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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 74, Number 27

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

DEC. 4, 2019

## Area college students learn about NFP

CANTON – On Nov. 19, Angelo and Suzanne Pietropaoli, diocesan Natural Family Planning directors, presented to a group of 10 college students from Potsdam and Canton Newman Clubs the science behind NFP, what it is and is not, how it works, and common misconceptions about Natural Family Planning. New technology that can aid couples in these methods was also mentioned, along with the fact that there are several different methods of NFP now available to fit with what works for different couples.

The presentation was given at St. Mary's School.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

## KNIGHTS & SCHOOL GIVE BACK



St. Mary's School in Canton and Canton Knights of Columbus teamed up to deliver food for families to the Church and Community food pantry. Pictured with the St. Mary's school grade 5-6 class are Marianne Augenstein, school coordinator for the program, and Grand Knight John Taillon.

## RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS



Many religious men and women have served and continue to serve the people of God here in the North Country as teachers, health care providers, pastoral associates, administrators, pastors and parochial vicars. We have the opportunity to express our appreciation by supporting the annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious. The proceeds from this collection offer some financial support for communities in caring for older members.

FULL STORY, PAGE 7-10

# Pope to theologians: Don't confuse the faithful

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Theologians must explore and debate disputed questions, at times even taking "risks" with what they propose, but those discussions should take place within the academy so as not to confuse the faithful, Pope Francis said.

"Theology must move forward," the pope told members of the International Theological Commission. "It must face things that are not clear and take risks in discussion. However, this is

among theologians.

"You must give the solid food of faith to the people of God, not feed the people of God disputed questions," because that could confuse them and cause them to lose their faith, the pope told the group Nov. 29 during a meeting celebrating the commission's 50th anniversary.

St. Paul VI established the commission to continue the collaboration between theologians and the teaching authority of the church experienced at the

Second Vatican Council, the pope said. And he wanted to ensure that the doctrinal congregation would benefit from the contributions of theologians reflecting on questions of faith in different parts of the world and in different cultural contexts.

"In fact," the pope told them, "you listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches in different cultures today in order to shed light on ever-new aspects of the inexhaustible

mystery of Christ."

By "translating" the faith for people of different cultures, he said, theologians help people feel "closer to and embraced by the church, taken by the hand where they are and accompanied to taste the sweetness of the 'kerygma' (proclamation of Christ) and its timelessness."

"This is theology's call," he said. "It's not an academic disquisition about life, but the incarnation of the faith in one's life."

"Good theology" is research that is born of a theologian's own active spiritual life, he said. "Theology is born and grows on one's knees!"

And, Pope Francis added, theology develops within and contributes to the life of the church. "One does not do theology as an individual, but in community, at the service of all, to spread the good news of the Gospel to brothers and sisters of their time, always with sweetness and respect."

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

## I'm waiting rather impatiently

"Patience is a virtue," the diocesan chancellor, Deacon James Crowley, has reminded me on more than one occasion.

My usual response: "I never claimed to be virtuous."

I'm not a patient person. I know this. I won't order a package from Amazon unless it's Prime-eligible and will arrive at my doorstep in two days. I get irritated if I leave someone a message and don't hear back in what I consider a timely fashion. I go insane when my son is moving at what I refer to as "the pace of

snail" when he gets ready to go somewhere with me.

Because I'm so impatient, Advent is good for me.

Darcy L.  
Fargo

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that John the Baptist was the precursor to Jesus and pointed Jesus out as "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world."

The Catechism then notes: "When the Church celebrates the *liturgy of Advent* each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Savior's first

coming, the faithful renew their ardent desire for his second coming. By celebrating the precursor's birth and martyrdom, the Church unites herself to his desire: 'He must increase, but I must decrease.'"

That section struck me for two reasons. First, it notes it was a "long preparation for the Savior's first coming." Jesus wasn't delivered by Amazon Prime in two days. Though His coming was foretold, the people of God waited generation upon generation for the birth of the Messiah.

It's a good reminder to me that there are graces to be found in the waiting and

preparation, and the waiting and preparation make the celebration that much more joyous.

Similarly, John the Baptist's assertion that "He must increase, but I must decrease" also struck me. I'm quite confident I'm not the only one who needs to be reminded sometimes that life, including the spiritual life, is not all about me and what I want. God works in His way and His time, even sometimes what seems like the "pace of snail."

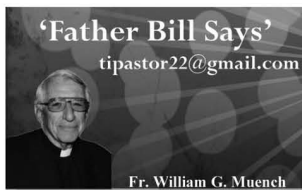
This Advent, I pray we all find the graces we need as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior, even if we do so rather impatiently.

## Getting ourselves ready for Christmas

Let us talk about Advent, today. December is a very busy month. There are many things competing for our attention this month. Spiritually, this is the time of Advent, the season that leads to the celebration of Christmas.

Advent is meant to be a time of prayer and penance as we prepare our hearts and souls to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Advent is about getting ourselves ready for Christmas. Advent is a time for us to step aside from the stuff of life to contemplate the place that God takes in our lives. Jesus leads us to find God the Father.

Advent is a good time to consider how well we are living and how well we are using the opportunities to bring God's love and peace into all we do. Advent is the time when we celebrate our relationship with Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Advent is the time for a spiritual preparation to strengthen our faith in the coming of Jesus as incarnate among us,



Fr. William G. Muench

longing to enter our hearts and our world.

Now at the same time, there are many other things going on during December as Christmas approaches. There are Christmas trees and other decorations. There is the writing and sending out of Christmas cards. There is the Christmas shopping for gifts, gifts to give as presents to those who are important to us. And, of course, there are all sorts of Christmas parties to plan and to attend. I want to tell you, as I do every year, that personally I love all these things. I love to receive and send Christmas cards. This is actually when I connect with so many who I consider my friends, but, in reality, only contact once a year. I try to take plenty of time writing these cards to

use the opportunity well.

So, a busy December – so many things to do. However, I want to use this moment to encourage you to make certain that this Advent, spiritual preparation gets the time in your life that it deserves. The birth of Jesus is the heart and soul of our Catholic faith. The prayers, the music and the scriptures of Advent lead us closer to a stronger relationship with Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Our belief in the incarnation of Jesus brings a deeper meaning to our own human life. Jesus became one of us. Jesus became incarnate to die for us.

The Feast of Christmas each year begins our remembrance of the story. Again, we begin to celebrate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. We are challenged to recognize all that Jesus means to us as Catholics and Christians.

Each time we recite the Creed at Mass – it is a precious moment – we remember and celebrate all that Our

Lord means to us. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of exactly what our faith is in the incarnation of Jesus. So, I would like to quote for you something from the United States Catholic Catechism for Adults.

"It is necessary to believe that the mystery of the Incarnation means that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. Jesus became truly man while remaining truly God. Above all it is in the Paschal Mystery, which is the saving Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus that we participate most profoundly in the mystery of Christ. Here is the heart of the Kingdom and salvation to which we are called. In Christ, we die to self and sin. We rise to participate in his Divine life through the Resurrection. This is made possible for us through the Sacraments."

So, here we go again. Another Advent – truly a time to renew the story that is at the center of our faith. Advent is a special time.

