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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 74, Number 36

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

FEB. 12, 2020

Follow Me: Mental health is part of wellbeing

World Day of the Sick occurs on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, Feb. 11. Remembering the day, Bishop Terry R. LaValley reminds us that mental health is an essential part of wellbeing.

"For too long, our society has minimized, ridiculed, isolated, ostracized or ignored the devastating effects of this disease. Mental illness is the cause for so much heartbreak suffered by the person afflicted, family members, as well as those victimized from the violent behavior that sometimes is the consequence of un-treated mental illness.

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PASTOR INSTALLED



SEMERARO PHOTOGRAPHY/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Bishop Terry R. LaValley, center, recently installed Father Kevin D. McEwan, right, as the new pastor of the Plattsburgh Parish, soon to be known as "Holy Cross Parish." Also pictured is Deacon John J. Drollette. See the full story on Page 7.

CALLED TO SERVE



Deacon Kevin T. Mastellon, diocesan director of Permanent Deacons, and Deacon John J. Drollette, diocesan director of Deacon Formation, discuss the role of the deacon, the impact the ministry has had on their lives and the process through which men become deacons.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

Pope: Humility is the Christian way of life

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Christians are called to follow the same path of humiliation Jesus followed to the cross, and they should not flaunt their piety or position in the church, Pope Francis said.

Everyone, including members of the clergy, can be tempted to take the "way of the world" and try to avoid humiliation by climbing up the proverbial ladder of success, the pope said in his

homily Feb. 7 during morning Mass at the Domus Sanctae Marthae.

"This temptation to climb can also happen to shepherds," he said. "But if a shepherd does not follow this path (of humility), he is not a disciple of Jesus: he is a climber in a cassock. There is no humility without humiliation."

The pope reflected on the day's Gospel reading from St. Mark, which re-

counted the imprisonment and death of St. John the Baptist.

St. John's mission wasn't only to announce the coming of the Messiah, but also "to give witness to Jesus Christ and give it with his life," he said.

"It is to bear witness to the path chosen by God for our salvation: the path of humiliation," the pope said.

Jesus' "death on the cross, this way of annihi-

lation, of humiliation, is also our way, the way that God shows Christians to go forward."

Both Jesus and John the Baptist faced temptations of vanity and pride: Christ faced them in the desert while John humbled himself in front of the scribes when asked if he was the Messiah, the pope explained.

Pope Francis said that although they both died "in the most humiliating

way," Jesus and John the Baptist emphasized through their example that the true "path is that of humility."

"The prophet, the great prophet, the greatest man born of woman — this is how Jesus describes him — and the Son of God have chosen the path of humiliation," the pope said. "It is the path that they show us and that we Christians must follow."

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Be careful praying for humility

Be careful praying for humility. You just might end up humbled.

It started with a discussion in an online group. The original poster indicated she was struggling with pride in a couple aspects of her life. Several group members commented on the post, suggesting the woman incorporate the "Litany of Humility" into her prayer routine.

I was somewhat familiar with this prayer prior to this conversation, but it hadn't been on my radar much lately. I struggle with pride. I'd like to think a lot of us do. For those so in-

clined, the Litany of Humility is a tough prayer. In that prayer, we ask the Lord to deliver us from things like, "the desire of being praised," "the desire of being approved" and "the fear of being despised."



Darcy L.
Fargo

But I like being praised and approved, and I don't like being despised. Yup. It seems like I need this prayer.

For the last couple of months, I've tried to pray this Litany of Humility at least once a week. It's made me more aware of all the ways the Lord humbles me, usually exactly when I need it.

A couple months ago, as I sat to write a column for that week's edition, I thought I had gold. I kept thinking to myself, "this is a topic with which people can identify. People are going to like this one." When the column appeared in print a couple days later, I reread it, again congratulating myself on how good I thought it was. Then, I reached the end of the column and found a giant editing mistake. I was reminded that I'm not as good as I sometimes think I am. Humbled.

On a recent morning, I was super tired after staying up far too late talking about books with a friend. While exhausted, I was thinking

about how intelligently I participated in the book discussion. I was proud of my literary knowledge.

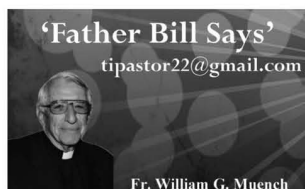
Then I spent almost 10 minutes looking for my car keys, checking every table, pocket and purse in the house several times. Finally, it occurred to me that my keys were already in my vehicle. My husband had started it for me to let it warm up and defrost. I guess I'm not that smart. Humbled again.

While I don't really enjoy being humbled, every time it happens, I try to remember that I need to be humbled. And I try to remember to be careful what I pray for, because I just might get it.

Two favorite readings on one day

I am often surprised when I discover that some of my favorite Scripture readings are matched together at a Mass, especially at a daily Mass. Today, I attended Mass while down here in Florida on a bit of a getaway from home. I am visiting my brother and sister-in-law, Mary Lee and Tom, who have a place in Delray Beach. I mention that because if you happen to be in the neighborhood, please stop over. Both Scripture readings are favorites of mine. I have used them often when teaching, as well as at Mass. The Old Testament reading from the Second Book of Samuel is the story of the death of Absalom. The Gospel reading is the story of a healing of Jesus, His raising of Jairus' daughter. I was wishing I could have given the homily this morning.

So, let me take a minute today and share with you these two wonderful stories. You have heard them often. The Books of Samuel describe the history of the kingdoms of Saul and David. In



today's story, during David's older years as king, his third son, Absalom, forms an army and revolts against his father, David. During a battle, Absalom is killed.

The Scripture describes a currier who runs to the city to notify David that Absalom has died and David's army has won the battle. However, David is upset and broken hearted that his son, Absalom, has been killed. We are told the occasion becomes a time of mourning instead of celebrating for David's army. David is personally crushed. His prayer – a prayer that is well remembered – is recorded in the Scripture: "My son, my son, Absalom! If only I had died instead of you, Absalom, my son, my son."

The life of his son is so important to David, even if this

son has turned against him and challenged his rule as king. For David, this was his son, whose birth he had celebrated many years ago, whose various achievements during his young life were rewarded, who he truly loved even when this child turned against him. An interesting story isn't it.

I am reminded of the story I heard once of a mother being interviewed while standing outside of a prison, where her son was about to be put to death for a crime he had committed. She continued to express her love and respect for him. As a priest, I have stood with parents who were trying to come to grips with the fact that their son or daughter had left home and had truly turned against their parents. They were crushed and upset and yet continued to love their child.

The Gospel story is a much happier incident in Jesus' ministry. Jairus, a synagogue official, comes to Jesus and actually kneels, obviously declaring his faith in Jesus as he

asks Jesus to heal his daughter. Jesus agrees to go to his home. Jairus' faith is again tested when some people meet him on the way declaring that the girl has died. Jesus again encourages Jairus to have faith. Obviously, a challenging moment for Jairus.

At the home, Jesus enters the house with the girl's parents and with Peter, James and John. We are told that the girl was 12 years old. Twelve is an important number for the Hebrew people. There are 12 tribes of the Chosen People. For us, Christians, 12 is also important. There are 12 apostles of Jesus. Jesus takes the girl by the hand and raises her to life. I always love that the story ends with Jesus telling the parents to give her something to eat.

