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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 74, Number 42

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MARCH 25, 2020

No gathering, but Mass goes on

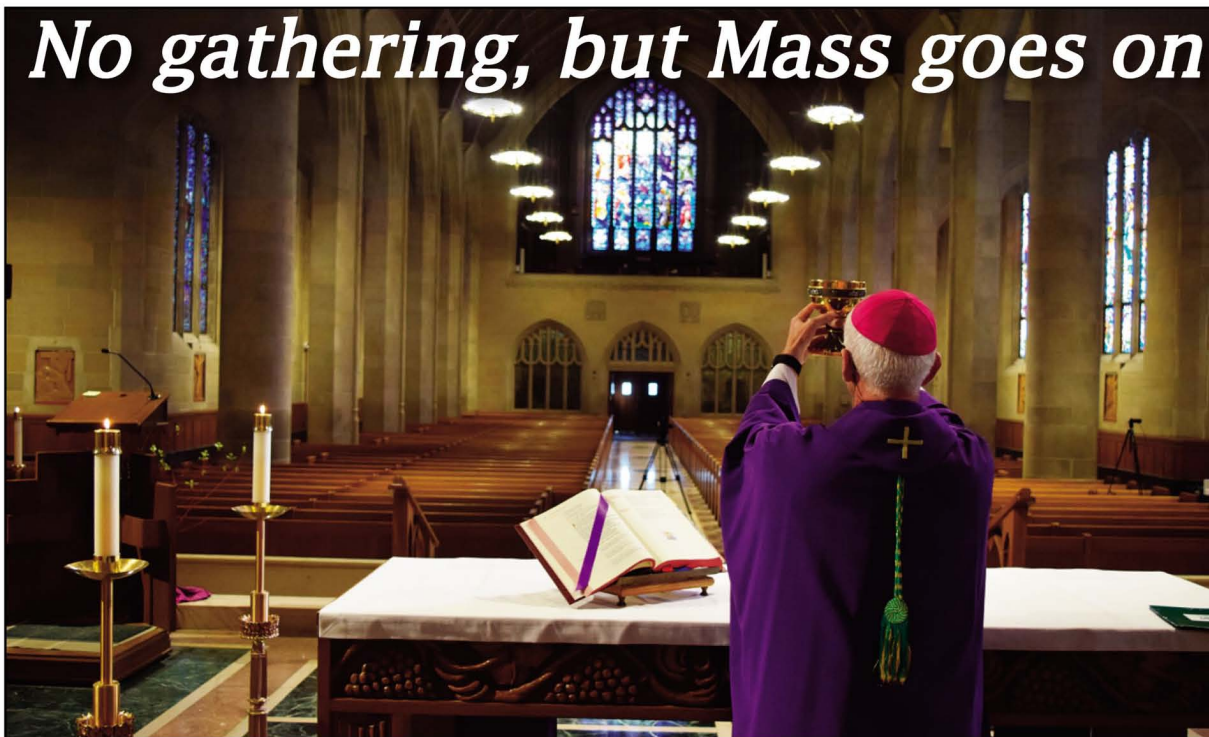


PHOTO BY DEACON JAMES CROWLEY/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrates Mass in St. Mary's Cathedral for a livestream broadcast. While restrictions on gathering remain in place through the Coronavirus pandemic, Sunday Mass will be streamed at 8 a.m. from the cathedral. For a link to the video, as well as information on other televised and online Masses, see Page 4 or visit the diocesan website at www.rcdony.org/covid-19.

Pope to give extraordinary blessing

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—In response to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, Pope Francis said he will give an extraordinary blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world) at 6 p.m. Rome time March 27.

The formal blessing — usually given only immediately after a new pope's election and on Christmas and Easter — carries with it a plenary indulgence for all who follow by televi-

sion, internet or radio, are sorry for their sins, recite a few prescribed prayers and promise to go to confession and to receive the Eucharist as soon as possible.

After reciting the Angelus prayer March 22 from the library of the Apostolic Palace, Pope Francis announced his plans for the special blessing, which, he said, would be given in an "empty" St.

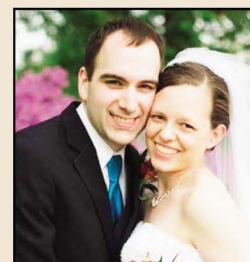
Peter's Square because all of Italy is on lockdown to prevent further spread of the virus.

With the public joining him only by television, internet or radio, "we will listen to the word of God, raise our prayer (and) adore the Blessed Sacrament," he said. "At the end, I will give the benediction 'urbi et orbi,' to which will be connected the possibility of receiving

a plenary indulgence."

An indulgence is an ancient practice of prayer and penance for the remission of the temporal punishment a person is due for sins that have been forgiven. In Catholic teaching, a person can draw on the merits of Jesus and the saints to claim the indulgence for themselves or offer it on behalf of someone who has died.

CALLED TO MARRIAGE



Jesse and Stacey Sovie reflect on their call to marriage as part of the North Country Catholic's annual "Called to Marriage" edition. This year's edition features the Sovie's story of how God brought them together and continues to bring them together and to Him; a look at marriage preparation with Deacon Henry and Dana Leader, as well as an outline of how we can cooperate with God's design using Natural Family Planning.

STORIES, PAGES 5-9

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Publish 45 issues per year: Weekly except skipping every other week beginning July through Aug. and skipping one week in Dec. by the Diocese of Ogdensburg.
622 Washington Street, Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

Editorial Office:

622 Washington Street,
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

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catholic.org

Entered at the

Post Office:

Ogdensburg, NY
13669 and
additional mailing offices as
Periodical Postage.

Subscription:

For one year:

In-Diocese Rate: \$27
Outside of Diocese Rate: \$30

Matters for publication

should be
addressed to
PO Box 326
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
and should be received by
Thursday prior to
publication.

Paper is printed each

Monday;

dateline is Wednesday.

Member, Catholic Press
Association.

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to
North Country Catholic,
PO Box 326
Ogdensburg, NY
13669-0326

EDITOR'S NOTE

'You're bitter? Don't be'

Nearly two weeks ago, I was chatting with a kind priest before he heard my confession. "How's your spiritual life?" he asked.

