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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 74, Number 41

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MARCH 18, 2020

Report of special funds

In this edition of the *North Country Catholic*, we're featuring the *Report of Special Funds* for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2019. As we present this report for your review, we complete our financial accounting of all the funds entrusted to the Diocese of Ogdensburg for the 2018-19 Fiscal Year. The monies highlighted in this report are those set aside for special purposes and investments.

Your personal sacrifice and generous support provide the needed resources for the Diocese of Ogdensburg to proclaim the Good News and minister faithfully to our sisters and brothers in Christ throughout the North Country.

FULL STORY, PAGES 8-13

FREE THROW CHAMPS



On February 29, 21 boys and girls from throughout the Diocese competed in the Knights of Columbus's Annual Northern Conference Free Throw Contest. This year's competition was conducted at Dana Hall on the campus of SUNY Canton. The youths, ages 9-14, had all won council free throws to qualify for the regional contest. Winners were: Age 9 - Adam Rose and Hanna Forgette; Age 10 - Cooper Sweeney and Tess Dumas; Age 11 - Ean Rose and Maddison Gagnier; Age 12 - Jackson Ames; Age 13 - Jordan Brown and Desire Dubois; Age 14 - John Martin.

SHARING OUR STORIES



In the next installment of "Sharing Our Stories; Sharing Our Faith," we learn about Ogdensburg resident Amy Schirmer. From Illinois to Africa to Wisconsin to Ogdensburg, faith has been Schirmer's constant companion on an unusual journey. Daughter and granddaughter of Protestant pastors and missionaries, she was received into the Catholic Church in 2006.

FULL STORY, PAGE 5

Pope entrusts world to Mary amidst pandemic

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Pope Francis entrusted to Jesus' mother the suffering and anguish of millions of people affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

In a video message broadcast March 11, the pope prayed before a portrait of Our Lady of Divine Love, beseeching her to "not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial" but to "deliver us from every danger."

"We entrust ourselves to

you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm," the pope prayed. "You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial."

The pope's video message was aired on TV2000, the television channel of the Italian

bishops' conference, and the Diocese of Rome's Facebook page. Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, papal vicar of Rome, celebrated a Mass at Rome's Shrine of Divine Love that was aired live after the pope's message.

The Mass, according to the Diocese of Rome, capped a day of prayer and fasting for the city and for Italy, which has been under a government-mandated lock-

down to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

As of March 11, more than 12,000 people in Italy have contracted the virus, known as COVID-19, and at least 827 of them have died since the outbreak began in northern Italy, the Italian health ministry said. However, an estimated 1,045 people have been cured since the outbreak began.

The image of Our Lady of Divine Love is of particular significance for Catholics in the city of Rome, especially during troubling times.

It was before the original image of Mary and the child Jesus at the shrine where Pope Pius XII prayed in 1944, imploring the Mother of God to protect the Roman people during the final battle for the city's liberation from Nazi occupation.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

'I gave credit to my Jeep, not Jesus'

After my recent car accident, I did what nearly any millennial would do: I posted about it on social media. I've been reflecting a lot about how I phrased the post.

Why do I keep revisiting it? I gave credit to my Jeep, not Jesus, for saving my life.

Every week, as part of my duties as editor of this newspaper, I share some reflection about

**Darcy L.
Fargo**

how I see God working in my life, how I'm living out my faith or how I'm struggling to do so. It's my job to share my faith.

While I will likely always struggle with writing the column (I struggle to come up with ideas, I struggle with feelings of unworthiness...), I've become somewhat accustomed to writing about my faith for this purpose. I've gotten to

where I don't mind writing about my faith for (mostly) strangers, especially strangers I assume are most likely men and women also trying to live out their faith.

Yet I shy away from sharing my faith – how I experience God, and where I see Him working – with my family, friends and acquaintances. I let my pride and my desire to be accepted prevent me from sharing my faith openly on social media or (sometimes) in person. I know I have a very diverse group of

friends on social media, and I'm confident expressions of faith would draw the ire of at least a few of them or make them think I'm weird or different.

I'm apparently not brave enough to own my faith in the face of a potential challenge.

I've resolved to try to do better at the next opportunity, though I hope that next opportunity doesn't involve me wrecking another Jeep.

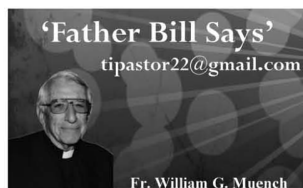
And I'm sorry I gave credit to my Jeep, not Jesus.

Called to renew our Baptismal Promises

Today, I would like to take a further look at Baptism with you. Last week, I wrote a bit about the importance of the Sacrament of Baptism during Lent. Lent is the time for the catechumens to enter their final stages of the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) Program as they prepare to enter the Catholic Church and receive the sacrament of baptism at the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday. For you and I who are already baptized, Lent is a yearly time of preparation for us to renew and reaffirm our dedication to live out our baptism.

At the Easter Vigil Mass, all of us – all the baptized – are asked to again proclaim their faith in their baptism by accepting the Baptismal Promises. For many of us, these Baptismal Promises were made for us by our godparents. Now, each and every Easter, we are asked to personally accept again these Baptismal Promises. So, today, I would like to remind you of your Baptismal Promises.

At the Easter Mass, the priest celebrant begins the renewal of the Baptismal Promises with an introduc-



tion: "Dear Friends, through the Paschal Mystery we have been buried with Christ in Baptism, so that we may walk with him in newness of life. And so, now that our Lenten observance is concluded, let us renew the promises of Holy Baptism, by which we once renounced Satan and his works, and promised to serve God in the holy Catholic Church."

In Scripture, we are reminded of the meaning of baptism in the Letter to the Romans: "Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through Baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might have a newness of life."

So, baptism is about death and resurrection for people of faith. The image is a wonderful one: in Baptism we are

buried in the waters of Baptism for we must die to all that keeps us from God so that we can rise to new life, a resurrection like that of Jesus. In the spirit of Our Lord, we dedicate ourselves to living well and following in life the message of our Savior, Jesus. Jesus rose from the dead on Easter to a new life. We believe we will find a new life through our baptism.

We do this by accepting again the Baptismal Promises. These promises are in the form of questions. We are asked to respond to our dedication by saying, "I do." The first questions are our rejection of evil: "Do you renounce sin, so as to live in the freedom of the children of God?" "Do you renounce the lure of evil, so that sin may have no mastery over you?" and "Do you renounce Satan, the author and prince of sin?"

We understand the Baptismal Promises when we recognize that living our baptism demands rejecting sin that brings us freedom as children of God. Baptism calls upon us to reject all that keeps us from God's love. Baptism is a certainly a challenge that calls upon us, the baptized, to live well in the

Spirit of our God. Baptism guarantees the help and strength and power of God to support and guide us. Baptism unites us all together in our Catholic Church, a community working together to help each one of us to live out our Baptismal Promises.

In these Baptismal Promises, we are asked to declare our belief in God, to be a people united in faith. So, we are asked: "Do you believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?" "Do you believe Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?" and "Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting?"

Our task for these last weeks of Lent is to properly prepare ourselves to be ready to reaffirm our Baptismal Promises. We need a strong and alive faith for this task. Use well the time that the Lord has given you for this prayer and growth in faith.

FOLLOW ME

Use prudential judgment on Mass decision

In light of the serious health risks to vulnerable populations, and mindful of the instructions of medical professionals, the Bishops of New York State have urged the faithful to use their prudential judgment on whether or not to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days during the coronavirus outbreak. This is in keeping with the teaching of the Church, which has always exempted those with serious medical issues which would prohibit them from attending Mass, as well as for all people in times of general emergencies. This is especially true during this coronavirus outbreak, particularly for adults over the age of 60, people with underlying medical conditions, and family

members of such individuals, who should take special care in discerning the best course of action.

Masses throughout the Diocese of Ogdensburg will continue to be offered at this time, contingent on emergency restrictions regarding large gatherings. We are taking steps to make attendance at Mass safe for those who attend.

Additionally, to those choosing not to attend Mass due to illness or having an underlying condition, Bishop LaValley hereby grants a dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass beginning immediately and continuing until further

notice. Persons with underlying health conditions are especially encouraged to remain at home at this time.

Those who do attend Mass are reminded that they should follow the guidelines in place, such as receiving Holy Communion reverently in the hand, not receiving the Precious Blood, being sure to wash hands/use sanitizer before and after Mass, and avoiding physical contact with or close proximity to other persons.

Additionally, at this time, we are asking pastors to ensure good and regular cleaning of surfaces that are touched

regularly (such as door handles), that ministers of the Eucharist exercise good hygiene (washing or sanitizing their hands prior to distributing Holy Communion), and that holy water fonts are emptied.

