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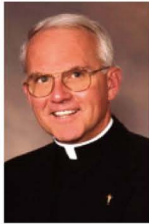
The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 74, Number 32

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

JAN. 15, 2020

Follow Me: Addressing past sins while focusing on our mission

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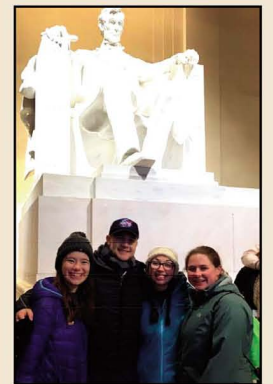
FULL STORY, PAGE 3

A SISTER, A STORY, A SONG



Seton Catholic students were very happy to have Sister M. Gregory Munger visit them on January 6, 2020. The students enjoyed the story of "The Runaway Bunny" and got to join her in song. Sister was very impressed with the insightful way they responded to her questions about vocations. Singing with Sister Gregory are Scarlett Gottschall, Vivian Howard, Oliver Sears, and Nolan McGowan.

PARTICIPATE IN THE MARCH



Youth from the Diocese of Ogdensburg visited the Lincoln Memorial during their trip to the nation's capital for last year's March for Life. There are several opportunities for residents of the diocese to attend this year's March for Life, including the Youth Buses for Life, a Campus Ministry group and family/adult buses leaving from both Clinton and Lewis Counties.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

Pope: Love is never indifferent to suffering

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Most Christians would agree it is wrong to hate someone, but it is also wrong to be indifferent, which is a camouflaged form of hatred, Pope Francis said. Real love "must lead you to do good, to get your hands dirty with works of love," the pope said Jan. 10 at morning Mass in the chapel of his residence, the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

Commenting especially on 1 John 4:19-21, Pope Francis said the Bible "does not mince words." In fact, he said, the Bible tells people, "If you say you love God and you hate your brother or sister, you're on the other side; you're a liar."

If someone says, "I love God, I pray, I enter into ecstacy, and then tosses aside others, hates them, doesn't love them or sim-

ply is indifferent to them," the pope noted, St. John doesn't say, "You're wrong," but "you're a liar."

"The Bible is clear because being a liar is the devil's way of being. He is the Great Liar, the New Testament tells us; he is the father of lies. That's the definition of Satan the Bible gives us," the pope said.

Love "is expressed by

doing good," he said.

A Christian does not get points for just standing by, he said.

Love is "concrete" and faces the challenges, struggles and messiness of everyday life.

Indifference, he said, "is a way of not loving God and not loving neighbor that is a bit hidden."

Pope Francis quoted St. Alberto Hurtado, who said, "It is good not to do

evil, but it is evil not to do good."

On a truly Christian path, one does not find those who are indifferent, "those who wash their hands of problems, those who don't want to get involved to help, to do good," he said. "False mystics are not there, those with hearts distilled like water who say they love God but forget to love their neighbor."

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Route 11 gives me road rage

While not a universal North Country experience, I'm guessing many of us in the northern and western parts of the diocese can identify with this sentiment: Route 11 gives me road rage.

Why? I'm not known for driving slowly. On Route 11, at least the portions I'm likely to travel, hills, curves and traffic make it almost impossible to pass if I end up behind a slower-moving vehicle.

If you use GPS, it will tell

you that Route 11 is the quickest route from my home in

Darcy L.
Fargo

Moira to the diocesan offices is Ogdensburg. I don't take Route 11, though. Even if it's shorter, I find myself so frustrated by my inability to get around slow-moving vehicles, it makes the trip feel like it takes forever. I find myself behind the wheel yelling, either in my head or out loud, "COME ON! MOVE IT!

"PICK UP THE PACE!" I feel like I have no control over my com-

mute.

Control is a funny thing. I'm very attached to the idea of it. But, really, do we ever have it? Even when I'm taking my preferred route to work, Route 37, I can't control the road conditions, other drivers, when I'll get stuck behind a school bus...

We never have total control. I struggle with that.

As I discussed my Route 11 road rage, and my control issues in general, with a friend, he pointed me to this line from Proverbs: "Many are the plans of the human heart, but

it is the decision of the Lord that endures."

I've added that quote to a note on my phone. I need to remind myself that God is in control. He has a purpose for every moment of my life, even if I can't see it.

Maybe God places me behind that slow-moving driver to help me avoid a collision with an animal or another vehicle. Maybe it's to teach me patience (I'm a slow learner on that one). He has a purpose. His decision endures.

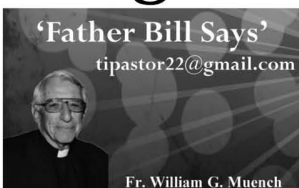
Even if it gives me road rage.

Relfecting on Christian unity

The first thing I think of during the month of January each year is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Each January, the Catholic Church sets aside a week to pray that one day there will be a unity among all Christians. One of the important messages of the Second Vatican Council was the importance of Church unity. One of the documents proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council is a Decree on Ecu-

menism. This document begins with this sentence: "The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council." This document reminds us all of the priestly prayer of Jesus at the Last Supper, when Jesus prayed to his Father for all believers: "that all may be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you; I pray that they may be one in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 17:21)

Following the Council, I remember as a young priest that every parish would develop programs and prayer services with the leaders and members of other Christian churches within our commu-



Fr. William G. Muench

nities. These were great opportunities to get to know each other and to develop further efforts to work together for the good of the community. Every year, a Prayer Service is planned during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Each year, the service is planned in a different Church. The service includes Scripture readings, prayers, and choirs of each church working together to plan proper music, all with this strong theme of Christian unity.

The other important day for joining together for prayer was Easter Sunday Sunrise Service. This service is a bit different for us, Catholics. Getting up early on Easter Sunday morning is a bit different, but I learned to enjoy the service and found it a good time for praying together as a community. However, many years it was rather chilly on Easter morning. Many years

Easter morning has been a beautiful moment as the sun rose and the moon was still bright in the sky. I must admit that I always enjoy the pancake breakfast after prayer.

I must share with you one of the most wonderful experience I know of churches working together. It involves St. Mary's School in Ticonderoga. I was pastor of St. Mary's, but this incident occurred after I had retired. When it happened, about five years ago, Father Kevin McEwan was the pastor. His pastorate demanded rather hard work. An arsonist set much of the St. Mary's School building on fire, and the fire resulted in a great deal of damage. This was the very first week of the school year. I have heard the story often of the help given to St. Mary's by all the church communities in the Village of Ticonderoga.

Sister Sharon, the school's principal, told me that the very night of the fire, as she stood in the street watching and probably wishing she could do something, the pastor of the Ticonderoga Methodist Church, Rev. Scott Tyler, who lived nearby,

came down to see what was happening. He did not hesitate to tell Sister that she would be able to use some of his parish center. Several of the lower grades would meet at the Methodist Church for the rest of the school year. The Methodist community was so welcoming. The children's prayer services were held in the Methodist Sanctuary; lunches were prepared in their parish center kitchen; their parish center became the cafeteria, the place for gym classes and even the location where the Christmas Program and other such programs were held. They were so wonderfully welcoming.