"Not so hot," I answered. "To be honest, I'm bitter. Between the car accident and two surgeries in just over a year, I feel like I've had more than enough pain and chaos."

"You're bitter?" he responded. "Don't be."

It was that simple. He let that reality sit with me for a few seconds before reminding me that I have a family I

Darcy L.
Fargo

adore, a job I love, relatively good health, a group of close friends... He reminded me that I have a pretty good life.

He also reminded me that I have the ability to choose how I react to what I perceive as hardships. He reminded me that God has given me great gifts, and he reminded me to be grateful.

I've thought about "you're bitter? Don't be" possibly hundreds of times this week, as our world has changed around us in response to the

coronavirus pandemic.

If there's ever been a good time for people to be bitter, this could be it. People are getting sick. People are dying. We're isolated. We're concerned about vital resources being available when needed. We can't go to Mass or gather in worship. We can't receive the Eucharist. There are financial concerns and other fears.

"You're bitter? Don't be."

While it would be easy to be bitter, I'm trying to see the positives and to see God at work in the current situation. I'm trying to be grateful.

I am grateful to God for the medical professionals, retail

workers, shipping and warehouse employees, law enforcement, emergency responders, media, policy makers and all the people working to try to keep the rest of us safe, healthy and informed.

I am grateful I'm able to spend my days with my husband and son. I'm grateful I'm able to work from home and continue doing this job I love so much. I'm grateful my family and I are safe and healthy.

I'm grateful to a loving God who has given me many gifts, even in a difficult time.

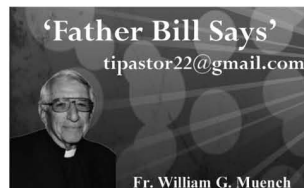
I'm trying not to be bitter. Please try with me.

A period of time without the Eucharist

I am writing this as we, the people of the USA, begin a time of serious isolation from each other as we respond to the coronavirus crisis. Every activity that involves groups of people gathering together are to be cancelled. Included in this list is all public Masses and services of our Catholic Church.

I am fully aware that Bishop LaValley had no other decision in this regard. So, because of this pandemic there will be no public Masses or services. The first thing that came to my mind is that many people will not be receiving the Holy Eucharist during these weeks.

For us, Catholics, the Holy Eucharist and Mass are the heart and soul of our prayer life. I believe, as the Catholic Church teaches, that Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is present in a special way in the Sacred Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. I believe, as our Catholic Church teaches, that Jesus instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice, the banquet of divine life, at the



Fr. William G. Muench

Last Supper. The Eucharist is the summit and source of our Christian life. I believe that Jesus is present in the Holy Eucharist body and soul. The Eucharist is the memorial of Christ's saving life, death and Resurrection.

The word Eucharist means thanks. The sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is an eternal gift from God. We express our gratitude through this sacrament for all that Jesus did for us through his Passion, death and Resurrection.

Our reception of the Holy Eucharist unites us with Our Lord Jesus in a special way and with each other in the Mystical Body of Christ.

Through the Eucharist, God gives us the power and sustenance to live a good life, a life filled with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Each time we receive Holy Communion, our Lord Jesus becomes one with us. Like all food, the Lord truly becomes one with us so that we are truly transformed. In this sacrament, we become a new person.

Today, I want to share with you my concern that many of you will not receive the Holy Eucharist for several weeks. So, what should I suggest to you during this time without Holy Communion? A friend suggested to me the answer will be living well as part of the Body of Christ. St. Paul speaks often of the Church as the Body of Christ – like a human body the Church has many parts, each different, but all working together.

The Adult Catechism says this: "The Church, the Body of Christ, is the assembly of people gathered into her by Baptism and their participation in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, which open their minds and hearts to the Trinity, a loving communion of divine persons. In the communion of the

Church, the members are called to love God, others, and self, and so to be a communal witness of the love by which Christ saved the world. By divine love, we are joined to the communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."

During these weeks without Holy Communion, I believe we must, through our prayers and our way of life, continue to live each day so well that we unite ourselves with the Lord and with others, united in this Body of Christ. In this way, we draw closer to the Lord, and we become more alive in the Spirit as living part of the Body of Christ.

This must be our goal, our call in this time of Lenten conversion and of new life. This becomes our time of living as part of the Body of Christ, just as when we receive the Holy Eucharist.

I believe the challenges will be to commit each day of union with Our Savior. Our question of now: How well will I be the Body of Christ, at work, at home, at school?

FOLLOW ME

'Carpenter's shop became a school of the Gospel'

The following is Bishop Terry R. LaValley's homily for the Sisters of St. Joseph's celebration of the Feast of St. Joseph.

Cardinal Francis Xavier Nguyen Van Thuan, former inmate of Communist prisons for 13 years, wrote that although "St. Joseph was the foster father of Jesus, he never received a sacrament in his life (they weren't yet instituted). But St. Joseph lived with the Word, listened to it, accepted it, put it into practice, communicated and shared it – so much so that his carpenter's shop became a school of the Gospel."

For a few minutes, join me in a journey back to a time long ago and a place far away. Without the risks of contracting any coronavirus or jet lag, we will allow our minds and hearts to transport us to a quaint, yet hallowed ground. We walk into Joseph's school of the Gospel. Standing in the shadows, off in a corner-unnnoticed, we watch the simple, yet intimate drama of foster father and Son engaged in woodworking.

What do we see? The boy, Jesus, assisting Joseph, who was clad in the sweat-stained work clothes of a carpenter. No power saw, electric powered drill, nail gun or electric sander to be found. Sunshine and candlelight, muscle power and faith provided the energy for the carpenter craftsman to accomplish the task at hand.

This carpenter's workshop must have served as a school for the young Jesus. Clearly, this setting was conducive to learning the skills of the carpentry trade, but so much more

would be offered and received. Among many lessons, the skilled carpenter would teach his young Charge about the virtue of patience, the dignity of hard work, need for assistance, respect for God's creation, and hope in the midst of daunting trials.

As I was reflecting on this Feast Day, I kept returning to Joseph the Carpenter. Maybe it was because my father was a carpenter who built the house my family grew up in, his middle name was Joseph, and his funeral Mass was held on the Feast of St. Joseph. Let me share with you some of life's lessons I learned, some better than others, from my father, although we did have the advantage of electricity and the use of power tools that made for less sweat.