I am reminded of a doctor I knew so very long ago. He was a very special man. I am told that after treating a child, he would take his prescription pad and write, "take this child out and get him or her an ice cream cone."

FOLLOW ME

Mental health is an essential part of wellbeing

World Day of the Sick occurs on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, February 11, 2020. Lourdes is the world-wide destination of so many pilgrimages. In that mountainous region of France, our Lady wished to demonstrate her maternal love, especially toward the suffering and sick.

On that site, since the day of the apparition to Bernadette Soubirous, Jesus has, through His Mother's privileged intercession, healed pain and sickness and restored many of her daughters and sons to health.

Even when they don't receive the desired gift of healing, pilgrims are able to receive something

much more important: conversion of heart, peace and interior joy.

This Feast Day reminds you and me of our responsibility to pray for all those who are hurting.

A serious affliction that haunts many is mental illness. We won't find many who suffer this disease numbered among the pilgrims headed for Lourdes.

For too long, our society has minimized, ridiculed, isolated, ostracized or ignored the devastating effects of this disease.

Mental illness is the

cause for so much heart-break suffered by the person afflicted, family members, as well as those victimized from the violent behavior that sometimes is the consequence of un-treated mental illness.

As you know, in some tragic cases, mental illness can lead one into such a state of hopelessness and despair that the taking of his/her life is seen as the only relief or remedy for the pain endured.

Mental health is essential for our overall wellbeing, yet mental health challenges are more diffi-

cult to identify. As you know, many today are afflicted with post-traumatic stress disorder and opioid addictions, both public health crises of our generation.

Addiction is increasingly recognized as a medical, not a criminal problem – a disease of the brain, not a disease of choice.

Attentiveness, patience, hope and knowledge of treatment options are characteristics we should exhibit when caring for our sisters and brothers who suffer, but these are especially essential to meet the unique challenges of those afflicted with mental illness.

We extend gratitude to

health-care workers, medical and paramedical personnel and researchers – especially those dedicated to discovering new treatments for those who suffer.

As we remember that every person is due the dignity and respect of one created in God's image and likeness, we pray for all those who seek wholeness of mind, body and spirit.

We pray for family members who care for loved ones who are hurting.

May the Blessed Virgin help us all to witness that the only authentic answer to pain, suffering and death is Christ our Lord, who died and rose for you and me.



Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley

SUMMER 2020

GUGGENHEIM CAMP COUNSELOR
APPLICATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED!

A GUGGENHEIM COUNSELOR SHOULD BE A HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE, 18 YEARS OR OLDER, HAVE A MINIMUM OF ONE YEAR OF COLLEGE OR WORKFORCE EXPERIENCE AND PARTICIPATED IN A COUNSELOR TRAINING PROGRAM (E.G., TEEN VISION) OR WORKED AS A CAMP COUNSELOR IN A YOUTH LEADERSHIP POSITION. AN APPLICANT SHOULD BE A PRACTICING CATHOLIC WHO IS WILLING TO SHARE FAITH WITH YOUNG PEOPLE. GUGGENHEIM OPERATES FOR 7 WEEKS - JUNE 18 THROUGH AUGUST 7. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT THE APPLICATION PAGE.

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Deacons: Called to serve the Father, the people

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

OGDENSBURG – “A deacon is called to serve,” said Deacon John J. Drollette, diocesan director of Deacon Formation. “That’s the core of it.”

Deacons are ordained ministers. As ordained ministers, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) says deacons “are called to the functions of Word, Sacrament and Charity.”

“As ministers of the Word, deacons proclaim the Gospel, preach and teach in the name of the Church,” USCCB says. “As ministers of Sacrament, deacons baptize, lead the faithful in prayer, witness marriages, and conduct wake and funeral services. As ministers of Charity, deacons are leaders in identifying the needs of others, then marshalling the Church’s resources to meet those needs. Deacons are also dedicated to eliminating the injustices or inequalities to meet those needs.”

Deacon Drollette and Deacon Kevin T. Mastellon, diocesan director of Permanent Deacons, say having deacons in the diocese has become increasingly important in recent years.

“We’re certainly seeing evidence that we have a shortage of priests,” Deacon Mastellon said. “It’s becoming increasingly important that we have others – lay ministers and ordained ministers – to help in parishes. With deacons, we have ordained men who have committed their lives to Christ. With that, we have the opportunity to have men in parishes to aid in the administration of the sacraments and to help in the parishes.”



DEACON KEVIN MASTELLON/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Deacon aspirants were accepted for candidacy by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on Oct. 4. Candidates include, from left, James Carlin, Mark Webster, Robert Uttendorfsky, Randy Besio, Roderic Roca, Bishop LaValley, Daniel LeRoy, Kenneth Lushia, Brent Davison, Kenneth Racette, Gerald Bouchard, Lee Trudeau, Michael Lieber, Jr., Noel Voos and Peter Wooschlager.

“In the days when parishes had four or five priests, duties were split between them,” added Deacon Drollette. “Now, we have a lot fewer active priests in the diocese. Those few priests are responsible for meeting the spiritual needs of their parishes. Having deacons helping allows for more pastoral needs to be met. In this diocese, we have deacons in hospital ministry, prison ministry, helping people with family needs, economic needs.”

Deacon Mastellon noted that priests remain the principle administrators of sacraments.

“We’re not trying to take the place of priests; that’s not our role,” he said. “We’re helping out where there are needs. We are men who are dedicated to Christ, to spreading the good news, and we assist and work with our priests to do that. Our function, our ordination conforms us to Christ and to His service capacity. Jesus came to serve his Father

and serve the people. That’s what we do.”

The role of each deacon within their parish is largely dependent upon the desires of the pastor, Deacon Mastellon said.

“A pastor can ask a deacon or assign a deacon to a number of different tasks,” he said. “A deacon might run the RCIA program. They might handle sacramental preparation. They typically assist at liturgy on weekends and holy days, and sometimes during the week. In some cases, a deacon may have various administrative functions, though that’s not limited just to deacons. We have a deacon, Deacon Brian Dwyer, who runs the parishes’ day-to-day operations as a pastoral life coordinator with a pastor serving as the canonical head of the parishes. A number of deacons are pastoral associates. It all depends on what the pastor needs them to do and that relationship with the pastor.”

The vast majority of the deacons in the diocese are

married, and that can create additional challenges, the deacons said.

“The deacon may be working a full-time job and then spending another 10 or more hours at the church, and that can really eat into family life and the relationship with the spouse,” Deacon Mastellon said.

“It’s about finding a balance,” added Deacon Drollette. “If you have a healthy relationship at home and a healthy relationship with the Church, these things can blend and work themselves out, but it can be a process.”

The deacons said the ministry is worth the work it takes to overcome the challenges.

“I’ve grown so much, both intellectually and spiritually,” said Deacon Mastellon. “I’m a totally different person than I was in 2003, when I was ordained. I’m calmer, quieter. I listen better. I see things differently. I thank God for all those blessings. Being a deacon has really changed my life.”

Forming deacons

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

OGDENSBURG – With the current diaconate formation program wrapping up in October of 2021, now is a good time for men considering the vocation to start discerning more seriously.