I have been told that every church community in the village did what they could to help St. Mary's School. The result has been a very close friendship – a close unity in so many ways – among the various churches in the village. I have experienced this unity often when I have visited Ticonderoga. It is truly a rather special association. I recognize that it was the result of a tragedy, however, I believe that deep down this spirit was always there, and the fire brought out best in everyone.

FOLLOW ME:

Addressing past sins while focusing on our mission

Today the great challenge to our faith and to our mission as a diocese is the sexual abuse scandal. The wounds of this crisis were re-opened with the report of the Pennsylvania Attorney General and the passing of the Child Victims Act in New York State last year. Our mission as a diocese is to continue to catechize, sanctify and serve the People of God in the North Country. At the same time, we will continue to reach out to victims of abuse in a way that helps to bring about reconciliation and healing for those who have been so terribly hurt by Church leaders.

Our diocese has been addressing the sexual abuse scandal for decades in a serious and determined manner. Over the past several years, we have instituted policies and procedures to prevent sexual abuse from happening. The procedures ensure that allegations are responsibly and justly handled when they are received. They call for pastoral outreach to victims who have been harmed by this evil. Tragically, in the past, serious mistakes were made when dealing with allegations of sexual abuse.

In our diocese, most incidences of abuse occurred in the 1940s through the 1980s. Cases that were reported in those decades were handled in ways that would be unacceptable today. Back then, most sexual abuse cases in our diocese were handled quietly by bishops, judges, parents, school principals, government agencies, prosecutors and psychiatric professionals. Their actions and decisions were

the result of the belief that counseling would rehabilitate the offender and that the stigma of abuse would be damaging to the victims and their families, and to the Church. Accordingly, the abuse was handled in a discrete fashion aimed at protecting the reputations of the victim, the accused and the Church.

We now know that these practices were very wrong and unacceptable. However, those in decision-making positions most often acted on the knowledge available to them at the time and upon the recommendations of professionals.

The Diocese reports allegations to the appropriate district attorney or law enforcement agency. We cooperate with the authorities in their investigations. We have an independent Review Board, comprised predominately of lay women and men with experience and background in abuse cases. Its task is to assess each allegation and recommend appropriate action. Clergy who are credibly accused of abuse are removed from ministry. Assistance to victims is offered by our Victims' Assistance Coordinator. Every victim is encouraged to meet with the Bishop.

Our diocesan safe environment program requires criminal background checks and safe environment training for all employees and volunteers working with children. We require safe environment education for children to help them recognize and avoid po-

tential abusers and inform them of how to report abuse. These measures have been effective. All claims received by the diocese relate to incidents that date back at least two decades. We have not had a report of contemporaneous sexual abuse of a minor occurring after 1999.

Prior to the recent passage of the Childs Victims Act, our diocese offered assistance to victims of abuse when claims were reported. In 2018, as part of the Year of Mercy, we reached out to victims of abuse through the Independent Reconciliation and Compensation Program (IRCP) seeking reconciliation with victims and compensation for them for what they suffered. We were able to resolve 38 claims through this program. Additionally, our diocesan attorney was able to resolve 14 claims outside the IRCP.

Under the Child Victims Act the criminal statute of limitations has been extended to provide a better opportunity to prosecute offenders. The Act extends the civil statute of limitations until the victim reaches age 55, affording victims a greater opportunity to pursue their claims in court. These provisions of the Child Victims Act were supported by the bishops of New York State.

The Act also opened a one-year window for victims to bring a claim of sexual abuse that was previously time barred. As a result of that provision, our diocese is currently

responding to 20 lawsuits claiming abuse. All these lawsuits involve claims of abuse that occurred decades ago, prior to the institution of our current safe environment policies and procedures.

The Church in the North Country continues to focus on discipleship while addressing these lawsuits. We simply cannot stop doing the work we are called to do as Church. With the help of professionals, we are evaluating our diocesan assets to determine how we can maintain our mission while addressing the needs and claims of victims. This is very time consuming and technical work for our staff and professional advisors.

Additionally, we have hired professionals to help evaluate the claims filed by the victims. We will continue to work with professionals to respond in a just manner to the claims that have been filed. We are evaluating how we can best address victims' claims and continue our mission. Civil litigation places great demands on our resources, staff and professional advisors. Our task is complicated by the fact that incidents underlying the claims occurred decades ago. Witnesses are unavailable, memories have faded, documents are hard to locate, and many of the accused are deceased.

I share this information to help you understand what the diocese is doing to address the lawsuits filed against it under the CVA, while maintaining our mission. As you know, additionally, the New York State Attorney General's office continues to review

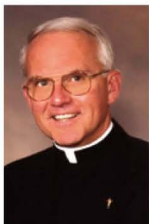
all of our documents that we have provided them pertaining to all sexual abuse cases handled by the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Certainly, these are challenging times for the Church and for our diocese. We need to address the sins of the past and reach out to victims who are suffering. However, all the while, we will remain focused on the mission Jesus gave us to preach the Good News to the ends of the earth. I shall keep you informed as our consultation process and review continues.

What can you do to help? First, pray for the victims of abuse, those who suffered at the hands of clergy and those who suffered abuse by others. Please pray for our clergy, religious, laity and for our diocese.

I am so grateful for your prayerful support. I am particularly grateful to our staff members who continue to devote long, difficult hours in this work. Please know that you all are in my prayers. We need God's strength and your support to help us through this time of testing. Please continue to support our diocese, your priests and parish family. Continue to support our safe environment programs and the daily living out of our faith.

We shall remain Christ-led, Christ-fed and Hope-filled, ever confident that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life.



**Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley**



Multiple groups plan March for Life trips

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

With several buses and vans making the trek from the Diocese of Ogdensburg to Washington, DC for the March for Life, there are still opportunities for area faithful to attend the march.

In addition to the annual Youth Buses for Life, a four-day pilgrimage for youth of the diocese, the March will be attended by 14 to 15 college students traveling with Campus Ministry, as well as buses of adults/families traveling from Clinton and Lewis Counties.