Patience: the carpenter knows that the wood he crafts must be dry. If it's too green – if he can manage to saw and nail through it – it will crack and split once it begins to dry. He must wait until the wood is ready to be crafted into the finished product the carpenter intends. Joseph would teach Jesus about patience in woodworking and in life--When the wood is ripe, the time is right. What about the virtue of patience with my own journey of faith? The Master Craftsman continues to mold us in His image. Am I patient with myself and my lifelong formation as a disciple of Christ? Am I patient with those with whom I live and minister?

The carpenter also knows how to let his tools

work for him, not against him. I remember learning how to use a hand saw. I would push the saw hard and quickly to make sure it

would cut through the piece. I would work up a sweat, often not able to cut along the marked line that I was supposed to follow, even breaking thin pieces of wood that I was sawing because I was pushing too hard, too quickly. I remember my father telling me to let the saw do the work. The teeth in the saw blade would do the cutting, so don't think you have to force it.

For the times I can't seem to smooth out my rough edges, will I rely on God's graces which are ever-present? Grace is abundantly available for me to use. I can't save myself by myself. In a way, grace is a tool that I can't harness, but I can allow God's grace to inundate me, energize and guide me in following Jesus.

A favorite time for me was when my father used the wood lathe. He would put a piece of wood in the lathe, turn it on and, using special lathing tools, make neat carvings in the wood. He crafted a piece of wood into a beautiful and practical piece of art. I especially liked the spindles he would create to be used to support the railings on stairways – beautiful, but necessary guides for those who would use the steps. Beautiful results can be achieved if we let the instruments available to us do what they are meant to do. Again, am I docile to God crafting me according to His design? Do I let go

and let God? Salvation is not about self-improvement...God saves us by His own initiative of grace. We must not work against the grace offered by the Master Craftsman. He must increase, I must decrease. God is God, not me.

Another lesson learned was respect for the product of the work crafted. I remember once when a high schooler, for his Eagle Project, in one of my parishes, had made a really impressive picnic table that was placed in the village's park. It wasn't there a week when vandals had carved graffiti into the wood and sliced out big segments of the table. The beautiful table was defaced badly. The Eagle Scout was devastated. That was just wood! What must our Creator think about what we do to the human person that God so lovingly crafts and continues to mold in His image and likeness? The unborn, the abused child, the abandoned refugee, the persecuted Christian, the person with whom I live? God forgive us!

Another lesson learned in the carpentry workshop is the value of having someone else around to hold up the other end of the board while the craftsman is fashioning it into the final product he envisions. Holding up the other end as the wood is being sawed or pieces are nailed together makes for a smoother process of transformation. We are not solitary beings. The presence of others helps to lighten the load. Having companions on the journey brings a real source of confidence and hope for each of us as we struggle to follow Jesus.

Sisters of St. Joseph,

your community is such a source of hope for your bishop, for the North Country. For decades, you have held up the other end when it comes to educating our youth. You have held up the other end as you have so faithfully tended to the unique needs of our native American sisters and brothers. You hold up the other end in our efforts to catechize our young, including our special ed. students here in the Watertown area. You hold up the other end as you minister to the hurting and as you instruct our deacon candidates.

Within your religious community, your presence and support of ailing sisters, your support and affirmation of the staff here at the Motherhouse--your holding up each other (sometimes literally), gives witness to the lessons you've learned in the school of the Gospel held in your patron's workshop.

These are just a few of the ways in which this blessed community, under the patronage of St. Joseph, beloved Carpenter, holds up the other end as the Lord seeks to fashion each and every one of us as faith-filled children, disciples in mission. And Sisters, those of you who no longer are engaged in active ministry, know how much you hold up the other end in your ministry of prayer. We depend on it so much. It's so fitting that the foster father of the Creator of the world should be a builder. Congratulations Sisters and associates for your inspiring living out the Gospel of the Word and thank you for helping to build up the Church in the North Country. Happy Feast Day! St. Joseph, pray for us all!



**Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley**

Online and televised Masses are available

Of course, attending Mass is best and most proper. While we cooperate and try to slow the spread of the coronavirus, you can participate in Mass via television, Internet and radio options. On March 22nd, we will begin streaming Mass from St. Mary's Cathedral at 8 a.m. at <https://www.rcdony.org/livemass>.

More options include:

WITHIN THE DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG

Internet streaming:

- St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg live at 8 a.m. Sunday, <https://www.rcdony.org/livemass>

- St. Augustine's Church, Peru Daily Mass is at 8 a.m. at "Our Mother Mary" site: <https://www.facebook.com/ilovemothermary/> Sunday Mass is streamed to Our Mother Mary and on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/StAugustinesChurch-PeruNY/>

Cable television – depending on your coverage area, on delay up to a week:

- St. André Bessette Parish, Malone from Notre Dame, Malone airs Thursday at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. and Sunday at 9 a.m. on Spectrum channel 30.

- St. Bernard's Church, Mass from St. Bernard's in Saranac Lake or Church of the Assumption in Gabriels, airs Sunday at 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Spectrum channel 2. Stations of the Cross from St. Bernard's airs the next 5 Fridays at 8 p.m.

NEARBY DIOCESES

- Albany: multiple options available at <https://www.rcda.org/livemass>

- Syracuse: Internet streaming at <https://www.youtube.com/syrdio>

- New York: SiriusXM, The Catholic Channel, channel 129, from St. Patrick's Cathedral, NY weekdays 7 a.m., Sundays 10 a.m., 11 a.m. and Our Lady of Angels, Los Angeles at 1 p.m.

OTHER

- EWTN: Mass is aired at 12 a.m., 8 a.m., 12 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Spectrum channel 460, DirectTV channel 370, Dish Net-

work channel 261 and is available via streaming at <https://video.ewtn.com/>

- CatholicTV Network: Internet live streaming at <https://www.watchthe-mass.com/>.

- Word on Fire Daily Mass broadcast at <https://www.wordonfire.org/daily-mass/>

For access this listing with functional links and

for more diocesan resources related to the Coronavirus pandemic, please visit <https://www.rcdony.org/covid-19>.

