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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 74, Number 28

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

DEC. 11, 2019

## St. Mary's School to close

CANTON – On Dec. 6, the families of St. Mary's School learned the school would close at the end of the 2019-20 school year.

The closure was unanimously recommended by the St. Mary's Parish Council, Education Council and Finance Council.

The recommendation was relayed by Father Bryan D. Stitt, pastor of St. Mary's Parish, to Bishop Terry R. LaValley, who accepted the recommendation.

The faculty learned of the decision on Dec. 5.

FULL STORY, PAGE 12

## THE REASON FOR THE SEASON



Religious Education students from St. Mary's in Clayton braved the cold on Dec. 7 to stage a living nativity. The event was organized by Doreen Garret and was well received by those traveling through the town, who greeted the youth with honks and waves.

## HONORING MOTHER CABRINI



St. Patrick's Church in Peasleeveville, a small hamlet in the Clinton County Town of Peru, is the home of a shrine honoring Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini. Faithful gathered there on Mother Cabrini's feast day to celebrate the first U.S. citizen to be canonized.

FULL STORY, PAGE 5

## Pope: Rise of populism due to lack of dialogue

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Ignoring the reality lived by men and women today has caused a resurgence of old ideologies, such as populism, that inevitably do more harm than good, Pope Francis said.

Speaking off-the-cuff with staff and members of the Italian Jesuit magazine, "Aggiornamenti Sociali" ("Social Updates") Dec. 6, the pope said that prejudices, certain "schools of thought and positions taken do so much harm" in the world.

"Today for example in Europe, we are experienc-

ing the prejudice of populism, countries who close in on themselves and turn to ideologies," he said. "But not just new ideologies – there are a few – but to the old ones, the old ideologies that created the Second World War."

Founded in 1950, "Aggiornamenti Sociali" offers "information but above all formation," as well as "criteria and instruments to confront today's most debated issues and participate in social life in a conscious way," according to the Jesuit magazine's website.

The pope told the staff and writers he had prepared to read an eight-page speech, but he feared that "after the third page, there will be few left who will listen."

In his off-the-cuff remarks, the pope highlighted the importance of listening, saying it is the "fundamental attitude of every person who wants to do something for others."

"Listen to situations, listen to problems, openly, without prejudices," he said. "Because there is a way of listening that is

'Yes, yes, I understand, yes, yes,' and it reduces them, a reductionism to my categories. And this cannot be."

The resurgence of ideologies like populism, he explained, is a product of not listening because "it is a projection of what I want to be done, what I want to be thought, what I think should be."

"It is a complex that makes us substitute God the creator: we take the situations in our own hands and work," he continued. "Reality is what I want it to be; we place fil-

ters. But reality is another thing, reality is sovereign. Whether we like it or not, it is sovereign. And I must dialogue with reality."

Dialogue, he added, is an important step in confronting today's societal ills. Christians are not called "to impose paths of development or solutions to problems," but instead, to initiate "a dialogue with that reality starting from the values of the Gospel, from the things Jesus has taught us, without dogmatically imposing but with dialogue and discernment."

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

## A gift that leaves us speechless

For a while, we weren't sure if my son, Jake, who is on the autism spectrum, would ever talk. Now, we're not sure if he'll ever be quiet.

So, it made my day, possibly my year, when he opened his early Christmas present, tickets to see our beloved Pittsburgh Steelers play the Buffalo Bills, and was rendered speechless.

Jake inherited what I refer to as "the collector gene" from my husband. Since I live with two collectors, my house is full of stuff. So, when it comes to holidays

and birthdays, we've adopted the practice of giving what I call "experience gifts" as often as possible.

Darcy L.  
Fargo

When people ask what to get Jake for Christmas or birthdays, I typically respond, "the last thing we need is more stuff, but we can't have too many memories or good times."

We've received and gifted movie theater gift cards, theater tickets, sporting event tickets, theme park passes and other

similar items. In addition to providing us with a multi-

tude of fun experiences, this practice gives us time together.

Since my husband dislikes both football and cities, he's not joining us for this trip to Pittsburgh. Jake and I will have the eight-hour car ride there and back to talk football, sing loudly and badly with the car radio, and just enjoy spending time with each other, and that's before we even consider the time we'll get to spend together bashing around Pittsburgh before the Sunday evening game.

Our experience gifts aren't just gifts of fun, they're gifts of ourselves – our time, our

attention, our laughter and our joy.

This season, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior, we're celebrating the ultimate gift of self. We're celebrating that our Savior became man and eventually gave His life to give us salvation.

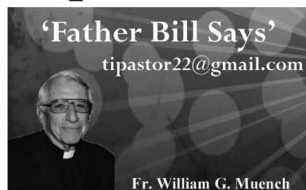
As we get caught up in the gift buying, cookie making and party attending, I pray we remember to give of ourselves. I pray we give gifts of time, both to our loved ones and those in need. And I pray we remember that we're celebrating the ultimate gift.

And I pray it leaves us speechless.

## John the Baptist's vocation was Advent

It is Advent. Let us take a moment to remember St. John the Baptist. John's vocation was Advent. He came to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus. Personally, St. John the Baptist is one of my favorite saints. In many ways, his vocation is the same as mine. As a priest, I am called to bring Jesus to others. John the Baptist is a true guide for me, both as a preacher, and as an evangelist. Actually, every disciple of Jesus is called to this vocation – to bring Jesus to others, to bring Jesus' love and peace to others. Such is our call as a Catholic. I know you know this story, but let us again remember John the Baptist.

John was called the Baptist because he used a baptism of water as a sign in his mission. It was truly a clever idea. Remember that this style of baptism of John was not the same as the Baptism of Jesus – our Sacrament of Baptism – our sacrament of dedication and new life with the Lord. John made it clear



Fr. William G. Muench

that he was not the Messiah and one greater than he would come after him who would baptize in the power of the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist preached to the people on the shores of the Jordan River. He urged the people to change their lives, to be better people, to make their world a better place and to prepare themselves for the coming of the Savior. As a sign of acceptance and a reminder of this experience, John invited them into the river and plunged them into the water as a baptism of faith and repentance. This was something to be remembered for a lifetime.

We are told in Matthew's Gospel that one day Jesus came to where John was speaking. Jesus got in line

with the others to be baptized by John. John was well aware of Jesus' identity. In fact, John wanted Jesus to baptize him. However, Jesus insists he wants to join with all those coming to John. It does become a supernatural moment. We are told that the Holy Spirit comes upon Jesus. A voice from Heaven is heard, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased." (Matt 3:17)

Later, in Matthew's Gospel, we learn that John the Baptist was placed in prison, as he had been criticizing the king. While in prison, John wants his disciples to discover Jesus as Messiah. So, he sends them to ask Jesus if he is the one who is to come. Jesus answers with words of the Old Testament prophets. He says this: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes

no offense at me." (Matt.11:4)

Jesus then goes on speaking to the people, saying: "This is the one about whom it is written 'Behold I am sending my messenger ahead of you, he will prepare your way before you.'" Jesus adds to this: "I say to you, among those born of woman there has been none greater than John the Baptist."

St. John's Gospel, chapter 3, tells us that before John's imprisonment, John was teaching his disciples about Jesus. "No one can receive anything except what has been given him from heaven. You yourselves can testify that I said that I am not the Messiah, but that I was sent before him. The one who has the bride is the bridegroom; the best man, who stands and listens to him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. So the joy of mine has been made complete. (John 3:22-29)

John the Baptist ends his teaching by saying, "He must increase, I must decrease."