Youth Buses for Life

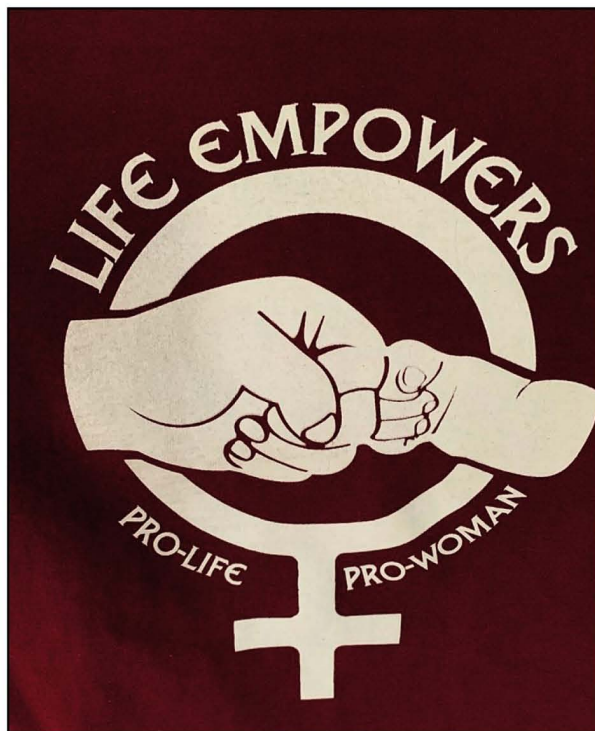
The Youth Buses for Life will travel to the nation's capital on Thursday, Jan. 23 for a long weekend full of pro-life education, prayer, making friends and having fun.

"Right now, we have 46 on the northern bus, the bus that picks up in Massena, Canton and Gouverneur," said Respect Life Director Colleen Miner. "We have another 25 on the western bus, the bus that departs from Watertown. Our biggest group this year is from Malone. They have 15 going."

The youth buses typically arrive in Washington, DC in the late afternoon on the first day of the four-day pilgrimage.

"Depending on timing, we try to take a quick outdoor tour," Miner said. "We visit the Lincoln Memorial and the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Then we check in at our hotel and go to a restaurant."

The Diocese of Ogdensburg group has rented the third floor of the restaurant, where they enjoy a meal together and hear a pro-life speaker. This year's speaker is Kate Mal-



one, a regional coordinator for Students for Life.

The youth and their chaperones then return to their hotel for the evening. On Friday, they'll depart their hotel by 9 a.m. to attend the Life is VERY Good rally and Mass at George Mason University. Sponsored by the Diocese of Arlington, the event includes opportunities for confession, music and Mass.

The youth are then given Chick-fil-A lunches before departing for the Washington Mall.

"It's a grassy area – sometimes a snowy area – where they set up a stage and speakers," Miner said. "They have speakers, typically pro-life voting representatives and celebrities. Last year, they had Vice-President Pence and a pro-life football player. This year, I know they also have abortion survivors speaking."

The march then pro-

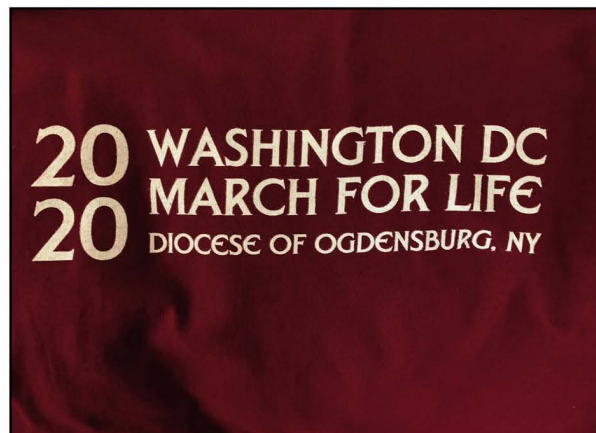
ceeds down Constitution Avenue to the steps of the Supreme Court building. There, the youth hear from representatives of "Silent no More."

"They tell their stories about why they regret their abortions," Miner said. "It's a powerful witness."

The group then proceeds to the Library of Congress, where chaperones conduct a head count. The Diocese of Ogdensburg group then walks to the Air and Space Museum, where they have an opportunity to experience the museum exhibits until closing time at 5 p.m.

The local group will then return to their hotel before walking to a local restaurant for dinner and possibly a speaker before wrapping up for the day.

On Saturday, Jan. 25, the local youth will attend the National Pro-life Summit at the DC Marriot. Previ-



Youth from the Diocese of Ogdensburg participating in the Youth Buses for Life pilgrimage to the March for Life will wear shirts featuring the image on the left on the front and the image above on the back. The youth will be joined at the march by a bus load of college students from the diocese, as well as buses from Plattsburgh and Lewis County.

ously known as the Students for Life of America National Conference, the event now encompasses Students for Life, Alliance Defending Freedom for Faith and Justice, Live Action, The Heritage Foundation, Heritage Action for America and Students for Life Action.

"Four of our college students have been selected to attend a leadership luncheon, where they'll learn additional information and leadership skills," Miner said.

After the summit, the group will go to dinner at Union Station and return to their hotel.

On Sunday, Jan. 26, the final day of the Youth Bus for Life pilgrimage, the local group will gather to celebrate Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception before departing for the return journey.

"The bus ride is also part of the experience," Miner said. "We pray the Rosary on the way down and back. The youth lead the Rosary. On the way back, the youth come forward and talk about what

they've learned or share the experiences they had and their overall thoughts on the pilgrimage. They watch educational videos, as well as movies that are just fun. We do a quiz on the bus to see how much they've learned, and we give out prizes."

Each bus has a bus captain/chaplain. This year, Father Martin E. Cline will be riding the western bus, and Father Scott A. Belina will be riding the northern bus.

"We also have a special guest joining us this year," Miner said. "Bishop (Terry R.) LaValley will be getting on the northern bus in Canton. He's never been on the bus with us before."

While it's a long bus ride full of events, Miner said the journey also gives the youth an opportunity to connect.

"They become friends so fast," she said. "I always worry when we have just one person from a community. I worry they may not know anyone. It never seems to matter. Either they know each other

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

N.Y. bishops condemn proposed surrogacy bill

Catholic News Agency

ALBANY – The bishops of New York stated their opposition to commercial surrogacy Wednesday as a new bill was introduced to legalize the practice in the state.

“The surrogacy legislation is designed mainly to benefit wealthy men who can afford tens of thousands of dollars to pay baby brokers, at the expense of low-income women,” said a Jan. 8 statement from Kathleen M. Gallagher, director of pro-life activities for the New York State Catholic Conference.

A bill, A.1071 / S.2071,

has been introduced in the state legislature which removes existing prohibitions on surrogacy contracts in New York. The Empire State is one of the few remaining states in the country not to have legislation on surrogacy.

Under the legislation, embryos created in a laboratory through in vitro fertilization (IVF), using sperm and eggs that may or may not be from the legal parents, can be transferred to the uterus of a woman who, having agreed to be a surrogate mother, is contractually obligated to bear the child and give the baby back to the legal parents.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Catholic, supports the legislation.

Regarding the practice of IVF, the Catechism of the Catholic Church paragraph 2376 teaches that:

“Techniques that entail the dissociation of husband and wife, by the intrusion of a person other than the couple (donation of sperm or ovum, surrogate uterus), are gravely immoral. These techniques (heterologous artificial insemination and fertilization) infringe the child's right to be born of a father and mother known to him and bound to each other by marriage. They betray the spouses'

'right to become a father and a mother only through each other.”