## FOLLOW ME

# A personal conversation with the Holy Father

As we begin the new Church year this First Week of Advent, I will conclude my reflections on my recent *ad limina Apostolorum* visit to Rome. Previously, I indicated that the basic purpose for this visit is to venerate the tombs of the Holy Apostles, Peter and Paul, to inform the Holy See (the Congregations, Councils and Commissions) about the state of our diocese, and to meet with the Successor of Peter, His Holiness Pope Francis. Permit me to share with you these thoughts of the third feature of the *ad limina*, the meeting with the Holy Father.

We were informed at our first gathering at the beginning of the visit that our appointment with Pope Francis was changed. Due to scheduling conflicts, our meeting would be the last meeting of our *ad limina* visit, Friday morning, November 15. It was a great way to wrap up the weeklong visit – a personal conversation

with the Pope and then preside at Mass at the Holy Father's cathedral, St. John Lateran.

As he warmly welcomed us, Pope Francis encouraged us to relax and enjoy an informal conversation with him. He was eager to listen to what was on our hearts and respond with his own personal thoughts. He expressed heartfelt gratitude for our prayerful support, particularly in the area of Christian marriage and Church teaching on life matters such as abortion and physician-assisted suicide. Pope Francis was thankful, as well as, for the U.S. Bishops' strong support for migrant families and advocacy for immigration reform.

As bishops, he reminded us that, first and foremost, we must be close to God. He asked: "How many hours do you pray each

day?" (He doesn't hesitate to get to the chase!) Secondly, the Pope said that we must be close to our individual priests and, thirdly, he urged us to work closely with the entire body of priests in the diocese (the presbyterate). Fourthly, he reminded us of the importance of staying close to our people, i.e., smell of our sheep.

I asked the Holy Father: "In light of all the urgent needs of the world, what do you find most personally challenging in your Petrine Ministry?"

With great sadness, he said that the first challenge he found to be most difficult was the state of the family and Christian marriage today. The Holy Father was remarkably candid as he began to speak specifically of his own family. He expressed great concern for the lack of children in our families. He observed that pets in

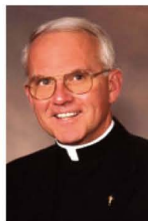
our families today seem to be of more importance than children. He spoke of the fractured family due to divorce and cohabitation and he addressed the ominous threat of gender identity. Pope Francis sees the breakdown of the family and Christian marriage as realities the bishops must continue to address with great energy and courage. He urged us to patiently accompany those who struggle with the Lord's teachings to follow Jesus.

Another personal challenge that the Pope cited was the religious void of so many of our youth today. He encouraged us to find new ways to reach out to our youth and young adults. He lamented the increasing number who have no affiliation with the Catholic faith, or indeed, any religion (the so-called NONES).

I concluded this *ad limina* visit with even greater respect for the Successor of Peter and for his min-

istry in our troubled world. While he is often misunderstood and mischaracterized in the media, his rock-solid faith is a tremendous sign of hope. Within our Church we sometimes experience polarization, misunderstanding and conflict. Pope Francis told us that even the best of families has arguments and disagreements. He is not afraid of dialogue with those who disagree with him. Neither should you and me. Perhaps because our own faith is weak in the face of so many challenges in our secular world, our fear paralyzes any movement to dialogue.

Advent is a Season of hope and great anticipation. God was born in the messiness, even sinfulness of humanity. I pray that our own personal intimacy with Jesus will bring us the confidence and hope that draws us closer to Him and, through Him, to one another. Blessed Advent everyone!



Bishop  
Terry R.  
LaValley

## New volunteers commissioned to help neighbors

Lake Placid – Ten New Friendship Volunteers completed training and were commissioned to become Mercy Care for the Adirondacks Friendship Volunteers to assist their elder neighbors.

To illustrate how Mercy Care Friendship Volunteers make an impact in our community, Mackenzie Boushie, Mercy Care's Program Director, recalls a recent response from an elder Mercy Care assists:

"Mary and I have become the best of friends and we enjoy spending one day a week going to

lunch and shopping. She is having some medical issues and needs PT weekly. Mary loves going out, and I really enjoy spending time with her. She knows she can call me anytime during the week, and I think that eases her mind. She is in her 90s and is still going strong. I feel blessed to be a part of her life. She is a big part of mine!"

And one of Mercy Care's Friendship Volunteers wrote, "I love the feeling of helping others and making a small difference in their lives. I enjoy my eld-

ers so much. Volunteering helps give me a sense of purpose in my retirement."

The next Mercy Care Friendship Volunteer training is scheduled for May 7 and May 14 in Lake Placid. If you are interested in becoming a Friendship Volunteer or Parish Nurse or if you are an elder and need the services of a Mercy Care Volunteer, please call Mackenzie Boushie, Mercy Care's Program Director, at 518-523-5446 or contact her by e-mail at mboushie@adkmercy.org.



The Tupper Lake Friendship Volunteer training included (front row, from left) Paul Guerrette, care manager, Sister Catherine Cummings, Mission director, Shirley Lavigne, Claire Lukas, Margie Gallagher, Chris Barnes, Mary Jane Staufenberg, (back row) Mackenzie Boushie, program director, Donna Beal, executive director, and Jerry Hayes board president.

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## College students learn about NFP

By Amanda Conklin  
 Contributing Writer

CANTON— On Nov. 19, Angelo and Suzanne Pietropaoli, diocesan Natural Family Planning directors, presented to a group of 10 college students from Potsdam and Canton Newman Clubs at St. Mary's School.

The presentation included the science behind NFP, what it is and is not, how it works, and some common misconceptions about Natural Family Planning.

New technology that can aid couples in these methods was also mentioned, along with the fact that there are several different methods of NFP now available to fit with what works for different couples.

The Pietropaolis included information about how artificial birth control is harmful for the environment and dangerous for our bodies. They discussed how, in a time when concern for the environment and what chemicals go into our bodies is heightened, this seems to be an area that is overlooked.

"College students tend to have a strong focus on gaining knowledge and also on protecting the environment," shared An-

gelo Pietropaoli. "Together these elements can create an important openness towards a natural approach to living in harmony with the gift of fertility. This process in turn leads to increased self-respect and therefore to healthier relationships. NFP really is good news for anyone seeking to live life in a healthier, more holistic way."

Though NFP is not exclusive to a religious perspective, it is not information that is very prevalent on most college campuses, which is something St. Lawrence University Sophomore and Newman Club Secretary, Rachel Meurer echoed.

"I wasn't so familiar with family planning, and I'm exposed to so many other birth control methods at college," Meurer said. "I wanted to learn about my options and see how they fit into my experience and beliefs. I'm happy I went and got the NFP perspective and stories of NFP users."

Suzanne Pietropaoli said she sees the need to reach students with the truth and beauty of Natural Family planning through the lens of the Theology of the Body.

"It is always a blessing to share the beauty of God's plan for sex and love," she said. "It is especially important to bring this truth to young people amid the many conflicting messages they see and hear every day."

If you would like the Pietropaolis to travel to your parish, school or group, to give a similar presentation, please contact them at [apietropaoli@rcdony.org](mailto:apietropaoli@rcdony.org) or 518-483-0459.