During Mass, the sign of peace will not be announced or exchanged. If the parish has the habit of holding hands during the Lord's Prayer, this practice should be halted at this time.

We ask all participants to refrain from shaking hands before, during or after Mass.

A complete listing of precautions can be found on our diocesan website via a link on the diocesan homepage, rcdony.org.

Those who will not attend Mass can follow the

Mass on radio, television, or online where possible. This includes The Catholic Channel on Sirius XM (10:15 a.m. from Saint Patrick's Cathedral and 1 p.m. from the Cathedral of Our Lady of Angels), and the Mass from St. Mary's Cathedral at 8 a.m. Sunday on WQTK 92.7 FM, and television broadcasts (8 a.m. and noon on EWTN, 9 a.m. from St. Andre Bessette Parish, Malone, on Spectrum and 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. from St. Bernard's Church, Saranac Lake, on Spectrum).

All are urged to keep in prayer those who are suffering from the coronavirus, as well as for doctors, nurses, caregivers, and all those who are working to combat the disease.



**Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley**



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Service to report misconduct by bishops launched

In May 2019, Pope Francis released his apostolic letter, *Vos estis lux mundi* ("You are the light of the world") to address the issue of sexual abuse and bishop accountability in the global Catholic Church. *Vos estis* calls upon the metropolitan archbishops to undertake the responsibilities for receiving and assessing reports involving bishops that pertain to sexual abuse and related misconduct. In June 2019, one month after Pope Francis issued his order, the bishops of the United States convened for their general assembly in Baltimore and approved the implementation plan for carrying out the directives of the Holy Father here in the United States.

As part of this ongoing commitment to carrying out *Vos estis*, the Catholic

Bishop Abuse Reporting Service (CBAR) was established. The service is operated by Convercent, Inc. an independent, third-party entity that provides intake services to private institutions for reports of sensitive topics such as sexual harassment through a secure, confidential, and professional platform.

Individuals may go to ReportBishopAbuse.org in order to make a report. Reports are also accepted via (800) 276-1562.

When a report is received, it will be forwarded to the local metropolitan archbishop who will undertake the responsibility of initially assessing the report.

Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan of the Archdiocese of New York is the metropolitan who presides over the New York province, which

A Deeper Look

Pope Francis has structured the handling and investigation of the complaints using the metropolitan archbishops. What does this mean?

- The Catholic Church in the U.S. has 32 provinces.

- Each province has one archdiocese plus several dioceses.

- The head of the archdiocese (the archbishop) is also known as the "metropolitan," and he presides over the province.

- The other dioceses are referred to as "suffragan" dioceses.

includes the dioceses of Albany, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Ogdensburg, Rochester, Rockville Centre and Syracuse. If a report is received that concerns Cardinal Dolan, it will be forwarded to the senior suffragan bishop.

The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service allows for individuals to relay to Church authorities any reports of a

U.S. Catholic bishop who has:

- forced someone to per-

form or to submit to sexual acts through violence, threat, or abuse of authority;

- performed sexual acts with a minor or a vulnerable person;

- produced, exhibited, possessed, or distributed child pornography, or recruited or induced a minor or a vulnerable person to participate in pornographic exhibitions;

- or, a diocesan or eparchial bishop, or a cleric overseeing a diocese/eparchy in the absence of a diocesan or eparchial bishop, who has intentionally interfered with a civil or church investigation into allegations of sexual abuse committed by another cleric or religious.

The Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service (CBAR) does not replace existing reporting systems for complaints against priests, deacons, religious or laity. CBAR was designed to respond only to complaints against bishops for issues related to sexual mis-

conduct.

The reporting of sexual misconduct by anyone in ministry who is not a bishop, such as priests, deacons, religious brothers and sisters, or lay persons working or volunteering for the Church should continue to be handled in accordance with the Diocese of Ogdensburg's child protection policy, which can be found at www.rcdony.org/safeenv, and with proper civil authorities. For more information on the reporting service, please visit: ReportBishopAbuse.org.

While the mandate by Pope Francis in *Vos estis* echoes many of the practices that the Catholic Church in the United States has already implemented since 2002 with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, this new order applies to the bishops and to the worldwide Catholic Church, making clear the pope's concern of the issue of sexual abuse in the Church at a global level.



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Faith: A constant companion

Editor's note: This is the third installment in what's planned to be an ongoing series featuring how Catholics of the Diocese of Ogdensburg are living out their faith. To suggest an individual to be featured in this series, please call the North Country Catholic at 315-393-2920 or email dfargo@rcdony.org.

By Suzanne Pietropaoli
Staff Writer

OGDENSBURG – From Illinois to Africa to Wisconsin to Ogdensburg, faith has been Amy Schirmer's constant companion on an unusual journey. Daughter and granddaughter of Protestant pastors and missionaries, she was received into the Catholic Church in 2006.

"My faith is important to me because it was important to my parents," Schirmer explains. "My faith is my own and different from theirs, but their Godly example, their heroes, their life decisions, their generosity and hospitality all expressed the importance of faith. As I grew up and altered my course, I have been so grateful for this heritage. I have also found untold riches in the Catholic



Amy Schirmer

Church that have provided a glorious context for understanding WHY faith is so important! It leads me to God!"

Not, she is quick to explain, in any predictable way, but "in a wildly beautiful, completely rational, hilariously unexpected, terrifyingly awesome way that includes shady green pastures, storm-tossed seas, parched deserts, flooded plains, dangerous mountains and a still, small voice."

Schirmer recalls having invited Jesus into her

heart as a second grader because she did not want to go to hell.

"No one was trying to scare me...I scared myself," she said. "And having made that decision, I never looked back. In high school, some students kept talking about 'being baptized in the Holy Spirit.' One of them prayed with me, and this was another milestone, drawing me closer to where I belonged. My dad started attending an Episcopal church my last year of high school, and I experienced the glory of liturgical worship for the first time. I was married in that church, and my husband, Rob, attended Episcopal seminary and was or-



ained to the priesthood."

This proved to be another milestone in Schirmer's journey. "I remember telling someone how much I loved the liturgy, but that I could NEVER be a Roman Catholic. Ha!"

The first significant challenge to that mindset came when a friend sent her Kimberly and Scott Hahn's book, *Rome Sweet Home*. Then there was the Catholic homeschool group she attended with her children, which introduced her to Catholic friends, Catholic radio and Catholic literature, especially the lives of the saints. Ten years would pass before Schirmer entered the Catholic Church.

During that time, Schirmer's husband left the Episcopal priesthood to join the Continuing Anglicans—a move that brought her into regular contact with "a Gregorian Mass done in English, with

Rob's excellent homilies, followed by a shared meal with conversation centered on our lives as Christians. When I told this group I that I wanted to become Catholic, they all wondered why I had waited so long! In 2006, I was received into the Church in Wisconsin."

Before long, the family was "surprised to find ourselves living here in the North Country. Within six months, we were living close enough to the cathedral that it became my parish. In the ensuing 12 years I have daily been nourished by the Eucharist and reminded of the goodness of God in giving us his Church. There, all three of my sons have entered the Church, as my father will soon do. Each addition is like a new birth, bringing so much joyful confirmation to my own conversion."

The Cathedral, where Schirmer is a secretary, has brought other blessings as well. A long-time participant and facilitator in the Women of Grace group there, she found fellowship, formation, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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Environmental Stewardship

Almsgiving

The giving of alms is a key component, not only to the Christian faith, but for nearly every religious group. While making periodic monetary contributions to the less fortunate is most commonly viewed as fulfilling this spiritual obligation, other commodities should also be considered as gifts to assist those in need.

In today's society, time has become an item that is regularly viewed by many people, especially younger, working adults, as being more precious than money. Regardless of how much wealth or personal possessions people may have, everyone still gets the same number of hours in a day and the same number of days in a year. No matter how hard a person works, they can not stockpile time, or accumulate more hours in their day compared to their neighbors. In the busy lifestyle that many of us accept, we find it impossible to spare even a few minutes to focus on issues that concern others, or benefits something as "unimportant" as the environment. This is why we have embraced our "throw-away" culture, as it allows us to more quickly deal with our garbage, rather than take the time to responsibly care for our common home.

This Lent, try spending those extra few minutes to engage in the tasks of separating the #1 and #2 plastics from your household wastes and placing them in a recycle bin. Likewise try learning about what types of paper your community collects for recycling, along with other items like metals, glass and cardboard can be kept out of the trash, and make an effort to see that these items are dealt with properly when they are collected for disposal.

