Faith Enrichment and ministry.

My eyesight began to fail, and I retired from formal ministry at the age of 75. In 2014, I moved from Kearney, Nebraska to Massena Sacred Heart Convent. I am now enjoying reconnecting with my

family, friends, Servite Associates, working with a spiritual enrichment group called Gospel joy, being with the delightful people of Northern New York, the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration online is required. Participants may preregister at www.virtus.org. Upcoming sessions:
Oct. 8 – 6 p.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**, Terri-ann Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, 618 Lake Rd, Chateaugay, NY 12920; terriannyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: Day: 518-651-2267, Night: 518-569-0612; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy at 315-393-2920

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters from readers of the North Country Catholic.

- Due to space limitations, we ask that the number of words be limited to 300.
- We cannot accept letters which support ideas which are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Send letters to North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY, 13669 or e-mail to news@northcountrycatholic.org
- Join the conversation!

Bishop's Public Schedule

Oct. 2 – Diocese of Ogdensburg Vocation Society Pilgrimage to Ottawa
Oct. 3 – 10 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Church in Ticonderoga followed by a visit to St. Mary's School
Oct. 4 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
5:30 p.m. – Admission to Candidacy for Ordination to the Diaconate at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg
7 p.m. – Deacon Candidate Class at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg
Oct. 5 – 10:30 a.m. – Memorial Mass for the Catholic Daughters of America Past Regents at St. Alexander's Church in Morristonville followed by a reception at the Jubilee Hall
4 p.m. – Mass at Our Lady of Victory Church in Plattsburgh
Oct. 6 – 9 a.m. – Mass at the Annex at the Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora
1:30 p.m. – Adoration/Rosary Rally at St. Mary's Cathedral
Oct. 8 – 11 a.m. – The Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by lunch
Oct. 9 – 11 a.m. – Priest Council Meeting at Holy Ghost Parish Center in Tupper Lake followed by lunch

Rest in Peace

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

Oct. 2 – Msgr. Joseph D. Creeden, 1944; Rev. Ambrose Raphael Hyland, 1954; Most Rev. James J. Navagh, 1965
Oct. 4 – Rev. George Drummond, 1839; Rev. Daniel F. O'Reilly, 1946; Rev. Thomas P. Fogarty, O.S.A., 1950
Oct. 5 – Rev. Victor Balcerak, O.F.M.Conv., 1960; Rev. Euren Beaucauge, O.M.I., 1984
Oct. 7 – Rev. Jean N. Laverlocher, O.M.I., 1884
Oct. 8 – Rev. Edward Letourneau, 1898

Environmental Stewardship

Sweat the right stuff

Henry Thoreau asks the question, "what is the use of a fine house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?"

"Home is where the heat is." Did you know that we Americans emit more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere by heating and cooling our homes than by any other single activity beside driving cars? All told, residential heating and cooling systems in the U.S. emit about 500 million tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere each year.

That's equivalent to the emissions of more than 100 mid-sized coal-fired plants, according to the findings of Union of Concerned Scientists.*

As the fall temperatures begin to drop and the trees lose their leaves, we may begin to think about keeping warm this winter.

Here is a fall tip for a good environmental steward: Consider doing an inspection of your home on a chilly, windy day to see if there are any leaky places in your homes that need to be plugged.

For a complete analysis of where you are losing energy and how to fix it, you may want to check with NYSERSA for an energy audit.

Whatever energy we save not only helps save money on our energy bills, but it is a concrete way to exercise our moral responsibility as Christians to our care for our Common Home.

As Thoreau notes, all our beautiful homes become less valuable if the planet becomes intolerable to live upon. The beautiful home that God has given for us to be stewards of belongs to everyone on the planet, and what a trust He has placed upon us to care for it!

Let us pray to St. Francis whose feast we celebrate this week, and ask his intercession to help us to do the right thing, "to sweat the right stuff!"*

*Information taken from: Cooler Smarter: Practical Steps for Low-Carbon Living

Sister Sharon Anne Dalton marks 50 years

By Sister Sharon Anne Dalton
Sister of St. Joseph

Sister Sharon is a native of Watertown, the daughter of the late John and Gertrude (Polly) Dalton, owners of Dalton's Religious Goods in the Arcade for many years.

She graduated from Immaculate Heart Academy and Watertown School of Commerce and entered

the Sisters of St. Joseph upon graduating from high school. Sister re-entered the Sisters of St. Joseph community in 1968 and received her bachelor's degree from Villa Marie College in Erie, Pennsylvania, and her master's degree in Education from Niagara University in Niagara Falls.

Sister Sharon's teaching career includes the fol-

lowing: St. Anthony's in Watertown, St. John the Evangelist in Morristown, St. Andrew's in Norwood, Sacred Heart in Watertown, St. James in Gouverneur, and St. Augustine's in Peru, where she served as both principal and first grade teacher for six years.

In 1986 Sister Sharon moved to Ticonderoga to become the principal of

St. Mary's School. This year marks the beginning of her 34th year in this position.

While serving as principal, Sister Sharon has served on the Watertown Catechetical Board and the Education Board of the Catholic Administrators Association of New York State.

With a total of 40 years as an elementary school

principal in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, her friends ask, "How did she do that?"

Her answer is "By the many graces God has given me and the people He has sent to help me along the way. God bless every one of you."

Sister celebrates 50 years as a Sister of St. Joseph this year.

Sister Constance reaches 50 years of music, ministry

By Sister Constance Marie
Sister of St. Joseph

Sister Constance Marie Sylver, daughter of the late Clarence and Marjorie Sylver, was born and raised in Carthage. She has four siblings, Stephen, Deborra, Alan and Susan. Sister attended Augustinian Academy and graduated from there in 1968.