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# Mystery Players on tour with Advent program

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

WATERTOWN – “It’s not a show; it’s a prayer,” said Terry Burgess, director of the Immaculate Heart Central Mystery Players.

The Mystery Players are now touring with their Advent prayer.

“It’s a more limited schedule than Lent,” said Burgess. “Between sports schedules and the potential for bad weather, we do fewer dates for Advent.”

Fourteen students, mostly seniors, participate in the program.

“They have to express interest in an essay,” he said. “As the student body has become smaller, generally everyone who expresses interest gets to participate.”

While the program is similar every year, Burgess noted the school cycles between six versions of its Lenten program and five versions of its Advent program.

“Obviously the story is the same, but there are slight differences in each different version,” he said.

Each performance, the participants switch roles.

“The roles could change every five minutes,” said Ben Hutchins, 17, of Watertown, a participant in the show. “Since this rehearsal started, I’ve had two different roles. I think changing roles is something I need so I’m not just going through the motions. I have to focus on experiencing each role.”

“If you do the same role over and over, you don’t have to think about it as much,” added McKenna Cooney, 17, of Watertown. “Because it changes all the time, we have to pray each role.”

Cooney said she’s been traveling with the Mystery



DARCY FARGO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Director Terry Burgess helps guide the 2019-20 Immaculate Heart Central Mystery Players as they rehearse their Advent program at St. Patrick’s Church in Watertown.

Players since she was in sixth grade. Her father, Brandon Cooney, an IHC alum, handles lighting as a volunteer for the Mystery Players.

“For years, I’ve watched the groups and I’ve seen what they get out of it,” she said. “It’s an experience you can’t get anywhere else. It’s deeper than what it appears. The group grows closer because of the experience. Other classmates don’t get that.”

Hutchins also has a family connection to the group.

“My mom did it when she was in high school,” he said. “She brought me to every play since I was young. I always enjoyed watching it, and she told me how close you get with everyone. I wanted to be part of that.”

Both Cooney and Hutchins said the Advent program helps the Mystery Players bond as they prepare for the Lenten

program.

“Without Advent, Lent wouldn’t be what it is,” said Hutchins.

“Advent is when we get our feet wet,” added Cooney. “Lent is when we

dive in.”

While it’s the group’s formative program, Cooney also noted that the Advent program is a great way to mark the season.

## Mystery Players Advent tour dates

With one performance (Dec. 1 at Summit Village in Watertown) already complete, the Immaculate Heart Mystery Players have the following remaining program dates scheduled for their Advent program:

- Dec. 8 – 6:30 p.m., United Methodist Church, Alexandria Bay
- Dec. 15 – 6 p.m., Adams Village Baptist Church, Adams
- Dec. 22 – 7:15 p.m., Holy Family Church, Watertown

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## Environmental Stewardship

**The heavens and earth tell the glory of God**

The customs for our celebration of Christmas are so interconnected with "the heavens and the earth." Many of them around this season are rooted in the natural world and are often used to teach us spiritual lessons. They remind us of the interconnectedness of the material and spiritual dimensions of all life. All of creation is united in Christ.

Let's look at some of these customs that are part of our Christmas traditions. Christmas trees have already been lighted in many of our homes in anticipation of the coming of the light of the world. For several hundred years, it has been an important part of our Christmas traditions. Interestingly, trees are mentioned more than 90 times in the Bible. Our creation story in Genesis centers around a tree in the garden, and our Savior dies on a tree. Is it any wonder that a tree has become a very important custom in our celebration of the birth of Emmanuel or "God with us?"

Tradition calls for an evergreen tree. We might wonder why it is an evergreen and what might be the spiritual symbolism. As Christian Christmas symbols, evergreens symbolize perseverance and resiliency to adversity. They remind us of Jesus' words, "The ones who persevere to the end shall be saved." It can remind us that our faith must remain vibrant in all spiritual, economic, political and social environments.

Another custom related to Christmas is the wreath. Traditionally, wreaths are made of evergreens, holly and sometimes may include fruit and nuts. Because wreaths, due to their circular shape, symbolize eternity, the circle of life and endless hope, they began to be used at Christmas and hung. Because a wreath has neither beginning nor end, but is a continuous circle, it symbolizes God Himself. Wreaths hung on doors or in windows are like a symbolic invitation for the spirit of Christmas to fill our homes with the joy of the season.

(To be continued next week)

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**Dec. 4** – 9:30 a.m. – Department Head Meeting at Wadhams Hall followed by lunch

**Dec. 5** – 10:50 a.m. – Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg

**Dec. 6** – 7 p.m. – Deacon Candidates Class at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

**Dec. 7** – 10:30 a.m. – Diocesan Pastoral Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by lunch

4 p.m. – Mass at St. George Church in Burke

6 p.m. – Mass at Our Lady of Fatima Church in Westville

**Dec. 8** – 9:30 a.m. – Mass at Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg

**Dec. 9** – 7:15 p.m. – Novena followed by Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Dec. 10** – Episcopal Ordinations in New York City

## Rest in Peace

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

**Dec. 4** – Msgr. James Mackey, 1883; Rev. Alexis D. Medeville, O.M.I., 1884; Rev. Albert Chevalier, O.M.I., 1948; Msgr. Joseph Patrick Heslin, 1962; Rev. Charles A. Flaherty, 1974

**Dec. 5** – Rev. Michael Hallahan, 1891; Most Rev. Edgar P. Wadhams, D.D., 1891

**Dec. 6** – Rev. Edward F. O'Brien, 1936

**Dec. 8** – Rev. Patrick J. McGuinness, 1931; Msgr. Cornelius J. Crowley, 1946; Rev. John Leo Hamill, 1949; Rev. John Harvey, 1961

**Dec. 9** – Rev. George Marion, O.M.I., 1927; Rev. Edwin Hanlon McCarthy, 1950; Rev. Arthur LaVigne, 1956

**Dec. 10** – Rev. James Hogan, 1882

## 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).

# Funeral Mass celebrated for Sister Anne Marie Ryan

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Anne Marie Ryan, OP (Sister Peter Marie) of the Dominican Sisters of Hope, was celebrated Monday, Nov. 25, 2019 in the Mariandale Chapel located at the Dominican Sisters Center of Hope in Ossining, New York.

Sister Anne Marie died Nov. 17 in St. Catherine of Siena Convent, Caldwell, New Jersey. She was 77 years of age.

The daughter of the late Thomas B. and Hilda (Jarvis) Ryan, she was born Aug. 16, 1942 in Gouverneur.

Sister Anne Marie entered the novitiate of the Dominican Sisters of Fall



Sister Anne Marie Ryan, OP

River, Massachusetts, in September 1960. She made her First Profession in August 1963 and Final Profession in August 1966.

Sister Anne Marie earned her bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology from Providence College and her master's degree in Ministry from Seattle University. She also earned certification in a number of areas related to theology and pastoral ministry.