While it is important to provide financial help to the needy, it must be remembered that a cleaner planet is vital to the health and well being of everyone that lives on the Earth. Giving the precious gift of a few minutes of our time is exceedingly hard for most people, but we are called to make those difficult contributions, especially during this season of Lent.

Submitted by: Tom Kalinowski, St. Bernard's Parish, Faith and Ecology Member

Bishop's Public Schedule

March 18 – 9:30 a.m. – Diocesan Department Head Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

2 p.m. – Meeting with diocesan staff in the Brzana Conference Room in Ogdensburg

March 19 – 11 a.m. – Diocesan Finance Council and College of Consultants Meeting at Wadhams Hall followed by lunch

March 20 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

March 21 – 11 a.m. – Mass and celebration of Saint Joseph's Day followed by dinner at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse in Watertown

March 23 – 7:15 p.m. – Novena followed by Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

March 24 – Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, Inc. Meeting in New York City

March 25 – 9 a.m. – St. Joseph's Home Board of Managers Meeting at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg

Rest in Peace

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

March 18 – Rev. Joseph Murtagh, 1928

March 19 – Rev. Andronique Blaignier, 1958; Msgr. Thomas J. Robillard, 2009

March 20 – Most Rev. Joseph H. Conroy, 1939

March 23 – Msgr. Paul T. Joly, 1987

March 24 – Rev. George Roskwitalski, O.F.M. Conv., 1980

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

A constant companion

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

a place to be of service. Similarly, Schirmer served for some years on the parish's evangelization committee, where she discovered Father Michael Gaitley's Thirty-three Days to Morning Glory, which concludes with a personal consecration to the Blessed Mother. Schirmer relates just how powerful this novena and consecration proved to be.

"After I made the consecration the first time, our youngest son Joe, then 18, chose to come into the

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:

March 19 – 2 p.m., St. James School, Gouverneur

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!



*Support And Pray
For Vocations*

Church," she said. "Before long, his oldest brother, Douglas, [now a 4th year seminarian for our diocese] came into the Church. Later, when I renewed my consecration, our son Calvin announced that he was becoming a Catholic. In 2019, after my most recent renewal, my 88-year-old dad decided to come into the Church, which he will do at Easter."

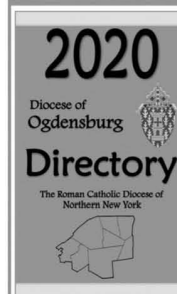
Nevertheless, Schirmer reveals, "Like everyone's story, my own includes some valleys. When we were in seminary, we lost a baby boy just hours after his premature birth. Samuel's death was a crushing experience. But I knew that I could trust the ground beneath me to bring me back to life, because it was the holy ground of a grieving parent...familiar ground to God, that I was being asked to share. Depression has also been a real part of my life for as long as I can remember, sometimes almost too much to bear. However, an experience in October 2018 was pivotal. Rob and I were traveling and went to Mass in Ishpeming, Michigan, where the priest prayed a prayer of deliverance over his parish.

While he was praying, I had a vision of Jesus looking at me and smiling. His look was one of absolute acceptance – and in that look I believe a healing took place. I have since struggled, but I have shared the story with those dear to me, and someone is sure to put their arms around and remind me: 'He smiled at you!'"

The foundation for Schirmer's faith journey was laid during her childhood in Africa, where her parents were missionaries in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo.

"My parents never looked down on anyone but helped everyone who came to our door," she said. "Back in the States it was the same: an open-door policy which allowed many to experience the love of God through their generosity and hospitality. So, I have found it easy to share my faith by offering to pray for people, to hug them, to share a book with them. When I think of what my faith means to me, I am overwhelmed, grateful, and humbled. What better response can there be to such a gift than to share it with others?"

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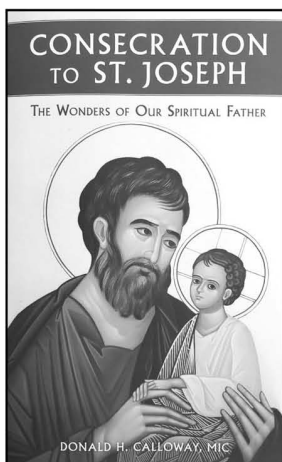
Watertown church hosts consecration to St. Joseph

WATERTOWN – St. Anthony's Church will be hosting a consecration to St. Joseph using *Consecration to St. Joseph, The Wonders of our Spiritual Father*, a book by Father Donald Calloway, MIC.

The group will begin Tuesday, March 24. The Blessed Sacrament is adored at St. Anthony's every Tuesday from 3 to 6 p.m. The consecration will begin immediately after reposition.

Participants will use Father Calloway's book to continue the consecration daily for 33 days. We will meet as a group March 24 and 31, April 7, 14 and 21. The final Consecration will be made on Friday, May 1, the Feast day of St. Joseph the Worker, at 6 p.m. with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Saint Joseph is a hidden



St. Anthony's Church in Watertown will be using the book, *Consecration to St. Joseph, The Wonders of our Spiritual Father*, to guide participants in a consecration to St. Joseph.

treasure, greatly needed today. The recent release, *Consecration to St.*

Joseph, The Wonders of our Spiritual Father has shed light on the power and effectiveness of this mighty defender.

The author, Father Donald Calloway, MIC, is a convert to Catholicism. He is a member of the Congregation of Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception. Before his conversion to Catholicism, he was a high school dropout who had been kicked out of a foreign country, institutionalized twice, and thrown in jail multiple times.

After his radical conversion he earned a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Theology from the Franciscan University of Steubenville, M.Div. and S.T.B. degrees from the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC, and an S.T.L. in Mari-

ology from the International Marian Research Institute in Dayton, Ohio.


Jim Caviezel (main character from *The Passion of the Christ*) has stated that "St. Joseph is our loving spiritual father and the missing piece needed in a world searching for truth, peace and hope."

Among many of the titles of St. Joseph are: Terror of Demons; Defender of Christ; Most Courageous; Hope of the Sick; Protector of the Holy Church and Patron of the Dying. Surely, we could all benefit from the patronage of this blessed Saint. If this courageous father could defend Christ and terrorize demons, imagine what he could do for us!


In glowing support of the book *Most Rev.*

Athanasius Schneider, ORC, DD has urged individuals, families, parishes and diocese to consecrate themselves to the spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph.

All are invited to join us. The only requirement is Father Calloway's book. They are available at fathercalloway.com, AIHeartsAfire.org and Amazon. St. Anthony's Church has a limited supply of free books. In order to reserve a copy, or for any questions, please contact Kathi Buskey at 315-783-2230, or kwbuskey@yahoo.com.

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Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg Report of Special Funds

A Letter From The Diocesan Fiscal Officer

A Message from Bishop Terry LaValley

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

I am privileged to refer you to the attached *Report of Special Funds* for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2019. As we present this report for your review, we complete our financial accounting of all the funds entrusted to the Diocese of Ogdensburg for the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year. The monies highlighted in this report are those set aside for special purposes and investments.



Your personal sacrifice and generous support provide the needed resources for the Diocese of Ogdensburg to proclaim the Good News and minister faithfully to our sisters and brothers in Christ throughout the North Country. Christ-led, Christ-fed and Hope-filled, the mission of the Church continues to be fueled by your strong support.

I wish to thank Michael J. Tooley, our Diocesan Fiscal Officer, and his dedicated staff for the competent manner in which they safeguard all the financial resources that have been entrusted to our Diocese, ensuring that they are used for the purposes intended. I am also most grateful to the members of the Diocesan Finance Council and Investment Advisory Committee who meet regularly and offer their expert counsel and prudential judgment in service to our Church. We are committed to being good stewards of the gifts entrusted to our care for the benefit of others.

Indeed, all the members of our faith family are to be congratulated. The Diocese of Ogdensburg is blessed with so many faith-filled persons whose generous hearts make ours a vibrant Church that beats with such a self-sacrificing heart. I continue to ask the Blessed Mother to bring your cares and that of your loved ones to the bosom of her Son, Jesus. Keeping you and your family in my thoughts and prayers, I am

Gratefully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

The Diocesan Fiscal Office is pleased to present in the *North Country Catholic* the Report of Special Funds for the year ended June 30, 2019, along with comparisons to prior years. Special Funds are funds that the diocese holds for special purposes, such as Disability Insurance, Property and Liability Insurance, Missionary Projects, Priests Retirement, Lay Employees Retirement and Unemployment Insurance. Also included in Special Funds are funds that belong to diocesan institutions which have been forwarded to the diocese for investment, such as the Diocesan Trust Fund and the Deposit & Loan Fund. All Special Funds statements for 2018-19 presented herein have been extracted from the audited financial report that was published in the November 27, 2019 issue of the *North Country Catholic*.