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Sharing our Stories



Sharing our Faith

The Diocese of Ogdensburg covers an area of 12,036 square miles. With such a large area to cover *The North Country Catholic* allows us share our stories of faith with one another. The NCC is able to provide:

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CALLED TO MARRIAGE

'God knew what I needed in a spouse'

By Suzanne Pietropaoli
Staff Writer

OGDENSBURG – In many ways, theirs is a very modern love story: Jesse and Stacey Sovie met online in January 2015. Even so, they point out, "We continually marvel at the awesomeness of God and his love for us as we look back and reflect on how he brought us together and blessed our relationship."

"After multiple failed relationships and a prayer to God for my future husband, I started searching CatholicMatch again," recalls Stacey. "I was finished 'settling,' and could not believe it when Jesse's profile appeared. All the qualities I was looking for were there! I wanted someone who was strong in his faith, and that I could grow closer to God with. I was looking for someone who was honest, respectful, loving, who could make me laugh, who wasn't trying to change me. A big thing for me was that I wanted a family. God knew what I needed in a spouse and Jesse had it."

That same evening, 145 miles away from Stacey's home in Sheldon, Vermont, Jesse Sovie, at his home in Ogdensburg, found Stacey's profile and was equally impressed. He, too, had stepped away from dating for a while.

"At that point in time, I knew I wanted to find someone who shared the same passion for the faith that I had," Jesse said. "CatholicMatch seemed promising because on the dating profiles, each person had to answer yes or no to a short list of important Church teachings.

Stacey had answered 'Yes' to all those questions, so I knew we had that in common before we even started communicating. That was so important to me."

As the couple connected, their appreciation for each other quickly deepened.

"Once we started talking to each other," Jesse explains, "we talked with such ease that it felt we had known one another for years."

"Messages (more like novels because they were so long!) turned into phone calls which led to our first date, followed by many more," Stacey added.

That first date began with meeting for Sunday Mass at a parish in Vermont.

"I still remember that moment so well," Jesse said. "The feeling I had, sitting next to Stacey in the pew as we worshipped together at Mass, was unlike any other. There was a total sense of peace, a sense that felt so right, like we were truly meant to be there together. As I found out later, Stacey also experienced those exact same feelings."

Many more dates followed, and the couple continued to message and call to bridge the distance between their hometowns. Jesse proposed on Valentine's Day, 2016, and he and Stacey were married at her home parish in Sheldon, Vermont, on May 13, 2017. It was also the 100th anniversary of the Blessed Mother's apparitions at Fatima – a perfect, the couple says, "because Our Lady has always had a special place in each of

our lives."

Establishing their home in Ogdensburg, the couple discovered new depths to their love for one another.

"To say that marriage is what I thought it would be, before I got married, isn't accurate," Jesse said. "If anything, marriage has been a blessing beyond anything I could've imagined. While there have certainly been times when Stacey and I had disagreements or suffered hurt feelings, our love and faith have always been the key to overcoming those bumps in the road. Both of us know the other isn't going anywhere and that our love and commitment are larger than any obstacles that may try to get between us. Love and forgiveness need to go hand in hand to allow growth in any relationship."

Stacey echoes her husband's assessment.

"Marriage for me has been a huge blessing," she said. "Every day I get to stand beside someone who has not only become my best friend, but someone who loves me unconditionally, even on my worst days. Together we have helped each other grow in our love and in our prayer life. We have had some challenges, but we have worked through them together with love and prayer. We have both learned that communication is a vital part of making our marriage work."

Building a family together was a dream this couple shared from the beginning of their relationship. On September 12, 2018, their first child, Rebecca, was born; their second baby is due on



Jesse, Stacey and Rebecca Sovie

REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

— PRAYER SUGGESTION —

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name a priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own dispositions and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul; take over his entire personality and life.

Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always. O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of our priests, pray and intercede for (...)

Amen.

APRIL

DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY		2020					
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
			1 BISHOP TERRY R. LAVALLEY	2 REV. DANIEL GOULET	3 REV. ALEX V. GUIMPOL	4 REV. ROLLAND A. HART	
5 REV. ALBERT I. HAUSER VF	6 REV. PETER G. HELFRICH	7 REV. MICHAEL J. JABLONSKI	8 OUR PASTOR	9 REV. VINCENTE F. JAZMINES	10 REV. DANIEL T. KEEFE	11 REV. PAUL J. KELLY	
12 REV. JOHN P. KENNEHAN VF	13 REV. THOMAS E. KORNMEYER VF	14 REV. STEVE KOVACEVICH	15 POPE FRANCIS	16 BENEDICT XVI POPE EMERITUS	17 REV. DONALD F. KRAMBERG	18 REV. ARTHUR J. LABAFF VF	
19 REV. ALAN J. LAMICA	20 REV. ROBERT O. LAMTITE	21 REV. KRIS C. LAUZON	22 RETIRED PRIESTS	23 REV. CLYDE A. LEWIS	24 REV. CHRISTOPHER J. LOOBY	25 REV. JOHN J. LOOBY	
26 REV. SHANE M. LYNCH	27 REV. DONALD J. MANFRED	28 REV. LAWRENCE E. MARULLO	29 DECEASED PRIESTS	30 MSGR. C. JOHN MCAVOY			

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Environmental Stewardship

What can I learn?

As I walk out our back door, I notice the sap rising in the willow tree, the song of the birds, and signs of new life springing up all around me. I sense a quiet peacefulness settle within me. In the midst of this Lenten Season and on the brink of the season of spring, I wonder what the Creator may have to teach me about life nestled in this season of springtime.

One lesson that seems embedded in the earth community and is reflected in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures is that of simplicity. Observing nature, we discover that it takes only what it needs. Jesus lived a very simple life in Nazareth, and He chose a very simple lifestyle in his public ministry. Spiritual writers tell us that "less is more." The more things I have, the more time it takes me to care for them and the less time I have to be attentive to God and needs of others.