Following her graduation, she entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in September 1968 and received the habit in June 1969. She professed her first vows in 1971 and her final vows in 1977.

Sister studied music at Immaculata College in Pennsylvania and at Ithaca College, where she received her master's Degree in music education. Sister has been actively engaged in music in the schools where she has taught in the parishes where she has served.

Sister Constance's initial ministry was teaching, and she taught in many schools throughout the diocese. She also taught at Wadhams Hall Seminary College. When the college closed, Sister became a pastoral associate in Lake Clear and then went on to be pastoral associate in Tupper Lake and Madrid, as well. Now, she is once again involved in teaching and does the Title I Reading Program for grades four through six at Immaculate Heart Elementary School. She is also the coordinator for religious education at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish in Watertown.

Sister has been actively involved in vocation ministry both in the Serra Club and as Formation director for her community. Sister Constance also served on the Council for Religious for a number of years.

Sister loves working with children and parishioners and looks forward to many more years of serving God's people in whatever capacity God intends for her.

Sister Ronald Marie Hax celebrates 50 years

By the Sisters of St. Joseph

Sister Ronald Marie was born Patricia Anne Hax, the daughter of the late Howard and Elizabeth Hax. The family lived in Redwood, New York, where she attended school and received the sacraments at St. Francis Xavier along with her sister, Linda (deceased) and brother, Ronald (now residing in Thomaston, Connecticut).

She graduated from Alexandria Central School, earned an associate's degree in business administration from SUNY Canton, a bachelor's degree in education from Villa Maria College, Erie, Pennsylvania, and a master's degree in Education from Niagara University.

She entered the Sisters of St. Joseph on Sept. 7, 1968, was received into the novitiate on June 20, 1969, and made her first profession on Aug. 22, 1971. Sister Ronald's final profession was made on Aug. 23, 1975 at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse in Watertown.

For some 42 years (from 1970-2012), Sister Ronald taught elementary grades in schools throughout the diocese of Ogdensburg. The assignments included Sacred Heart in Watertown, Bishop Smith Memorial in Malone, St. Augustine's in Peru, St. Agnes in Lake Placid, Augustinian Academy in Carthage, Holy Family in Watertown, and St. Joseph's in Massena.

In 1981, Sister Ronald moved to Gouverneur. Here she served as a teacher at St. James School until 2006 and as the school's principal from 1983 until 2008.

While serving as principal, Sister was a member of the National Catholic Education Association and the Catholic School Administration Association of New York State.

After 26 years as a principal, Sister Ronald retired from serving in this

capacity and left Gouverneur to join the teaching staff at St. Mary's School in Ticonderoga, working there for the next four years. In 2012 Sister Ronald returned to the Motherhouse to become part of the Prayer Apostolate.

Upon Sister Ronald's retirement she stated "I will always be grateful to God for the many blessings I have received." Her favorite quote is "let the little children come to me."

Sister Ronald's first love is her community of Sisters of St. Joseph and her second love was teaching first

grade for over 30 years. This year she celebrates her 50th Jubilee as a Sister of St. Joseph.



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Sister Rosie Soosairaj marks 25 years of healing mission

By **Sister Rosie Soosairaj**
Sister of the Cross

"In everything God work for the good of those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8: 28)

As I look back at those years of becoming a religious and religious life in community, ministry in India and in USA, I am ever so grateful for the 25 years of religious life and for what brought me to this point in my life.

I was born and raised in India by a loving mother and father. However, after 12 years of being barren, my mother finally gave birth to me. In India, to be barren is a disgrace, but my mother prayed to our Blessed Mother for a child with the firm faith and trust, and she promised the Blessed Mother she would dedicate her first child to God if she was blessed with a child. Blessed Mother heeded her intercession and blessed her with two children. Three years after my birth, my brother was born. My younger brother and I were raised with a compassionate caring mother and a work-driven father, who was dedicated to providing for his family.

My parents stressed

having a Catholic education, an education that would teach us to develop social and intellectual skills, as well as interactive and good leadership skills. Therefore, my formative years in Catholic school fostered in me a desire to give to God a religious life of service by entering a religious community. As a young person, I still was not sure I was led to a life of religious dedication, but through prayer and God's grace, I finally decided to offer my life for God in his service, and I entered the religious order of Sisters of the Cross in 1991, taking my first vows on May 18, 1994.

While still in India, I was encouraged by my religious superiors to study nursing. I received a wide range of nursing opportunities within my local community. In nursing school, I experienced numerous phases of medicine, which broadened by medical knowledge and gave me a strong desire to serve God's people in their most painful and difficult times.

My nursing experience and my involvement with patients prompted me to serve as a missionary in the United States. Our religious order accepted the

request from the Diocese of Syracuse to serve the parishes in Norwich, New York. Our first mission in the U.S. began amidst the loving and caring people of Norwich. Four sisters were involved in our first mission, each in their own assigned position.

I worked at Chenango Memorial Hospital, a small 100 bed hospital, while I continued to work toward a Bachelor of Science Program at State University of New York, Utica. My next professional placement was in Watertown. There, I worked at Samaritan Medical Center in the emergency room. This emergency room experience just increased my motivation to participate in the nurse practitioner program.

I am ever so grateful to God for this opportunity in serving people who are suffering from physical illness as well as spiritual illness. I came from a small town in India and into a very different culture in the U.S., but I was able to accomplish my dream of serving God, and in showing those who are unable to see what God holds for them.

My religious life has truly been enriched by God's people, who opened their hearts to me as I encountered them in my ministry. So, in turn, I will continue to dedicate my life to helping the discouraged and marginalized in their efforts to have a physical "sick free" life and find God.