DIOCESAN TRUST FUND

As of June 30, 2019, the Diocesan Trust Fund had principal assets with a cost of \$27,240,810 and a market value of \$30,664,130. The investment's portfolio had a rate of return of 5.7% in 2018-19. In the first six months of the 2019-20 fiscal year the Diocesan Trust Fund had a rate of return of 6.7%, and its market value is \$32,266,391 as of December 31, 2019. The diocese paid dividend distributions from the Fund in the amount of \$875,000 during the fiscal year, a rate of return of 2.65% on investments in the Fund.

DEPOSIT & LOAN FUND

The Deposit & Loan Fund had a decrease of \$62,321 in its net assets in 2018-19, bringing its net asset balance to \$2,629,679. The Fund issued a department grant in the amount of \$560,000 in 2018-19 to help to cover the cost of consultant fees incurred that year for the diocese's Capital Campaign. The interest rate to depositors is 3%, and the interest rate on loans is 4%. In the first six months of 2019-20 the Deposit & Loan Fund net assets increased by \$801,640, primarily due to investment performance. As of June 30, 2019, total deposits in the Fund, including diocesan central office monies, totaled \$33,868,440, and the balance of loan principal due the Fund amounted to \$2,972,340.

PROTECTED SELF-INSURANCE PROGRAM

Expenses exceeded revenue in the Protected Self Insurance Program by \$255,418 in the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019. The diocese settled 10 claims of clergy sexual abuse paying \$985,000 from this fund during 2018-19. The program remains financially sound, as it has reserves for claims in the amount of \$1,292,522, and net assets of \$1,275,198 as of June 30, 2019. The Note Receivable of \$2,855,174 is monies forwarded to the program by excess insurance carriers to cover claims submitted by St. Mary's Church in Champlain for their fire loss in 2014-15. Claims Payable of \$2,713,424 is related to this loss.

LAY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT FUND

The Lay Employees' Retirement Fund had a decrease in net assets of \$320,285 during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019, bringing its total net assets to \$27,406,902. The investment's portfolio had a rate of return of 4.1% in 2018-19. During the first six months of fiscal year 2019-20

fund investments saw a rate of return of 6.8%, bringing its market value to \$28,738,322. The Fund's July 1, 2019 actuarial valuation determined the Fund remains underfunded, seeing a decrease from 75.2% to 74.5% in its funded status. The Plan is well funded as it relates to covering obligations to current retirees (109.7% funded). Diocesan employers contribute 10% of lay employee wages to fund the Plan.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND

The Unemployment Insurance Fund had an increase in net assets of \$23,031 for the year ended June 30, 2019, bringing total net assets to \$287,701. This increase was generated even though eligible employers paid \$20,085 less in premium in 2018-19.

MISSIONARY PROJECTS FUND

The Missionary Projects Fund had an increase in net assets in the amount of \$31,066 for the year ended June 30, 2019, bringing its net assets as of that date to \$203,328. The Diocese of Ogdensburg continues to provide monthly financial support to its former mission in Mollendo, Peru, as well as other missions in the world as deemed appropriate by Bishop LaValley. Moneys are given to support the U.S. Bishops' annual appeal for Latin America. Additionally, with Bishop LaValley's approval, financial support is given from the Fund to urgent need collections taken at times of global emergency/crisis.

DISABILITY INSURANCE FUND

The Disability Insurance Fund had a surplus for the year ended June 30, 2019 in the amount of \$12,453. Claims paid in 2018-19 were \$10,973 lower than in 2017-18. Net assets of this Fund as of June 30, 2019, are \$242,034.

PRIESTS RETIREMENT FUND

The net assets of the Priests Retirement Fund decreased by \$268,245 in the year ended June 30, 2019. The Fund had investment income of \$237,123 and gains on investments in the amount of \$426,414 in the fiscal year. Support from Christmas collections was \$235,334, as compared to \$238,928 the prior year, as the diocese maintained a contribution of 75% of parish Christmas collections to support the Fund. Modest ad hoc pension increases were approved for retired priests in each of the past two fiscal years, but no increase was approved for fiscal year 2019-20.

The Diocesan Fiscal Office is available to answer any questions that may arise following review of the Report of Special Funds. Please feel free to call the Diocesan Fiscal Office at (315) 393-2920, ext. 1210, email at mtooley@rcdonv.org or visit the Fiscal Office at 604 Washington Street in Ogdensburg during normal office hours.

Michael J. Tooley
Diocesan Fiscal Officer

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG
Diocesan Trust Fund Principal
January 1, 1977 - June 30, 2019
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN PRINCIPAL

	January 1, 1977 - June 30, 2017	July 1, 2017 June 30, 2018	July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019	January 1, 1977 - June 30, 2019
Opening Balance	\$0.00	\$27,014,382.14	\$27,933,081.96	\$0.00
Net Deposits	14,919,381.78	(63,079.90)	(215,928.53)	14,640,373.35
Net Realized Gain on Sales	21,731,104.36	1,352,077.57	400,313.16	23,483,495.09
Fees [Custody/Management]	(2,436,284.61)	(275,950.56)	(227,569.18)	(2,939,804.35)
Transfers to Pay Dividends	(11,503,026.26)	(750,000.00)	(875,000.00)	(13,128,026.26)
Net Adjustments*	<u>4,303,206.67</u>	<u>655,652.71</u>	<u>225,912.97</u>	<u>5,184,772.55</u>
Closing Balance [Book]	<u>\$27,014,382.14</u>	<u>\$27,933,081.96</u>	<u>\$27,240,810.38</u>	<u>\$27,240,810.38</u>
Market Value	<u>\$29,016,659.23</u>	<u>\$30,583,623.11</u>	<u>\$30,664,130.12</u>	<u>\$30,664,130.12</u>

* includes income reinvested for fund, funds in transit, etc.

** Assets June 30, 2015 at NBT Bank, Dimensional Fund Advisors & The Investment Fund for Foundations.

	Book Value	Market Value	% Yield (Book)	% Yield (Market)
NBT BANK INVESTMENTS				
Bonds & U.S. Government Agencies & Bond Funds	\$10,743,685.28	\$10,953,502.17	2.53%	2.48%
Equities & Equity Funds	9,420,417.76	11,521,624.40	1.32%	1.08%
Real Estate and Real Estate Trusts	323,528.78	468,330.81	0.00%	0.00%
Money Market	<u>582,733.12</u>	<u>582,733.12</u>	<u>2.23%</u>	<u>2.23%</u>
TOTAL NBT BANK INVESTMENTS	<u>\$21,070,364.94</u>	<u>\$23,526,190.50</u>	<u>1.74%</u>	<u>1.74%</u>
CHRISTIAN BROTHERS INVESTMENT SERVICES				
Bond Funds	\$1,786,216.97	\$1,793,957.34	2.70%	2.69%
Equity Funds	<u>\$3,578,732.47</u>	<u>\$4,567,909.72</u>	<u>0.90%</u>	<u>0.71%</u>
TOTAL CHRISTIAN BROTHERS INVESTMENT SERVICES	<u>\$5,364,949.44</u>	<u>\$6,361,867.06</u>	<u>1.50%</u>	<u>1.27%</u>
DIMENSIONAL FUND ADVISORS	<u>\$626,000.00</u>	<u>\$550,972.56</u>		
THE INVESTMENT FUND FOR FOUNDATIONS	<u>\$179,496.00</u>	<u>\$225,100.00</u>		
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	<u>\$27,240,810.38</u>	<u>\$30,664,130.12</u>		

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG
Deposit & Loan Fund
July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2019

BALANCE SHEET**STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSE**

	June 30, 2019	June 30, 2018		July 1, 2018 June 30, 2019	July 1, 2017 June 30, 2018
ASSETS			INCOME		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$1,357,102.99	\$922,591.58	Interest on Notes Receivable	\$77,378.22	\$67,779.27
Accounts Receivable	\$0.00	\$0.00	Investment Income	885,775.89	908,971.69
Interest Receivable	110,032.10	107,311.31	Unrealized Gain (Loss) On Investments	608,496.42	(21,117.47)
Notes Receivable - Borrowers	2,972,339.67	2,417,952.17	Realized Gain (Loss) On Investments	406,435.69	911,769.14
Reserve	(669,260.00)	(443,658.00)	Other Income	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Investments	32,127,223.49	35,330,755.00	TOTAL INCOME	<u>\$1,978,086.22</u>	<u>\$1,867,402.63</u>
Investment - Diocesan Trust Fund	718,714.12	700,982.11			
Due From Retirement Plan for Priests	0.00	600,000.00	EXPENDITURES		
Due From Operating Fund	<u>0.00</u>	<u>(3,491,369.84)</u>	Interest on Notes Payable	\$951,296.43	\$1,003,151.03
TOTAL ASSETS	<u>\$36,616,152.37</u>	<u>\$36,144,564.33</u>	Investment Management Fees	147,016.16	152,928.57
			Fiscal Office Administration	155,965.00	185,567.00
LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE			Office Supplies	527.58	292.05
Notes Payable - Depositors	\$33,868,439.99	\$33,341,053.04	Office Equipment	0.00	0.00
Accrued Interest Payable	117,085.19	111,511.65	Increase in Reserves	225,602.00	(44,524.00)
Liability to Others	948.50	0.00	Loans Forgiven	0.00	0.00
Fund Balance	<u>2,629,678.69</u>	<u>2,691,999.64</u>	Departmental Grant	560,000.00	3,379,916.80
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE	<u>\$36,616,152.37</u>	<u>\$36,144,564.33</u>	Contributions	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
			TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>\$2,040,407.17</u>	<u>\$4,677,331.45</u>
			EXCESS (DEFICIT) - INCOME MINUS EXPENDITURES	<u>(\$62,320.95)</u>	<u>(\$2,809,928.82)</u>