According to Deacon John J. Drollette, diocesan director of Deacon Formation, the first step for men who feel they may be called to the diaconate is to complete the Formation for Ministry program.

“The Formation for Ministry program is a prerequisite unless the individual has completed some other educational component that would replace that program,” he said.

After Formation for Ministry, individuals who want to be considered for the diaconate typically attend information sessions, which will be scheduled around the diocese.

“We try to hold the sessions in central areas to get as many individuals together as possible,” Deacon Drollette said. “These sessions are opportunities to ask questions, meet deacons and learn about the formation process.”

Men who are interested in pursuing ordination as a deacon then apply to the program, and the applications are reviewed by a panel. Men in that stage of the process are referred to as “inquirers.” Inquirers

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Forming deacons

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

also undergo background checks, psychological testing and interviews as part of the process.

Once accepted into the program, deacon aspirants participate in a four-year process that includes focus on four areas of development.

"The four components are spiritual, intellectual, human and pastoral," Deacon Drollette said. "During the four years, we look to grow in each of those four areas. Before a man can become a candidate and later be ordained, they have to have an understanding of the theology of our faith and be able to talk intelligently to people and explain what our faith teaches for the intellectual component. For the spiritual, they have to practice their faith and be willing to do it in a public way. There's the human dimension of it, and they have to be able to share what is common within the parish. And they have to have the ability to work one-on-one with people and be pastoral."

Throughout the program, the participants are building community, deepening their faith and learning.

"It's an ongoing discernment process," Deacon Drollette said. "There have been times individuals have completed the program and chosen not to be ordained. And the discernment doesn't stop even after ordination, for those who make it to that point. We continue to discern and deepen our faith as we serve. We do continuing education. We have regional meetings and convocation. It's all about community and faith."

In many cases, the discernment doesn't just impact the man discerning whether he's called to the

vocation.

"If the man is married, his spouse has to agree," Deacon Drollette said. "Throughout the program, there are times the wife has to give her permission for her husband to move on."

Wives are also included in the formation process.

"There's a wives' program that mirrors the diaconate," Deacon Drollette said. "Karen Donahue is the director of that program. Each weekend the candidates meet, the wives are also invited. They talk about what a deacon does, how he serves, how they can help, how to handle it if they don't have the time to help – those kinds of issues. And there are different levels of involvement. Some wives come every weekend, while others come a couple times each year. There's no right or wrong. Each couple needs to find its own balance."

"We try to stress that the deacon and his wife grow spiritually together," added Deacon Kevin Mastellon, director of the Permanent Deacons. "They may not be in the same place spiritually, but there's growth – spiritual growth – for both the deacon and his wife."

Those in formation are required to complete 26 online classes, currently offered through the University of Notre Dame. In addition, they attend one weekend session per month, currently offered the first weekend of the month, through the academic year.

"We typically do five courses Friday through Saturday," Deacon Drollette said. "We start on Friday with evening prayer, dinner and our first class of the weekend. Right now, we start with a course in Canon Law with Bishop LaValley. We start Saturday

with Mass and breakfast, and we do four courses throughout the day. We finish at 5:30, go to chapel for evening prayer, and go home for the weekend."

In the course of the lengthy process, some men discern that they're not called to the diaconate. "In the current group, we started with 24, and we're down to 14," Deacon Drollette said. "We had one death, and we had others who determined it wasn't where they were called right now."

The discernment continues with those 14.

"I think most guys coming into the program don't know if the goal is to be ordained," Deacon Drollette said. "Basically, they have just enough information to want to make them continue delving deeper into their faith. If someone had asked me in my third year if I planned to be ordained, I would've answered 'I'm not sure. I don't know yet.' I had to receive the totality of the program and have enough information from the Holy Spirit to make that emotional and spiritual decision. It's a decision that affects my family and my parish. You know you have the commitment after completing the four years, because of what the program asks of you educationally and spiritually but being ordained is just the beginning. We mature physically and spiritually after ordination. This is an ongoing process."

For more information about the formation process, or to express in-

terest in a future class, contact Deacon John Drollette at jdrollette@rcdony.org or 518-726-0019.

Rest in Peace

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

Feb. 12 – Rev. Richard O'Donnell, 1949

Feb. 13 – Rev. Richard J. Maloney, O.M.I., 1893; Deacon Edward F. McAuliffe, 1986; Rev. Harry E. Giroux, 2012

Feb. 14 – Rev. John McDonald, 1879; Msgr. Gerald F. Kellogg, 1979; Rev. Charles Joseph Richard, 2007

Feb. 15 – Msgr. James H. Driscoll, 1928

Feb. 16 – Rev. André Marie Garin, O.M.I., 1895; Rev. Joseph Alexander Fournier, O.M.I., 1904

Feb. 17 – Rev. Joseph Alfred Hervieux, 1940; Rev. Francis B. Ruddy, 1976

Feb. 18 – Rev. Charles Guillot, M.S.C., 1985

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, 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

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:
Feb. 11 – 3 p.m., St. Mary's School, Ticonderoga
Feb. 19 – 6 p.m., Catholic Community of Cape Vincent, Rosiere and Chaumont, in Cape Vincent

Bishop's Public Schedule

Feb. 17 – Pontifical College of Josephinum Board Meeting in Columbus, Ohio

Feb. 19 – 11 a.m. – Council of Priests Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by lunch

Environmental Stewardship

Why be concerned about microplastics?

In science, it is only after much extensive study and experimentation that an idea can be given any credence, despite the seemingly common-sense nature of the proposal. Such is the case with plastics; as it seems only logical that the abundance of these man-made compounds would lead to problems in the environment.

It has only been in the past few years that researchers are noting the presence of invisible fragments of plastics, referred to as microplastics, in samples of air. The concentration of these airborne particles seems to be widespread and not limited to areas around population centers. One study undertaken this past spring notes the presence of microplastics within the human digestive system of everyone examined in this unique research project. While the results of these few studies are troubling, it must be emphasized that more comprehensive work must be undertaken before drawing conclusions.

The presence of such small fragments of plastics appearing in samples of our air and within our bodies has raised speculation that even smaller remnants of plastics, called nanoplastics, might be present in our environment. Scientists, however, have noted that currently there are no means of detecting such ultra-tiny pieces of plastics, and our capability of identifying such objects remains years away.

It seems to make sense that allowing plastics to enter the environment in the vast quantities that they currently do is only creating a hazard for future generations. Some individuals claim that microplastics, or nanoplastics if they exist, may not be of any harm to human health, or detrimental to the well being of any form of life on the planet.

As with climate change, it seems wrong to wait until science can definitely state that this form of trash is a hazard to life on the planet. It seems to make sense that, as a society and as good Christian stewards we need to reduce and try to eliminate as much plastic from entering the environment as possible. The challenge is before us NOW.

CLINTON

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

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

Date: 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

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Peru – St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus Council 7273 will host a spaghetti dinner.

Date: Feb. 15

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

Place: St. Augustine's Parish Center

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

Features: Take-outs are available. Proceeds benefit local programs serving youth and people in need.