The New York Catholic Conference, which speaks on behalf of the bishops of the state, called the bill “a dangerous policy that will lead to the exploitation of poor, vulnerable women, and has few safeguards for children.” There are no safeguards such as residency requirements and background checks for surrogate parents, the conference says.

Other countries, including almost all European Union members, have begun moving away from the practice after cases of abuse of poor women act-

ing as surrogates were made public.

India, Nepal, Thailand and Cambodia have banned the commercial surrogacy trade and the EU Parliament has found it to be a “serious problem” and one “which constitutes an exploitation of the female body and her reproductive organs.”

In addition, the legislation explicitly denies any and all rights to babies in utero, stating that they may not be viewed as a ‘child’ under the laws of New York, with the presumption that they must instead be viewed as manufactured products or disposable goods.

March for life trips

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

from Guggenheim or other youth events, or they just become fast friends.”

Miner said the youth who attend the event continually amaze and impress her.

“Our kids are great,” she said. “They’re really into making new friends, and they really seem to take a lot out of the experience. Last year, kids from our group were interviewed by Fox News. They blew me away with the answers they gave to the reporter’s questions. The kids said it better than I could say it.”

To participate in the Youth Buses for Life, visit rcdony.org/prolife. Prior to registering, please call or text Colleen Miner at 518-524-0774 prior to registering to ensure space is still available.

Clinton County

Seats are still available on a bus leaving from Plattsburgh on Thursday evening.

Deacon Randy Smith

said the bus will depart from St. Peter’s Church at 7:45 p.m. on Jan. 23, returning at around 4 a.m. on Jan. 25.

“It’s one of those things where you say ‘I’m never doing this again’ on the way down, but by the time you’re on the trip back, you’re so energized, you’re saying ‘I can’t wait to do it again,’” said Deacon Smith. “It’s inspiring and awesome. I’m old. I’ve had my chance and my generation messed things up. But then you see all the kids that show up – it’s probably 75 percent kids. It gives us hope that there’s going to be a future for us.”

The bus typically arrives at the march site around 6 a.m., giving riders the opportunity to explore the area and hear speakers prior to the start of the march at 1 p.m. The group departs for home immediately after the march.

Thanks to donations from Knights of Columbus Council 255 and other

local councils, the cost for each rider is only \$30.

“We wanted to make it affordable for families,” Deacon Smith said. “And if that \$30 is keeping someone from attending, they should give me a call, and we’ll make sure they can get to the march.”

While they’ve missed a couple marches due to weather or scheduling issues, Deacon Smith said a bus has left from Plattsburgh to attend the march for around 20 years.

“We have people from Vermont join us, we have people from outside the Plattsburgh area,” he said. “Anyone who wants to go is welcome.”

To reserve a seat on the Plattsburgh bus, call Deacon Smith at 518-566-6229.



Lewis County

Lewis County Right to Life has also been sponsoring a bus to the March for approximately 20 years.

This year, the bus leaves Port Leyden around 9:30 p.m. on Jan. 23, arriving at the march site in the morning on the 24th.

The group departs immediately following the march, stopping for dinner on the return trip.

Students ride the bus free. For adults, the suggested donation is \$50.

To register for the bus, contact Paul Campeau at 315-486-7928.

Career Opportunity

DUE TO GROWTH, AND RETIREMENT OF AGENTS IN THE *KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS* INSURANCE PROGRAM WE ARE ADDING FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME CONSULTANTS IN CLINTON, ESSEX, AND FRANKLIN COUNTIES.

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If this sounds like something you would like to be considered for, or if you know a fellow Catholic gentleman that might be interested in this opportunity, please call (518)-593-3298 or email me at shawn.tetreault@kofc.org



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Environmental Stewardship

Look beneath
the surface

Last week, you were invited to pay attention to how you interacted with aspects of creation. "Do I see it as an object there solely for my use, or do I see it as a unique expression of God's goodness and creativity?"

You may have discovered that your initial reaction to anything most often is: how can it help me or how might it harm me? For example, the way I look at a tree initially could be in the way it fulfills my needs – shade, shelter, food, heat. Or it could be seen as a potential hazard to my home or an obstacle to my view. In each of these instances, it is seen for how it will affect my life.

However, James Kilmer, in his poem "Trees," sees the trees beyond their usefulness. He begins "I think I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree."

Likewise the psalmist also looks at a tree in Psalm 1 as a metaphor for the one who follows God's ways. "That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither."

St. Francis, faithful to Scripture, invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of His infinite beauty and goodness. (Laudato Si #12)

Another way of viewing the world around us is revealed by a tour guide at the Mohawk Six Nation Museum in Onchiota.

In response to visitors' complaints about the black flies, he asked, "Do you like birds?" All responded YES! He then said, "No bugs, no birds!"

His response reminds us of the interconnectedness of all creation, each with its own purpose.

Our call to be "caretakers" requires us to see beyond the usefulness of the natural world and to consider its intricate sacredness emerging from God's creativity and its interconnectedness with everything else on the planet.

How can this awareness affect the decisions I make today?

Bishop's Public Schedule

Jan. 15-16 – NYS Bishop's Retreat at Our Lady of Florida Spiritual Center in North Palm Beach, Florida

Jan. 19 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Jan. 20 – 7:15 p.m. – Novena followed by Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Jan. 22 – Board of Bishops meeting at Cardinal Cooke Catholic Center 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

Jan. 15 – Msgr. James Joseph Lacey, 1942

Jan. 16 – Msgr. James Alexander Fix, 1969; Rev. Herbert Skurski, O.F.M.Conv., 1996

Jan. 17 – Rev. Francis A. Menard, 2009

Jan. 18 – Rev. Hugh Shields, 1881; Rev. Telesphore Campeau, 1935; Rev. Paul Martin Hagan, 1980

Jan. 19 – Rev. Benjamin Desroches O.M.I., 1908; Rev. Arthur P. Condon, 1966; Rev. Aloysius R. Isele, 1974

Jan. 20 – Rev. William D. O'Byrne, 1928; Rev. Joseph Erhard, O.M.I., 1936; Rev. Victor Viaud, O.M.I., 1937; Rev. Joseph Pontur, 1940

Jan. 21 – Rev. Albert W. Giroux, 1991; Rev. Adam Zajdel, O.F.M.Conv., 1997; Rev. Patrick C. Callaghan, O.F.M., 2001

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terri-
anne Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY, 12955

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

Sister Mary Louise Genest died January 6 at age 91

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Mary Louise Genest, a Servite sister, was held Jan. 11 at Our Lady of Sorrows Convent in Omaha, Nebraska.

Sister Mary Louise died Jan. 6, 2020 at the age of 91.

Born May 31, 1928, she was the daughter of Edward and Bertha Genest.

She was preceded in death by parents and a

sister, Mrs. Gladys Larrow. She's survived by a sister, Arlene Conklin (Richard); and a brother, Ron Genest.