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG
Missionary Projects/Ogdensburg
 July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2019

<u>FUND BALANCE - JULY 1</u>	<u>July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019</u>	<u>July 1, 2017- June 30, 2018</u>
	\$172,261.74	\$142,249.06
<u>RECEIPTS</u>		
Diocesan OPA Collection	\$42,466.89	\$66,103.98
Missionary Coop Collection	0.00	2,615.87
Parish OPA Donations	0.00	0.00
Interest	5,743.23	4,619.21
Special Gifts	0.00	0.00
General Donations	0.00	1,598.76
Bequests	10,017.73	0.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>58,227.85</u>	<u>74,937.82</u>
TOTAL JULY 1 FUND BALANCE AND RECEIPTS	\$230,489.59	\$217,186.88
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>		
Office Supplies	\$528.62	\$544.27
Advertising	54.00	0.00
Department Grants	0.00	15,000.00
Budget Grants and Donations	26,578.78	29,380.87
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	<u>27,161.40</u>	<u>44,925.14</u>
FUND BALANCE - JUNE 30-	<u>\$203,328.19</u>	<u>\$172,261.74</u>

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG
Diocesan Health/Disability Benefits Program*
 July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2019

	<u>BALANCE SHEET</u>		<u>STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURES</u>	
	<u>June 30, 2019</u>	<u>June 30, 2018</u>	<u>July 1, 2018</u>	<u>July 1, 2017</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>			<u>June 30, 2019</u>	<u>June 30, 2018</u>
Accounts Receivable	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Cash & Money Market Funds	5,055.96	5,478.03		
Investment in Deposit & Loan Fund	0.00	0.00		
Due From Operating Funds	<u>236,977.83</u>	<u>224,103.02</u>		
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>	<u>\$242,033.79</u>	<u>\$229,581.05</u>		
<u>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</u>				
Reserve for Claims**	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Deferred Revenue	0.00	0.00		
Due To Operating Funds	0.00	0.00		
Fund Balance	<u>242,033.79</u>	<u>229,581.05</u>		
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCE</u>	<u>\$242,033.79</u>	<u>\$229,581.05</u>		
			<u>INCOME</u>	
			Premiums	\$83,142.00
			Retiree Drug Subsidy	0.00
			Gain (Loss) on Investments (Net)	0.00
			Investment Income	<u>0.00</u>
			<u>TOTAL INCOME</u>	<u>\$83,142.00</u>
			<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
			Claims Paid	\$36,963.09
			Administrative Fees	0.00
			Health Insurance - Retired Priests	0.00
			Fiscal Office Administration	33,726.17
			Transfers to Other Programs	<u>0.00</u>
			<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>\$70,689.26</u>
			<u>EXCESS (DEFICIT) - INCOME MINUS EXPENDITURES</u>	<u>\$12,452.74</u>
				<u>\$106,792.00</u>
				<u>\$79,962.36</u>
				<u>\$26,829.64</u>

*Self insured health insurance program was terminated August 31, 1997

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG

Priests' Retirement Fund

July 1, 2017-June 30, 2019

	<u>July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019</u>	<u>July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018</u>
FUND BALANCE - JULY 1	\$10,204,905.77	\$10,200,440.14
ADDITIONS		
Share of Christmas Collection	\$235,334.29	\$238,928.08
Diocesan Assessment	73,313.00	74,130.00
Donations in Lieu of Christmas Collection	8,144.00	8,657.00
Bequests and Donations	344.96	26,255.72
Investment Income	237,122.90	252,711.02
Gain (Loss) on Investments (Net)	<u>426,413.61</u>	<u>685,714.27</u>
TOTAL ADDITIONS	<u>980,672.76</u>	<u>1,286,396.09</u>
TOTAL JULY 1 FUND BALANCE AND ADDITIONS	\$11,185,578.53	\$11,486,836.23
DEDUCTIONS		
Payments to Retired Priests	\$880,193.66	\$880,735.16
Retired Priests' Health Insurance	231,892.39	239,748.63
Diocesan Administration	<u>136,831.45</u>	<u>161,446.67</u>
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	<u>1,248,917.50</u>	<u>1,281,930.46</u>
FUND BALANCE - JUNE 30	<u>\$9,936,661.03</u>	<u>\$10,204,905.77</u>

FIFTY-ONE YEAR SUMMARY

	<u>1968-2019</u>
ADDITIONS	
Share of Christmas Collection	\$8,541,867.25
Assessment Per Priest	1,487,279.70
Diocesan Assessment	601,952.44
Donations in Lieu of Christmas Collection	415,975.41
Bequests and Donations	3,026,725.13
Investment Income	7,403,437.26
Net Realized & Unrealized Gains on Investments	12,345,361.26
Self-Insurance Fund Grant	90,000.00
Loan Account Interest	119,838.70
Loan Account Grant	<u>30,000.00</u>
TOTAL ADDITIONS	\$34,062,237.15
DEDUCTIONS	
Payments to Retired Priests	\$18,753,175.14
Retired Priests Health Insurance	3,248,312.59
Diocesan Administration	<u>2,124,088.39</u>
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	24,125,576.12
FUND BALANCE - JUNE 30, 2019	<u>\$9,936,661.03</u>

PRIESTS' RETIREMENT FUND ASSETS

	<u>Book Value</u>	<u>Market Value</u>
Cash and Cash Equivalents - NBT Bank	\$481,986.31	\$481,986.31
Accounts Receivable	\$8,455.00	\$8,455.00
Due to Operating Fund	(2,238,427.87)	(2,238,427.87)
Interest Receivable	19,912.41	19,912.41
Stocks	2,097,745.04	2,632,909.51
Bonds and U.S. Government Obligations	3,315,345.53	3,415,695.01
Manning & Napier Funds	2,420,176.85	2,459,650.82
Christian Brothers Investment Services	2,309,544.92	2,738,327.13
The Investment Fund for Foundations: Real Opportunities Fund	74,790.00	93,791.00
Dimensional Fund Advisors - Emerging Markets Social Core Equities	<u>364,750.00</u>	<u>324,361.71</u>
TOTAL ASSETS - JUNE 30, 2019	<u>\$ 8,854,278.19</u>	<u>\$ 9,936,661.03</u>

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG

Priests' Retirement Fund

The Fund Balance has Accumulated as Follows:

1968	\$17,500.80
1969	10,330.23
1970	20,579.08
1971	19,265.60
1972	27,914.97
1972-1973	5,070.97
1973-1974	18,329.14
1974-1975	55,740.80
1975-1976	44,465.90
1976-1977	36,976.48
1977-1978	54,045.99
1978-1979	66,581.55
1979-1980	133,679.84
1980-1981	113,242.58
1981-1982	22,235.30
1982-1983	99,793.90
1983-1984	173,959.28
1984-1985	30,889.45
1985-1986	153,452.78
1986-1987	111,359.14
1987-1988	204,214.85
1988-1989	188,566.80
1989-1990	226,548.99
1990-1991	143,441.06
1991-1992	445,497.41
1992-1993	272,881.17
1993-1994	463,490.02
1994-1995	491,107.10
1995-1996	960,060.25
1996-1997	1,021,061.17
1997-1998	408,417.16
1998-1999	829,004.36
1999-2000	719,110.30
2000-2001	660,809.56
2001-2002	(1,184,839.10)
2002-2003	330,280.74
2003-2004	1,009,257.04
2004-2005	693,492.98
2005-2006	722,134.05
2006-2007	1,178,509.12
2007-2008	(1,037,244.76)
2008-2009	(1,814,310.57)
2009-2010	92,956.71
2010-2011	1,351,134.50
2011-2012	(403,955.22)
2012-2013	632,958.28
2013-2014	1,249,004.22
2014-2015	(400,661.47)
2015-2016	(1,078,531.11)
2016-2017	610,630.75
2017-2018	4,465.63
2018-2019	<u>(268,244.74)</u>

FUND BALANCE - JUNE 30, 2019\$9,936,661.03

Survey shows divide among believers over Trump views

WASHINGTON (CNS) – President Donald Trump may be as divisive to religionists as he seems to be to other groups in American society, as indicated by the latest Pew Research Center survey.