FISHERS CLUB

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

Date: Feb. 16, March 1 & 29, April 19

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: St. Peter's upper room

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 Howard Venette: pastormoll@stmarysti.org 518 585 7144 or Father Christopher Carrara at ccarrara@rcdony.org 315-375-6571

FISH FRY

Chazy – Sacred Heart Parish to have its Annual Fish Fry.

Date: March 6

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

Place: Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$12; Children 6-12, \$6; All take-outs, \$12

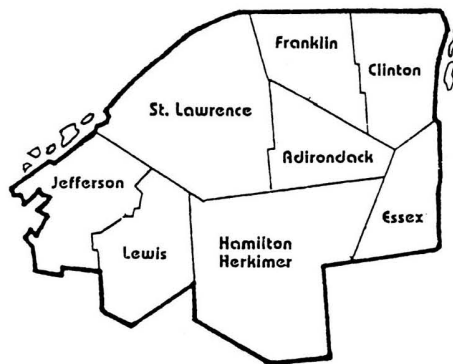
Contact: For more information call the rectory at 518-846-7650 or email sacredheart@westelcom.com

BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM

Plattsburgh – Join us this Lent as we take 6 weeks to prepare ourselves for the coming of Christ!

Date: Tuesdays, Feb. 25 – March 31

Schedule: 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at St. John's Parish center classroom; 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the upper room at St. Peter's



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,
Ogdensburg, NY 13669; fax, 1-866-314-7296;
e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

Features: The Road to Redemption, Cycle A. A Catholic Scripture Study International Program by Mitch Pacwa, S.J. The six weeks leading up to Easter mark our own 40 days in the desert with Jesus. To prepare, each participant reads the Sunday readings along with the "Points to Ponder" commentary, answers the Study Questions & Questions for Reflection and "prays the scriptures." All material is provided in the study guide.

Contact: Please call The Rectory office at 518-563-1692 to register by Feb. 18 When you call please make arrangements to pick up your study guide prior to the session on Feb. 25 (We will be discussing the Week 1 Session - Temptation in the Desert at the 1st session).

40 DAYS FOR LIFE

Plattsburgh – You're invited to join other Christians for 40 Days for Life – 40 days of prayer and fasting for an end to abortion. You are also invited to stand and peacefully pray during a 40-day vigil.

Date: Feb. 26 – April 5

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

Place: Public right-of-way outside Planned Parenthood

Contact: If you'd like more information – and especially if you'd like to volunteer to help, please contact: Nancy Belzile at 518-593-6024 or nancys_56@hotmail.com
www.40daysforlife.com/Plattsburgh

FRANKLIN

ROSARY RALLY

St. Regis Falls – Rosary Rally to be held

for world peace and the sanctity of families.

Date: Feb. 22, March 21

Time: 12 p.m.

Place: St. Ann's Church

Contact: For more information call Elaine McGivney at 518-529-6133

JEFFERSON

FISHERS CLUB

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

Date: Feb. 23, March 22, April 26

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 ccarrara@rcdony.org 315-375-6571

LENTE PRAYER GROUP

Adams – Join us on our Lenten journey as we meet in a small group setting to pray and reflect on the Sunday readings.

Date: Sundays for 6 weeks March 1 to April 5

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 a.m.

Place: St. Cecilia's Parish

Features: We will be using the Lenten Longings series to embrace the teachings of Christ, open ourselves to

the Spirit of God, grow in our faith and in our relationship with God and one another.

Contact: To register please call the Parish office at (315) 232-3292 or Denise Wallace at (315) 523-1623

BRUNCH

LEWIS

Lyon Falls – The Father Paschal Rys Knights of Columbus will be sponsoring a brunch.

Date: Feb. 16

Time: 8 a.m. to Noon

Place: St. John's Church Hall

Costs: Adults, \$8; Students, \$5; under 5, Free

TURKEY & BISCUIT DINNER

Lowville – Turkey & Biscuit dinner to be held to benefit Catholic Charities of Lewis County for their work with Migrant Outreach.

Date: Feb. 18

Time: 5 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Peter's Church

Cost: Adults, \$8; Children 5-12, \$5; under 5, Free; Take-outs available.

DIVINE MERCY DEVOTIONS

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

Date: March 1

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Features: The program includes Vespers (Evening Prayer), Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Benediction. **Contact:** 315-348-6260 for more information.

BIBLICAL TALK

Croghan – Five-week study to be had about "No Greater Love: Biblical Walk Through Christ's Passion"

Date: Beginning March 4 and continuing every Wednesday for 5 weeks

Time: Two Sessions, 1:30 p.m. & 6:45 p.m.

Place: St. Stephen's Church

Cost: \$24.95 for the Book and Workbook

Features: You will also need to use your Bible. Couples could purchase one set and share.

Contact: call Tom at 315-523-5890 or via email tkalamas@twcny.rr.com. Parish Office at 315-346-6958

BIBLE TIMELINE STUDY

ST. LAWRENCE

Massena – 8 Week series to be held unlocking the mystery of the bible.

Date: Tuesdays, Feb. 4 – March 31

Time: 2 p.m. to 4 & 6:30 p.m. to 8:30

Place: St. Mary's Social Hall

Cost: Free-will offering

Contact: 315-769-2469 or smar-ion@massenacatholics.com; massenacatholics.com

STEAK OR HADDOCK DINNER

Ogdensburg – Knights of Columbus to have a Steak/Haddock Dinner.

Date: Feb. 21

Time: 4:30 p.m. until gone

Place: K of C Hall

Cost: Pre-sale, Adults, \$12; Seniors and children, \$11; Day of the dinner \$1 more

Contact: Order tickets and Take-out by calling 315-393-7990 by 4:15 to be delivered to the towers.

LENTE FISH AND SHRIMP FRY

Gouverneur – St. James School to have a Lenten Fish & Shrimp Fry.

Date: Friday's during Lent starting Feb. 28

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6:15

Cost: Adults, \$10; Children 12 and under, \$5; under 5, Free

Contact: Deliveries and take-outs available by calling 315-287-0130

FISHERS CLUB

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

Date: March 1, April 5

Time: 1 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Rectory

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 Stephen Rocker at srocker164@yahoo.com or 315-265-9680 or Father Christopher Carrara at ccarrara@rcdony.org 315-375-6571

LENTE BIBLE STUDY

Ogdensburg – Bible series on salvation to be held.

Date: March 4 and runs 10 weeks.

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral, Brzana Hall

Cost: \$10 for the workbook, the parish will supply the book.