# IHC students develop spirit of giving, service

By Patricia Minter-Powell  
Immaculate Heart Central

WATERTOWN – Immaculate Heart Central (IHC) School's mission statement ends with the imperative: "... form responsible citizens whose Christian values will transform the world." In reality, however, the future tense of its mission is very much being played out in the present, especially during this season of giving.

A quick glance, for example, at IHC's December community service calendar provides a special insight into the many ways the students at this small North Country Catholic school are actively transforming their world.

It also reflects the broader meaning of "community" as interpreted by its students and administrators.

Furthermore, it reflects the true spirit of the season as our students give the most precious of all gifts, the gift of oneself.

During this month alone our students will reach out to the marginalized, the impoverished, the lonely, the elderly, the hungry or the forgotten. Close to "home," they'll serve dinners of fellow-

ship to those seeking to stretch their food budget or perhaps just get a respite from an otherwise lonely evening at home. They'll dance and sing with the disabled, sign and illustrate hundreds of cards for shut-ins and elderly and help children from low-income families celebrate the joy of creating Christmas crafts.

IHC students will also provide a "night-out" for parents of young children, assist clients at our local Urban Mission, help tutor fellow students, clean our school's chapel and ready our halls for Advent.

Expanding their outreach they'll fill health kits for refugee children, participate in a dance marathon to raise funds for our "sister" school in Tanzania and begin the process of supporting our troops through participation in a local "Adopt-A-Platoon" program for deployed service men and women.

The students are also learning how much they can gain by serving and giving to others.

"Our annual Dance for Kitenga is so much fun," exclaimed Jack Charlebois, an eighth-grade student. "It's hard to

believe that we're dancing and still supporting a good cause!"

"I enjoy serving at Dollar Dinners because I meet new people and listen to their stories. It gives me a new perspective on things," added Melinda Rivera, an IHC senior.

"I like Kids Night Out events because it's an opportunity to learn how to look after someone other than yourself and you get to watch and allow kids to be kids," said Mallory Alice-Loving, an eleventh-grade student.

"I love doing Urban Mission's Food Sense Program, because it's so fun to help people check in before they get their food," said Sharon Moniello, an IHC senior. "It's so nice when you see the same face every time."

Margaret Mead got it right when she famously stated: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world."

Through their simple acts of kindness, the students of Immaculate Heart Central are getting it "right" each and every day while providing living testimony to the success of our school's mission and the ultimate power of the gift of self.



Immaculate Heart Central Junior High student Jack Charlebois catches his breath at last year's 'Kick Up Your Heel's 4: Kitenga Dance Marathon' in support of IHC's "adopted" girls' school in Tanzania.

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# Saint Frances Cabrini honored at local shrine

By Mary Beth Bracy  
Contributing writer

PEASLEEVILLE – On the feast day of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini on Nov. 13, faithful celebrated her patronage with a Mass offered by Father Alan D. Shnob, pastor of St. Augustine's in Peru, at her shrine in Peasleeville.

Father Shnob, who played a crucial role in the shrine's renovation, spoke about the parish's gratitude for Cabrini's continued favors and blessings.

Bonnie Snider attended the Mass and shared a powerful story of Cabrini's intercession. Snider explained that when her grandson Mason was one-and-a-half years old, he was diagnosed with leukemia. Pleading for Cabrini's assistance, Bonnie promised to visit her shrine weekly if her grandson was healed. Mason was cured and is now a 14-year-old athlete. Snider continues to travel to the shrine each week in thanksgiving.

Charles Normandin, a retired mason who helped repair the shrine, believes that he saw Cabrini there.

"I drove up to the shrine, there was a white flash, a puff, almost like you looked into a beam of light," he said. "I looked back and there was a woman there in the mist. I got out of my car and I approached the shrine. I looked at her and she



Father Alan D. Shnob, pastor of St. Augustine's Church in Peru, celebrates Mass for the Feast of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini at St. Patrick's Church in Peasleeville (West Peru), where a shrine is built in Mother Cabrini's honor.

turned. I said, 'It is a beautiful day up here,' and she said 'Yes, it 'tis.' She was looking at the work I had done, repairing the shrine. That was the year before (1995).

"I said, 'Do you know what body of water it is down there? It's Lake Champlain.' 'Oh,' she said, 'That's what they call it.' She walked off the shrine down to the side walk, she had only two steps to go down. I heard this clunk, clunk. I walked down the side walk with her and I stopped. She proceeded to keep walking on. She said, 'Have a nice day.' I said, 'Yes, you have a nice day.' And she continued on walking toward the Church. She told me 'If you don't want to see me vanish, look at me here. So, I turned and looked at the shrine.'"

Normandin said he is convinced the vision he saw was Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, also known as Mother Cabrini.

"I was thinking of the power of the Maker to have her come; that affected me more than anything after I knew who she was," he said. "The power of God Himself, to see it, to talk to her, it dumbfounded me, I was overwhelmed with it, kind of like a shock. It was her, definitely it was her."

Normandin described her long skirt, wooden shoes, ruffled blouse, and accent.

"It appeared to me to be a real person," he said. "It was as real as any person could be, like I'm looking at you. You could feel the power of God. I believe that she was looking at the shrine, but she didn't have to look, she already knew it."

Joyce Lucia-Kolb, a Peasleeville native, recounted the history of the shrine, located in the small Clinton County hamlet. She noted that St. Patrick's Parish, now an oratory, wanted to honor the

first American citizen to be canonized.

Father Harold P. McCabe, pastor of St. Patrick's in 1946, the year Mother Cabrini was canonized, was greatly devoted to the saint and wanted to begin a shrine to her. Parishioners worked for its construction and, as a result, thousands of people visited the shrine from as far away as Michigan. Numerous people of all faiths came by busloads from New York City and Canada.

"The parish wanted to build a shrine to her and one of the parishioner's volunteered," she said. "We were a parish of farmers... All of the families donated rocks from their farms. My parents' farm is directly across the road from the church."

Lucia-Kolb said the shrine and Mother Cabrini have had a significant impact on her life.

"The church and the shrine were our life," she said of her family. "We did the haying for the church land that had at one time been a part of our farm but had been donated to the church to prevent development. We cared for the flowers, candles, lawns, etc. Mother Cabrini has been my life since I was born."

Lucia-Kolb said she believes her family experienced a miracle she attributes to Mother Cabrini's intercession.

"When my son was a baby, he regularly had ear infections both inner and outer and often both at the same time," she said. "The doctor wanted to do surgery. (When he was) about a year and a half old I put the relic (of Cabrini) on his ears. He never had any more infections and his hearing was superior. I remember when I was

very young there was a pair of crutches left on the shrine. The caretaker said the person left them there and walked away."

Born in 1850, near Milan, Italy, Cabrini loved the Holy Eucharist from a young age. She longed to be a religious, but her health was too poor to join the teaching Sisters. Cabrini founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, desiring to travel to China, but the Pope told them to go to the United States instead. They left Italy in 1889 and arrived in New York City without a home.

Father Shnob noted that, although only five feet tall, Mother Cabrini was indomitable. She and the sisters in her community ministered to Italian immigrants and traveled the Americas and Europe founding schools, orphanages, and hospitals.