The Christian virtue of "simplicity means taking only what you need – not wasting or taking in excess. It leads to a life that is outwardly simple, inwardly rich and social just. Simplicity is no longer an alternative lifestyle only for a few ascetics. The U.S. comprises 5% of the world population, but consumes 30% of world's goods." (Lent 4.5 /Lent 4.2 Program)

St. John Paul II stated, "It is manifestly unjust that a privileged few should continue to accumulate excess goods, squandering available resources, while masses of people are living in conditions of misery at the very lowest level of subsistence." In *Laudato Si* #222 we read "Christian spirituality... encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption." (LS 222)

As we experience the outbreak of the coronavirus here in our country in the midst of our Lenten Journey, we are provided with practical and spiritual reasons to consider what is really important and to fast from what we don't need. Our fasting can have both spiritual and social affects upon us and upon our neighbors.

Bishop's Public Schedule

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

March 27 – 11 a.m. – Pastoral Advisory Committee Phone Conference Meeting

April 2 – 11 a.m. – Chrism Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

April 3 – 7 p.m. – Deacon Candidates Class at Wadhams Hall 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 25 – Rev. Michael D. Charbonneau, 1909

March 26 – Rev. Jean P. Bernard, O.M.I., 1885; Rev. Thomas J. Rodgers, O.S.A., 1971; Msgr. William E. LaVallee, 1976

March 27 – Rev. Bernard Marron, 1927; Rev. Henry Cormerais, 1938; Rev. Lawrence J. Gerrity, O.S.A., 1981; Rev. John L. Gallagher, O.S.A., 1982

March 28 – Rev. Francis McShane, O.S.A., 1932; Rev. Walter C. McMahon, 1978; Rev. Lawrence A. Mallette, 1989; Rev. Joseph P. Trombley, 2001

March 29 – Rev. Joseph Taney, 1880; Rev. Hillary Hemmer O.M.C., 1934; Rev. J. Aime Troie, 1955; Rev. Ross A. Garnsey, 1986; Rev. Euclid Marier, 2003

March 30 – Rev. Joseph Chartrand, O.M.I., 1960; Rev. Victor Lamore, 2017

March 31 – Rev. Louis Lopic, 1873; Rev. Gabriel Volkert, 1873; Rev. Henri Langlais, O.M.I., 1980

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters from readers of the North Country Catholic.

- We ask that the word count 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

'God knew what I needed'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

April 18.

"When you hold a child in your arms after anticipating their birth for nine months," Jesse relates, "so much joy and awe hits you at once. The reality also hits that you are personally responsible for this life that you helped bring into the world."

Stacey, who is fulfilling her dream of being a stay at home mom, agrees.

"The best moments of parenthood can never be topped by the moment

we held our miracle for the first time," she said. "Seeing her and knowing that she is a gift from God truly humbles me. I realize how blessed we are to have her in our lives when I see her grow each day and hear her laugh."

"Parenthood has changed me in ways that would be impossible without God's grace," Stacey added, "like an increase in patience when Rebecca is not behaving. The ability to sacrifice is probably what has changed me the most. It's not just sacrificing for myself or Rebecca, but for the whole family."

Jesse refers to parenthood as "the new normal of planning and preparing, not just for ourselves but for our children. Now when we make decisions, we must discern what effects they will have on our time, commitments, and family life."

Jesse, a data management technician, explains that they are careful to

discern their various parish commitments at St. Mary's Cathedral Parish, where they now serve on the Pre Cana team for marriage preparation. There, and in this space, they emphasize the importance of "taking the time to discern properly if the other person is right for you. Make sure God is part of your relationship. Seek honest input from someone you trust who can see your relationship more clearly than you can. Marriage has a way of bringing our selfishness to light. Embrace this as an opportunity to grow in virtue. Surround yourselves with other couples and individuals who share your faith and values. Be sure to continue a regular date night with your spouse. There is more to learn about your spouse even after marriage, so never quit those fun dates. Make sure God is part of your relationship. Pray often and pray together!"

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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
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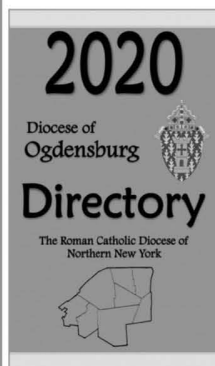
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CALLED TO MARRIAGE

Preparing for lifelong love

By Suzanne Pietropaoli
Staff Writer

While the Church wisely requires marriage preparation for engaged couples, not everyone understands why. The NCC explored this issue recently with Deacon Henry and Dayna Leader of Gouverneur, diocesan Family Life Associates for Marriage Enrichment and Preparation. Married for 25 years, parents of eight and grandparents of four, the couple brings to this work more than two decades of experience in leadership at Family Guggenheim, in Worldwide Marriage Encounter, and in diocesan marriage preparation.

What motivated your extraordinary commitment to this ministry?

LEADERS: Our understanding of God's plan for marriage and family, and the indissolubility of the Sacrament of Marriage, compelled us from our own Pre-Cana and Engaged Encounter Weekend that this would be our lives' work. We were so blessed to know, through our own preparation, that the vows we were about to make were for EVER. We saw the destruction and despair of generations of friends and loved ones because of failed marriages. We understood that "some weddings should not have taken place," and that many couples are not prepared, nor capable, to make a valid vow of permanence. We have seen the devastation of couples who went into marriage believing that they were promising forever, but not actually knowing what that really meant or how to achieve it.

Why does the Church re-

quire marriage preparation for engaged couples?