Sister Mary Louise served as teacher and principal at Sacred Heart School in Massena from 1971-81 before moving to Rome to serve as general secretary for the Servants of Mary, a role she held until 1983. She served as a teacher at Trinity

Catholic School in Massena from 1983-93, a permanent substitute teacher at Trinity from 1993-94, and as a part-time French teacher at Trinity from 1994-2011. She retired in 2011.

Memorial donations may be made to the Servants of Mary, 7400 Military Ave., Omaha, NE 68134.

Letter to the Editor

To the editor,

So much to be thankful this past year, as I prepare to depart Northern New York, with finality.

With renewed strength of faith, I am often reminded to share my spirits with fellow Catholics who enjoy the music of

Catholic worship. The gift that you all bestowed upon me will ever be in my heart with the duty to share it with others to relieve the burdens of life here on Earth.

At large, representing Catholic ministry with music, The Northern Choral Society brought additional study of great historical Christmas pieces, and again I must thank St. Patrick's Choir members for referring me there, with recommendation.

Singing Christ's messages to commemorate his birth and life, as well as Blue Mass Latin tributes, were memorable spiritual experiences for me as well, offering many opportunities for growth, and shared

strength during challenging times.

With relocation and renewed employment eminent, the joy of Catholic faith and with these ministries always present, I reflect with thanks and great humility the opportunities that faith in God have provided me.

Thank You St. Patrick's.

Timothy Allan William
Drew

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults.

Pre-registration online is required.

Participants may preregister at www.virtus.org.

Upcoming sessions:

Jan. 30 – 6 p.m., Wakefield Recital Hall at SUNY Potsdam

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters from readers of the North Country Catholic.

- Due to space limitations, we ask that the number of words be limited to 300.

- We cannot accept letters which support ideas which are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

- Send letters to North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY, 13669 or e-mail to news@northcountrycatholic.org

- Join the conversation!

Correction

In the Dec. 18 edition of the *North Country Catholic*, it was incorrectly stated that Father Joseph N. Sestito was a recipient of the priests' retirement fund. Father Sestito does not accept support from that fund at this time.

The NCC regrets this error.

For a New or Used Car

**Mort
Backus &
Sons**

On Canton-Ogdensburg Rd.
315-393-5899



CHEVROLET



*Support And Pray
For Vocations*

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Bishops require mail balloting to OK assessment increase

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The U.S. bishops, nearly two months after the issue was presented to them at their fall general meeting in Baltimore, approved a 3% increase in their diocesan assessment for 2021. "Yes" votes were recorded by 130 bishops – exactly the number of votes needed to pass the measure. On Nov. 11, the first day of their Baltimore meeting, the bishops had given their OK to a budget nearing \$22.69 million for 2020. That vote, 211-11 with one abstention, required a majority of bishops present and voting. But the diocesan assessment increase required instead a "yes" vote from two-thirds of diocesan and eparchial bishops for it to pass. With 195 such bishops, two-thirds represents 130 bishops. The final vote was 130 bishops voting yes, 62 voting no and three abstentions. Chieko Noguchi, director of public affairs for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, confirmed the results in a Jan. 10 email to Catholic News Service, adding the bishops have been notified of the results. The original vote Nov. 11 was inconclusive, 111-55 with three abstentions. Under USCCB statutes, bishops not present are mailed ballots to help generate a final tally.

Former cardinal moves from Kansas friary to new location

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Theodore McCarrick, the former cardinal who was laicized by the Vatican in 2019 after numerous claims of abuse by him were substantiated, moved Jan. 3 from the Capuchin Franciscan friary in Kansas where he had been living since late 2018. McCarrick made the move on his own accord, according to a spokesman for the Capuchin Franciscan province that oversees the friary. The former prelate had stayed a little over one year at St. Fidelis Friary, run by the Capuchin Franciscan order in Victoria, Kansas, in the Diocese of Salina in the northwestern part of the state. While his new residence has not been publicly disclosed, one diocese vociferously declared that McCarrick was not within its territory. "Rumors that the former cardinal Theodore McCarrick has moved to Jacksonville and is staying at a priest retirement facility in the Diocese of St. Augustine are absolutely false. The diocese has made no arrangements for McCarrick to stay at any of its church-owned properties," said a Jan. 8 statement from Kathleen Bagg, diocesan communications director for the northeast Florida diocese.

Brazil's high court: Netflix can air 'First Temptation of Christ'

SAO PAULO (CNS) – Supreme Court Justice Jose Antonio Dias Toffoli has overturned a lower court decision to temporarily suspend Netflix's Brazilian-made movie, "The First Temptation of Christ." The satirical movie has been severely criticized by Catholic organizations and hundreds of Brazilians for suggesting that Jesus had a homosexual experience after spending 40 days in the desert. "It should not be assumed that a humorous satire is capable of weakening the values of the Christian faith, whose existence goes back for over 2,000 years, and the belief of the majority of Brazilian citizens," Dias Toffoli said in his Jan. 9 decision. The Supreme Court justice also noted that freedom of expression is "a condition inherent to human rationality, as a fundamental right of the individual and a corollary of the democratic regime." Brazil's judiciary is in recess until February, so it is up to Dias Toffoli to rule on matters he considers most urgent until the courts are back in session. The suspension of the movie on Netflix's website was requested by a conservative Catholic group, Dom Bosco Center of Faith and Culture.

Pope sets special day to honor, study, share the Bible

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The newly established "Sunday of the Word of God" is an invitation to Catholics across the world to deepen their appreciation, love and faithful witness to God and his word, Pope Francis said.

By papal decree, the third Sunday in Ordinary Time – Jan. 26 this year – is to be observed as a special day devoted to "the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God."

A day dedicated to the Bible will help the church "experience anew how the risen Lord opens up for us the treasury of his word and enables us to proclaim its unfathomable riches before the world," the pope said in the document establishing the special Sunday observance.

Dioceses and parishes have been invited to respond with creative initiatives, helpful resources and renewed efforts for helping Catholics engage more deeply with the Bible at church and in their lives.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, said added emphasis on the importance of the word of God is needed because "the overwhelming majority" of Catholics are not familiar with sacred Scripture. For many, the only time they hear the word of God is when they attend Mass, he told Vatican News Sept. 30, when the papal document, titled "Aperuit Illis," was published.

"The Bible is the most widely distributed book, but it's also perhaps the one most covered in dust because it is not held in

our hands," the archbishop said.

With this apostolic letter, the pope "invites us to hold the word of God in our hands every day as much as possible so that it becomes our prayer" and a greater part of one's lived experience, he said.

In his letter, Pope Francis wrote, "A day devoted to the Bible should not be seen as a yearly event but rather a yearlong event, for we urgently need to grow in our knowledge and love of the Scriptures and of the risen Lord, who continues to speak his word and to break bread in the community of believers."