At the time of Cabrini's death in 1917, she had over 4,000 sisters and more than 50 houses, in addition to 67 institutions: hospitals, schools, and orphanages worldwide. Though afraid of water, Cabrini crossed the Atlantic 23 times. She is patroness of immigrants. Her incorrupt body is on display at St. Frances Xavier Cabrini Shrine in Manhattan.

Recently Mother Cabrini was in the news when the New York City public arts program decided to build statues of women in our state. When they held a poll to decide which statues to erect, Mother Cabrini received the most votes. Nevertheless, they decided not to include her.

Citizens spoke up, however, and Governor Andrew Cuomo announced that a statue of Cabrini will be sculpted.

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## AT THE MOVIES

## KNIVES OUT

NEWYORK (CNS) – As the days of 2019 dwindle down to a precious few, we're unlikely to see the year produce a more richly entertaining film than the splendid comic whodunit "Knives Out" (Lionsgate).

Though writer-director Rian Johnson's ensemble homage to Agatha Christie – and the big-screen adaptations of her work – is strictly for grown-ups, it provides a brainy and satisfying movie.

The case at hand concerns the death, in the wake of a family party on the night of his 85th birthday, of famous and wealthy crime novelist Harlan Thrombey (Christopher Plummer).

The police officers assigned to investigate, Lt. Elliott (LaKeith Stanfield) and Trooper Wagner (Noah Segan), insist Harlan killed himself.

But shrewd Southern detective Benoit Blanc (Daniel Craig), who has been hired by an anonymous client, has other ideas.

Benoit, whose Francophone – presumably Cajun – background is a tip of the hat to Christie's famous Belgian sleuth Hercule Poirot, seeks answers among the eccentric members of Harlan's conflict-ridden clan.

And, unsurprisingly, it turns out that virtually every one of them (played, among others, by

Chris Evans, Jamie Lee Curtis, Michael Shannon, Don Johnson and Toni Collette) had a reason for wanting the old man dead.

As he tries to navigate his way through this morass of competing motives, Benoit enlist the help of Harlan's caring and sensible Latina nurse, Marta (Ana de Armas). Marta makes an excellent witness and guide to events because she has an unusual medical condition: she cannot tell a lie without getting sick to her stomach.

Yet even Marta's role in the mystery is not what it initially appears.

Clever twists and turns, worthy of Christie herself, abundant humor and sly social commentary make Johnson's movie a dandy treat.

There is a hard edge to the proceedings, though, since so many of the figures on screen are grasping, entitled, selfish and perpetually quarrelsome.

Those qualities are, of course, being satirized. Yet at least some viewers may not care for the company of such ethically impoverished characters. There is also at least one important aspect of the story requiring mature

discernment – another good reason, along with thematic and vocabulary considerations, to steer kids elsewhere.

Still, in the end, good triumphs over evil and Johnson handles this final development just as deftly as he treats the rest of his material.

As a result, there's a particular relish to the wrap-up. Call it the sweetly moral cherry atop the flavorful cinematic sundae that is "Knives Out."

The film contains brief gory violence, a morally complex situation, drug use, sexual references,

about a dozen profanities, a few milder oaths, a couple of rough terms, frequent crude and crass language and an obscene gesture.

The Catholic News Service classification is A-III – adults.

The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 – parents strongly cautioned.

Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**Dec. 12** – Noon – Mass at St.

Mary's Cathedral

**Dec. 13** – 4:30 p.m. – St.

Lawrence Deanery Clergy Penance Service followed by dinner at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Dec. 14** – 4 p.m. – Mass at St.

Mary's Cathedral

**Dec. 15** – 8 a.m. – Mass at St.

Mary's Cathedral

2 p.m. – Advent Penance

Service at Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg

**Dec. 17** – 10:50 a.m. – Mass at St.

Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg

2:30 p.m. – Episcopal Council

Meeting in the Spratt Conference

Room followed by dinner at

Bishop's Residence

**Dec. 18** – Noon – Mass at St.

Mary's Cathedral

## Rest in Peace

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

**Dec. 11** – George Montreuil, 1914;

Rev. Edward Tetrault, 1952; Msgr.

George Henry Brisson, P.A., 1969

**Dec. 12** – Rev. Victor Dugas, 1843;

Msgr. Albert J. Farrell, 1967; Rev.

Julian P. O'Brien, 1988; Deacon

Floyd J. Barton, 1999

**Dec. 14** – Rev. P.M. O'Shea, O.S.A.,

1942, Rev. Paul Beyette, 2016

**Dec. 15** – Rev. Leon Pierre

Cochard, 1915; Deacon Joseph H.

Gilbert II, 2010

**Dec. 16** – Rev. J. F. McGowen,

O.S.A., 1935; Rev. Frederick Cum-

mings Horton, 1975

**Dec. 17** – Rev. John Orrin Senecal,

1980

## Letters to the Editor

**We welcome letters** from readers of the North Country Catholic.

- Due to space limitations, we ask that letters be limited to 300 words.

- 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](mailto:news@northcountrycatholic.org)

## 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](http://www.virtus.org).

Upcoming sessions:

**Dec. 14** – 9:30 a.m., St. Marguerite D'Youville Academy, Ogdensburg

## Environmental Stewardship

## What's on your list?

This week, we continue our reflections on some of our Christmas traditions and how they connect us with the heavens and earth. Another familiar tradition is the Advent wreath. It was originally adopted by Christians in the Middle Ages as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas. It combines the symbolism of wreaths, evergreens and candles. The addition of candles to the wreath provides us with another connection with the natural world – bees. Candles have always been an important part of our Catholic celebrations. The wax that fuels the light reminds us of warmth and comfort. They are not only an important part in our Advent and Christmas celebrations but are also an important part of the Easter celebration. In the Easter Vigil Exsultet, the work of bees is mentioned and praised in the prayer over the Easter Candle. Light, like honey, is a symbol of blessing and goodness.

Another custom of the Christmas season includes fruit. At the turn of the last century in the northern hemisphere, good children would receive their only orange of the year as a Christmas gift. Baskets of fruit are often given as gifts. As a Christmas symbol, fruit recalls the 12 Fruits of the Holy Spirit. These Fruits result from the activity of the Gifts of the Spirit in our lives. As we enjoy the fruits of this season, we may give thanks for these gifts of the earth and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

And what about all those Christmas cookies and breads of the season? These pastries are made with flour and remind us of the many uses of bread in the Scriptures. The Christmas cookies are often cut out in the shapes of stars, trees or gingerbread men.

As we continue to prepare for Christmas, what other customs do you find that join heavens and earth together in our celebration? What ways of celebrating this season can you find that will protect, heal and honor the gifts of creation?