Sister Anne Marie taught at Dominican Academy in Fall River, Massachusetts. She taught religious education in West Chazy and Plattsburgh. She worked in the Ogdensburg Diocesan Religious Education Department. Sister taught religion at Mount Assumption Institute in Plattsburgh. She was Priore of the Motherhouse of the Dominican Sisters of Fall River, teacher and assistant principal at Mount Assumption Institute, and pastoral associ-

ate at St. Mary's Parish in Massena. From 1992-93, she was involved in community outreach at the Advocate Center in Norton, Virginia. From 1995-99, she was a member of the leadership team of the Dominican Sisters of Hope.

Following a sabbatical, Sister Anne Marie was pastoral associate at Holy Innocents Parish in Pleasantville. She later worked in the finance office of the Dominican Sisters of Hope and was a part-time lecturer at Mount St. Mary College in Newburgh. From 2006 to 2015 Sister Anne Marie was involved in pastoral outreach at Idlewild Creek Apartments in Cornwall, New York and RCIA for St. Thomas Parish in that community.

Upon retirement in 2015, she first lived in assisted living at Braemar in Middletown, New York, and then moved to St. Catherine of Siena Convent in Caldwell, New Jersey, in 2017.

Sister Anne Marie was generous in sharing her talents and time wherever she ministered and lived. She was particularly fond of gardening and not only took care of her flowers but planted and tended gardens for others.

Sister Anne Marie is survived by her sister, Mary Theresa Ryan; her sister-in-law, Linda Ryan; and a niece and nephew. She is predeceased by her parents and her brother, Richard Ryan.

Donations in memory of Sister Anne Marie can be made to the Dominican Sisters of Hope Development Office, 299 North Highland Avenue, Ossining, New York 10562.

## To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terrianne Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, 31 Sixth Street, Malone, NY 12953; [terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com](mailto:terrianneyanulavich@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](mailto:news@northcountrycatholic.org)

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# Retirement Fund for Religious



**Collection Weekend  
Dec. 7th and 8th**

***Please give to those who have given  
and are giving a lifetime***

## Please give to those who have given and are giving a lifetime



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

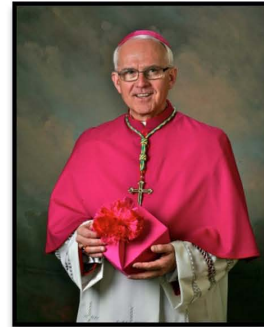
Soon the parishes in our Diocese will conduct the annual appeal for the *Retirement Fund for Religious*. This collection benefits some 32,000 elderly consecrated religious men and women.

As Christians, we are called to “serve the Lord with gladness” (Ps 100:2). Our elderly consecrated religious offer an inspiring example of what it means to answer this call. During their years of active ministry, they worked tirelessly to build Catholic schools and hospitals, promote social justice, and embrace the neediest among us. In retirement, many continue in volunteer ministry, and all pray for the needs of our Church and world. Energized by love, their service-past and present-is marked by joy and a deep desire to do the will of God.

Many religious men and women have served and continue to serve the people of God here in the North Country as teachers, health care providers, pastoral associates, administrators, pastors and parochial vicars. We are richly blessed to have a community of contemplatives, Sister Adorers of the Precious Blood, supporting us through their ministry of prayer. We are also grateful to those missionaries (Sisters of the Cross, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Heralds of the Good News) who have left their home countries to minister here.

We are so indebted to these consecrated religious. We have the opportunity to express our appreciation by supporting the annual collection for the *Retirement Fund for Religious*. The fact that these religious worked for little or no financial compensation in years past, means that they are now struggling to meet the costs of caring for retired and infirmed members. The proceeds from this collection offer some financial support for their communities in caring for older members. In addition, it helps to ensure that younger members can continue the good works of their elders.

Thank you for your generous support of this appeal. We continue to thank God for the presence of the consecrated religious among us. We pray for them and for an increase in their number. Know that they are praying for us!



Gratefully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley  
Bishop of Ogdensburg

*“...called to live the present with passion” (Pope Francis)*



*"Every vocation is a summons not to*

*stand on the shore, nets in hand, but to follow Jesus on the path he has marked out for*

## Please give to those who have given and are giving a lifetime

### Orders Serving in the Diocese

- Daughters of Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Dominican Sisters of Hope
- Franciscan Friars of the Atonement
- Mid-Atlantic Community of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas
- Missionaries of the Sacred Heart
- Servants of Mary
- Sisters of Charity of St. Louis
- Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod
- Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood
- Sisters of St. Joseph

- ◆ Religious communities are financially responsible for the support and care of all members. Income, earnings, and expenses are managed separately from the parish and diocesan structures of the Catholic Church.
- ◆ By 2027, retired religious are projected to outnumber wage-earners by more than three to one.
- ◆ The funding shortage is compounded by rising healthcare costs and decreased income. And, as more religious reach retirement age and leave compensated ministry, income will further decline while care needs increase.
- ◆ There are 31,000 religious past age 70 living in the United States. In 2017, the average annual cost for their care was almost \$44,000 per person.
- ◆ Many elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests worked for little to no pay, and now their religious communities do not have enough money for their care. Please support the Retirement Fund for Religious collection at Mass.



Above: Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated the anniversaries of the Consecrated Religious of the Diocese of Ogdensburg at St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg On Sept. 15. Left to Right: 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).



## YOU SHARE IN THEIR PRAYER LIFE AND FREE OTHERS FOR MINISTRY...



**... WHEN YOU GIVE TO THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN A LIFETIME.**



*We are grateful  
for all the  
support you have  
given us throughout  
the years.*

*Religious of  
the Diocese of Ogdensburg*



Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Make your tax-deductible check payable to your parish. Write *Retirement Fund for Religious* on the memo line and give it to your parish collection.

You can express your gratitude for all the religious have done and will continue to do by giving to your parish's annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious  
- OR -

send your donation directly to:

**RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS**  
P.O. Box 106  
Canajoharie, NY 13317

**COMFORTING · NURTURING · TEACHING · NURSING · SHARING · LOVING · CARING**

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Pope advances sainthood causes of Canadian missionary

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** – Pope Francis advanced the sainthood cause of Bishop Ovide Charlebois – a Canadian Missionary Oblate of Mary Immaculate who ministered to First Nations peoples and migrant workers scattered throughout the vast, lake-covered province of Manitoba. The pope recognized the Quebec native, who lived from 1862 to 1933, as having lived the Christian virtues in a heroic way. The pope also recognized the martyrdom of Father Jan Franciszek Macha, a Polish priest who began his parish ministry when the Nazis invaded Poland and was imprisoned and murdered by its elite force, the SS, despite his mother's efforts to secure a pardon from Adolf Hitler. During a meeting Nov. 28 with Cardinal Angelo Becciu, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes, the pope signed the decree approving the heroic virtues of Bishop Charlebois, making him "venerable." Before he can be beatified, the Vatican must recognize that a miracle has occurred through his intercession.