LEADERS: The Church, in all her wisdom, requires marriage preparation for several reasons. Jesus chose the Sacrament of Marriage to reflect His love for His Church. Our job as a husband or wife is to help each other get to heaven. Marriage requires daily choices to love even when we do not feel like it! To love is to will the good of the other! To love is to sacrifice, to make a gift of

ourselves to our spouse every single day. The Church requires marriage preparation **BECAUSE YOUNG COUPLES DO NOT KNOW THESE FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS!!**

Now more than ever, the world is screaming the exact opposite of these truths. One of the greatest misconceptions that young people bring into marriage is that they will always be as happy as they were on their wedding day, or when dating,

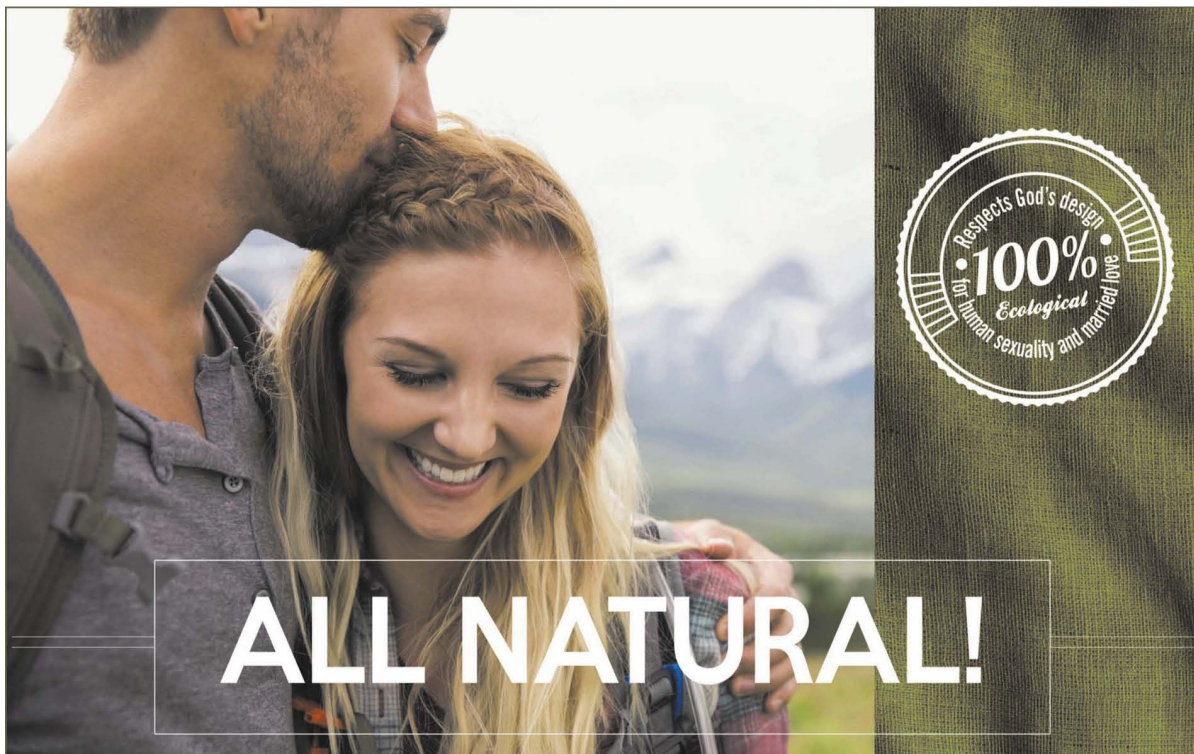
or on their honeymoon. When they are not, they become disillusioned and believe that they either chose the wrong spouse, or that they will never find happiness with their spouse. Both are lies from the evil one, whose greatest desire is for marriages to fail. Once, in an argument, Henry and I were not acting very charitably, and he challenged me by referring to what we teach in Pre-Cana. Stubbornly, I sniffled and blubbered,

"Oh yeah! I'm the best person to tell those kids that they aren't always going to be that happy!" As always, Henry's love softened my heart and we laughed and reconciled. Young couples need to hear this reality! Lifelong, faithful marriage is possible!

What is the focus of a Pre-Cana session?

LEADERS: The focus of the Pre-Cana sessions is to expose engaged couples

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



ALL NATURAL!

Natural Family Planning

Good for the body. Great for the soul!

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Diocesan NFP Office

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Preparing for lifelong love

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

to the fundamental truths about God's plan for marriage. The content includes the basics of Theology of the Body, what the Sacrament of Marriage is, and how it differs from a civil marriage. Obviously, this content is huge, but it is vitally important that couples understand that in marriage they are being called to love the way God loves: freely, permanently, faithfully, and fruitfully. Catholic marriage is a vocation, a call to love and serve God and to share His love with others.

What is BELOVED, the Augustine Institute's marriage prep program that many Pre-Canas use?

LEADERS: The BELOVED program is a treasure trove of the beauty of sacramental marriage, presented in state-of-the-art videography unpacked by leading experts in the Church on marriage. The engaged couples are very receptive to the format and the content, as well as hav-



The Leader family

ing a married couple model prayer with them and facilitate the discussion of various topics. Participants also enjoy the time provided for the two of them to privately discuss what is presented. At this time, BELOVED is the best format that we have found, and it introduces couples

to the most highly respected authors and speakers on marriage in the Church.

What joys and challenges are involved in marriage preparation?

LEADERS: The biggest challenge is that nearly all the engaged couples are hearing the fundamental truths about the Sacra-

ment of Marriage for the very first time. We are asking them to take a drink of living water that can sustain them in marriage. But in reality, we are drowning them in an ocean of information in less time than it takes to prepare to drive a car or become a deer hunter, or a lifeguard. They look at us as if we are speaking a beautiful, romantic language that they have never heard before but would like to understand, though some honestly look at us like we are crazy. The challenge is knowing that the measure in which they accept the grace of the Sacrament and stay faithful to their marriage vows is directly proportional to the extent that they are capable of true happiness, along with their children and grandchildren. The

joy is the hope of Jesus Christ that the longing for Him is in every human heart. He has called these couples to be with us before they marry, and He allows us to be unworthy, honest, real-life instruments to His example of sacrificial self-gift and unwavering forgiveness as the keys to life-long marriage. The joys are when we see new families created, see couples return to Mass and the Sacraments, reflecting God's love to the world.

Pope Francis calls for "a new catechumenate in preparation for marriage." Any thoughts?

LEADERS: The best approach we know is understanding that marriage formation begins in childhood. We need to speak to our children about vocations at the youngest ages. We need to teach children about making gifts of themselves, about self-donation, and we need to teach them that language and train them in virtue. We need to identify that we are preparing them for their future spouse, whether in marriage or in Jesus or the Church, every time they help with the dishes or clean up a mess they didn't make, or ask forgiveness when they have failed to be a gift of self to the family. This simple but profound formation can be reinforced by Teen Camp, Family Guggenheim, and the Steubenville Youth Conference. Families, no matter the age of their children, can pray for their current/future spouses. That is the beginning. It is impossible to love like Christ, to love 100%, 100% of the time. However, it is possible to love like Christ when we cling to Him.