"We need to develop a closer relationship with sacred Scripture; otherwise, our hearts will remain cold and our eyes shut, struck as we are by so many forms of blindness," he wrote.

Sacred Scripture and the sacraments are inseparable, he wrote. Jesus speaks to everyone with his word in sacred Scripture, he said, and if people "hear his voice and open the doors of our minds and hearts, then he will enter our lives and remain ever with us."

Pope Francis urged priests to be extra attentive to creating a homily each Sunday that "speaks from the heart" and really helps people understand Scripture "through simple and suitable" language.

The homily "is a pastoral opportunity that should not be wasted," he wrote. "For many of our faithful, in fact, this is the only opportunity they have to grasp the beauty of God's word and to see it applied to their daily lives."

Pope Francis encour-

aged people to read the Second Vatican Council's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, "Dei Verbum," and Pope Benedict XVI's apostolic exhortation on the Bible, "Verbum Domini," whose teaching remains "fundamental for our communities."

The pope also suggested pastors provide parishioners with the Bible, a book of the Gospels or other catechetical resources, "enthroned" the Bible in order to emphasize the honor and sacred nature of the text, bless or commission lectors of the parish and encourage people to read and pray with Scripture every day, especially through "lectio divina."

"The Bible cannot be just the heritage of some, much less a collection of books for the benefit of a privileged few. It belongs above all to those called to hear its message and to recognize themselves in its words," the pope wrote.

"The Bible is the book of the Lord's people, who, in listening to it, move from dispersion and division toward unity" as well as come to understand God's love and become inspired to share it with others, he added.

The celebration of the Sunday of the Word of God also "has ecumenical value, since the Scriptures point out, for those who listen, the path to authentic and firm unity," he wrote. The third Sunday in Ordinary Time falls during that part of the year when the church is encouraged to strengthen its bonds with the Jewish people and to pray for Christian unity.

CLINTON

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Peru – St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus Council 7273 to have a spaghetti dinner.

Date: Jan. 18

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

Place: St. Augustine's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$9; Children 6-12, \$4; 5 and under, Free

Features: Take-outs are available. Helps fund Coats for Kids, Kids Day Out, Youth Programs, Keep Christ in Christmas Poster Contest and More.

BLOOD DRIVE

Plattsburgh – Catholic Daughters Court #479 and Knights of Columbus Council #255 will co-Host an Adirondack Regional Blood Center Blood Drive.

Date: Jan. 23

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Peter Church, The Emmaus Room

Contact: 518-563-9483 or 518-536-0265

MARCH FOR LIFE

Washington D.C. – Plattsburgh bus to Washington D.C. for March for Life.

Schedule: Bus to leave St. Peters at 7:45 p.m. on Jan. 23 and it will return to Plattsburgh on Jan. 24

Cost: \$30

Contact: Deacon Randy Smith 518-566-6229.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

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

Date: 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.

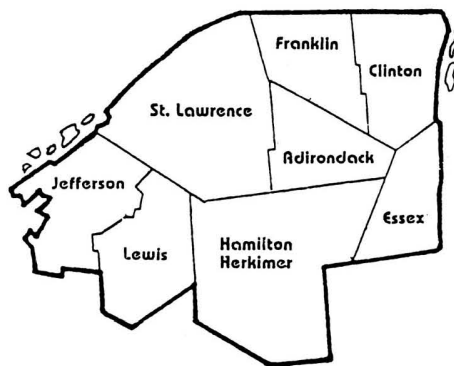
Schedule: #2 – Jan. 16 – "Sacraments"; #3 – Jan. 23 – "Saints" #4 – Jan. 30 – "Prayer"; #5 – Feb. 6 – "Heaven & Hell"

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. Refreshments.

Contact: Holy Family Rectory, 315-



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.

782-2468

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

SURVIVING DIVORCE

Watertown – Surviving Divorce program to be held.

Date: 12 Sessions for 6 weeks starting Jan. 21 on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 8:30

Place: St. Anthony's Church

Features: Separated and divorced adults, come find support and healing.

Contact: For more information, contact Steve Tartaglia at startaglia@rcdony.org or (315) 393-2920.

RESPECT LIFE PRAYER VIGIL

Watertown – Heal Our Land Interfaith Respect Life Prayer Vigil to be held.

Date: Jan. 27

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: In front of Watertown Municipal Building on Washington Street

Features: Music by the King family. This peaceful half-hour vigil will be followed by refreshments in the nearby First Presbyterian Church.

Contact: For further info contact Betty-Ann Honan at 315-782-3616 or Bette Hartzell at 315-785-1087

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Watertown – St. Anthony's church to have a Spaghetti Dinner.

Date: Jan. 30

Time: Take-outs begin at 4 p.m., dinner 4:30 p.m. to 6:30

Cost: Adults, \$8; Half portions for children or adults, \$4.50; children 3 and under, free; Sauce, \$5 quart (bring a pot); extra meatballs are 75 cents each.

PARISH MISSION

Watertown – "Dare to be Holy," A parish mission to be hosted by the parishes of St. Anthony, St. Patrick, Holy Family and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.

Schedule: Feb 9 at Holy Family Church; Feb. 10 at St. Patrick's Church; Feb. 11 at St. Anthony's Church; Feb. 12 at Sacred Heart Church

Time: 6:30 p.m. all days & extra special session after 12 p.m. Mass at St. Patrick's Church Feb. 10-12

Features: Bill Wegner will be joining us to preach our Parish Mission. Everyone welcome. Offering will be taken. Refreshments will be served.

Contact: For more information call 315-782-1190

FISHERS CLUB

Watertown – Priesthood discernment group to meet for those men hearing the call.

Date: Feb. 23, March 22, April 26, May 31

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: St. Anthony's Church, Sechi Hall

Features: For High School Junior

men & older. Meetings will have discernment, evening prayer & dinner. It's never too early to begin the discussion with your Pastor or another trusted priest.

Contact: Just drop in or contact Father Chris Looby at fatherlooby@gmail.com 315-782-1190 or Father Christopher Carrara at ccarara@rcdony.org 315-375-6571

LEWIS

BRUNCH

Lyons Falls – The Father Paschal Rys Knights of Columbus will be sponsoring an all you can eat pancake brunch.

Date: Jan. 19

Time: 8 a.m. to noon

Place: St. John's Church Hall

Cost: Adults, \$8; Students, \$5; Under 5, free

ST. LAWRENCE

ST. JAMES SCHOOL GALA

Gouverneur – St. James School Gala with the theme of "God Bless the USA" to be held.

Date: Feb. 8

Time: Doors open at 5:45 p.m.;

Treasure Chest Keys go on sale at 6:30 p.m.

Place: St. James School

Cost: \$60 per person; \$45 special ticket price for active and retired military, law enforcement, and emergency responders.