I have my parents to thank for all they sacrificed so I can fulfill my mother's promise to our Blessed Mother.



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CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

U.S. Cardinal William Levada, former doctrinal head, dies at 83

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – U.S. Cardinal William J. Levada, former head of the Vatican's doctrinal congregation and retired archbishop of San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, died Sept. 26 in Rome. He was 83. When Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was elected Pope Benedict XVI in 2005, he named then-Archbishop Levada to replace him as head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican agency charged with protecting and promoting the church's teachings on faith and morals. It was the first time a U.S. prelate had headed the congregation, and Cardinal Levada served in that position until 2012. Before his Vatican appointment, he had served as archbishop of San Francisco since 1995; archbishop of Portland, Oregon, 1986-95, and an auxiliary bishop of Los Angeles, 1983-86. For decades, he was a frequent collaborator with the Vatican and with the future Pope Benedict. He was a doctrinal congregation staff member from 1976 to 1982 and was a bishop-member of the congregation beginning in 2000. In the 1980s, he worked with then-Cardinal Ratzinger as one of a small group of bishops appointed to write the "Catechism of the Catholic Church."

Catholic Charities to award \$1 million for anti-poverty efforts

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Catholic Charities USA has unveiled a \$1 million award program that officials hope will lead to innovative efforts to address poverty. Called the Innovation Challenge, the program will see three member agencies receiving identical \$333,333 awards for the "reduction, elimination and prevention of poverty. Innovation is the key word," explained Steve Bogus, who is Catholic Charities USA's vice president of social enterprise and workforce development. Dominican Sister Donna Markham, president and CEO, announced a yearlong competition Sept. 26 during the agency's annual gathering in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She invited diocesan member agencies to submit proposals for new programs to meet peoples' needs. The winners will be announced during the organization's annual gathering Oct. 28-30, 2020, in Cleveland. Awards will be given to three diocesan agencies based on the size of their operation. That way, Bogus told Catholic News Service, a small agency will not be competing with an agency in a much larger budget and staff.

Australian states to have priests report confessed abuse

SYDNEY (CNS) – The Australian states of Victoria and Tasmania have become the latest in the country to pass legislation criminalizing priests who fail to report the abuse of children disclosed during confession. The country's six states and two territories are all expected to have such laws in place in coming months. But some clerics, including Melbourne Archbishop Peter Comensoli, one of Australia's most senior and vocal bishops, have vowed to ignore the laws in an effort to uphold the seal of the confessional. Archbishop Comensoli told Australian public radio that he would urge anyone who confessed to child sexual abuse to tell police. But he added that he, personally, would not break the seal, preferring to go to jail. The laws broadly make it a crime if members of the clergy do report abuse or suspected abuse to police. Penalties for breaching the new laws range from fines to decades in prison, and the laws underscore the rollback of special concessions for the church in Australia following the country's landmark Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The laws have flowed from recommendations made by the Royal Commission, which ran from 2013 to 2017, when its findings were handed down along with 52 recommendations, many covering activities of the church.

Amazon synod may inform Canada, CCCB official says

CORNWALL, Ontario (CNS) – Canada's bishops will monitor discussion about ordaining married men at next month's Synod of Bishops for the Amazon, but the issue is not a priority in Canada, said Archbishop Richard Gagnon of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

"This hasn't really been a focused topic in Canada in that way," said the archbishop, vice president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Archbishop Gagnon told a news briefing Sept. 23 at the annual CCCB plenary that the Amazon region is similar to Canada's North in that both are sensitive ecological areas with vast resources and several distinct indigenous peoples. Like the Amazon, northern dioceses are made up of many remote communities in which people face threats to their way of life while coping with an acute shortages of priests.

The 45-page working document for the Oct. 6-27 synod proposes an examination of the possibility of priestly ordination for elders who are respected in the community, even if they are married. Pope Francis has said he opposes "optional celibacy" for priests, but wants to study ordination for married men in remote locations.

This suggestion has already stirred debate among some Catholics, who fear ordaining married men in any circumstance will lead to the eventual end of a celibate clergy.

Bishop Lionel Gendron of Saint-Jean-Longueuil, Quebec, president of the CCCB, was named Sept. 23 as a synod delegate by Pope Francis; he was unavailable to discuss the synod.

Archbishop Gagnon said Pope Francis, "being a good Jesuit, he raises certain topics and throws them out there, and then there's a lot of discussion about that on various levels."

The archbishop said the pope mentioned the issue of ordaining married men when Canada's Western bishops made their last ad limina visit to Rome in 2017. He also raised the issue of "the role of women in the church at every level."

"These are things we'll hear something about in the Synod on the Amazon for sure," he said. "I think the Amazon synod will have something to say to the church of Canada."

Several Catholic bishops from northern dioceses have raised the issue of ordaining married men over the years, most recently in June interviews with The Catholic Register, because of an acute

shortage of priests in far-flung communities.

None of the five bishops from northern dioceses raised the issue on the floor of the CCCB plenary. Instead, Archbishop Murray Chatlain of Keewatin-Le Pas requested the bishops in the rest of Canada loan northern dioceses more priests.

"It's a big ask," he said. "There are not extra priests lying around."

Many dioceses have been relying on missionary priests.

"It is a challenge," Archbishop Chatlain said, describing the difficulty of explaining to an African or an Asian priest what to expect when they land in a place like the Yukon.

He said sometimes God gives a "call within a call" to go North, and if the Lord is encouraging priests to go North, the bishops could help by putting the invitation out and allowing priests to go for a period of two years.

All five northern bishops spoke of dioceses encompassing huge territories, serving small Catholics populations that house many indigenous communities. Transportation is mainly by plane and the cost is high. Other transport modes such as snowmobile or driving on winter roads can be dangerous, with no gas stations or motels amid changeable weather conditions.