## Poll: Most Americans support life in prison over death penalty

**WASHINGTON (CNS)** – Most Americans support life imprisonment over the death penalty, according to a Gallup poll released Nov. 24, revealing a shift in the majority opinion on this issue for the first time in 34 years. The poll, based on results from telephone interviews conducted October 14-31 with a random sample of 1,526 adults in the U.S., showed 60% prefer that convicted murders receive a sentence of life imprisonment while 36% said capital punishment would be better. This view marks a shift in Americans' opinion over the past two decades. In the 1980s and 1990s, the majority opinion leaned toward the death penalty. The survey is also just the second time more people said they thought life in prison was a better punishment than the death penalty which they did by 1 percentage point in 2007 – 48% favoring life in prison to 47% favoring the death penalty. The current poll, with a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points, breaks down respondents by age, sex and party affiliation. Within these groups there were differing opinions: Women showed stronger support for life in prison (66%) than men (53%). Younger people were also more likely to show support for life in prison (68%) than older people (57%). Along party lines: 58% of Republicans supported the death penalty over 38% saying life in prison was the better option and 79% of Democrats preferred life in prison over 19% who preferred the death penalty be administered.

## Pope names finance inspector head of financial agency

**VATICAN CITY (CNS)** – Pope Francis appointed a seasoned Italian finance inspector to lead the Vatican's financial watchdog agency following the resignation of its president. The Vatican said in a statement Nov. 27 that the pope named Carmelo Barbagallo as the new head of the Financial Intelligence Authority, known by the Italian acronym AIF. In an interview with Vatican News published shortly after the announcement, Barbagallo said he was honored by the appointment and "aware of the full weight of the moral and professional responsibility it carries." "In carrying out my service of responsibility in leading the AIF, I will work to bring all my experience accumulated in 40 years working at the Bank of Italy, as an inspector, as head of vigilance of the Italian banking and financial sector and in the context of the supervision of the European banking system," he said. He also emphasized AIF's important role in upholding the "fundamental values of fairness and transparency of all financial movements."

# Youth take 'Deep Dive' in becoming vibrant witnesses

**INDIANAPOLIS (CNS)** – Katie Prejean McGrady acknowledged a truth about the National Catholic Youth Conference and similar events.

"All of us hit these walls when we leave these big events," the well-known Catholic speaker and youth minister from Louisiana said. "We don't know how exactly to take what we've heard, take what we've felt and articulate it in a way that is engaging, that is dynamic and that actually moves somebody to want to know and love Jesus."

NCYC planners recognized the phenomenon, too. Addressing a packed hall in the Indiana Convention Center Nov. 23 during NCYC, Prejean McGrady recalled an NCYC committee meeting she attended some time ago.

"The thought was, what if we went deeper with the young people who were ready to go deeper?" she said.

"A lot of NCYC is introductory. But NCYC is such an on-ramp for so many people who want to go deeper in faith."

Prejean McGrady said the committee asked, "What does it look like when you take a couple thousand of you, throw you in a room and actually equip you to go and be vibrant, visible witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ?"

That's how NCYC's new "Deep Dive" series of sessions was created.

Presenters offered practical tips during the new sessions about how young people – and anyone – can live their faith more intentionally through prayer and Scripture and by asking "How

can I help?"

Franciscan Father Agustino Torres mentioned the "out of sight, out of mind" tendency after NCYC.

Afterward, he said, "You're like, 'Woo, yeah!'" "Then two weeks later things get back to normal," he continued. "Sometimes you go home changed, but things at home haven't changed. ... You go back home to the same mess."

"My solution is prayer, love – and TACOS," he said, laughter filling the room as a slide appeared spelling out the acronym: "Telling Another Christ Overcomes Sadness."

Prayer is a must to keeping personal faith alive, Father Torres said.

"We must pray, because if we're going to dive deeper, we can't give what we don't have," he said.

Mass is the highest form of prayer and worship, but only for those who fully participate he told his young audience.

"If you go to Mass without putting anything into it, how can you expect to get anything out of it? I don't care if what the priest says in the homily is boring, Jesus is coming down in the Eucharist. He is being made present. Every single Mass is a miracle," he said.

His next tip focused on love, which he defined as when "we don't think first of ourselves but begin to think more of the person right in front of us."

That includes God.

"How many of you, the first thing you do when you wake up is check your (phone)?" Father Torres asked. "Don't think first of who contacted me; think first of contacting God.

Just make the sign of the cross and say, 'Lord, help me to love like you today.' Then you can check your phone."

For his last piece of practical advice, the priest admitted his "love for tacos" was so great, he found a way to incorporate them as a practical tip for living the faith: Tell Another Christ Overcomes Sadness.

"The best way for you to live what you receive" at NCYC, he suggested, "is for you to go up to other people, especially if they're down, and share a word of encouragement: 'Can I pray with you? Here's a Bible verse that's helped me.'"

"You never know how you sharing this message that Christ overcomes sadness can change a life."

Mark Hart, executive vice president of Life Teen International, didn't mess around in his Deep Dive session.

"If you actually want to live – not just to be, but to live – as a Catholic, you are going to have to get to know this book," he said, holding up the Bible. "This is nonnegotiable."

His first suggestion was to read upcoming Sunday readings in advance.

"The Catholic Church actually believes, this is so ridiculous, that in the 167 hours that you're not in Sunday Mass, that you would set aside some time to read the readings for Mass," Hart said in mock indignation.

Acknowledging people's busy lives, he suggested reading each of the Sunday readings, including the Psalm response, on separate days of the week rather than all in one sitting.

## ADIRONDACK

## CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Lake Placid – St. Agnes school to have its Christmas Bazaar.

**Date:** Dec. 7

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

**Place:** St. Agnes School

**Features:** A great way to start your holiday shopping. There are trees, wreaths, plants, toys, crafts, gifts, baked goods, raffles, silent auction items and so much more. Lunch will be served and Santa will make a visit.

**Contact:** Vendor space is available. Please call Kathleen Murphy at 518-523-3771 or email info@stagnesp.org.

## CLINTON

## WINTER CRAFT FAIR

Peru – CDA #2598 to have Fall into Winter Craft Sale.

**Date:** Dec. 7

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

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

**Features:** Vendors from all around the area with craft items, household items and more. Café lunches, soup, sandwiches and chips. Bake Sale with lots of goodies.

**Contact:** For more information contact Judy Akey at 518-643-8716

## PEACE IN THE WOMB CAROLING

Plattsburgh – Christmas Caroling to be held.

**Date:** Dec. 9

**Time:** 10 a.m.

**Place:** Planned Parenthood

**Features:** In the Christmas story, hope enters the world through the birth of a child, even in the midst of difficult circumstances. Join us as we sing carols and share this Christmas hope where it's needed most: the abortion facility right here in our community.

**Contact:** More Info contact Nancy Belzile, Chair at Champlain Valley Right to Life at 518-593-6024

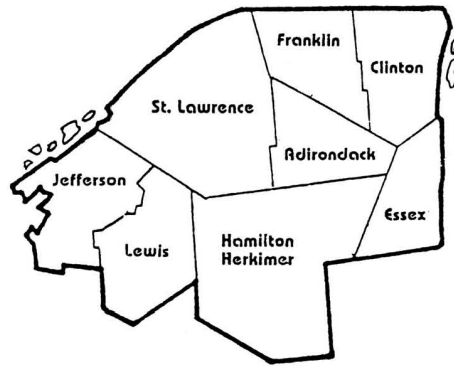
## CRAFT SHOW

Morrisonville – 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!



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.

## CHARISMATIC PRAYER GATHERING

Morrisonville – A Charismatic Prayer Gathering is to be held.