## Share Christmas greetings with the priests of our diocese

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**Rev. Scott A. Belina**  
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**Rev. Peter M. Berg**  
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**Rev. John M. Demo**  
Holy Family Church  
129 Winthrop Street  
Watertown, NY 13601

**Msgr. Lawrence M. Deno**  
PO Box 459  
Chazy, NY 12921

**Rev. Raymond Diesbourg MSC**  
The RCC of Cape Vincent,  
Rosiere and Chaumont  
PO Box 288  
Cape Vincent, NY 13618

**Rev. John L. Downs**  
8828 State Highway 56  
Massena, NY 13662

**Msgr. Dennis J. Duprey V.F.**  
St. Peter's Church  
114 Cornelia Street  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

**Rev. Guy F. Edwards**  
PO Box 2010  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

**Rev. Joseph W. Elliott**  
LBSH  
32 S. Church Street Apt. 23  
Brasher Falls, NY 13613

**Rev. Alfred H. Fish**  
St. Ann's Church  
PO Box 288  
St. Regis Falls, NY 12980

**Rev. Francis J. Flynn**  
St. Elizabeth's Church  
PO Box 368  
Elizabethtown, NY 12932

**Rev. Vincent Freeh MSC**  
Missionaries of the Sacred Heart  
668 Thompson Street  
Watertown, NY 13601

**Rev. J. Michael Gaffney**  
The RCC of Brownville and  
Dexter  
PO Box 99  
Brownville, NY 13615

**Rev. Adrian Gallagher**  
St. Ann's Church  
24 Town Hall Road  
Moers Forks, NY 12959

**Rev. Garry B. Giroux**  
St. Patrick's Church  
PO Box 208  
Brasher Falls, NY 13613

**Rev. Joseph W. Giroux**  
St. Bernard's Church  
27 St. Bernard Street  
Saranac Lake, NY 12983

**Rev. L. William Gordon**  
PO Box 159  
Morrisonville, NY 12962

**Rev. Alex Guimpol**  
St. Bernard's Church  
27 St. Bernard Street  
Saranac Lake, NY 12983

**Rev. Rolland A. Hart**  
Memory Care at Allen Brook  
99 Allen Brook Lane  
Williston, VT 05495

**Rev. Albert J. Hauser V.F.**  
The CC of Moriah  
12 St. Patrick Place  
Port Henry, NY 12974

**Rev. Peter G. Helfrich**  
34 Milrace Drive  
Rochester, NY 14445

**Rev. Michael Jablonski**  
St. Andre Bessette Parish  
PO Box 547  
Malone, NY 12953

**Rev. Vicente F. Jazmines**  
St. Paul's Church  
210 LeRay Street  
Black River, NY 13612

**Rev. Daniel T. Keefe**  
Pine Harbour  
15 New Hampshire Street #320  
Plattsburgh, NY 12903

**Rev. Paul J. Kelly**  
180 Coreys Road  
Tupper Lake, NY 12986

**Rev. John P. Kennehan**  
55 County Route 50  
Brasher Falls, NY 13613

**Rev. Thomas E. Kornmeyer VF**  
The CC of Constable, Westville  
and Trout River  
PO Box 78  
Constable, NY 12926

**Rev. Steve Kovacevich**  
PO Box 1522  
Lake Placid, NY 12946

**Rev. Donald F. Kramberg**  
8040 Rowland Avenue B146  
Philadelphia, PA 19136

**Rev. Arthur J. LaBaff V.F.**  
St. Mary's Church  
521 James Street  
Clayton, NY 13624

**Rev. Alan J. Lamica**  
P.O. Box 38  
North Bangor, NY 12966

**Rev. Robert O. Lamitie**  
1836 Walden Pond Road  
Ft. Pierce, FL 34945

**Rev. Kris C. Lauzon**  
The CC of Holy Name &  
St. Matthew  
PO Box 719  
Au Sable Forks, NY 12912

**Rev. Clyde A. Lewis**  
St. Patrick's Church  
PO Box 217  
Rouses Point, NY 12979

**Rev. Christopher J. Looby**  
St. Anthony's Church  
850 Arsenal Street  
Watertown, NY 13601

## Share Christmas greetings with the priests of our diocese

**Rev. John J. Looby**  
PO Box 78  
Constable, NY 12926

**Rev. Shane M. Lynch**  
St. James Church  
164 East Main Street  
Gouverneur, NY 13642

**Rev. Donald J. Manfred**  
St. Stephen's Church  
PO Box 38  
Croghan, NY 13327

**Rev. Lawrence E. Marullo**  
St. Mary's Church  
PO Box 382  
Constableville, NY 13325

**Msgr. C. John McAvoy**  
51 Willow Way Apt. 19  
Saranac Lake, NY 12983

**Rev. Kevin D. McEwan**  
The RCC of St. John the Baptist  
7 Margaret Street  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

**Rev. J. Roger McGuinness**  
15 New Hampshire Rd Apt. 317  
Plattsburgh, NY 12903

**Rev. Bernard D. Menard**  
2679 State Route 11  
Mooers, NY 12958

**Rev. Gilbert B. Menard**  
104 Beas Way Apt. 118  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

**Rev. Raymond J. Moreau**  
St. Mary's Church  
1347 State Route 11  
Brushton, NY 12916

**Rev. Joseph A. Morgan VG**  
St. Mary's Cathedral  
415 Hamilton Street  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

**Rev. William G. Muench**  
PO Box 664  
Sackets Harbor, NY 13685

**Msgr. John R. Murphy**  
St. Bartholomew's Church  
PO Box 236  
Old Forge, NY 13420

**Rev. Steven M. Murray**  
St. Andre Besette Parish  
PO Box 547  
Malone, NY 12953

**Rev. Dominic Duc Nguyen**  
St. Patrick's Church  
PO Box 217  
Rouses Point, NY 12979

**Rev. Kevin J. O'Brien**  
St. Raphael's Church  
PO Box 377  
Heuvelton, NY 13654

**Rev. Patrick J. O'Reilly**  
425 Sue Ryder Apartments  
Kilminchy, Portlaoise, Ireland

**Rev. Jerome Pastores**  
Kateri Hall  
PO Box 429  
Hogansburg, NY 13655

**Rev. Terrence Patterson**  
18 Flow Drive  
Potsdam, NY 13676

**Rev. Eduardo C. Pesigan III**  
St. Peter's Church  
114 Cornelia Street  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

**Msgr. Leeward J. Poissant**  
16 Glen Drive Apt. 4  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

**Rev. Herman Pongantung MSC**  
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**Rev. Sony G. Pulickal V.F.**  
St. James Major Church, Lake Pleasant  
PO Box 214  
Speculator, NY 12164

**Rev. Patrick A. Ratigan**  
PO Box 436  
Hannawa Falls, NY 13647

**Rev. William G. Reamer**  
Our Lady of Victory Church  
4919 S. Catherine Street  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

**Rev. Mark R. Reilly VF**  
St. Peter's Parish  
PO Box 329  
Massena, NY 13662

**Rev. Donald A. Robinson**  
St. James Minor Church  
327 West Street  
Carthage, NY 13619

**Rev. Stephen Rocker**  
St. Patrick's Church  
PO Box 315  
Colton, NY 13625

**Rev. Joseph N. Sestito**  
100 Van Tassel Lane  
Rome, NY 13440

**Rev. James W. Seymour V.F.**  
St. Peter's Church  
5457 Shady Avenue  
Lowville, NY 13367

**Rev. Scott R. Seymour**  
The RCC of St. Alexander and St. Joseph  
PO Box 159  
Morrisonville, NY 12962

**Rev. Alan D. Shnob**  
St. Augustine's Church  
3035 Main Street  
Peru, NY 12972

**Rev. F. James Shurtleff**  
St. Mary's Cathedral  
415 Hamilton Street  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