Bishop Jon Hansen of MacKenzie-Fort Smith said his diocese includes the entire Northwest Territories – more square miles than Texas, California and Wyoming combined – and part of Nunavut and serves 20,000 Catholics with six priests, three religious and many part-time lay pastoral workers. The diocese is looking forward to welcoming two new priests from Toronto, he said.

"It is a feeling of tremendous gratitude for the generosity I have witnessed to this point," Bishop Hansen said.

Living in the North is a constant struggle, said Bishop Robert Bourgon of the Hearst-Moosonee Diocese in northern Ontario. Medical services are virtually nonexistent, and food and other essentials are extra costly. He said the diocese has nine native peoples reservations that are not served.

"There is a tension in the communities I serve," Bishop Bourgon said. "The people generally feel the church is the heart and soul of the community. If they lose the church, they lose the soul of their community."

ADIRONDACK

RACHEL'S VINEYARD

Saranac Lake – A Rachel's Vineyard after-abortion healing retreat will be offered.

Date: Oct. 18 – Oct. 20

Place: Guggenheim Lodge

Features: Chaplain for the weekend is Father Mark Reilly. If you are suffering after abortion, you're not alone. Help and healing is available.

Contact: Confidential online registration form available at www.rcdony.org/prolife Please contact The Respect Life Office with questions 518-524-0774. Other retreat dates and locations available at www.rachelsvineyard.org

CLINTON

40 DAYS FOR LIFE

Plattsburgh – Calling all Christians across the Diocese to participate in this life saving event.

Date: Now – Nov. 3

Time: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Place: Planned Parenthood

Features: You're invited to join other Christians for 40 Days for Life – 40 days of prayer and fasting for an end to abortion. You're also invited to stand and peacefully pray during a 40-day vigil in the public right-of-way outside Planned Parenthood. Prayer Volunteers needed.

Contact: If you would like more information please contact: Nancy Belzile at 518-593-6024. www.40daysforlife.com/plattsburgh

AUTUMN DINNER

Plattsburgh – Our Lady of Victory parish will have a spaghetti dinner.

Date: Oct. 6

Time: 5 p.m.

Place: OLV Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$9; Seniors (60 and over), \$8; Children 12 and under, \$5; under 5, Free

Features: Ticket Raffle and Huge country store will also occur during dinner.

Contact: Call (518) 578-1068 (take outs or delivery 12-4).

HARVEST DINNER

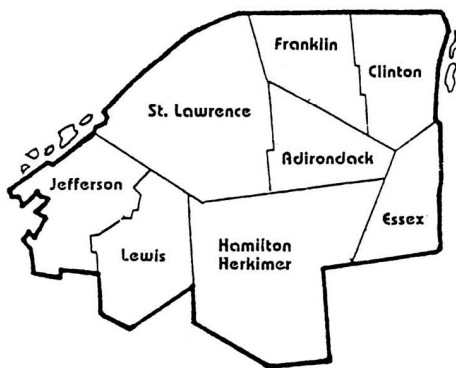
West Chazy – St. Joseph's Church will hold their 46th Annual all you can eat Harvest Dinner.

Date: Oct. 13

Time: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Place: Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$12; Children 5-12, \$5; under 5, Free; Take-outs, \$12



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.

Features: Turkey Dinner will be served. There will also be a Country Store, and a Benefit Drawing and much more.

Contact: For more information, call 518-493-4521.

HARVEST DINNER

Dannemora – St. Joseph's Church will have their annual Roast Turkey Harvest Dinner.

Date: Oct. 20

Time: 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Cost: Adults, \$10; Children, \$7; under 5, Free

Features: Come and enjoy live music and try your luck with a 50/50 raffle and Chinese Auction.

HARVEST DINNER

Chazy – Sacred Heart Parish to have their Roast Turkey Harvest Dinner.

Date: Oct. 20

Time: 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Place: Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$10; Children under 12, \$5; Under 5, Free; All Take-outs, \$10

Features: Visit our Sinners' Den Pantry for "sinfully" delicious goodies. Raffle with dozens of prizes. Please join us!! We are handicapped accessible.

Contact: For more information, 518-846-7650 or sacredheart@westelcom.com

FRANKLIN

HARVEST DINNER

Chateaugay – The CC of Burke and Chateaugay to have their 38th Annual Harvest Dinner.

Date: Oct. 6

Time: 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Place: St. Patrick's Church
Cost: Adults, \$12; Children 5-11, \$5; under 5 Free

Features: Dinner will be Roast Beef. Cash Prize raffles will be held, tickets are available at the office. There will also be a 50/50 raffle. There will also be a Country Store with Baked goods, homemade items and a Basket Raffle.

HARVEST DINNER

Brushton – St. Mary's to have their Annual Harvest Turkey Dinner.

Date: Oct. 6

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

Place: Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$10; Seniors, \$9; Children 6-12, \$6; under 5, Free; Take-outs, \$10

Contact: Take outs available. Call 518-529-6580 if you wish to place an order.

JEFFERSON

SPAGHETTI DINNER

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

Date: Oct. 5

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$7; Seniors, \$6; under 12, \$5; 5 and under, Free

Contact: For more information call 315-629-4678

CRAFT FAIR

Carthage – Augustinian Academy to have a Craft Fair.

Date: Oct. 5

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

Place: School Gym

Features: Handmade Crafts, gifts, themed basket raffle, food & bake sale. Door prizes with admission.

ROSARY CRUSADE

Watertown – The 5th Annual Citywide Family Rosary Crusade to be held.