"We're seeing a big divide between white Christian and minority Christians and non-Christian groups," said Pew research associate Claire Gecewicz, who was the lead researcher on the 55-page Pew survey, released March 12.

Gecewicz also cited a lengthening "bridge between white and Hispanic Catholics, especially with the questions about Donald Trump."

White Catholics increasingly believe their side has been winning politically. This Pew poll, taken Feb. 4-15, showed 55% believing that, more than double the 26% recorded in May 2016, and up from 41% from just last May.

"White Catholics are fairly high on Donald Trump," Gecewicz told Catholic News Service in a March 10 phone interview to discuss the survey findings.

In the survey, taken online, 68% of white Catholics thought "intelligent" describes Trump "very well" or "fairly well," along with 66% who said Trump "fights for what I believe in."

Among white Catholics, 29% say they agree with Trump on "nearly all" issues, while another 29% said they agree with him on "many, but not all" issues. Another 41% said they agreed with the president on "few," "almost none" or "none."

Hispanic Catholics look at Trump differently. Majorities said he was "prejudiced" and "self-centered," while minorities of 21-24% described him as "honest," "morally upstanding" and "even-tempered." Only 31% said Trump "fights for what I believe in," and just 30% agree with Trump on all, nearly all or many issues.

"These results largely reflect partisanship," Gecewicz said. "Most white Catholics said they identified with the Republican Party, and that's certainly in line with their partisan views and partisan identification."

Many of the questions, Gecewicz said, were new to the survey, and were asked in such a way that, if Pew researchers deem it necessary, can be asked again in a future election cycle or about a future president.

When asked how important certain characteristics are in a president, 93% of Catholics said they either "very" or

"somewhat" want a president who "personally lives a moral, ethical life"; 73% want a president who "stands up for people with your religious beliefs"; 62% want one with "strong religious beliefs, even if they are different for your own"; and 42% want a chief executive who "shares your religious beliefs."

Yet 63% said Trump is either "not too" or "not at all" religious, while 35% said he was either "very" or "somewhat" religious. Conversely, 72% found Vice President Mike Pence very or somewhat religious, with just 18% saying the opposite. The only subgroups with majorities believing Trump to be religious were Republicans and white evangelicals.

Pew found 25% of respondents who said he has helped Catholics, although larger percentages – yet not majorities – say he has helped evangelicals and Jews. Among Catholics, 40% say he has helped evangelicals, and 26% said he has helped Catholics.

At best, Trump elicits mixed feelings among people of faith in the way he conducts himself. No religious subset recorded a majority, or even a plurality, saying they like how he comports himself. Forty-nine percent of Catholics said they don't like how Trump conducts himself, led by 59% of Hispanic Catholics.

Majorities of evangelicals, Jews and atheists said there is conflict between their beliefs and mainstream American culture. But 62% of Catholics said they see little or no conflict between their beliefs and the culture.

By a nearly 3-to-1 margin, survey respondents said Christianity's influence in society was decreasing. Catholics mirrored that mindset, with 49% agreeing, but 17% saying Christianity's influence was increasing. But 27% of Catholics said it was a temporary change that could reverse itself, while 22% said they saw the decline as permanent.

Majorities of those who found Christianity's influence declining cited growth in the number of Americans who are not religious, more permissive attitudes about sexuality and sexual behavior in popular culture, and "misconduct by Christian leaders." Fully 66% of Catholics saw misconduct as a reason for Christianity's waning influence – the largest percentage recorded by any religious group, or for any of seven possible reasons suggested.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Vatican: Papal Holy Week liturgies to be closed to public

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The Vatican office that distributes free tickets to papal events has posted a notice on its website that "the liturgical celebrations of Holy Week will take place without the physical presence of the faithful." While public gatherings, including Masses, have been banned in Italy through April 3, Holy Week begins with the Palm Sunday liturgy April 5, so the notification from the Prefecture of the Papal Household was read as a sign that the ban would be extended, at least at the Vatican. Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, told Catholic News Service early March 15 that arrangements for the pope's Holy Week and Easter schedules were "still under study" and that the prefecture's note was meant only to inform people seeking tickets that they would not be distributed as usual. In a formal statement March 15, Bruni said Pope Francis would celebrate all of the Holy Week and Easter liturgies: Palm Sunday, the chrism Mass, the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the liturgy of the Passion of the Lord, the Easter vigil Mass and Easter morning Mass. However, he said, the Vatican still is studying how those liturgies will take place and with what kind of participation.

Pope prays for pastors to find ways to minister amid pandemic

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis urged people to pray for parish priests so that they may find ways to accompany their people while the coronavirus pandemic continues to restrict movement around the country and the world. The pope offered his intention at the beginning of his livestreamed morning Mass March 13, the seventh anniversary of his election to the papacy. A day earlier, Cardinal Angelo De Donatis, papal vicar for the Diocese of Rome, announced that all churches, which had remained open for private prayer, would be closed to prevent the spread of the virus. He modified the order the next day, allowing pastors to make the choice to open, but only if people maintain a safe distance from one another. The pope discouraged priests from taking "drastic measures" to be near their faithful and prayed the Holy Spirit would help them in finding ways to not leave "the holy, faithful people of God alone."

Deacon participates in ordination of his son as bishop

AUCKLAND, New Zealand (CNS) – In a first for New Zealand, a permanent deacon participated in the episcopal ordination Mass of his son. More than 3,000 people from throughout New Zealand attended the March 7 ordination Mass of Bishop Michael Gielen, 48, as an auxiliary bishop of Auckland. Deacon Henk Gielen participated in the Mass, which had strong Maori and Pasifika cultural elements. The Vodafone Events Centre was chosen for the event because St. Patrick's Cathedral was not large enough to accommodate the expected congregation. Before the Mass, NZ Catholic newspaper asked Deacon Gielen if he could ever have imagined when his son was growing up in the central North Island forestry town of Tokoroa that the pair of them would one day be flanking Auckland Bishop Patrick Dunn, with one as a deacon and the other as a new bishop. "No father knows what will become of their children," Deacon Gielen said. "But you love them and give them your best and hope they will flourish." Deacon Gielen, from the Papamoa Coast, said he is very proud of his son – the oldest of six children in his family. He said the news that his son was to be a bishop came as something of a shock, and he is still getting used to the idea. But he thinks God called Bishop Gielen to this ministry because "Michael has a heart for (the) less privileged and a heart of compassion."

ADIRONDACK

RUMMAGE SALE

Lake Placid – St. Agnes School to have their Annual Rummage Sale.

Date: March 28
Time: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Place: School gym

Features: Donations can be dropped off at school any day prior to the event.

Contact: For more information please call Kathleen Murphy at 518-523-3771 or email info@stagneslp.org

CLINTON

FISH FRY

AuSable Forks – AuSable Forks Knights of Columbus to have their Ash Wednesday Fish Fry.

Date: March 20
Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6:30
Place: Holy Name Parish Center
Cost: Adults, \$10; Children under 12, \$6; take-outs available

CHAMPLAIN VALLEY RIGHT TO LIFE OPEN MEETING

Treadwell Mills – Come join the conversation and breathe LIFE into our area.

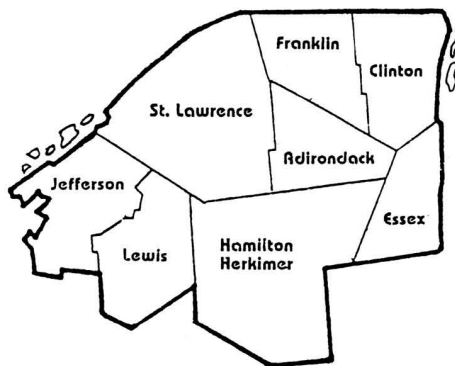
Date: March 21
Time: 1 p.m.
Place: St. Joseph Hall
Features: Champlain Valley Right to Life (CVRTL) not for profit, under new leadership is working together with NYSRTL, to refresh their business plan. The opportunity came about last year when there was discussion to fold. However, when a member stepped forward and offered to take over, the board agreed to vote in new leadership roles of President and Secretary. As part of CVRTL's new vision, an open meeting is planned.