**Date:** the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month.

**Time:** 6:30 p.m.

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

**Features:** A time for prayer, praise, scripture, song, sharing and fellowship. All are welcome! An opportunity to grow in our relationship with God and each other.

**Contact:** For more information or if you have questions, please contact the church office at 518-561-5039.

## FRANKLIN

## HEARTS ON FIRE

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

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

**Place:** Notre Dame Church

## DEVOTION AND HOLY HOUR

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

**Date:** First Saturday of each month.

**Time:** immediately following the 4:30 anticipated Mass.

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

**Features:** Prayer after Mass, Night Prayer, Prayer for All Souls and the Holy Souls, Novena in Honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, the Reparation Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, private meditation on the 15 Mysteries of the Rosary, adoration of the Blessed Sacra-

ment reposed in the Tabernacle, prayers for the Holy Father and his intentions, and refreshments are provided in the Church Hall.

**Contact:** 518-856-9656

## JEFFERSON

## CATHOLICISM

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

**Date:** Dec 5. (Part 4); Dec. 12 (Part 5)

**Time:** 7 p.m.

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

**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. 8 at United Methodist Church, Alex Bay at 6:30 p.m.; Dec. 15 at Village Baptist Church, Adams at 6 p.m.; Dec. 22 at Holy Family Church, Watertown at 7:15 p.m.

## COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS TABLE

Clayton – Community Christmas Table and Living Nativity to be held.

**Date:** Dec. 7

**Time:** 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Place:** St. Mary's Parish Center  
**Cost:** \$8, over 50 delicious dishes to sample

**Features:** Stop in for the Community Christmas table. Again this year, students will present a living nativity.

## 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

## DAY OF REFLECTION

Lowville – All are invited to a Day of Reflection on "True Hospitality of the Heart" with Sister Bethany Fitzgerald.

**Date:** Dec. 7

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

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

**Features:** Lunch will be served.

**Contact:** Please call Deb Mullin at the Parish Office 315-376-6662 or 315-523-0336 to RSVP.

## ST. LAWRENCE

## CRAFT FAIR &amp; BOOK SALE

Gouverneur – Craft fair and book sale to be held.

**Date:** Dec. 7

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

**Place:** St. James School

**Features:** Santa will visit at 1 p.m.

Items available will include: Jewelry, woodcrafts, ceramics, stuffed animals, homemade dolls, leather goods, candles, knitted items, country crafts, Christmas ornaments and decorations, baskets, etc. Over 50 vendors will be there. Lunch will be available. Admission is a donation.

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

## CURSILLO WEEKEND

Ogdensburg – North Country Cursillo event to be held.

**Schedule:** For 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.

**Contact:** For more information please contact the person in your area: Watertown/Ogdensburg Area: Anne Seegebarth Email: ams2962@gmail.com, Phone: 315-

783-4596; Canton/Massena Area: Michael Neaton Email: neaton-michael@yahoo.com, Phone: 315-335-6302 or 315-261-4150; Port Henry/Ticonderoga Area: Dan Stewart Email: dshope4444@gmail.com, Phone: 518-898-6851; Plattsburgh Area or other not listed above: Ken Racette Email: kracette1a@gmail.com Phone: 518-314-1505 or 518-578-3056

## 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](http://www.rcdony.org/prolife)

## LEAD EVENT

Lake Placid – Diocesan LEAD event to be held.

**Date:** March 9-10

**Place:** Crowne Plaza

**Cost:** One LEAD member is free, Additional members cost \$50. If you have a team of 3 the cost is \$120. Non-LEAD parishites 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](mailto:jhargrave@rcdony.org) or by phone: (315)393-2920



*Support And Pray  
For Vocations*

## Also showing: Ford v. Ferrari

A film that revels in its 1960s gender stereotypes, evoking a "Great Man" age of auto racers in which the men were men and the women glad of it.

Director James Mangold, working from a screenplay by brothers Jez and John-Henry Butterworth and Jason Keller, keeps the story stripped down to the competition between automakers Ford (led by Tracy Letts and Jon Bernthal) and Ferrari (its namesake founder played by Remo Girone) to have their cars win the grueling 24-hour Le Mans road race in 1966.

Car developer Carroll Shelby (Matt Damon) and daredevil British driver Ken Miles (Christian Bale) fight off their personal troubles to form a successful partnership in which they also keep the corporate types at bay.

Ford v. Ferrari is probably acceptable for mature teens, despite some salty dialogue. The film includes intense action sequences, fleeting crude and crass language, a single racial slur.

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

# A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

AT THE MOVIES

**NEW YORK (CNS)** – Last year, "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" – filmmaker Morgan Neville's documentary about iconic public television children's show host Fred Rogers (1928-2003) – achieved both critical acclaim and remarkable success at the box office.

With the advent of the fact-based dramatization "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" (Sony), lightning, it would seem, has struck twice.

Assigned, much against his will, to profile Rogers (Tom Hanks) for an edition of Esquire magazine devoted to heroes, troubled, cynical reporter Lloyd Vogel (Matthew Rhys) sets out to tarnish his subject's halo. Instead, he finds his life transformed by the friendship into which his gentle, wise and unflappable new acquaintance gradually draws him.

In particular, Rogers helps to alter Lloyd's embittered attitude toward his estranged father, Jerry (Chris Cooper). Though Jerry has reached out in hopes of a reconciliation, Lloyd initially remains resolute in his refusal to forget his dad's past transgressions, especially his abandonment of the family at a moment of crisis during which he was too busy womanizing to live up to his responsibilities.

Rogers also has a positive influence on Lloyd's marriage since the latter's compassionate wife, Andrea (Susan Kelechi Watson), believes her husband should accept Jerry's repentance.

In adapting a 1998 article by Lloyd's real-life counterpart, Tom Junod, director Marielle Heller takes interesting artistic



CNS PHOTO/SONY

Tom Hanks stars in a scene from "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood."

risks with powerful emotional results. Significantly, she makes room for the thoughtful silences and quiet speech by which Rogers' subdued manner was marked.

Visually, Heller makes her own the interplay between reality and imagination that was a trademark of "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" throughout its long run from 1968 to 2001. A dream sequence even finds a miniaturized Lloyd dwelling temporarily in the Neighborhood of Make-Believe, the realm, as many will recall, of King Friday XIII.

The movie is at its best when the mesmerizing Hanks is on screen. But the treatment of topics like forgiveness, the need to prioritize family life over professional advancement and the power of prayer (Rogers was a Presbyterian minister) are consistently handled with skill.

What emerges is the

portrait of a man whose childlike delicacy and vulnerability were precisely his sources of strength – and the products of relentless discipline and hard work.

Although the script, by Micah Fitzerman-Blue and Noah Harpster, doesn't mention the fact, Rogers had a close friendship with Benedictine Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, the leader of a monastery in Rogers' hometown of Latrobe, Pennsylvania. That Rogers, with his high moral and spiritual aims, should have been drawn to the monastic life of Archabbot Nowicki's community, St. Vincent Archabbey, hardly seems accidental.