Date: Oct. 7

Time: 5:15 p.m. Mass with Rosary to follow with all 4 mysteries

Place: Holy Family Church

Features: Sponsored by the Watertown Curia Legion of Mary and the theme will be "Mary's Immaculate Heart will Conquer."

SPEAKER

Watertown – National Author and Speaker, Chris Padgett to speak.

Date: Oct. 10

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 8

Place: St. Anthony's Church

Features: Chris has spoken at Steubenville and been seen on EWTN. His topic will be "I'm not o.k., you're not o.k., but it's o.k." He is dynamic, entertaining and very relevant. This is a great opportunity for the whole family.

ROAST PORK DINNER

Evans Mills – Roast Pork dinner to be held to benefit St. Mary's Church.

Date: Oct. 12

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$10; Seniors and children to age 12, \$8; under 5, Free

Contact: For more information call 315-629-4678.

ROSARY RALLY

Watertown – Rosary Rally to be held.

Date: Oct. 12

Time: Noon

Place: Fatima Shrine on the lawn of St. Patrick's

Features: Come join in prayer to make amends for the sins of abortion and euthanasia, and the devastating scourge of drug addiction.

BLOOD DRIVE

Watertown – The St. Anthony's and St. Patrick's Parish Nurse Ministry to have a Blood Drive.

Date: Oct. 14

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 6:30

Place: St. Anthony's Old School Gym

Contact: 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) Visit redcrossblood.org or download the Blood Donor App to schedule your appointment.

LEWIS

TURKEY DINNER

Copenhagen – St. Mary's to have their Annual Turkey Dinner.

Date: Oct. 3

Time: 4:30 p.m.

Place: Copenhagen Fire Hall

Cost: Adults, 9; Children 6 to 12, \$4.50; 5 and under, Free, Take-outs, \$9

Features: Bazaar & Bake Sale, Raffle Items & 50/50 Raffle

ROSARY RALLY

Turin – Rosary Rally to be held.

Date: Oct. 12

Time: Noon

Place: Spirit Walk's Fatima Garden, West Main Street

Features: Praying the Rosary for peace and personal intentions, song, private time for walking/meditation, outdoor Stations of the Cross, new mediation chapel will be open for viewing/use. Light refreshments provided. **Contact:** 315-272-6168

POLISH FESTIVAL

Houseville – Save the date for St. Hedwig's Polish Festival

Date: Oct. 13

Time: Noon/after the 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Features: The festivities include: The serving of a tasty Polish platter, bake sale items, Polish hot dogs, ice cream sundaes, theme basket raffles, and a 50/50 raffle. Take outs are available. Program to benefit church programs, repairs and restorations.

Contact: 315-348-8735, or 315-348-6260.

ST. LAWRENCE

GUN AND KNIFE SHOW

Brasher Falls – Knights of Columbus Council 2176 to have a Gun and Knife Show.

Schedule: Oct. 5, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Oct. 6, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Place: K of C Hall

Cost: \$3 over 12

Features: Concession stand open all day. Breakfast will be served from 8 a.m. to 11

Contact: For more information call Mike Hoag at 315-389-4318 or Phil Davis 315-389-4627

DIOCESAN EVENTS

LIFECHAIN

Lifechain Sunday to be held.

Date: Oct. 6

Schedule: Massena - Main Street at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

AT THE MOVIES

ABOMINABLE

NEW YORK (CNS) – "Adorable" has a new synonym: "Abominable" (DreamWorks), a charming animated film which transforms the dreaded Yeti monster – the legendary abominable snowman – into a lovable furball.

This family-friendly adventure set in China and the Himalayas features eye-popping animation, roller-coaster action (nothing too perilous for the little ones) and good humor. Folded in are worthy lessons on the importance of family, friendship, and helping others in need, mythological creatures notwithstanding.

Yi (voice of Chloe Bennet), a resourceful teenager, lives with her mother (voice of Michelle Wong) and grandmother Nai Nai (voice of Tsai Chin) in a small apartment in Shanghai. She's mourning the death of her beloved father, who taught her to



CNS PHOTO/UNIVERSAL

Animated characters Peng, voiced by Albert Tsai, Everest, Yi, voiced by Chloe Bennet, and Jin, voiced by Tenzing Norgay Trainor, appear in the movie "Abominable."

play the violin and promised to take her on a road trip across China.

Her makeshift retreat on the roof of her building is turned upside down with the arrival of the Yeti, whom Yi nicknames "Everest." He has escaped from

a research lab after being captured by Burnish (voice of Eddie Izzard), an explorer with dreams of wealth and glory, and his wicked zoologist Dr. Zara (voice of Sarah Paulson).

Yi takes pity on Everest (who grunts and groans

but does not speak) and is determined to see him safely home to the Himalayas. And so she embarks on an epic adventure with two friends in tow, Jin (voice of Tenzing Norgay Trainor) and Peng (voice of

Albert Tsai), and the badies in close pursuit.

Directors Todd Wilderman and Jill Culton, using Culton's script, serve up an entertaining if predictable variation on "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial," enhanced by Everest's magical powers which intensify as his namesake peg comes into view.

Faced with multiple challenges, Yi recalls her grandmother's wisdom, based on the colorful koi fish, a symbol of perseverance. "Be like koi – keep swimming," she says. "When things get really tough, they never give up."

The film contains non-perilous action sequences. The Catholic News Service classification is A-1 – general patronage. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG – parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Route 37; 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 - Charles Shearer 315-769-0898 ; Plattsburgh - Smithfield Blvd at Route 3 2 p.m. to 3:30 - Nancy Belzile 518-593-6024; Potsdam - Market Street at Main Street 2 p.m. to 3 - Conner Cummings 315-783-5477; Saranac Lake - Bandshell Park at River St. 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 - The Miners 518-524-0774; Schroon Lake - Route 9 and Main at Fairfield Ave. 2 p.m. to 3 - Dorothy Bean 518-834-7958

Contact: For more information visit www.lifechain.net or call the contacts listed above.