**Msgr. Harry K. Snow**  
St. Joseph's Home  
950 Linden Street  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

**Rev. Bryan D. Stitt**  
St. Mary's Church  
68 Court Street  
Canton, NY 13617

**Rev. Richard S. Sturtz**  
St. Mary's Cathedral  
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Missionaries of the Sacred Heart  
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Watertown, NY 13601

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St. Edmund's Church  
5526 State Route 11  
Ellenburg Center, NY 12934

**Rev. Justin Thomas HGN**  
St. Mary's Cathedral  
415 Hamilton Street  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

**Rev. Howard J. Venette**  
St. Mary's Church  
22 Father Jogues Place  
Ticonderoga, NY 12883

**Rev. Raymond J. Wertman**  
2292 Costa Rican Drive Apt. 56  
Clearwater, FL 33763

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Watertown, NY 13601

**Rev. Leo A. Wiley**  
Church of the Holy Family  
129 Winthrop Street  
Watertown, NY 13601

**Rev. John R. Yonkovig V.F.**  
St. Agnes Church  
169 Hillcrest Avenue  
Lake Placid, NY 12946

  
**MERRY CHRISTMAS**



# Buffalo's bishop resigns, Albany bishop named admin

**BUFFALO, N.Y. (CNS)** – Buffalo Bishop Richard J. Malone told Catholics Dec. 4 he asked Pope Francis to allow him to retire early so the people of the diocese "will be better served" by a new bishop who is "perhaps better able" to bring about "reconciliation, healing and renewal" in addressing the abuse crisis.

In a three-page letter, he said that "despite the measurable progress we have achieved together," he made his decision "after much prayer and discernment." The "spiritual welfare" of the faithful will be better served by a new bishop.

Bishop Malone released his letter as Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, announced Pope Francis had accepted Bishop Malone's resignation and named Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger of Albany, New York, as Buffalo's apostolic administrator.

At 73, Bishop Malone is two years shy of the age at which bishops are required by canon law to turn in their resignation to the pope.

For more than a year, he has faced questions about how he has addressed the clergy sex abuse crisis, particularly a situation involving two priests' relationship with a seminarian that he has called "a very complex, convoluted matter."

Bishop Malone has headed the Diocese of Buffalo since 2012. Pope Benedict XVI named him the 14th bishop of Buffalo May 29, 2012, and he was installed in August of that year. Bishop Scharfenberger, 71, has headed the Albany Diocese since

2014. In his five and a half years in Albany, he has been a national leader in responding to the clergy abuse crisis.

"My family just expanded and we have 600,000 wonderful Catholics (in the Diocese of Buffalo.) It's a very wonderful Catholic diocese," Bishop Scharfenberger said in an interview with *The Evangelist*, Albany's diocesan newspaper. "I want to do a lot of listening and I want everybody to feel that they do have my ear. I don't want anyone to feel excluded."

"I am very well aware that there has been a lot of hurt and polarization and trust breaches," he added. "We only have one healer and that is Jesus, and we are going to turn everything into his hands and trust that he will guide the way."

Bishop Scharfenberger said he plans to visit the Diocese of Buffalo in western New York weekly. As for how long he could be in the dual role, he said: "I have no idea ... these things can take over a year. I know it will be a high priority to find the right successor."

In his letter, Bishop Malone referred to the apostolic visitation the Vatican had assigned Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of Brooklyn, New York, to conduct in October. When the visitation was announced, Bishop Malone welcomed it.

On Oct. 31, the Brooklyn Diocese announced completion of the visitation and said Bishop DiMarzio had submitted his report to the Congregation for Bishops. It has not been made public.

"Inevitably some will

surmise that my decision" is the result of this visitation, Bishop Malone wrote. "While I was made aware of the general conclusions of the report, which were a factor in my discernment, my decision to retire early was made freely and voluntarily" and reached "after honest reflection" and with "a deep and abiding commitment" to the best interests of the Church in western New York.

Bishop Malone did not share details of what the report contained in his letter.

"This has been a difficult period in the life of the church in Buffalo. Throughout this process, the lay faithful, religious and clergy were in my prayers," Bishop DiMarzio said in a Dec. 4 statement.

At the Vatican's direction, he said, the visitation was thorough, "conducted with urgency" and carried out with "the good of the people of the Diocese of Buffalo" being the foremost consideration. More than 80 people were interviewed over a period of several weeks "to gather information for this administrative review," he said.

"What I found are many deeply devoted Catholics who love their church. I pray this moment of suffering and pain will lead to a birth of new faith," he added, saying he is confident Buffalo Catholics "are in good hands" with Bishop Scharfenberger overseeing the diocese.

"I hope that now Catholics in Buffalo can begin the process of moving forward, healing and helping the diocese in all of its ministries," Bishop DiMarzio said.

## CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

### Religious freedom is a basic right, says lawyer for Little Sisters

**SALT LAKE CITY (CNS)** – As an attorney with Becket, a religious liberty law firm, Luke Goodrich is proud to be able to make a difference while earning a livelihood. He sees his work as a calling from God. It entails representing religious groups or individuals who fall afoul of the federal government simply by trying to follow the dictates of their conscience. Perhaps the most well-known of his clients are the Little Sisters of the Poor, who operate a number of homes for the elderly poor across the nation. The sisters continue to fight the Obama-era contraceptive mandate in the courts. "I'm very grateful and very thankful that my life's work lines up with what I see as a fundamental issue of justice in Scripture," he said. "It's a great joy because I do think religious freedom is a basic human right and a basic issue of biblical justice." Goodrich is a member of Misseo Dei Community, a nondenominational Protestant church in Salt Lake City. Originally from Florida, Goodrich has for the past seven years lived in Utah with his wife, Sarah, who grew up in Utah, and their seven children.

### USCCB president urges prayers for pope's 50 years as a priest

**WASHINGTON (CNS)** – The Catholic faithful across the United States are being invited to pray for Pope Francis as he celebrates 50 years as a priest. Los Angeles Archbishop Jose H. Gomez, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, has sent a letter to bishops across the country asking them to encourage parishioners to honor the jubilee during Advent with special prayers and Mass petitions. The letter included a prayer for the pope as well as two petitions that can be used at Mass or in praying the Liturgy of the Hours. The archbishop also invited the faithful to use any other appropriate prayer for the pope if they desire. Four days before Pope Francis celebrates his 83rd birthday Dec. 17, he will celebrate 50 years as a priest – a ministry he sees as being a shepherd who walks with his flock and yearns to find those who are lost. The prayers are being sent in English and Spanish to bishops. They were developed by the USCCB Secretariat for Divine Worship. The USCCB also plans a social media effort to spread the message about the prayers.

### Caritas delivers food aid to flood victims in Muslim Somalia

**NAIROBI, Kenya (CNS)** – Caritas, the relief arm of the Catholic Church, has delivered food aid to Muslims in Somalia, who are currently facing floods and living in a fragile peace environment due to a prolonged Islamist insurgency. The aid reached families in Berdale, a small town center of 50,000 people, including 6,000 people displaced from their homes. The town has been cut off following flooding that left most areas submerged, making it difficult for the people to access emergency food, medicine and shelter. "Caritas Somalia is carrying out interventions working with another NGO in Berdale severely hit by the floods. The intervention was finalized (Dec. 3). It consists of food for 1,000 families for one month," Archbishop Giorgio Bertin, apostolic administrator of Mogadishu, told Catholic News Service. Nearly 273,000 people have been displaced in the flood with at least 17 others being killed in the Horn of Africa country, according to U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Some are now sheltering under trees or in emergency tents. According to agencies a combination of floods, drought and conflict have displaced an estimated 575,000 people this year alone. Scientists say a weather phenomenon in the Indian Ocean is causing unusually heavy rains across East Africa, with swollen rivers bursting banks and some areas experiencing floods and mudslides.