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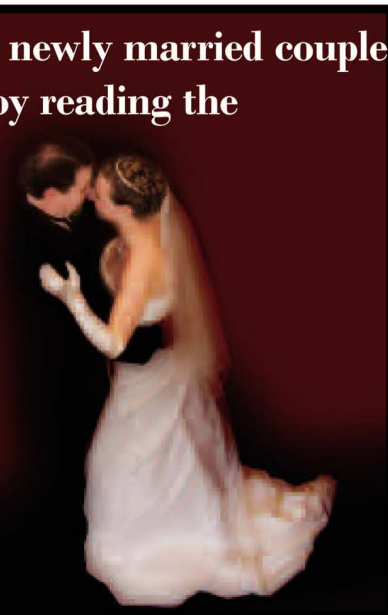
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CALLED TO MARRIAGE

Why Natural Family Planning?

By Suzanne Pietropoli
Staff Writer

What is Natural Family Planning, and why does it matter? The U. S. Bishops answer both questions in their document, "Married Love and the Gift of Life."

"Natural Family Planning," they write, "is a general name for the methods of family planning that are based on a woman's cycle. A man is fertile throughout his life, while a woman is fertile for only a few days each cycle during the childbearing years. A woman experiences clear, observable signs indicating when she is fertile and when she is infertile. Learning to observe and understand these signs is at the heart of education in natural

family planning. When a couple decides to postpone pregnancy, NFP can be very effective. NFP can also be very helpful for couples who desire to have a child, because it identifies the time of ovulation. Natural methods of family planning involve fertility education that enables couples to cooperate with the body as God designed it."

This cooperation with God's design makes NFP unique among family planning methods.

As the Bishops make clear, "When couples use contraception, either physical or chemical, they suppress their fertility, asserting that they alone have ultimate control over this power to create a new human life. With NFP,

spouses respect God's design for life and love. They may choose to refrain from sexual union during the woman's fertile time, doing nothing to destroy the love-giving or life-giving union that is present. NFP does not change the human body in any way, or upset its balance with potentially harmful drugs or devices."

Instead, it empowers couples to live in harmony with their bodies, and with their fertility. The Bishops also note that NFP "leads couples to show greater attentiveness to and respect for each other."

"By using contraceptives," the Bishops conclude, "couples may think that they are avoiding problems, that they are

exerting control over their lives. But the gift of being able to help create a new human being involves profound relationships. It affects our relationship with God, who created us complete with this powerful gift. It involves whether spouses will truly love and accept each other as they are, including their gift of fertility. Finally it involves the way spouses will spontaneously accept their child as a gift from God and as the fruit of their own marital love. Like all important relationships, it is not subject solely to our individual control. **In the end, this gift is far richer and more rewarding than that.**"

To learn more about Natural Family Planning,

please contact the Diocesan NFP Office at (518)483-0459 or email apietropaoli@rcdony.org. NFP information may also be accessed at www.rcdony.org/nfp and at the website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp.

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"G.K. Chesteron" Men's Retreat

June 5 to June 7
Guggenheim Lodge, Saranac Lake

"Restore" Steubenville Youth Conference

July 17-19
For more information contact
Dayna Leader at 315-323-0827

Family Guggenheim

Session 1: August 13-16
Session 2: August 20-23
Session 3: October 9-11

Married/Religious Jubilee

September 20
Mass starts at 2:30 p.m. followed by reception
St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg



Special note for anyone who is preparing for marriage or is married please check out the USCCB's web site. The materials and helpful articles are designed for helping build strong marriages. Every marriage matters, because marriage comes from the hand of God.

For more information on these events or programs, please contact the Steve Tartaglia at the Family Life Office 315-393-2920 or visit our website at www.rcdony.org/familylife



'Trusting God through hard times'

Editor's note: This is the fourth 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 Darcy Fargo
Editor

LOWVILLE—"There's a quote by Pope Francis I adore," said Eileen Greenwood, a Lowville resident and Catechetical Leader at St. Stephen's Church in Croghan. "He said, 'sometimes tears are the lenses we need to see Jesus.' I have shed a lot of tears, but my heart remains joyful and hopeful."

Greenwood said her faith in and love of the Lord has sustained her through a number of losses and has guided her as she has discerned what God wants for her life.

She credits her parents for instilling faith in her and her 12 siblings despite facing challenges.

"I grew up in a family with 13 children," she said. "Throughout childhood, our family prayed the rosary daily, and you didn't skip a single Sunday of Mass unless you were very, very, very ill. Of the 13 of us, they lost four boys."

Three of Greenwood's brothers died as children. While she was too young to remember two of her deceased brothers, the death of the third, Davey, stands out vividly in her memories.

"I was 12, and he was 18," she said. "Watching my mom and dad through that, and seeing how they held onto God through it,



Eileen and Tim Greenwood

really formed me. I grew up understanding the importance of Mass and prayer and staying connected to God."

Though there were times, especially in college, when she questioned the importance of her faith, Greenwood always attended Mass. But when she met Tim, the man who would eventually become her husband.

"He really wanted to go to church with me," she said. "He wanted to know more about the faith. During the course of our engagement, he became Catholic. We did the (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) courses together. That was when I really started learning more about my faith."

Also during their engagement, Greenwood's father, Richard suffered a heart attack and died.

"His death brought us even closer to God," Greenwood said. "It was a significant time when we realized how important God was to us and how we needed to cling to Him."

Not long after Tim and Eileen married, the couple prepared to welcome their first child into the world. During the delivery, there was a medical complication that endangered both Greenwood and her baby, Melissa.

"She or I could've died," Greenwood said. "It was really, really bad. Melissa was transported out to Upstate in Syracuse. I had a c-section and couldn't travel. It was so hard. I didn't get to hold her for days. By the third day, she was doing well. I couldn't stand it. I told the nurses and doctors I was leaving. I was going. I had to see her. She was doing well enough that they arranged to bring her back, and I had her with me at the hospital."

Having that first child was transformational, Greenwood said.

"Your heart becomes so full when you have a child," she said. "Becoming a mom was such a tremendous gift to me. I had this tremendous awareness that this baby

was a gift, and that God was here in this baby."