FAMILY GUGGENHEIM

Saranac Lake – Registration is open for Family Guggenheim 2019.

Date: Session 3: Oct. 11-13

Features: Come pray and play with other faithful families, enjoy the beau-

tiful mountains and lake, beach time, engaging workshops, and liturgies. Families of all sizes and ages are welcome!

Contact: For information contact Deacon Henry and Dayna Leader, Family Guggenheim Directors deleader@rcdony.org 315-323-0827 visit <https://www.rcdony.org/family-life/family-guggenheim.html>

CELEBRATE CHRIST

Lake Placid – Celebrate Christ event to be held.

Date: Oct. 19

Place: Crowne Plaza

Features: This event is for those involved in parish ministry. The presenter, Kevin Dowd, will speak about *A Spirituality of Imperfection* and the *Eucharist, Source and Center of our Lives*.

Contact: Register at www.rcdony.org/celebrate

MISSION DISCUSSION

MASSENA – A panel discussion, "Called to Mission: Two Sisters Share Their Stories" to be held.

Date: Oct. 24

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Trinity Catholic School, Massena

Features: As part of Extraordinary Missionary Month, Sister Debbie Blow and Sister Cindy Sullivan will discuss their mission work in Nicaragua and Ecuador.

Contact: For more information or to RSVP, contact Molly Ryan at mryan@rcdony.org or 315-393-2920, ext. 1361

YOUTH MINISTER GATHERING

Tupper Lake – Youth Minister Annual Gathering to be held.

Date: Nov. 9

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Place: Holy Ghost Parish Center

Features: The day is centered around an open discussion on the current state and future of Youth Ministry in the Diocese. Lunch will be included.

Contact: Please RSVP to Tom Semeraro, tsemeraro@rcdony.org or 315-393-2920 ext. 1415

CURSILLO EVENTS

Ogdensburg - North Country Cursillo event to be held.

Schedule: Men, Nov. 21-24; Women Dec. 12-15

Place: Wadhams Hall

Features: A Cursillo Weekend is an encounter with Christ, others and self. Cursillo means "short course" and consists of talks given by priests and lay persons with participation in small group discussions. Weekend participants also share the Eucharist, sing, pray and fellowship together.



SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

God is still in control of our destiny

A common topic of conversation these days is the inability or the unwillingness of world leaders to do much about the violence that flows from ethnic and religious hatreds. As a result, we are experiencing general frustration and helplessness. We end up blaming everyone in sight, and, of course, even God becomes the target.

In this Sunday's first reading, the prophet Habakkuk lashes out at a God who seems to be deaf. "How long, O Lord? I cry for help, but you do not listen!"

The prophet is angry as he watches the steady growth of the Babylonian Empire, which threatens to swallow up Israel.

After listening for a while to this outburst, God answers Habakkuk. He tells the prophet that His divine plan is all mapped out in His mind. "The vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint."

He says, in effect, just be patient, don't be so rash, and stir up your faith in Me.

Perhaps the following true story will help us all trust that God's Providence can bring good out of the present evils in our lives.

A man from Norfolk, Virginia, called a local radio station to share this on Sept. 11, 2003. His Name was Robert Matthews.

These are his words:

A few weeks before September 11th, my wife and I found out we were going to have our first child. She planned a trip out to California to visit her sister. On our way

to the airport, we prayed that God would grant my wife a safe trip and be with her.

Shortly after I said 'amen,' we both heard a loud pop and the car shook violently. We had blown out a tire.

I replaced the tire as quickly as I could, but we still missed her flight. Both very upset, we drove home.

I received a call from my father who was retired NYFD. He asked what my wife's flight number was, but I explained that we missed the flight.

My father informed me that her flight was the one that crashed into the southern tower. I was too shocked to speak.

My father also had more news for me. He was going to help.

He said, "this is not something I can't just sit by for. I have to do something."



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

October 6

27th Sunday of Ordinary Time

READINGS

Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4

2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14

Luke 17:5-10

I was concerned for his safety, of course, but more because he had never given his life to Christ. After a brief debate, I knew his mind was made up.

Before he got off the phone, he said, "take good care of my grandchild." Those were the last words I ever heard my father say. He died while helping in the rescue effort.

My joy that my prayer of safety for my wife had been answered quickly became anger. I was angry at God, at my father, and at myself. I had gone for nearly two years blaming God for taking my father away.

My son would never know his grandfather, my father had never accepted Christ, and I never got to say goodbye.

Then something happened.

About two months ago, I was sitting at home with my wife and my son, when there was a knock on the door. I looked at my wife, but I could tell she wasn't expecting anyone.

I opened the door to a couple with a small child. The man looked at me and asked if my father's name was Jake Matthews. I told him it was.

He quickly grabbed my hand and said, "I never got the chance to meet your father, but it is an honor to meet his son."

He explained to me that his wife had worked in the World Trade Center and had been caught inside after the attack. She was pregnant and had been caught under debris.

He then explained that my father had been the one to find his wife and free her.

My eyes welled up with tears as I thought of my father giving his life for people like this.

He then said, "there is something else you need to know."

His wife then told me that as my father worked to free her she talked to him and led him to Christ.

I began sobbing at the news.

Now I know that when I get to Heaven, my father will be standing beside Jesus to welcome me, and that this family would be able to thank him themselves.

When their baby boy was born, they named him Jacob Matthew in honor of the man who gave his life so that mother and baby could live.

This story should help us to realize two things: First that God is always in control.

We may not see the reason behind things, and we may never know this side of Heaven, but God is always in control.