Features: Tickets are available at the parish office or log onto stjamesk6.org, hit the donate button and purchase your tickets. Ticket includes: Admission to our auctions, raffles, appetizers, full course dinner, dessert bar, drinks and dancing. Must be 21 years of age. Formal attire is optional. Join us as we ignite the pride in every American heart and celebrate our Hometown Heroes.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Canton – Knights of Columbus to sponsor a pancake breakfast.

Date: Feb. 9

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Place: St. Mary's School Gym

Cost: Adults, \$7; Children 5-10, \$5; Under 5, Free; Families, \$30

DIOCESAN EVENTS

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: 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 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 jhargrave@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, 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. Register by March 18 by emailing crussell@rcdony.org or by calling 315-393-2920

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Following Jesus like Andrew and Simon

The lights of Christmas and Epiphany have all faded. We've come from last Sunday's feast of the Baptism of the Lord into eight Sundays in "Ordinary" time. Watch out! Ordinary time in the liturgy never means going back to "business as usual." True, Jesus has long since grown out of his swaddling clothes, grown through puberty to life as an adult "man with a mission." Certain words in the readings stand out – words like "servant" and "mission" and "follow me."

The first reading from Isaiah was selected to show God's plan for His Son. From Mary's womb, he was destined to be His Father's servant, that He might bring the chosen people back to faithful observance of the Law. But in



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

the same reading, God says "It is too little for you to be my servant...I will make you a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." Here we have a clear statement of what Jesus' mission is all about.

In the Gospel, John gives eloquent testimony of what he heard God say from the heavens about His beloved Son. The very next day, John sees Jesus coming toward him. He turns to his own followers and says, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world." Why does John call Jesus a lamb? Because the world "lamb" connects Jesus with both the "suffering servant" of Isaiah and the paschal lamb of sacrifice.

January 19

Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS

Isaiah 49:3, 5-6;

1 Corinthians 1:1-3

John 1:29-34

Then he explains to them what had happened when he poured water over Jesus' head, exclaiming that he saw the Spirit descend on him and remain with him. Only the prophetic power of the Baptist could make a statement like that!

Jesus acknowledges the truth of what John has said by beginning to gather his own followers. It's a major turning point in the story of our salvation as Andrew and his brother Simon became the first disciples of the Lord. How casual it all seemed. They ask Jesus where he lives, and Jesus simply says, "Come and you will

see."

How attractive Jesus must have been to those seeking more from life. Older priests like myself find it puzzling that today's young men do not seek Him out as Andrew did. Is it Jesus who fails to attract them? Or is it the life of the priest that doesn't appeal? Young people should "come and see," and ask their pastor for information and advice.

Of course, the underlying attraction is love. Unless a young man falls in love with Jesus as Andrew and Simon did, he will never pursue a vocation. Only love can quiet the voices of protest from the world around them and give them the courage to sacrifice the normal seeking out of a lovely woman with whom to have a family and build a career.

Why should young men seriously consider priesthood as a lifetime com-

mitment? Because priesthood leads not only to personal holiness and salvation, but because it brings this about through the priest guiding countless others to salvation through the sacraments of the church. There is no other calling in life to equal it. It is a life of imitation of Jesus' life and mission in his great love for people, his willingness to search out the lost, to counsel and encourage, bless and forgive sins by God's power, to be a part of every family, yet belonging to none.

What does it take to become a priest? Priesthood takes sacrifice, generosity, common sense, adequate intelligence, piety and a sense of humor.

Know anyone that has those qualities? Then give them a nudge, pray for them and encourage them. The Holy Spirit will carry on from there!

The event of the decade

The following is an unsigned editorial titled: "Event of the decade" which appeared on the website of the Catholic Register, the Toronto-based national Catholic Canadian newspaper.

From a Catholic perspective, few if any dates were more significant during the soon-to-close decade than Feb. 11, 2013.

On that day Pope Benedict XVI, citing his age and declining health, broke an 800-year tradition of popes holding onto office until death with the stunning announcement of his retirement. It has our vote as the defining church moment of the past 10 years.

A consistent theme throughout Pope Bene-

dict's eight-year papacy was the connection between faith and courage. An essential component of faith, he taught, is courage. Christians need courage to uphold truth and defend Catholic values in a secular age, to be heard in the public square and, ultimately, courage to trust in God's will.

And in Pope Benedict's case that meant the courage to stand aside and let a man with more vigor assume the crucial work of leading the church in difficult times. The papacy, he said, is not about the person who wears the ring of St. Peter but about the greater mission to make disciples of all nations.

So, if it takes a strong

spine to accept the mantle of pope, perhaps it takes an even a stronger one to announce to the world, after much prayerful reflection, you are no longer up to the job.

It's unlikely, however, that even Pope Benedict foresaw the degree of fortitude required from all Catholics to endure what became a decade so consistently darkened by scandal. Faith and courage, as Pope Benedict taught, are indeed inextricably linked and each faced a stern test over the past 10 years.

The person most immediately affected by Pope Benedict's bold resignation was Pope Francis.

As Pope Benedict made history by leaving, Pope

Francis made it by arriving as the first non-European pope in modern times, the first from the Americas, the first called Pope Francis and the first Jesuit.

Unlike every other pope over the previous century, Pope Francis had never even studied or worked in Rome. A true outsider and reformer, Pope Francis was passed over in the 2005 papal conclave and only got a second chance because Pope Benedict decided the pope could indeed retire.

In personality and style, the gregarious Argentinian arrived as a stark contrast to his German predecessor. But although different in many ways, Pope Francis has mirrored Pope Benedict's high regard for

courage or, as Pope Francis succinctly puts it: "a cowardly Catholic doesn't make much sense."

Pope Benedict's resignation, as he neared his 86th birthday, gave us a new way to regard the papacy. He once said that should a pope become physically, psychologically or spiritually unable to perform his duties, he had a moral duty to retire rather than cling to the title and rewards of office.

To step down was a bold decision and, years from now, will form a central component of Pope Benedict's legacy.

Church history may well record it as the most significant single event of the decade, and maybe the most courageous.

AT THE MOVIES

1917

NEW YORK (CNS) – "1917" (Universal) is a great movie about the Great War. By turns harrowing and lyrically beautiful – and deeply humane throughout – director and co-writer (with Krysty Wilson-Cairns) Sam Mendes' gripping historical drama displays both the horrors of trench combat and the endurance of fundamental decency and spiritual striving.

Our entree into the grim spectacle of the global conflict comes as two friends serving with the British Army on the Western Front, Lance Cpls. Schofield (George MacKay) and Blake (Dean-Charles Chapman), are dispatched on a dangerous mission across enemy territory.

Their task is to warn a nearby commander, Col. Mackenzie (Benedict Cumberbatch), that, by carrying out an imminent attack, he will be falling



CNS PHOTO/UNIVERSAL

George MacKay, center, stars in a scene from the movie "1917."

into a German trap. Their mission is made all the more urgent by the fact that one of the 1,600 men under Mackenzie's command facing slaughter if the assault goes forward is Blake's brother, Joseph (Richard Madden).