## ADIRONDACK

## FESTIVAL OF LESSONS &amp; CAROLS

Lake Placid – The Festival of Lessons and Carols to feature the Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble.

**Date:** Dec. 22

**Time:** 4 p.m.

**Place:** St. Agnes Church  
Cost: Donation of \$10

**Features:** Anthems, carols, and hymns illuminate the Christmas story with community readers and congregational singing.

**Contact:** For more information contact drew.benware@gmail.com

## CLINTON

## CRAFT SHOW

Morrisville – St. Alexander's Church will be having their 8th Annual North Country Christmas Craft Show.

**Date:** Dec. 14

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Features:** The works of local vendors, a fabulous Bake Shop with all your favorite Christmas treats, basket raffle and more... and don't forget to stop by and have lunch at Padre's Café. See you there!

## FESTIVAL OF LESSONS &amp; CAROLS

Plattsburgh – The Festival of Lessons and Carols to feature the Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble.

**Date:** Dec. 21

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.

**Place:** St. Peter's Church  
Cost: Donation of \$10

**Features:** Anthems, carols, and hymns illuminate the Christmas story with community readers and congregational singing.

**Contact:** For more information contact drew.benware@gmail.com

## PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Treadwell Mills – The Knights of Columbus will hold a pancake breakfast.

**Date:** Jan. 5, Feb. 2, March 1 & April 5

**Time:** 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Place:** St. Joseph's Parish Hall

**Cost:** Adults, \$8; Children 6-12, \$4; 5 and under, free

## JEFFERSON

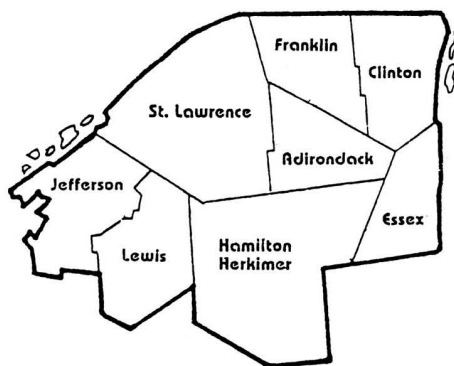
## CATHOLICISM SERIES

Watertown – Bishop Robert Barron's "Catholicism" DVD presentation and discussion to be held.

**Date:** Dec. 12 (Part 5)

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Place:** Dostie Hall at Sacred Heart Church



The North Country Catholic welcomes contributions to "Around the Diocese".

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669; fax, 315-394-0670;  
e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

**Features:** Explore the faith through stories, biographies, & images; like a world tour of persons, places, & cathedrals. All believers welcome. Refreshments.

**Contact:** Holy Family Rectory, 315-782-2468

## IHC MYSTERY PLAYERS ADVENT

Watertown – IHC Mystery players to present their Advent play.

**Schedule:** Dec. 15 at Village Baptist Church, Adams at 6 p.m.; Dec. 22 at Holy Family Church, Watertown at 7:15 p.m.

## ADORATION FOR VOCATIONS

Watertown – The St. Joseph Cupertino Fraternity of the Secular Franciscans will be having adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for vocations into the priesthood and religious life.

**Date:** Dec. 28

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

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

**Features:** We extend our welcome for all to join us and share some moments in prayer.

## SPAGHETTI DINNER

Adams – The Knights of Columbus will have a spaghetti dinner.

**Date:** Jan. 18

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

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

**Cost:** Adults, \$7; Seniors, \$6; Children, \$4; Children 5 and under, Free

**Contact:** For more information call Joe Hulbert at 315-465-6543

## LEWIS

## INTERNATIONAL NATIVITY EXHIBIT

Houseville – All are welcome to an International Exhibit of Christmas Creches-Nativities.

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

**Time:** before or after the celebration of the 11 a.m. Mass, or between 1 p.m. to 3 or by appointment

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

**Features:** The exhibit is free and open to the public. Help keep Christ in Christmas. Bring family and friends and experience the universality of the Birth of the Christ-child as experienced through the eyes of many different cultures.

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

## YOUTH BUSES FOR LIFE

Washington, DC – Registration is now open for the Youth Buses for life.

**Date:** Jan. 26, 2020

**Cost:** \$200

**Features:** Buses depart the North Country and the cost will include transportation, three hotel stays, three breakfasts, two dinners, two lunches, t-shirt, slingbag and an awesome experience! Western bus departs from IHC in Watertown. Northern bus departs from Massena with stops in Canton and Gouverneur. March for Life in our nation's capital and participate in the Life is Very Good Rally and Mass and the National ProLife Summit!

**Contact:** Registration and more information at www.rcdony.org/prolife

## YOUTH LENTEN RETREAT

Lenten retreats to be held for young people in grades 7 to 12

**Schedule:** Feb. 29 at St. Patrick's, Watertown; March 7 at St. Mary's, Champlain

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

**Features:** There is no fee to attend. Each retreat will focus on three aspects to aid us in centering ourselves on Jesus Christ and strengthening our relationship with our loving God. Each afternoon retreat will be fun, heart and mind opening and spiritually rejuvenating.

**Contact:** To register go to www.rcdony.org/youthlenten/lenten-retreat.html or contact Virginia Demers, at: vdemers@rcdony.org - 315-393-2920 ext.1401

## LEAD EVENT

Lake Placid – Diocesan LEAD event to be held.

**Date:** March 9-10

**Place:** Crown Plaza

**Cost:** One LEAD member is free, additional members cost \$50. If you have a team of three, the cost is \$120. Non-LEAD parishes cost \$75 per person.

**Features:** The theme will be "The Catechumen's Journey: The Initiation process". Creating Holy Moments for New Disciples. Participants are responsible for their own hotel accommodations and expense. Mention the event when registering with the hotel.

**Contact:** Jessica Hargrave by email: jhargrave@rcdony.org or by phone: (315)393-2920

## DAY OF REFLECTION

Lead event to be held in the Eastern and Western region of the diocese.

**Date:** March 21

**Time:** 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

**Place:** Eastern Region, St. John XXIII Newman Center, Plattsburgh. Speaker will be Deacon Mark Bennett. Western Region, Wadhams Hall, Ogdensburg. Speaker will be Deacon Jim Crowley.

**Cost:** One LEAD member is free. Additional Lead member and non-members fee is \$20

**Contact:** Jessica Hargrave at jhar-

grave@rcdony.org or call 315-393-2920

## CONFIRMATION RETREAT

Net Ministries challenges young Catholics to love Christ and embrace the life of the church.

**Schedule:** March 28, St. Augustine's Church, Peru, from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; March 29, at Sacred Heart Church,

## NEIGHBORING DIOCESES

Watertown, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Cost:** \$30 per student (meal included)

**Contact:** These are a first come, first served basis registration, so don't be the last and miss the chance to attend. Register by March 18 by emailing crusell@rcdony.org or by calling 315-393-2920

## DISCERNMENT RETREAT FOR MEN

Syracuse – The Vocations directors of Upstate NY will hold a discernment retreat.