Second is that though it has been several years since the attacks, we should never let it become a mere tragic memory

In today's Gospel, Jesus

is even more demanding of his followers than His Father was with Habakkuk.

When his disciples beg of Him, "increase our faith," He emphasizes first their need for humility.

He shows them what He means by comparing them to servants.

"When you have done all that is commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done only what we were supposed to do.'"

Now that takes humility! As for their need of faith, he tells them real faith is so powerful, a man of faith could demand of a tough, stubborn mulberry bush, "be transported into the sea, and be planted there," and it would happen!

It's that kind of faith St. Paul was trying to fan into a flame in his faithful disciple, Timothy, in today's second reading.

Read it carefully. It's great advice for us, too. In fact, read all three of the Scriptures again after today's Mass.

When we complain to God in our pain and misery, He's urging us to greater patience, humility and faith.

We all need to pray more – to get down on our knees and pray our Rosary, especially during this Month of the Rosary.

Oct. 7 is the Feast of the Most Holy Rosary. Let's make sure we say a Rosary today for Peace in the world.

Let's pray it every day in October. And let's give God credit for having a plan that will be fulfilled in good time.

It will not disappoint. God is still in control of our destiny.

Visit our website

www.northcountrycatholic.org

- Read local stories and commentaries
- Search archived papers
- View diocesan events and much more

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

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

Extraordinary Missionary Month: Pray for Jubilarians

The time has come once again when we honor those Religious celebrating a Jubilee. Congratulations on this wonderful and blessed occasion. Thank you for your support. You are in our prayers.

The Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg and the Missionary Projects of the Diocese of Ogdensburg sends congratulations to our jubilarians!

Sister Rosie Soosairaj, SCC (25 years)
Sister Sharon Anne Dalton, SSJ (50 years)
Sister Ronald Marie Hax, SSJ (50 years)
Sister Constance Sylver, SSJ (50 years)
Sister Doris Durant, OSM (60 years)
Sister Mary Anne Croitz, SSJ (60 years)
Sister Mary Rita Kempney, SSJ (60 years)
Sister Mary Camillus O'Keefe, RSM (60 years)
Sister Stephanie Frenette, OP (60 years)
Sister James Marie Kelly, SSJ (65 years)
Sister Mary Christine Taylor, SSJ (70 years)
Sister Mary Audrey Hallahan, RSM (70 years)

To commemorate their jubilee, the Mission Office would like to offer this prayer for them during this most Holy Extraordinary Mission Month.

Prayer the Prayer for Extraordinary Mission Month
Heavenly Father, when your only begotten Son Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He commissioned his followers to "go and make disciples of all nations." And you remind us that through our Baptism we are made sharers in the mission of the Church.

Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, to be courageous and zealous in bearing witness to the Gospel, so that the mission entrusted to the Church, which is still very far from completion, may find new and efficacious expressions that bring life and light to the world.

Help us make it possible for all peoples to experience the saving love and mercy of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever. Amen.

Please remember the Pontifical Mission Societies when preparing your Will.
www.rcdony.org/mission-office.

Speaker to offer humor, family lessons in Watertown

WATERTOWN – Nationally sought-after speaker Chris Padgett will be appearing at St. Anthony's in Watertown on Oct. 10 at 6:30 p.m. There is no charge to attend.

Padgett will share his experience as a convert, father of nine children and youth minister. Filled with humor and enthusiasm, Padgett's presentation is meant to appeal to all ages. The evening is appropriate for the entire family.

Padgett aims to empower, encourage and equip families and marriages. Catholic Family & Marriage Inc. reports that the "failure rate of Catholic marriages is the greatest vocation crisis of our time



Chris Padgett

and that marriage has decreased by 64% since 1969."

Padgett and his wife, Linda, are defying those odds and are inviting others to join them.

Padgett acknowledges

that "marriage and family life is messy," but he is quick to offer hope. He uses comedy, honesty and optimism to make his presentation energetic and engaging.

Padgett, who is also a musician, has spoken around the country. He has appeared on EWTN and has been a guest on Life on the Rock, The Journey Home and EWTN live. He has written several books including, *I'm Not O.K. You're Not O.K., but It's O.K.*; *Spirituality That You Can live With*; and *Not Ready for Marriage*; and *Not Ready for Sex: One Couple's Return to Chastity*.

Learn more about Padgett's ministry at chrispadgett.com.

OBITUARIES

Alex Bay – Robert George Shepard, 80; Mass of Christian Burial at St. Cyril's Church.

Sept. 26, 2019 at All Saints Church.

Brasher Falls – Sharon A. (Derouchie) Gauthier, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 25, 2019 at St. Patrick's Church.

Ogdensburg – Ethel Ruth Flynn, 82; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 21, 2019 at St. Mary's Cathedral.

Brasher Falls – Douglas W. Russell, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 27, 2019 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Doris E. (Dashnaw) Kelly, 100; Funeral Services Oct. 12, 2019 at Frary Funeral Home; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery

Clayton – Donald R. Bennett, 84; Funeral Services Sept. 27, 2019 at Cummings Funeral Home; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Peru – Dalton R. Criss, 18; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 5, 2019 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in God's Acre Cemetery.

Gouverneur – Roger Leon Rice, 78; Funeral Services Sept. 26, 2019 at the French Funeral Home; burial in New St. James Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Louis J. Diamond, 99; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 28, 2019 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Lowville – Maurice L. Murphy, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 28, 2019 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Lowville Rural Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Peggy (Ward) Murphy, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 21, 2019 at Our Lady of Victory Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Mineville – Jeanie "Gigi" Leona Trombley, 74; Mass of Christian Burial

Plattsburgh – Sheila Mulcahy Wylie, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 27, 2019 at St. John's Church.