Features: At every Sunday Mass, Catholics confess that Jesus came and down from heaven "... for us men and for our salvation." But what does salva-

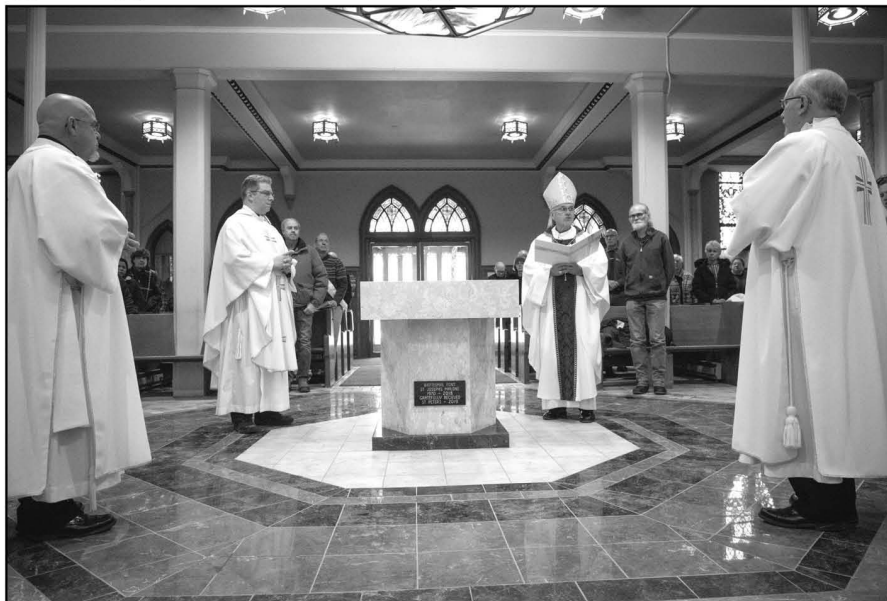
Plattsburgh gets new pastor, baptismal font

PLATTSBURGH—Bishop LaValley installed Father Kevin D. McEwan as the new pastor of the Plattsburgh Parish (St. Peter's, St. John's and Our Lady of Victory), soon to be called "Holy Cross Parish." Father McEwan was installed on Sunday, Jan. 19 at the 11:15 a.m. Mass.

The new parish is the result of the planning process initiated several years ago to help keep maintain vibrant parishes in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

A detailed plan was presented to Bishop Terry R. LaValley in the Fall of 2018 and approved early in 2019. Planning for its implementation continued until they were joined ecclesiastically effective on Jan. 1, 2020 when Father McEwan was named pastor.

At the same event, Bishop LaValley blessed



SEMERARO PHOTOGRAPHY/THE NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Bishop Terry R. LaValley blesses the new baptismal font at St. Peter's in Plattsburgh on Jan. 19. The font was formerly installed at St. Joseph's in Malone. Also that day, Bishop LaValley installed Father Kevin D. McEwan as the new pastor of the Plattsburgh Parish, soon to be known as "Holy Cross Parish."

the new baptismal font in St. Peter's Church.

It was necessary to replace the former font,

which was no longer functional.

After much reflection and research, it was advised by both the Parish and Finance Councils to replace it with a large upright font.

St. Peter's was blessed when the parish was informed that the former parish of St. Joseph's in Malone would allow their font to be used at St. Peter's.

Several clergy and parishioners from Malone attended the blessing. Some of the local clergy previously assigned to St. Joseph were also present: Fathers Dan Keefe, Francis Flynn, and Msgr. Dennis J. Duprey.

The baptismal font made of marble and weighting about 1,500 pounds was expertly moved and placed by Plattsburgh Memorials.

A large reception was held after the mass to honor the occasion.

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

tion mean? In this remarkable 10-part video series, Scripture scholar and theologian Michael Patrick Barber provides a thorough, deeply Catholic, and deeply biblical, answer.

Contact: Register at St. Mary's Cathedral website at ogdensburghcatholics.org. Scroll down and in the right column find "Lectio-Salvation." Click "Go Here" to register. If you have any questions, email Deacon Bill O'Brien at billob315@gmail.com.

DAY OF REFLECTION

Ogdensburg — CLM's and FFM Candidates invited to attend a morning of reflection.

Date: March 7

Time: 9:30 a.m. to Noon



Place: St. Mary's Cathedral Brzana Hall

Features: Let's slow things down and truly see God around us. The theme is "Joyful Steps: Walk — No Running Allowed." The presenters will be Mary Sovie and Clare Murdock. Event will be free and snacks will be provided.

Contact: Early registration appreciated to ensure enough materials. Register at www.rcdony.org/clm-event or contact Jeannie Grizzuto at 315-393-2920 Ext. 1413 or jgrizzuto@rcdony.org

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

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Vatican opens doors to leaders ready for finance reform

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The same day Pope Francis dedicated his general audience talk to explaining "Blessed are the poor in spirit," high-level finance ministers and economic experts were meeting nearby to come up with concrete solutions to overcome chronic global inequalities, instability and injustice.

People do not like to accept the truth of that beatitude, the pope told visitors in the Paul VI audience hall Feb. 5, because it keeps them from achieving fame and fortune, but it also always leaves them "radically incomplete and vulnerable."

That same sense that there is something radically inadequate and vulnerable about today's economic policies and financial systems was what drew dozens of experts and finance ministers to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences for a full day of talks and appeals.

The leading "global decision-makers" all agree on the root causes of unsustainable inequality and are adamant about wanting to prevent yet another global financial crisis, said Eric LeCompte, executive director of Jubilee USA Network and an observer invited to the Vatican gathering.

He told Catholic News Service the problem comes in finding consensus on the solutions, "the ways forward for countries to get out of debt crisis and financial crisis and also for building an economy that's more inclusive and where there is less of a distinction between the haves and the have-nots."

The first step toward coming up with "New Forms of Solidarity: Toward Fraternal Inclusion,

Integration and Innovation," as the meeting was titled, was getting such major players together in the first place.

Kristalina Georgieva, managing director of the International Monetary Fund and a leading voice warning that the global economy runs the risk of a major depression, told reporters that the Vatican venue was ideal for such talks.

"First, because we have a pope that is very caring and well-respected by people of all religions and who has demonstrated in his own life that high standing and modesty can go hand-in-hand," she said.

Second, she added, "the academy is a place open to different views, not a narrow-mindedness that could constrain good dialogue."

Meeting participants agreed it was no longer acceptable science to consider any market philosophy or policy as being "natural," invisible or inevitable, but that economics is all about people picking and choosing specific rules and frameworks.

"Inequality is a choice," said Joseph E. Stiglitz, an academy member, Nobel Prize laureate and former chief economist of the World Bank.

The ongoing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few and increasing economic disparity is not "just a matter of the laws of nature or the laws of economics, but in large measure, it's the result of our man-made policies and laws," he said in his keynote address.

Current and looming crises are making it clear "we have been making the wrong choices," and it is time for a new path, "an al-

ternative economic system and alternative globalization" that puts people and values first, he said.

Pope Francis understands that what is at stake is not just a matter of calling for more ethical behavior by leaders in the system, but an actual reform of the system and how it works.

His biographers have noted how his long experience ministering in the slums of Buenos Aires, Argentina, gave him unique insight into how a nation rich in promise could be so crippled by financial crisis and corruption.

LeCompte said, "Pope Francis really led his country as they were battling a type of predatory finance known as vulture funds," so while he is continuing the same social teaching as his papal predecessors, "we see the Holy See talking more about very technical economic policies like derivatives and taxation and illicit financial flows."

"There's a real sense from this Holy Father that if we really want to change the structures that govern our economy, we need to be able to address these technical issues head-on," he said.