While Lloyd's struggles are too dark for little kids, teens and grown-ups will profit from this explicitly

humane, implicitly religious movie. The spell Rogers cast, which could even inspire a subway car full of hard-bitten New Yorkers to join a group of schoolchildren in honoring him by joyously singing his program's theme song, continues to exercise its magic from beyond the grave.

The film contains mature themes, including adultery, a fistfight, one mild oath and a single crass term. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II – adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG – parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.



## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

# Heeding the call of John the Baptist

On this second Sunday of Advent, the central figure is John the Baptist. One of the strangest figures in all of Scripture, he really came alive for me through a musical, popular back in the '70s, Godspell.

This popular show was based on the Gospel of Matthew. It began with the haunting sound "o" at goat's horn. Then a haunting voice is heard, singing "Pre-e-e-pare ye the way of the Lord!" Then



Monsignor  
Paul E.  
Whitmore

the phrase repeated as the orchestra picked up tempo, and the chorus chanted over and over again as they danced on stage – "Pre-e-e-pare ye the way of the Lord!!" All are now aware that the startling message is from that strange figure dressed in animal skin, John the Baptist.

John is the star of the show in Advent. He is Isaiah and Jeremiah and Elijah all wrapped into one, and it's

December 8

Second Sunday of Advent

READINGS

Isaiah 11:1-10

Romans 15:4-9

Matthew 3:1-12

clear he means business. His message is that the long-awaited Messiah is coming, and we'd better get our houses in order **fast**. It's not about sugar plum fairies and candy canes, it's about the people of Israel repenting of their many sins. Why? Because the Messiah comes to bring about the King-

dom that all the prophets told them about.

We rebuild the kingdom through prayer and reparation, and with faith in action.

Let's ask Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, whose feast we celebrate tomorrow, to help us pull that off without fuss or fanfare... daily prayer, reflection, almsgiving and fasting.

It also involves writing checks to just a few of those begging letters that come at this time of year, serving at community projects like our food pantries, praying and vis-

iting the shut-ins and the sick.

And where do we get the push? From those seven gifts of the Spirit mentioned in this Sunday's first reading – they're the ones we received at Confirmation, remember? And they still work.

Call on the Spirit to help make this an "action" Advent to help restore the badly damaged moral structure of our own dear country. That will open the doors and hearts of many discouraged people to the call of Christ for His Kingdom of truth and justice.

## Giving thanks and honoring St. Francis

By Eileen Greenwood  
Contributing writer

At St. Stephen's Church in Croghan, we have an annual tradition of inviting in families to join us for a "Thanks-For-Giving" gathering in our church hall.

The purpose of this day is to model an attitude of gratitude, so our students also learn to be thankful for all they have.

We always thank some very special people who volunteer their time and their talents and share their love for God and our Catholic Faith with us: our catechists.

We begin with a delicious frosted sugar cookie that each person is then able to decorate and enjoy.

Each catechist is called forward to be recognized and given a small gift of appreciation for all they do.

This year, they received a sunshine candle with the following quote from

St. Francis attached: "All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the light of one candle."

We are very grateful that our catechists share the light of Christ's love with their students and encourage them to then share that light with the world.

During our celebration, the students also learned about St. Francis and why he is so important to our center.

We shared a bit of the life of St. Francis, and how he gave up his wealth to serve God. St. Francis had a life that models for our students many beautiful characteristics we hope they strive to embody.

St. Francis shared his adoration for God with all he met.

He loved nature and took care of animals and honored and praised God for all creation.

He also wrote beautiful prayers we still pray today. The Prayer of St. Francis is one song we

still sing because of his humble life of service. He also is known to have assembled a live nativity, the very first one, to help people of that time understand the gift of the baby Jesus.

After we talked about St. Francis, students worked at their tables to solve puzzles and color pages about this special saint. It was a very enjoyable time!

It also helped our families to understand some of the history of our program.

The Faith Formation center at St. Stephen's has a very special name, chosen to honor St. Francis of Assisi. The "St. Francis Faith Formation Center" at St. Stephen's Church has been active here since 1977. Here is a little history about our center...

Father Leo Memorial School in Croghan was about to close after having been open for 75 years.

At that time St. Stephen's parish was

served by the Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Name Province. In fact, the Franciscan friars had been in Croghan since 1876. Four mission churches serving the neighboring communities of Castorland, New Bremen, Indian River and Belfort have since all been closed.

The parish education council, (made up of parishioners from each of the mission churches) wanted to respect and be inclusive of each church and to honor the patron saint of the friars, and named the new education center after St. Francis.

We have a statue of St. Francis outside of the Faith Formation Center. Near the Statue is a small evergreen tree that was planted last year.

As we end a catechetical year, we always plant a tree on the Church property to commemorate another year of growth in faith.

We have decided on a project to honor St. Fran-

cis and all he represents to us here in our center. St. Francis had a great love for God and creation and was known to care for and speak to animals.

This winter, each of our classes will take turns feeding the birds and other small animals with edible crafts on this evergreen tree throughout the winter season.

We also have begun to collect extra change in a donation box to eventually replace the outdoor St. Francis statue. It may take years for us, but it is important to continue to honor this special saint who means so much to our Church community.

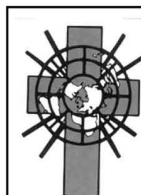
As St. Francis once said, "Start by doing what's necessary, then what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

We are sure that our love for St. Francis, who has been such an important part of our center, will continue to be shared for many more years.

# Learning from the missionary experience

By Father Francis Flynn

"The Church of God is Universal; she is not alien to any people", words from the letter of Pope Francis referring to the 100th anniversary of the Promulgation of the Apostolic Letter "Maximum Illud", issued by Pope Benedict XV in 1919. In 1973 I volunteered to go to San Martin de Porres in Mollendo Peru. I was part of a response to a call from Pope John XXIII for the Church of the Northern Hemisphere to help the Church in Latin America by "tithing" their priests and sisters. The number I heard floating around was a request for dioceses to send 10 percent of their priests to the south. At its peak the Diocese of Ogdensburg had a total of five priests in Peru, which was not 10 percent, but a large percentage given the number of priests we had in our diocese at the time. I remember visiting the Irish priests from Cork who were working in Trujillo, Peru, and they had 10 percent of their priests



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

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serving in Peru. They were the only diocese that could make that claim. The idea was foreigners would serve outside their home diocese for five years, during which it was hoped that native vocations would be found and there would not be a need for priests from outside.

I would like to share things that I learned about mission thanks to my experience in Peru. First, I had the mistaken idea that as a missionary I would be bringing God to the people, as if God wasn't already there before I got there. I learned that I needed to discover how God was present there and then reflect that back to the people. Sometimes they didn't appreciate how God was in their midst, and it took someone from

outside to point it out to them. I learned to appreciate a religiosity that was not mine: processions and devotion to the statues of saints. Processions, for example, I discovered they were a people walking with God. They were not a Church stagnant, but a Church on the move. The processions were a mix of piety and irreverence. Teens would be flirting with one another at the back of the procession. I came to realize that the procession was the Church as it really was – a mixture of good and bad, of saints and sinners.