Contact: Please RSVP by calling Nancy 518-593-6024

FISHERS CLUB

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

Date: March 29, April 19, May 3 & 10
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: pastorsmoll@stmarysti.org 518 585



The North Country Catholic welcomes contributions to "Around the Diocese". Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to: North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY 13669; fax, 315-394-0670; e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

7144 or Father Christopher Carrara at ccarrara@rcdony.org 315-375-6571

LENTEN 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

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.

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

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

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

Date: 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

ESSEX

ST. JOSEPH'S LENTEN STUDIES

Olmstedville – Lenten Studies on Miracles to be held.

Date: Wednesdays starting Feb. 26 to April 1
Time: 5 p.m.
Place: St. Joseph's Parish House
Features: Discussion to be had as well as soup and bread will be served.

FRANKLIN

ROSARY RALLY

St. Regis Falls – Rosary Rally to be held for world peace and the sanctity of families.

Date: March 21
Time: 12 p.m.
Place: St. Ann's Church
Contact: For more information call Elaine McGivney at 518-529-6133

JEFFERSON

THE MASS SERIES

Watertown – Bishop Robert Barron's "The Mass" DVD presentation and discussion

Schedule: (3) March 19 "Preparing the Sacrifice; Creating Communion"; (4) March 26 "Sacred Meal, Sacrifice, Real Presence"

Time: 7 p.m.
Place: Dostie Hall at Sacred Heart Church
Features: Whether new to the Mass or not, you will learn from Bishop Barron's presentation. All are welcome. Refreshments.

Contact: Holy Family Rectory, 315-782-2468

SPRING JUNGLE FUN RUN

Carthage – Celebrate Spring with Augustinian Academy Spring Jungle Fun Run.

Date: March 21
Time: 9 a.m.
Place: Packet pickup at Augustinian Academy Gym
Features: There will be a 5K and 1.5 mile walk.

Contact: For more info or paper registration, please contact the front office 315-493-1301 - Or at kclarkson@augustinianacademy.org Register at <https://www.webscorer.com/register?rcode=194539> or facebook.com/caa-jinglebellrun

FISHERS CLUB

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

Date: 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 ccarrara@rcdony.org 315-375-6571

SPAGHETTI DINNER

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

Date: March 26
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.

LENTEN 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

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Watertown – Panel discussion on Human Trafficking in Jefferson County.

Date: April 2
Time: 7 p.m. to 8:30
Place: Dostie Hall, Our Lady of Sacred Heart Church
Features: Panelists representing Jefferson County DA Office, Child Advocacy Center, U.S. Border Patrol and a concerned parent. Free. All are welcome. Refreshments.
Contact: Pat Fanning 315-788-1101

CELEBRATE DIVINE MERCY

Watertown – Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church will hold a Divine Mercy Sunday Celebration.

Schedule: April 10 at 3 p.m. the Divine Mercy novena will begin by praying the chaplet in Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church; April 19 at 3 p.m. at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Singing of the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, confession, & a procession. You may bring your own Divine Mercy picture to be specially blessed.

Contact: For more info on Mercy Sunday, call Judy Boulton at 315-783-7349 or visit www.thedivinemercy.org

LEWIS

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

AT THE MOVIES

I STILL BELIEVE

NEW YORK (CNS) – In keeping with the song and book from which it takes its title, nondenominational affirmations of faith permeate the fact-based romantic drama "I Still Believe" (Lionsgate), making the film congenial fare for Christians of various stripes.

The absence of objectionable material, moreover, renders this love story suitable for all but the youngest viewers who might be upset by some of the events it portrays.

KJ Apa plays future Christian music star Jeremy Camp. As the picture opens, Indiana-bred Jeremy is off to college in California. There he promptly falls at first sight for fellow student Melissa Henning (Britt Robertson). But their relationship faces a series of challenges.

The initial problem is that Jeremy's friend and professional mentor, Jean-Luc LaJoie (Nathan Dean) – who, as front man for a group called the Kry is an already established singer – also loves Melissa, though she just wants to be his pal. So the duo feel compelled to conceal their deepening bond from Jean-Luc, at least temporarily.

No sooner has this triangle been resolved, however, than a much graver development arises when Melissa is diagnosed with cancer. Jeremy, who is clearly on board with the whole "in sickness and in health" deal, doesn't allow this to deter him from wheeling Melissa into the chapel where she's being treated and popping the question.

Though generally supportive of him, Jeremy's parents, Tom (Gary Sinise) and Terri (Shania Twain), are understandably concerned that, at just 20, he

might be getting ahead of himself. But Jeremy remains convinced that marrying Melissa, even as he prays fervently for her to be healed, is the right thing to do.

By hewing to the real-life ups and downs recounted in Camp's eponymous 2003 memoir, directors and brothers Jon and Andrew Erwin's winning picture, which the former co-wrote with Jon Gunn, avoids following a predictable arc. It also gains credibility by portraying the sad truth that, however anxious Jeremy may be to nurture her, there are times when Melissa must suffer alone.

Additionally, "I Still Believe," which is paced by musical interludes, sends a pro-life message via Jeremy's kindly interaction with handicapped kids, most prominently his developmentally challenged younger brother, Josh (Reuben Dodd). Taken together with the other positive values underlying the script, this outlook will make Jeremy's partial biography appealing to moviegoers committed to Bible-based morality.

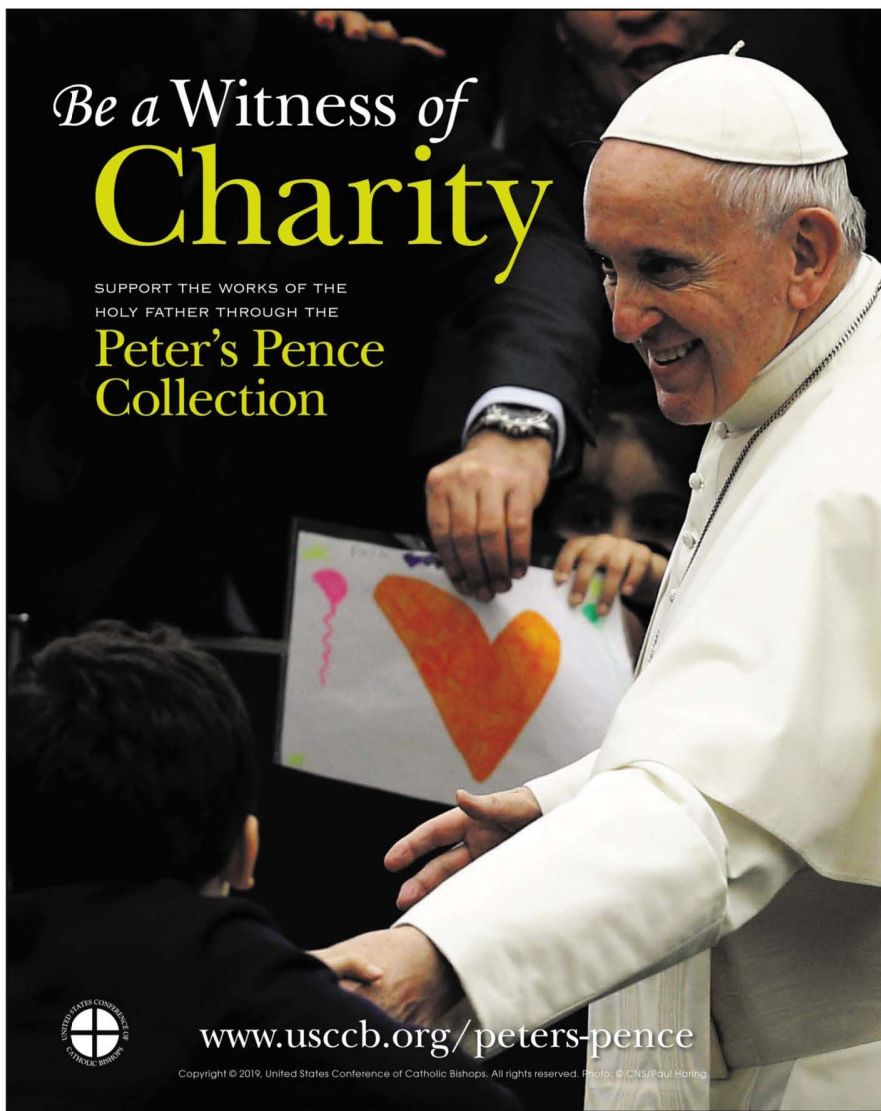
The film contains mature themes, brief medical gore and a couple of marital bedroom scenes. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II – adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association rating is PG – parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.