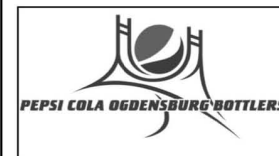
**Date:** Jan. 5 – 7

**Time:** Sunday Evening to Tuesday Morning.

**Place:** Christ the King Retreat House, 500 Brookford Rd, Syracuse

**Features:** Have you felt the invitation to follow Jesus Christ as a Catholic Priest? Gather with other young men from across New York State who are considering the call to the priesthood. Hear dynamic talks on the priesthood delivered by NY Vocation Directors. Meet seminarians and hear their stories. Enjoy Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament as well as time for silent prayer. Have an opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Take your spiritual life to the next level. Be inspired to live your life generously.

**Contact:** Father Christopher Carrara at ccarrara@rcdony.org, 315-393-2920 or speak with your pastor.



Visit our website

www.northcountrycatholic.org

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



Find us on Facebook!



## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

## Advice for living in today's desert

Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday is the most joyful of all the Sundays of Advent. As we light the rose candle of our Advent wreath, we wonder why there is such cause for rejoicing. After all, the world around us resembles a desert, dry and hopeless.

In the first reading from the prophet Isaiah, we get our



Monsignor  
Paul E.  
Whitmore

answer! "The desert and the parched land will exult," he tells us. Then he stirs up our courage, telling us to strengthen our hands and our weak knees, and spread the word to all the frightened and depressed people around us that the glory and splendor of the Lord is about to burst forth. And our God

## December 15

## Third Sunday of Advent

## READINGS

Isaiah 35:1-6a

James 5:7-10

Matthew 11:2-11

will come to save us. Then, in almost the same words Jesus will speak to John in prison, "Then will the eyes of the blind be opened, the ears of the deaf will be cleared, and the lame leap like a stag, and the tongue

of the mute will sing."

This is the promise of every Christmas that all begins with the birth of a small weak and helpless child born of Mary in Bethlehem. We all saw its fulfillment in the days of the grown man, Jesus, who performed all these healings in his travels in Galilee and Judea.

How faithful John the Baptist was in all his life preparing for the coming of this Savior. Then, while in prison, he patiently

waits for word that Jesus is indeed the Messiah. Jesus' message to John is the reward for his patience. It is basically the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah.

The second reading today, from the Epistle of James, gives us the best advice for those of us living in today's desert: "Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord." May our patience be filled with prayer and good works.

## Advent gratitude: A handmade Christmas

By Kathleen Gallagher

Director of Pro-Life Activities

New York State Catholic Conference

As I carefully unwrapped and hung the ornaments on the tree this year, I was struck by how many of them were made by hand, crafted expressly for me and my family. How had I never noticed this before?

There's Santa's head, fashioned by a walnut, yellowed cotton gently encircling it, forming the hair, mustache and beard. Colored markers long ago crudely inked the eyes, nose and lips. My mother's mother made that Santa, a grandparent who died when I was a toddler. That Santa is my ancestral connection to my maternal roots.

There's the hand-stitched cherub, a needle-point work of art made by a long-time friend. Each stitch is an expression of time, talent and love...for me. That hand-sewn angel always sits high on the tree, like Gabriel announcing the coming birth of Jesus.

There's the bright or-

ange miniature sweater, a ball of yarn attached with two toothpicks pretending to be knitting needles. That sweater was woven by my Aunt Mae, now of blessed memory. She wasn't really our aunt, just a close family friend, with a dimpled smile and a generous heart. I miss her.

There's the extra-large shiny red ball with a hand-painted black belt and a gold buckle transforming it into Santa's stomach, a gift from our future daughter-in-law. Her humor, simplicity and thoughtfulness are all reflected in that decoration.

I can't even count the number of ornaments created for my husband and me by our boys as they made their way through each year of elementary school. Handprints on construction paper, clothespin reindeer heads, a plastic star filled with tinsel and a beaming Cub Scout photo.

There's even a tiny tree with a handwritten note from one brother to the other: "Merry Christmas Mikey! Love, Joey." (That one still overwhelms me



Handmade ornaments, such as this star filled with tinsel and a Cub Scout photo, are signs of genuine love.

with parental pride.)

In an age where technology races to remove the human touch from every aspect of our lives – think grocery store self-check-out lines and the absence

of toll booths – humans were necessary to make these ornaments.

Human hands lovingly crafted each one-of-a-kind item. Human thoughts centered on me and my

family as they were shaped. Genuine heartfelt love came tucked inside each one.

Research confirms that producing art – any kind of art – improves physical health and reduces stress and anxiety. Moreover, the act of giving has been shown to increase happiness and may actually increase a person's life span. I pray that the acts of creating and giving these wonderful Christmas decorations filled the gift-givers with as much joy, serenity and satisfaction as they have given to me.

The Christmas story reveals that God loves us so much that he gave us His only Son, a Son who ultimately died for us and redeemed us. It is this spirit of selfless generosity that illuminates my Christmas tree and fills me to the brim with gratitude this Advent.

No one else in the entire universe has the treasured ornaments that adorn my Christmas tree. Each one is slightly imperfect. And that's what makes them perfect. Perfect and priceless.



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSI, Director

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

# Celebrate the season by helping

*The Mission Office is in the midst of its annual Christmas appeal. This "mail to the donor campaign" is a national based appeal to aid both the Missionary Childhood Association and the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Your generosity is very appreciated this time of year. Thank you!*

As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, offering joy and love especially to the children in our lives, we know many children in the world live a different reality. These vulnerable little ones too often experience dire poverty and immense suffering, endure violence or forced labor, face human trafficking and other challenges beyond their age and innocence.

But there's hope in Sri Lanka, and you can be part of it as Christmas comes! You can send love to so many families in Batticaloa, where some 300 children are doing their best to recover from physical, mental, and spiritual trauma. They are the survivors of the Easter Sunday bombings earlier this year. Some are injured, others alone without parents, all fearful. But thanks to the Sisters and other Church workers, there is light in the darkness of the circumstances of their lives.

Through your prayers and generous help to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith / Missionary Childhood Association, the children are fed and clothed, receive counseling, medical care and an education. Most importantly, they find listening hearts, loving care and hope, hope from the Good News of Jesus' birth, and from the reality of His love alive in the work and witness of the Sisters and pastoral leaders caring for them, who are helping them to get ready for Christmas right now.

"Children are a gift," Pope Francis tells us. Your gifts to the children in mission countries this Christmas are where the children need your help. A gift of \$35 is a month's care for a child in Batticaloa. A gift of \$420 will provide a year's support. With such a gift for Christmas, you can know that you are rebuilding the lives of these children. Whatever you provide will be most appreciated. Please know these gifts will make you a special angel of mercy with your love for these children half a world away.

Know that those you help in the Missions remember you in prayer. I too promise prayers throughout Advent and at Christmas for all families, and for the "gift" that you are to one another and to the world.

*Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.*  
[www.rcdony.org/mission](http://www.rcdony.org/mission)

## OBITUARIES

**Adams** – Joan M. (Barker) LaFlair, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 2, 2019 at St. Cecilia's Church.

**AuSable Forks** – Barbara Ann (Gilbert) Paul, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 14, 2019 at Holy Name Church.