Second, I learned to depend on the people as I was not in charge. They were. It helped that I had to learn a new language, Spanish. I was also learning a new way of thinking

and looking at reality. The Church wasn't mine. It was theirs. I was a guest in their community. They were not there to do my will. I was there to serve and not be served.

It has been 38 years since I returned from Peru. The first year back, there wasn't a single day that at some point my thoughts didn't return to Peru. It was a life changing experience.

In order to explain the experience of being a missionary, I use the example of the rocket launching a satellite. The first moment of danger is when the satellite is leaving the earth's gravity. Once it has broken beyond that and is in space, it is smoother sailing. An even more dangerous moment is when it returns to earth. It had already undergone great stress leaving and some parts may have been weakened. Returning to earth is harder than leaving it. I am sure any person who has served in the missions would tell you

the same. It was hard leaving, but after having immersed yourself in another culture and made the transition from outsider to insider, coming back home is harder. Home is where the heart is. Physically you may be in one place, while your heart is in another. It may take years before heart and body are once again in the same place.

Lastly, more important than going is coming back. It is what is called "reverse mission." What's the point of sending a rocket or satellite into space if it never comes back with its load of information? It was once thought that missionaries should leave forever and never come back home. But how then would their experience be shared? How could they help the sending Church see the receiving Church as part of the same Church? Which brings us back to Pope Francis' quote: "The Church of God is Universal; she is not alien to any People."

## OBITUARIES

**Champlain** – Victor Conrad Bechard, 44; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 30, 2019 at St. Mary's Church

**Keene** – Robin Gail (Pelkey) Lawrence, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 1, 2019 at St. Brendan's Church.

**Massena** – Jean L. Landon, 81; Funeral Services Nov. 23, 2019 at Phillips Memorial Home; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Massena** – Michele Ann Moniere, 59; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 26, 2019 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Moors** – Tammy Lee (DeCoste) Holbrook, 55; Funeral Services Nov. 23,

2019 at the Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in St. Ann's Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Susan M. Bouchey, 65; Funeral Services Dec. 1, 2019 at Frary Funeral Home.

**Plattsburgh** – Felixine "Phyl" Bijeau, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 24, 2019 at St. Peter's Church.

**Plattsburgh** – Dorothy Solesky Bonte, 99; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 25, 2019 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Gate of Heaven Cemetery, Hawthrone.

**Redford** – Sophie M. (Plumadore) Bosley, 97; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 29, 2019 at Church of the Assumption; burial in parish cemetery.

**Schroon Lake** – Theresa D. (Williford) Sabota, 68; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 6, 2019 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church.

**Waddington** – Larry E. Jones, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 30, 2019 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Watertown** – Jeannie (McCoy) Manteeley, 71; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 26, 2019 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

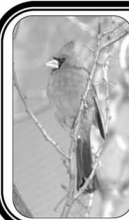
**Watertown** – Mary M. (Hladun) Seebler, 99; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 6, 2019 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in N. Watertown Cemetery.



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# Want to add to hope, healing? You can do Advent

By Mark Pattison  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Compared to Christmas, Easter and Lent, Advent is the Maytag repairman of liturgical seasons. Hardly anybody calls on it.

To many, Advent may seem like four weeks of the priest wearing purple vestments at Mass, while people are otherwise hurtling about trying to get ready for Christmas. The sentiment is understandable, since Walmart posted Christmas displays in stores even before Halloween was over, and some radio station in virtually every city of any size has been playing nothing but Christmas songs since before Veterans Day.

But if Catholics do take time for Advent, which begins Dec. 1 this year, they can find it to be a meaningful season.

"I love Advent!" said Kim Smolik, CEO of the Leadership Roundtable. "I love that Advent is a time that we have an opportunity to reflect on the many blessings in our life and to show our gratitude."

"I know we get pulled in other directions," Smolik added, but advent is for her "a time to slow down and to be with people. That's what I think the season is about."

"And hope. Hope. It's a season of hope."



CNS PHOTO/ANN M. AUGHERTON, ARLINGTON HERALD

The sequence of lighting the candles on an Advent wreath is to light the first purple candle on the first Sunday of Advent, which is Dec. 1 this year. Then move clockwise and light a second purple candle for the second Sunday of Advent, Dec. 8. On the third Sunday of Advent, Dec. 15, also known as Gaudete Sunday, the pink candle is lit. The last purple candle is lit on the fourth Sunday of Advent, Dec. 22.

Given the scandals that have scarred U.S. Catholicism over the past year and a half, Smolik said, Advent can be the time for Catholics to ask themselves, "How can I contribute to the healing in our church? What new life

can I bring to the church and how can I bring that forward in the next year?"

Smolik said one help for her is a Nativity scene. "I think that is putting our focus on Jesus, on healing, on light, on hope," she added. "I think we can use that nativity scene in our home. We can sit and be present at a place of meditation and prayer."

Joe Boland, vice president of mission for Chicago-based Catholic Extension, also finds great comfort in the creche.

Catholic Extension, which provides material and spiritual assistance to mission territories in the

U.S. church, promotes a concept called "Meet Your Creche," catholicextension.org/nativity. "The way that I'm going to meet my creche through the lens of Catholic Extension and as a Catholic is really through an encounter with the poor," Boland told Catholic News Service.

"Pope Francis keeps calling us to this idea of encounter. For me, for us, the creche and the Nativity scene is a moment of encounter. It's Christ encountering the world in a very unique and special way now," he said.

"It's going to be my moment with my own kids — they're 10, 8 and 6. They know their dad goes out around the country and meets a lot of kids. We have to pay attention to one really important to think about the creche. Jesus is born into poverty, and from poverty, we learn a lot."

He spoke of the hope people in Puerto Rico have despite the devastation they have suffered. Catholic Extension has ministered in Puerto Rico for a century, yet many are "recovering from the still-devastating effects of Hurricane Maria. Two years later and still absolutely no rebuilding yet," Boland said.

"But people still talk about their hope and God's solidarity with them as a people," he said, and "a sense of joy that God has given them life and they're going to use the best of their ability to help them and their neighbor."

The destruction there includes hurricane damage to 20 churches, yet people are "going out and still meeting their neighbors."

He recounted the tale of a Puerto Rican boy whose father has to work far away from home to earn money for the family. When the subject of Christmas came up, the lad's idea, according to Boland was: "We can put our gift in the front, and Dad will come home."

De La Salle Christian Brother Javier Hansen, a religion teacher at Cathedral High School in El Paso, Texas, sets out to instill habits his students may not have in cultivating Advent customs.

"A lot of our students cross the border (with Mexico) every day. I envy them in some sense because they go home and pray the rosary together," said Brother Hansen, adding that earlier in November, he "went over with them."

He noted that various institutions have their own calendar — the school year, the monthly calendar and "the church also has a liturgical year that begins in Advent."

A big fan of Advent music, Brother Hansen said he'll sit with his students and sing Advent songs with them.

"Advent tells a real story of our faith," he added. "Part of my job is to write reflections to the parents and the larger school community on virtues such a patience. That's a big virtue that's associated with the season."

Students, he said, "need a small reminder at times that secular society's not helping us all the time when they're putting Christmas ornaments in stores and everything, and (make it seem) that Advent doesn't exist. That's not their main intention, but that's kind of what it's doing to us."

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