The pope, in fact, made a point to stop by the pontifical academy in the early afternoon. And his lengthy and detailed written speech continued to hammer home basic and reasonable ethical principles: an end to money laundering, the arms industry and tax havens that drain billions from national economies; stopping repeated tax cuts for the wealthy; and relieving crushing, unsustainable debt burdens, to name a few.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

New martyrs include religious priests, laity killed in 20th century

VATICAN CITY – Pope Francis recognized the martyrdom of six religious priests and brothers and seven laypeople who were killed in the 20th century "in hatred of the faith," clearing the way for their beatification. The pope approved the decrees during an audience Jan. 23 with Cardinal Angelo Becciu, prefect of the Congregation for Saints' Causes. Among the soon-to-be blessed are three Spanish priests of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and seven laymen who were killed in Guatemala between 1980 and 1991. Sacred Heart Missionary Fathers Jose Maria Gran Cirera, Juan Alonso Fernandez and Faustino Villanueva were all serving in different parts of the Guatemalan department of Quiché, where almost 90% of the population is indigenous Maya. The guerrilla movement was very strong in Quiché, making it a scene of severe repression and horrific violence during Guatemala's 36-year civil war. Priests and religious were often targeted by government forces as they were often accused of supporting or carrying out subversive activities. More than 200,000 people were killed or disappeared during the conflict, which ran from 1960 to 1996. The pope also recognized the martyrdom of three Capuchin priests from Spain who were killed in 1936 during their country's brutal civil war.

Bishops applaud administration's support for school choice

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The right of parents "to exercise freedom of choice in education is firmly rooted in the teachings of our Catholic faith," two U.S. Catholic bishops said Feb. 5 in a joint statement on a federal proposal to expand parental choice for their children's schooling. Bishop Michael C. Barber of Oakland, California, who is chairman of the Committee on Catholic Education for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Auxiliary Bishop Michael J. Fitzgerald of Philadelphia made the remarks about Education Freedom Scholarships, a bill proposed by Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and supported by the Trump administration. Bishops Barber and Fitzgerald issued the statement expressing appreciation for the administration's commitment to parental choice in education following a visit by Vice President Mike Pence and U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to St. Francis de Sales Catholic School in Philadelphia. Pence and DeVos highlighted the success of parental choice programs across Pennsylvania and talked about Education Freedom Scholarships, which would authorize a federal tax credit for individuals and companies that donate to school scholarship funds or help parents who home-school their children.

Cardinal Dolan to meet with Cuban president, church leaders

WASHINGTON (CNS) – New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan is set to meet with the president of the Republic of Cuba during a Feb. 7-12 trip to the island nation, which includes a visit with the cardinal of Havana and other Cuban prelates. Cardinal Dolan flew to Havana early Feb. 7 with a small delegation from the New York area, and is scheduled to celebrate Mass at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre, the patroness of Cuba, during the visit. Cardinal Dolan met Cuban President Miguel Mario Diaz-Canel Bermudez in 2018, the year he took over as head of Cuba from Raul Castro. Diaz-Canel, 59, visited New York later in the fall and spoke before the United Nations. He then met with Cardinal Dolan at New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral during that visit. Granma, the official government newspaper published by the Communist Party, published Sept. 27, 2018, an article about the meeting, calling the cardinal "charismatic."

A LOOK AT BOOKS

Books celebrate cathedrals in wake of Notre Dame fire

"Notre-Dame: A Short History of the Meaning of Cathedrals" by Ken Follett. Viking (New York, 2019). 62 pp., \$17.

"Notre Dame de Paris: A Celebration of the Cathedral" by Kathy Borrus. Black Dog and Leventhal (New York, 2019). 122 pp., \$25.

Among the many disasters of 2019, the burning of the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris evoked, possibly, the most universal sadness as this cathedral and the Eiffel Tower are the two most famous symbols of Paris. The cathedral fire which started April 15 destroyed the roof, brought down the spire and damaged many precious objects housed in by the cathedral.

The silver lining is that no human lives were lost; an alarm was sounded and the cathedral was cleared a half hour before flames were sighted. There has been no evidence found, as of yet, that the burning was the act of a terrorist.

Before the fire, a fund for the restoration of the cathedral had been started in 2018 and scaffolding had been put up and was there on the day of the fire. But officials worried that there wasn't enough in the fund to continue the project.

The day after the fire, more than a billion dollars was donated. The day

after the fire French President Emmanuel Macron bravely declared, "We will rebuild" and set an ambitious timeline of completing the restoration in five years.

Very few think this restoration can be done in this time, including the best-selling author Ken Follett, who wrote a short book in the days following the fire.

All proceeds from the book will be donated to the charity, La Fondation du Patrimoine.

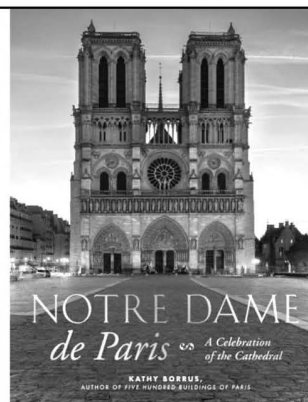
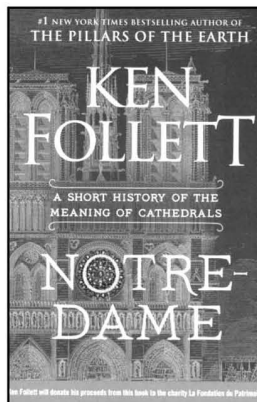
In the life of a cathedral, five years is the bat of an eye.

The Notre Dame we see today was a rebuilding itself, begun in 1160. The Gothic style had become popular and the old cathedral, built in Romanesque style, seemed dowdy and old-fashioned.

The basic construction of Notre Dame was done by 1345, which is a speedy pace compared to many cathedrals. But since then, additions have been built, the spire erected and the building electrified.

The electrification may have been the cause of the fire – a spark from a decaying electrical wire might have ignited the debris collected under the roof beams.

As there were no sprinklers in the attic, the flames would have spread quickly. But it also might



CNS

These are the covers of "Notre-Dame: A Short History of the Meaning of Cathedrals" by Ken Follett and "Notre Dame de Paris: A Celebration of the Cathedral" by Kathy Borrus. The books are reviewed by Graham Yearley.

have been started by the quick toss of a cigarette butt.

But Follett's point is not to investigate what happened in the 2019 fire, but to explain why cathedrals get built and why we want to preserve them.

Kathy Borrus' book, "Notre Dame de Paris: A Celebration of the Cathedral," has a similar purpose and is part of a flood of new books published since the fire. It is a picture book filled with photographs and drawings of the cathedral and its contents.

There is an interesting section on the precious

relics and treasures of Notre Dame and what happened to each object. For example the organ built in the 18th century was already in need of restoration, but the fire further damaged it. The altar built in 1725 and topped by a statue of Mary lamenting with Jesus lying dead across her lap did

survive the fire but was blackened with soot and the statue was damaged.

Notre Dame has survived desecration during the French Revolution, German bombings during both World War I and II, and shifts of architectural and decorative tastes. It will rise again even if it takes longer than Macron predicts.

Subsequent to the publication of both books, the cathedral's rector told the media that the walls that remained after fire may still collapse. The scaffolding put up before the fire is exerting great pressure on the walls.


If they do collapse, restoration would be made infinitely harder, if not impossible.

But these books are concerned with Notre Dame's past and present before the fire and this news does not alter their value as celebrations of a great cathedral.