Mendes keeps the stakes high and the pace unflagging as the duo journeys across a once-fruitful but

now ruined landscape. While the relentless challenges lying in their path may strike some canny moviegoers as a bit extreme, most will be too busy rooting for the success of their quest to notice.

Unsparring in its portrayal of misery and desperation, "1917" also is luminous in its affirma-

tion of civilized values. This is especially true during an encounter between Schofield and a refugee mother who has taken shelter in a basement as she tries to care for her infant child.

Mendes brings as light and artful a touch to this peaceful interlude as he does to the anti-war theme that pervades the picture. Like a good novelist, he takes to heart the admonition to show rather than tell.

The tension between cynicism and faith also is dealt with in a subtle way. Thus when a burnt-out officer, Lt. Leslie (Andrew Scott), finds that Schofield and Blake are determined to carry out their orders, despite what he regards as hopeless odds, he "anoints" them with the contents of the flask he's been drinking from while reciting a prayer from the rite then known as Ex-

treme Unction.

Yet, at a climactic moment, the singing of a transcendent hymn transfixes a company of soldiers as they're about to go into battle – and the audience along with them. While the message conveyed by this scene is broad and implicit, it's also – like "1917" as a whole – profoundly moving.

The film contains much combat violence with gore, numerous gruesome sights, slightly irreverent humor, a fleeting sexual reference, about a half-dozen uses of profanity, several rough terms and occasional crude and crass language.

The Catholic News Service classification is A-III – adults. The Motion Picture Association rating is R – restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

CNN settles suit with Covington Catholic student

WASHINGTON (CNS) – CNN reached an undisclosed settlement Jan. 7 with Nick Sandmann, a Kentucky Catholic high school student who sued the cable news outlet for defamation over its coverage of an incident that occurred after last year's March for Life.

Sandmann, a junior last year who was at the center of the viral video controversy, sought \$275 million in damages in his lawsuit filed against CNN last March. He has also sued The Washington Post and NBC Universal.

A federal judge let part of the suit against The Post continue after the paper filed a motion to

dismiss it. Trial dates have not yet been set for these two cases.

The amount of the CNN settlement was not made public during a hearing at the federal courthouse in Covington, Kentucky.

After the announcement, Sandmann tweeted: "Yes, We settled with CNN," which gained more than 82,000 likes by the next day and hundreds of comments, primarily of support.

Sandmann sued media outlets for what he claimed was biased coverage of what transpired at the Lincoln Memorial Jan. 18, 2019.

That day, Sandmann, wearing a "Make America

Great Again" hat, smiled just inches away from Nathan Phillips, a Native American leader, as Phillips chanted and beat a drum.

The day after that encounter, clips from a video of that encounter went viral almost immediately, which showed students surrounding Phillips while appearing to be mocking him.

The clip caused immediate outrage, particularly on social media. But by the next day, extended footage of how the situation unfolded revealed that another group had taunted the students and some responded back. Phillips said he had

walked over to the students and the group as an intervention.

After the initial video went viral, Sandmann said in a statement that he had "received physical and death threats via social media, as well as hateful insults."

Sandmann's school and the Diocese of Covington initially condemned the students' behavior but then backed down as more information came forth and they called for a third-party investigation into the situation.

The conclusion of that report, released by the Covington Diocese Feb. 13, 2019, found no evidence that the students

had issued "offensive or racist statements" that they had been accused of doing.

In a letter to parents of Covington Catholic High School last year, Bishop Roger J. Foys of Covington said his hope that the investigation would "exonerate our students so that they can move forward with their lives has been realized."





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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

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

Missions see great Christmas appeal

The Mission office is indeed grateful for your Christmas sacrifices and donations, which are such a blessing to the Church as it serves the poor of the Missions. Through these donations, you help to support the work and witness of religious sisters throughout the missions, especially as they offer loving service to children in need.

With your giving to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, you are helping so many who work in the mission lands, religious and clergy alike, who bring this Good News to the poor and suffering. They also bring a better way of life to the poor and the suffering in the form of medicine, food, shelter and guidance.

I ask your continuing prayers for our mission family as life in the mission lands is not easy and not always secure.

Thank you for trusting in the love you show by your support and sacrifices to our brothers and sisters in developing countries.

Let us reach out as missionaries and confidently announce the Good News of Christ with words and deeds. The best Christian testimony is love for others.

Have a blessed new year!



Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.
www.rcdony.org/mission

OBITUARIES

Adams – Henry Masters Colby, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 9, 2020 at St. Cecilia's Church; burial in Rumford Center, Maine.

AuSable Forks – Juna Parrow, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 16, 2020 at Holy Name Churchy.

AuSable Forks – Bonnie L. (Blaise) Trombley, 62; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 7, 2020 at Holy Name Church.

Brushton – Christopher J. Deon, 28; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 14, 2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Chasm Falls – Grace E. (Larry) Barcomb, 87; Mass of Christian Burial June 26, 2020 at St. Helen's Church; burial in St. Helen's Cemetery.

Malone – AZC Kenneth Roy Batchelder, 73; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 8, 2020 at Notre Dame Church.

Massena – Elizabeth "Betty" (Donalis) D'Arienzo, 98; Funeral Services in Spring; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – George Y. Krstich, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Therese Larocque MacMillan, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 9, 2020 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Mount Royale Cemetery, Montreal.

Mooers Forks – Ashley M. D. LaFountain, 18; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 10, 2020 at St. Ann's Church.

Ogdensburg – M. Jacqueline (LaVenture) Cushman, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 9, 2020 at Notre Dame Church.

Peru – George Arnold Howard, 74; Funeral Services Jan. 11, 2020 at the Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in St. Augustine's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – George V. Douglas, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 10, 2020 at

St. Peter's Church; burial in Whispering Maples Mausoleum.

Port Henry – Barbara Genier Fecura, 76; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 19, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church.

Potsdam – James M. Nicola, 63; Mass of Christian burial in the Spring at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Tupper Lake – Ellen M. (Grote) Crary, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 7, 2020 at St. Alphonsus Holy Name Church.

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FACES OF FAITH



The Canton Knights of Columbus held its annual "Free Public Skating" on Christmas Day at the Canton Pavilion. A good time was had by all. Pictured are Brother Knights Mike Christy, Randy Brown and Grand Knight John Taillon.



Jim Guinness and Michael Wagner decorate St. John the Baptist Church in Plattsburgh for the Christmas season.



Seminarians from the Diocese of Ogdensburg recently gathered with their families and Bishop Terry R. LaValley to celebrate the Christmas season. Pictured are, from left, Douglas Schirmer, Jude Nnadibuagha, Kevin McCullough, Matthew Conger, Nicholas Olley, Carter Pierce, Bishop LaValley, John Ojuok, Leagon Carlin, Aaron Akey, Lukas Gruber, Severinus Torwoe, Thomas Middleton and Tyler Fitzgerald.