**Brownville** – Anne T. (Condon) Couse, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 5, 2019 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in Brownville Cemetery.

**Carthage** – Margaret Mary (Strife) Young, 76; Funeral Services Dec. 10, 2019 at the Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home.

**Copenhagen** – Genevieve Elizabeth Baker, 102; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 9, 2019 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Croghan** – Alice M. (Aucter) Bush, 96; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 4, 2019 at St. Stephen's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery, New Brehan.

**Ellenburg** – Eugene C. Nichols, 61; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 6, 2019 at St. Edmund's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Keeseville** – Howard J. Wemette, 70; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 7, 2019 at St. John's Church.

**Lowville** – Philip W. Smithling, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 4, 2019 at St. Peter's Church; burial Martinsburg Cemetery.

**Malone** – Frances (Saunders) Ohlman, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 7, 2019 at Notre Dame Church.

**Malone** – Lane Joan Twiss, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 6, 2019 at Notre Dame Church.

**Morrisonville** – Glenn A. Monto, 79; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 9, 2019 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Morrisonville** – Joan M. (Dragoon) Rock, 73; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 7, 2019 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Norfolk** – Marvin H. Mitchell, 61; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 6, 2019 at Church of the Visitation; burial in Visitation Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Frederick R. Kocyla, 92; Mass of Christian Burial in Spring at Notre Dame Church.

**Plattsburgh** – Barbara M. (Phair) Trombley, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 3, 2019 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

**Potsdam** – Jean M. (Bedore) Forget, 78; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 4, 2019 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Saranac Lake** – Virginia (Gallagher) Bristol, 100; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 6, 2019 at St. Bernard's Church.

**Watertown** – Aletha M. (Capone) Fortunato, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 7, 2019 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

**Watertown** – Mary M. (Hladun) Seebler, 99; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 6, 2019 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in N. Watertown Cemetery.

**Watertown** – Gertrude H. (McDonald) Smith, 89; Funeral Services Dec. 3, 2019 at the Reed & Benoit Funeral Home; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

## Letter to the editor

### To the Editor:

I was glad to read about the faithful in Croghan honoring St. Francis (12/4/19, p. 14). His radiant sanctity and radical poverty are a useful challenge to each of us to follow Christ. However, I hope people will look beyond the stereotypes of the saint of Assisi and try to see his whole message. For instance, Father Augustine Thompson's 2013 biography, "Francis of Assisi: The Life," shows a saint unfamiliar to most of us.

Francis held the utmost regard for the Eucharist and the Mass. He stressed total reverence for Our Lord and for everything used in the Mass, especially the sacred vessels

and vestments.

Thompson writes, "In his [St. Francis's] final words to his followers, the issue he found most pressing was not poverty, not obedience, but proper reverence for the Eucharist" (153).

Radical living for Christ does not preclude reverent worship. In fact, it demands it.

Sincerely,  
Greg Cook  
Malone, NY

Keep Christ in Christmas and  
give the gift of the  
*North Country Catholic*.  
Call our office at 315-608-7556

MERRY CHRISTMAS

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CATHOLIC**

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# IHC fifth-grade student gets education assistance

Clavery Nebie is the the 2019-20 recipient of the Gary F. West Faith-Based Education Scholarship.

Nebie is an Immaculate Heart Central Elementary School fifth grader.

West and his wife, Kim, presented Nebie and her family with a \$500 award this week.

The funds will help Nebie continue her primary education at Immaculate Heart Central School.

Following his retirement as IHC elementary school principal in 2018, Mr. West established the scholarship as a component fund of the Northern New York Community Foundation to provide financial assistance to students attending the school.

Mr. West served for 40 years in various capacities



**Pictured at the presentation of the Gary F. West Faith-Based Education Scholarship are, from left, Babou Nebie, Whitney Nebie, Edith Nebie, scholarship recipient and Immaculate Heart Central fifth-grader Clavery Nebie, Gary West, Kim West, Immaculate Heart Central School Principal Dan Charlebois, and Immaculate Heart Central Elementary School Assistant Principal Amy Mitchell.**

in public and parochial education in Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties.

## Letter to the editor

### Dear friend of Champlain Valley Right to Life (CVRTL),

As many know we are living in trying times. So much sadness and despair, negative news all around us, so many needs, so many suffering and so many in need of our prayers and attention.

CVRTL feels this pain too and will not give up on the mission it was created for over 40 years ago. I

feel, It's time to turn the ship and set sail onto new waters.

I have been leading as chair since February of this year and am so thankful and blessed to continue the mission of creating a culture of life in the North Country of New York.

CVRTL does a lot of wonderful, positive educational endeavors throughout the year and cannot do it without your help. Volunteers help in many ways and with many volunteers much can be done.

Our next event is this coming Monday, Dec.9 beginning at 10 a.m.

We will bring the joy of Christmas to the most needed and desperate place in our community, the abortion facility at 66 Brinkerhoff Street.

We will sing praises to Jesus, the Child that was brought unto us for our salvation. All are invited, song sheets and hand warmers will be provided, just bring yourselves and a friend or two dressed and bundled in warm clothing and a willingness to sing. It's always a joyful time!

Take a moment to visit the new website and if you can forward this message to at least one person in your address book our volunteers may grow as God desires.

May you all be blessed this Christmas season with His love. Christ the savior, is born!

Thank you so much for all you do for LIFE!

**Nancy Belzile  
Chair, CVRTL**

# St. Mary's School to close at end of the school year

**CANTON**—On Friday, Dec. 6, the families of St. Mary's School learned the school would close at the end of the 2019-20 school year.

The closure was unanimously recommended by the St. Mary's Parish Council, Education Council and Finance Council. The recommendation was relayed by Father Bryan D. Stitt, pastor of St. Mary's Parish, to Bishop Terry R. LaValley, who accepted the recommendation. The faculty learned of the decision on Thursday, Dec. 5.

"It is a sad day for me when I am asked to approve the closing of one of our schools," said Bishop Terry R. LaValley. "St. Mary's School has served the parish and community very well since its humble beginnings in 1930."

Generally, closures of Catholic schools have occurred when there has been a pattern of declining enrollment and the inability of the school and community members to raise the funds necessary to operate the school.

Last January, the Councils agreed to certain benchmarks that would need to be met to continue operating the school after this current year.

Despite countless efforts, the school will not meet these benchmarks this year.

Failure to attain the budgeted benchmarks for tuition, enrollment, and fundraising place

great hardships on the parish, which is responsible for ensuring the school's financial obligations are met.

"While it is sad to see the end of the school, we take comfort in knowing that every possible alternative was explored," said Father Stitt. "We thought we'd have to close last year after the Councils voted to do so, but the school staff and volunteers pulled out all the stops. We increased marketing, including television, mailings, signage, and tabling; we increased initiatives in fundraising, including regional appeals, grant-writing, and the formation of a Parent-Teacher Organization; and we implemented developments to our aftercare program including Brain-Science, crafts, Nature up North, language and music. We tried it all. After 90 years, this is like a death in the family. But with every death we have hope in New Life."

St. Mary's parish, including the involved Councils, is working with the diocese and involved stakeholders to aid our school family in this time of transition and to explore future uses for the school facility.

With this being our school's 90th anniversary, we will have a variety of opportunities for the students, faculty, parents, alumni, parish, and greater community to honor those nine decades of excellence.



*Support And Pray  
For Vocations*