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SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Looking at the wisdom of our choices

Our readings this week discuss the wisdom in our choices. The writer of Sirach (formerly Ecclesiasticus), puts two choices before his audience – fire or water, life or death, just as Moses had done to the Israelites who were about to enter the Promised Land. Fire is a symbol for the Spirit which breathes life and Wisdom, while water suggests death by drowning in sin and foolishness. God never forces us but gives us hints about the preferred choice!



**Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore**

St. Paul, in the second reading, urges the new Christians to seek the Wisdom that comes from

God's Spirit, a divine wisdom, a mysterious wisdom planned from eternity. This wisdom urges us to embrace Christ's crucifixion, death, and resurrection. Faith in this mystery will reveal to us the meaning of following Christ to life and victory.

In the Gospel, which continues the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus amazes his listeners by declaring that He has come not to destroy the law of Moses, but to fulfill it. Then he proceeds to go beyond the law to its radical conclusion. He concentrates on two sins forbidden especially by the Law – murder and

February 16

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS

Sirach 15:15-20
1 Corinthians 2:6-10
Matthew 5:17-37

adultery. He emphasizes in practical terms the sins that lie behind the commandments. If we are to avoid murder, then we must root out the sin of anger which leads to murder. If we are to avoid adultery, we must root out the sin of lust which leads to adultery. If we want to be righteous, we must take very strenuous efforts to go beyond the law – even anger against one's brother or sister is cause for sin. If you want to offer your gifts at the altar,

“leave your gifts at the altar, and go first to be reconciled to your brother... then come and offer your gifts.” He tells his followers that when one even looks at a woman with lustful eyes, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Jesus then departs from the literal, deliberately exaggerating his advice: “If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members, than to have your whole body thrown into Gehenna (hell).” He says the same about sinning with your hand. Obviously, Jesus does not want us to physically carry out this advice! But we certainly get the point! The passage is a long one, for-

bidding divorce unless there are grounds for the invalidity of the marriage. He warns against false oaths, urging us to use simple language. “Let your ‘yes’ mean ‘yes,’ and your ‘no’ mean ‘no!’”

As St. Paul tells us today, Jesus' wisdom is not the wisdom of this age, but a divine wisdom meant for those who are mature. How well we know how toxic contemporary advice often given to our young people by the media, greedy business leaders, immoral educators, and even by some parents can be. Our readings this Sunday give us strong medicine to counteract the poison of this age. It may not make us popular, but living the Gospel to the full never was!

MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

Christian girls and abortion

When Mother Teresa visited New Bedford, Massachusetts in June 1995, she told those of us gathered at St. Lawrence Martyr Church: “Abortion is the greatest evil of today.” Never one to mince words, Mother Teresa's courage, truthfulness and charity were palpable. Parents today need similar fortitude, honesty and love to be able to discuss the hard topic of unplanned pregnancies and abortion with their children.

Parental input and advice are critical when these situations arise. Even as children profess independence, parents exercise influence over them, whether for good or for ill. If a mother says to her daughter, for example, “You can't have a kid now,

because you've got your studies, your career and your whole future ahead of you, so I'll give you money for an abortion” she is not merely offering advice, but being coercive and taking away any real choice her daughter might have had.

Likewise, when a boyfriend learns that his girlfriend is pregnant and informs her he doesn't want to be a father right now, and will drive her to the abortion clinic, he abandons both his child and the mother of his child in their moment of greatest need.

To read testimonies of young women who have had abortions is heart-

wrenching. Many times they seem to have less responsibility for the abortion than their parents or others close to them.

One woman described being only 12-years-old when she had an abortion: “When Saturday came my mom drove me back across town, walked me in, paid for the abortion with money my boyfriend gave her, and left the building. I didn't know it then, but they wouldn't allow her to stay. The nurse told her I would be ready about 3:00, so I was there alone... It's been 35 years since my baby was aborted and I still think about it every day. It wasn't a quick fix and it

wasn't a solution to my pregnancy. It was a panicked response to our fears.”

Fear often stands behind the decision to abort. Young women are understandably frightened when they discover they are pregnant: “I'm afraid I'm not ready and I won't be a good mother.” “I'm fearful my boyfriend won't stand by me and support me — he's just a kid himself.” “What will mom and dad think of the fact I've been having sex?” “My friends are people of faith and I'm afraid they'll look down on me for this if they find out.”

Whenever we let fear direct our moral thinking, we tend to make bad judgments and poor choices that can haunt us long afterwards. Even good peo-

ple who believe in love, life and family can make panicked choices when they feel cornered by shame and guilt. Major decisions are better made when emotions have calmed and the order of reason can once again fill our minds. This happens most readily when a person is surrounded by an abundance of loving support.

Wendy Bonano serves as the director of several pregnancy support centers in North Carolina. She regularly works with students from area universities and colleges, and in a recent article in the Family NC magazine, challenged parents to reflect on what their own sons and daughters are really up against in today's society:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



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

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Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

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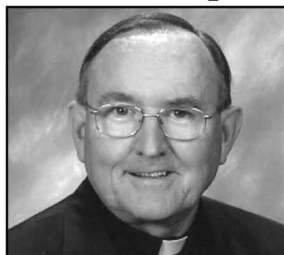
mbrett@rcdony.org

A note from Father Kennedy

Many of us remember Father Richard Kennedy, MSC, former pastor of Sacred Heart Church in Watertown, and currently the USA Superior General. He writes to all in the North Country and beyond in their publications. The following excerpt penned by Father Kennedy is from the MSC Annual Report titled "A New Heart for a New World" and published by the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart in the South Pacific. Below please find a message from Father Kennedy as we start the New Year!

Dear Friends of the MSC,

Our Founder, Father Jules Chevalier, lived in 19th Century France during a time of great political upheaval, religious persecution, and neglect of the practice of the Catholic faith by many people. In the midst of this, Father Chevalier discovered a loving and forgiving God personified in the Sacred Heart of Jesus. And yet, despite all the turmoil in the world at the time, Father Chevalier's small group of followers expanded to a family of priests, brothers, sisters and devoted lay people who dedicated their lives to preach and witness to God's love, beginning with a small French parish in upstate New York and then a very challenging mission



Father Richard Kennedy

to bring the message of Christianity to the island country of Papua New Guinea in the South Pacific.

Today we still believe in a world of political unrest, religious persecution in many countries and a growing and disturbing number of people who choose to have no religion in their lives.

Miraculously, our MSC family continues to grow in this 21st century, especially in developing countries. Because of you, enthusiastic and devoted men and women dedicated to the message of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the message of Father Jules Chevalier is still being proclaimed and people open to the power of God continue to respond. We are so grateful for your prayers, partnership, and generosity.

"May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere!" From Reverend Richard Kennedy, MSC, USA Superior Provincial.

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

OBITUARIES

Carthage – Marilyn A. (McVoy) Homan, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 8, 2020 at St. James Church; burial in Sunnyside Cemetery, Naumburg.

Carthage – Helen E. (Gyurko) Redmond, 96; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 3, 2020 at St. James Church; burial in St. James Cemetery.

Champlain – Carol Ann Castine, 78; Mass of Christian Burial in Spring at St. Mary's Church.