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"A LITTLE MERCY MAKES THE WORLD LESS COLD AND MORE JUST."

—POPE FRANCIS, ANGELUS, MARCH 17, 2013

Pope Francis calls each of us to witness to charity and to show God's mercy to one another. He encourages us to **"open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help!"** (Misericordiae Vultus [MV], no. 15). The Peter's Pence Collection unites us in solidarity to the Holy See and its works of charity to those in need. Your generosity allows the Pope to respond to our suffering brothers and sisters.

The purpose of the Peter's Pence Collection is to provide the Holy Father with the financial means to respond to those who are suffering as a result of war, oppression, natural disaster, and disease.

Collection Weekend: March 21 & 22

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Invited to live in the light

We're at the half-way point in Lent. Two weeks ago, we were told to "Listen up!" This week, the readings tell us to get rid of the darkness. Currently, our fears for the spread of the coronavirus have already disrupted normal living. We have much more darkness throughout our world as well. Father Richard Rohr told us a while ago, "Because humans do not see their own

March 22

Fourth Sunday of Lent

READINGS
1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a
Ephesians 5:8-14
John 9:1-41

truth very well, they do not read reality very well either."

As a result of straining away through the darkness, we make many foolish and destructive choices in combating the darkness. We're like a person who fails to turn the

light on when entering a room. As a result, we knock over tables and chairs rather than seeing how to use them.

In the first reading, God sends Samuel to go to the house of Jesse in Jerusalem to anoint that son whom God has chosen to succeed Saul as King. God warns Samuel, "Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have re-



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

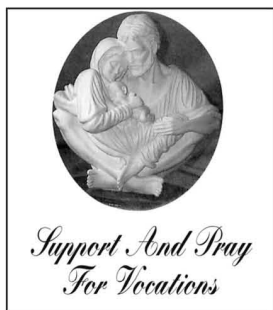
jected him. Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart." Eventually, Samuel finds the least likely son, David, and anoints him king.

If we are to really see clearly, we need to let Jesus heal us of our blindness as He did the man born blind in today's Gospel. Even though Jesus was right in front of him, the blind man couldn't see him until Jesus removed the scales from his eyes and restored his sight. Only later, after much harassing from the narrow-minded Pharisees, was he able to really see spiritually and

see Jesus as the Son of God. It was all possible when he saw through the lens of the Holy Spirit.

We are invited to celebrate this Sunday with joy, because through our baptism and confirmation, we have been invited to live in the light and to act with the power of that light. In the second reading from St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, we read, "You were once in darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light, for light produces every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth."

Through our Lenten discipline, God will remove the darkness in our lives, and help us to respond in faith and love to the Truth about ourselves and our world. Then we will see as God sees!



Visit our website
www.northcountrycatholic.org

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

Find us on Facebook!

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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669

(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296

mbrett@rcdony.org

Lenten sacrifices make a difference

The beautiful and familiar "Peace Prayer" attributed to Saint Francis of Assisi concludes, "...it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

That timely Lenten prayer touches the core of the Catholic Faith and offers us a threefold Lenten meditation on charity, forgiveness and resurrection! The Pontifical Mission Societies are the Pope's chief representatives in supporting the Church in the Missions. This is the greatest of all apostolates ... the direct propagation of our faith to the poor and the needy. We feel a new energy, great zeal in our hope to maximize the gifts of the faithful in America. When we all follow the Lenten expectation to "give up" something, we can provide for the mission Church from Africa to Asia, from Oceania to Latin America.

One of the things that is so special in this work, quite frankly, is the almost limitless potential that we have as Americans to do good. We can greatly help the Church in the developing world right now, as a Lenten offering. We pray, we give... we receive a satisfaction that comes from God Himself.

It is now Lent. The seriousness of the season requires action by all Christians. Prayer and sacrifice are what come to mind. Would you please consider a gift for the missions so that you may receive peace! Would you pardon someone's offences, that Almighty God may pardon yours! Would you offer a prayer for the needy in the missions so that they and you, by the power of Christ's Cross, may one day be born to eternal life!

"Give it up for Lent," they say. Yes, and give it to God by way of His most needy. Such charity, such goodness literally goes to the ends of the earth. May the Lord bless you and your loved ones with a beautiful Easter season. Through you, may He do the same for countless souls far away.

The Mission Office sends tidings to you all for a peaceful and beautiful spring season. God Bless.

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

OBITUARIES

Au Sable Forks – David Blaise, 81; Mass of Christian Burial March 10, 2020 at Holy Name Church.

Brushton – Loren W. Franzier, 63; Mass of Christian Burial March 9, 2020 at St. Mary's Church.

Cape Vincent – Theresa V. (Hallaway) McTague, 108; Mass of Christian Burial March 9, 2020 at St. Vincent DePaul Church; burial in St. Agnes Cemetery, Menands.

Chazy – Ronald V. LaPointe, 81; Mass of Christian Burial March 12, 2020 at Sacred Heart Church.

Elizabethtown – Dianne Marie (MacDougal) Garvey, 81; Mass of Christian Burial March 13, 2020 at St. Elizabeth's Church.

Glenfield – Lois A. (Ramsey) West, 84; Mass of Christian Burial March 14, 2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Old Glendale Cemetery.

Hogansburg – Marjorie A. Lazore, 77; Mass of Christian Burial March 10, 2020 at St. Regis Church; burial in Kateri Cemetery.

Keeseville – Roger Baker, 79; Mass of

Christian Burial at St. John's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Keeseville – Thomas E. Doner, 87; Funeral Services March 10, 2020 at Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in St. John's Cemetery.

Lowville – Louis C. Bush, III, 86; Mass of Christian Burial March 13, 2020 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Lowville Rural Cemetery.

Malone – Norma M. Bouissey, 90; Funeral Services March 12, 2020 at the Bruso-Desnoyers Funeral Services; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Malone – Judy E. Bussey, 71; Mass of Christian Burial March 11, 2020 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Malone – Bernard "Bernie" Davis, 79; Mass of Christian Burial March 9, 2020 at Notre Dame Church; burial in St. Edmund's Cemetery, Ellenburg.

Massena – Edward R. Ash Jr., 34; Funeral Services March 12, 2020 at the Donaldson Funeral Home.

Massena – Raymond G. Lancto, Sr., 98; Mass of Christian Burial March 11, 2020

at Sacred Heart Church; burial in Visitation Cemetery, Norfolk.

Mineville – Barbara Ann Goodspeed, 57; Mass of Christian Burial June 6, 2020 at the Church of All Saints.

Mooers Forks – Shirley A. (LaFontaine) Rabideau, 84; Mass of Christian Burial March 10, 2020 at St. Ann's Church.

Norfolk – George M. Smith, 89; Funeral Services March 14, 2020 at the Buck Funeral Home; burial in Visitation Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Phillip L. Hall, 31; Funeral Services March 10, 2020 at the Frary Funeral Home.

Plattsburgh – Theresa M. (Brunelle) Jensen, 91; Mass of Christian Burial March 13, 2020 at St. Peter's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Potsdam – Diane Carol (Nelson) Hayes, 74; Mass of Christian Burial March 13, 2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Hillcrest Cemetery, Parishville.

Rouses Point – Mary A. (Bombardier) Filion, 70; Mass of Christian Burial March 11, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church.

Many churches cancel Masses

WASHINGTON (CNS) – In an effort to stem the pandemic of COVID-19, bishops' conferences and dioceses around the world began suspending public Masses.

The measures were designed to "flatten the curve," an effort to ease the burden on the health care system so treatment is available. In Italy, the health care system in some areas of the north was overwhelmed within three weeks.

By midday March 13, the World Health Organization reported more than 132,000 cases in 123 countries; nearly 5,000 people had died.

On March 12, the bishops of Quebec canceled

all weekend Masses across the province until further notice. The step was taken in response to measures announced by the Quebec government to combat the spread of the coronavirus, including limiting public assemblies to fewer than 250 people.

The bishops said they wanted to "contribute to this joint public health effort and act in solidarity with the authorities."

"Given the impossibility, in many places, of managing the limit of 250 people gathered, also considering that many of our parishioners are over the age of 65 and are therefore more at risk of contracting the virus," all weekend Masses were

canceled, said a statement from the Quebec Catholic bishops.

Churches were to remain open for small gatherings and for personal visits, but parishioners were encouraged to view Mass on TV, pray at home and read Scripture.

Several archdioceses and dioceses in the United States – including Seattle, Chicago and Washington – made similar closures. Along with the suspension of Masses came a dispensation of the Sunday obligation. Some dioceses continued to offer Masses, but encouraged anyone with a compromised immune system, especially the elderly, to remain home.

Collection Weekend March 21 & 22, 2020

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