Rouses Point – Patrick William McGoldrick, 58; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 30, 2019 at St. Patrick's; burial in parish cemetery.

Saranac Lake – Janice Lynn (Clark) Branch, 56; Funeral Services Sept. 26, 2019 at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home.

Theresa – Geraldine M. (Villeneuve) Coffin, 90; Funeral Services Sept. 28, 2019 at Frederick Bros. Funeral Home.

Watertown – Sandra (Shorkey) Kirkby Hathaway, 77; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 28, 2019 at Holy Family Church; burial in Evans Mills Cemetery.

West Chazy – Ann (Dragoon) Duffina, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 24, 2019 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in Whispering Maples Memorial Gardens, Plattsburgh.

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'Twinning' effort continues to aid Syrian diocese

Editor's note: Pope Francis has declared October Extraordinary Missionary Month. The theme of the celebration is "Baptized and Sent." As part of the Extraordinary Missionary Month, the North Country Catholic will be featuring stories of missionary efforts originating in our diocese throughout the month. The following is part of that series.

By Darcy Fargo
Editor



Since 2017, the Diocese of Ogdensburg has been working with the Diocese of Latakia to aid those in need and to grow in faith and knowledge as part of its "Solidarity in Faith" effort.

At the Chrism Mass that year, Bishop Terry R. LaValley announced the "twinning" arrangement with the diocese, located in war-torn Syria.

"Bishop LaValley had attended the (United States Conference of Catholic) Bishop's meeting, and he heard about the situation faced in Syria and the Middle East," said Father Steven M. Murray, pastor of St. André Besette Parish in Malone and chair of the Solidarity in Faith advisory committee. "He wanted to help."

With some help from Bishop Gregory J. Mansour, a Maronite bishop in Brooklyn, Bishop LaValley made contact with Bishop Antoine Chbeir, his counterpart in Latakia, Syria.

From Bishop Chbeir, the Diocese of Ogdensburg has learned of the plight of the Syrian people he serves.

"People tend to be aware of the refugee crisis in Europe that's resulted from Syrians fleeing Syria," said Father Murray. "But there's also a refugee crisis in

Syria. People have fled the areas where there's extensive conflict to the areas where there's less conflict."

Father Murray noted that Bishop Chbeir resides in Tartus, a city on the Mediterranean coast. Tartus has been relatively safe despite the conflict that has wreaked havoc in much of the country.

"Bishop Chbeir and his diocese have a lot of internal refugees," Father Murray said. "People are showing up in his area in nothing but their pajamas, having fled their homes in the night with nothing but the clothes on their backs. They have nothing – no housing, nothing to cook with, no clothes."

Father Murray says the Diocese of Latakia works to assist the refugees both with immediate needs and long-term needs.

"They are helping with both material needs – food, clothing, housing – and conducting education programs for youth and adults, psychological rehabilitation programs to help the displaced, especially children, and other programs to help meet their needs," he said.

The Diocese of Latakia also has programs in place to help with medical care, heating and spiritual

enrichment.

"It's also about helping people not lose their faith," Father Murray said. "Bishop and his people care for whoever needs to be cared for, whether it be Muslims or Christians. Bishop Chbeir has explained that there's a difference between Islamists and Muslims. Islamists are the extremists, the terrorists. They don't represent the Muslims in the nation."

Bishop Chbeir has recounted to Father Murray a story of Muslim men serving at Masses in the diocese.

"Someone will point out that their Muslim, but they are very reverent," Father Murray said. "They know they can't receive Communion, so they cross their arms and bow their heads. Bishop Chbeir says their fine young men who have a lot of respect for the Christians."

However, to help the refugees and the people of the Diocese of Latakia, it takes extensive resources, Father Murray noted.

"There are lots of different Eastern rites in Syria, and there may be six bishops in one city," he said. "They all work together and cooperate. They firmly believe Christians have to maintain a pres-



NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC FILE PHOTO

Bishop Antoine Chbeir, bishop of the Diocese of Latakia, Syria, receives gifts from students at Seton Catholic in Plattsburgh during a 2017 visit to the Diocese of Ogdensburg. The visit was part of the twinning relationship between the two dioceses.

ence in Syria and the Middle East. If not, who would proclaim the Gospel? While they can't openly proselytize, they can proclaim the Gospel through their way of living and helping. Still, they're working with limited resources."

Providing resources is one of the ways our diocese supports the Diocese of Latakia, Father Murray said.

"We can help with financial support," he said. "Unfortunately, we can't send items. Bishop Chbeir is only able to leave the country and return freely because he is Lebanese and has a Lebanese passport, but he can't bring items back with him from Lebanon into Syria."

To donate, checks should be made out to the Diocese of Ogdensburg with "Solidarity in Faith" written in the memo section.

The faithful of our diocese can also help by praying for the Diocese of Latakia, Bishop Chbeir and the people of the diocese.

"They need our prayers," Father Murray

said. "We need to see ourselves as a universal church. If any part of the Body of Christ is suffering, we're all suffering. Our brothers and sisters in Syria are suffering."

Father Murray also noted that Bishop Chbeir, who visited our diocese in December 2017, plans to visit again to tour our diocese and discuss the plight of the Syrian people and Syrian Christians.

"Last time he was here, he said it was a very good trip for him," Father Murray said. "He said, 'people from here in northern New York are talking to me with tears in their eyes saying they're praying for us.' It was very heartening to him. He said, 'I know I have support.'"

Father Murray said the partnership with Latakia has inspired him, as well.

"The Syrian people have faith in the face of adversity," he said. "I think we, as Catholics, often take the practice of our faith for granted. They practice their faith in a very difficult situation. Their courage ought to be something we can emulate."