Dannemora – Wanda (Buck) Sweeney, 72; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 8, 2020 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Elizabethtown – Walter A. "Bud" Doyle, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 6, 2020 at St. Elizabeth's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Lake Placid – Therese Anne McDonald, 92; Mass of Christian Burial in spring at St. Agnes Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Lyon Mountain – Jacqueline M. (Perry) LaPoint, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 10, 2020 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

North Bangor – William A. Delarm, 55; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 4, 2020 at St. Augustine's Church.

Ogdensburg – Mary Sheila (LeMay) Richards, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 7, 2020 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in White Church Cemetery.

St. Regis Falls – Jan M. (Haskell) Patnode, 62; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 5, 2020 at St. Ann's Church; burial at Forest Cemetery.

Ticonderoga – Carolyn Marie (Hopkins) Malaney, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 7, 2020 at St. Mary's Church.

Watertown – Matthew J. "Coach" Branski, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 8, 2020 at Holy Family Church; burial in Brookside Cemetery.

Watertown – Muriel "Mimi" Jeanne (Reilly) Kendall, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 8, 2020 at Holy Family Church; burial in Wellesley Island.

Watertown – Louise Lucy (Mangini) Mosseau, 88; Mass of Christian Burial at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – S. Vivian (Phelps) Schmidt, 96; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 7, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church.

Christian girls and abortion

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

"I imagine you are thinking, 'This would never be my daughter.' I beg you to think again.

More often than not, 'good' Christian girls in relationships are determined to abstain from intercourse and therefore are not actively using contraception. Therefore, it takes just one poor decision by either your son or daughter to create an unplanned pregnancy, regardless of all you've taught them."

So why are good Christian girls getting abortions? Those who should be at their side in a moment of crisis may not be present. Mothers and fathers may not have fostered close relationships with their daughters.

They may have never discussed the possibility of an unplanned pregnancy to let them know ahead of time that, even if they act contrary to their advice and conceive a child, they will still be

there for them.

After more than ten years of helping single mothers at her clinics, Bonoano makes precisely this point:

"Quite often there's a piece missing from the 'talks' parents have with their daughters and sons. Without knowing it, we are leaving no doors open for our children to come back to us should they stray. We are making good, strong cases for purity until marriage and yet neglecting to communicate the message of grace: that we are there for them no matter what, and should they make a mistake—in this case, get pregnant—it is safe for them to come to us for help and support."

Today more than ever, Christian children need to hear those supportive and reassuring words from their Christian parents.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience

from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org

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Raise the bar on youth protection

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By Sharon Doty, J.D., M.H.R.

At a recent event, I had the opportunity to meet and talk with people involved in youth ministry at local Catholic parishes. They were familiar with the child sexual abuse prevention efforts of the Church, but many were unfamiliar with the *Protecting God's Children*® (PGC) program, and were surprised by my suggestions of behavioral best practices for safety.

Many of them said that individuals involved with ministering to youth really have the best interests of children at heart and would not really harm anyone. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. They also felt that it was important to form more intimate personal relationships with the young people in order to accomplish their youth ministry goals. No amount of explanation or encouragement really changed their mind, until I said:

"When you do the things you are talking about, you become part of the problem. Those actions that you are justifying condition young people to accept more intimate touch from adults. You may not have bad intentions, but the next person who interacts with the young person may have a different purpose, and now that

person will have an easier time of it. You just helped that predator break down the barriers that keep children safe. In addition, your actions condition the community to accept these behaviors as part of ministry and that also opens the door to predators."

We must continue to raise the bar. We can do that easily by looking at two specific things.

SOCIAL MEDIA & ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

There can be no compromise regarding the use of social media and contact through Internet and other electronic means. Recent news stories have included too many stories of adult youth ministers from many different denominations who used social media and electronic communication to seduce young people, share pornography and initiate contact that led to alcohol and drug use, and sexual assault.

If your parish does not have a policy about social media and electronic communication, establish one. If you have a policy in place, check to see that it includes the following points:

- No private contact with any young people involved in youth ministry (other than the volunteer/employee's own children and family). Private means completely outside of the sight and hearing of others, without any oversight.

- No "friending" of any parish young people other than through group/organization sponsored webpages that keep everyone informed. This means that it isn't appropriate to "friend" a child using your own personal account for any social media platform.

- Be extremely careful of

how and when you text young people using your own personal phone. All communication with young people should have oversight from a supervisor.

- Do not exchange pictures/videos with young people.

- Parents should always be aware of communication with youth.

If young people initiate electronic one-on-one contact with you, inform them that you'd be happy to communicate during your normal working hours (if applicable), in a place that is conducive to your ministry. Invite them to come visit you in a location where others can see and hear you. And, in the meantime, notify a supervisor regarding when and where the meeting will occur.

Keep in mind that your policy may contain provisions to regularly update the policy on electronic communications as technology improves and new methods of communication become part of the electronic landscape. When policy updates happen, there may be a new requirement to read and accept updated versions.

REVIEW & MONITOR BEHAVIOR

In addition to raising the bar on electronic communications, it is important to review all activities and interactions with the "no conditioning" standard in mind. Make sure that none of your actions or those of other adults in ministry can be characterized as behavior that conditions children to lower their barriers to inappropriate contact.

There are some behaviors that sometimes creep back into the picture because they are justified or rationalized as "just how she (or he) is." The prob-

lem is predators are counting on us to water down our vigilance and open the gate to give them more access. These include full-on hugs or excessive examples of physical touch, a single person violating policy requirements by giving a child a ride home and meeting a young person outside of the office to "talk" about something that is bothering them. Children should know that they can consider you to be a trusted adult and that they can talk to you about their concerns. However, these types of interactions must be held during times and places that have oversight for both your protection and theirs.

Volunteers and employees who minister to youth must regularly review the policies and examine their own behavior to see if there is anything that has appeared, or reappeared in the interactions with youth that creates a risky environment. They must also review the policies with other ministers and volunteers and reinforce the message that there is a no tolerance policy for those who work in youth ministry. Monitor each other and communicate when you see something risky.

Follow the policies, practice the safe environment standards and make sure your interactions are consistent with the established guidelines for protecting all God's children. Parents and others who see the rigorous standards slipping must step in and demand that child protection and prevention of child sexual abuse be a priority.

Raise the bar on youth protection!

It's everyone's responsibility.

Buffalo to close seminary

BUFFALO, N.Y. (CNS)—Citing annual operating losses and declining enrollment, the Diocese of Buffalo announced it will close its seminary at the end of the academic year.

Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger of Albany, New York, apostolic administrator of the diocese, said Feb. 4 that Christ the King Seminary's board of trustees decided the seminary would "cease operations" after determining that a decade of losses averaging \$500,000 per year could no longer be sustained.

The seminary has 26 seminarians enrolled this academic year, about 10% of its capacity, the bishop said. The number includes two men who are preparing for ordination June 6 and 11 seminarians from other dioceses.

"This isn't just about numbers on a balance sheet that no longer add up. We are fully committed to attracting, educating and forming priests for the future needs of our diocese," Bishop Scharfenberger said in a video message posted Feb. 4 on the Diocese of Buffalo's website.

The bishop said he had appointed a committee to look at other models for the formation of priests and to recommend how best to promote and cultivate vocations. It also is tasked with seeking ways to provide education for men preparing for the permanent diaconate, people in pastoral ministry and training for lay men and women.