Several years later, when Greenwood had her third child, she was working as a kindergarten teacher in a public-school system. She was able to take a period of leave from her job.

"I was still going through post-partum depression," she said. "I really struggled through that. Had a loving caring husband, job I loved, three children I adored, but I really was not doing well emotionally. Fortunately, I had a doctor who listened to me, and I had counseling and everything I needed. I felt like I was in a desert almost. It was like I was unable to feel joy. I knew I was blessed, but I couldn't feel it."

As she worked through her depression, Greenwood said she struggled to pray, read Scripture and connect with her faith and God. As she received treatment, her prayer life started to improve again.

"Finally, when my leave was almost up, I went to confession," she said. "I poured out to the priest that I didn't know if I wanted to keep teaching. I

wanted to be home with my kids, but I was afraid to take that step. That priest spoke to my heart and said, 'God will tell you what to do. Listen to the conversations with people you respect most. God will tell you what to do.' Later, I went to the grocery store. I saw the school board president. She asked how I was, and I confided in her. She said, 'you can take time to be a mom. You'll have a job if you want one in the future.'"

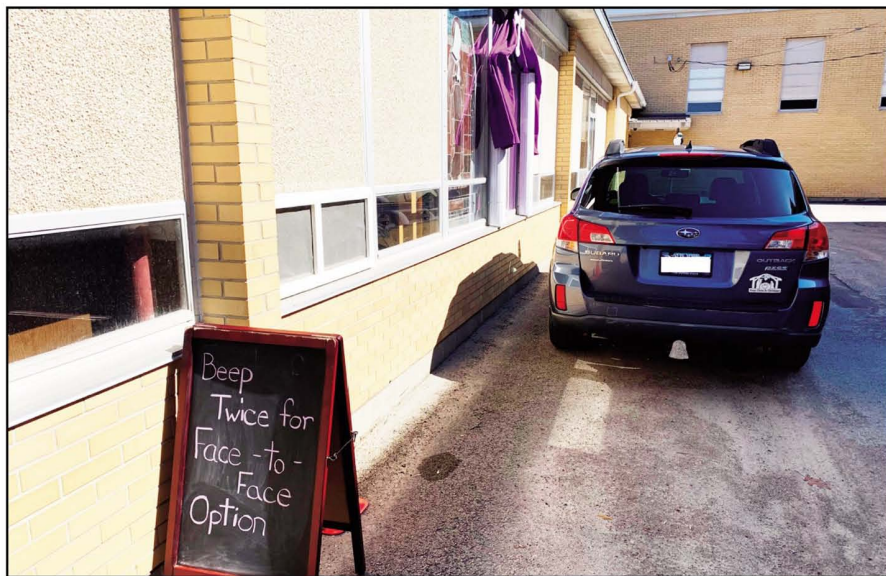
Greenwood's mother was also living with her family at the time.

"I was able to be home and be a mom, and I was able to spend the time with my mom," she said. "I've never regretted that."

During her time home with her family, the Greenwood's welcomed two more children, for a total of five. Greenwood started volunteering with the religious education program and youth ministry at St. Stephen's and signed up for the Formation for Ministry program.

"It was absolutely nourishment for my soul to go





Penitents can maintain social distance while celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation by using the drive-thru confessional at St. Mary's in Canton.

Reconciliation with social distancing

CANTON—St. Mary's Parish has begun serving Catholics of Canton and beyond by making the sacrament of penance more available with a drive-thru confessional. "We've got the perfect arrangement to make this work," stated Father Bryan D. Stitt, pastor. "We have a driveway that comes right next to our empty school building, sinners who drive, and a pastor who doesn't mind the cold."

During normal confession times, penitents can drive into the parking lot off Powers Street, pull between the church and school, and park next to the purple veiled window. One beep means they're looking for a priest. Two beeps mean they would like a face-to-face confession. Of course, if there is more than one penitent in the car, we ask passengers to step outside for a moment.

Confessions are heard in the drive-thru confessional at St. Mary's on Tuesdays at 5:45 p.m., Fridays at 5:45 p.m., and Saturdays from 3:45-4:45 p.m. Confessions will also be available on The Day of Mercy, April 8, from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

'Through hard times'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

to the lay ministry classes and make the friendships with the people in the program and the teachers," she said. "I was incredibly blessed. It showed me how much more there is to learn about our faith. It showed me the beauty of the depth of our faith."

The program also exposed her to new ways to pray.

"I loved the spirituality class we did with Sister Bethany (Fitzgerald)," Greenwood said. "She taught me how to center myself every day and how to use Scripture and writing in my prayer. She also taught me to spend time in nature really praising God and praying in nature. Now, I often walk outside and pray the rosary, or I pray the rosary while I'm out working in the garden. And whatever God puts in my path each day, I write about it later. He speaks to us so much, and we don't always take the opportunity to listen. I find it easier to connect

with Him in nature, because it's so quiet."

Greenwood used those connected moments to discern where God wanted her.

"The religious education director at St. Stephen's decided to retire after 35 years of service," she said. "I was asked to consider applying. My kids were in school, and I was doing some substitute teaching. I was also asked to consider applying for a teaching position in the public school. I applied for both and prayed. I accepted the religious education director position."

Greenwood said she was grateful her husband was supportive of her decision.

"He supported me," she said. "He knew that was what God wanted and it was where I was called."

Greenwood said working in ministry has been a blessing to her.

"I know I was meant to be doing this," she said. "I was meant to share my love of God with these

kids. And it's not just me sharing what I love with them, they share what they love with me. My heart is in a really great place."

Being in that "great place" and being connected to the Lord was again a source of strength for Greenwood when, two years ago, she faced a series of losses.

In April of that year, Greenwood's brother, Tony, passed away.

"We received the call, and I had to tell my mom," she recalled. "My mother looked at me and said, 'I'm going to be sad for a very long time, but I will not question God's will, and we will see Tony again.' She lost four sons in four different ways, but she never let go of God's hand."

Then, in June, two of Greenwood's young nephews drowned in an accident on Lake Ontario.

"That was an incredibly difficult time," she said. "God was still there. They were swept into the lake

by a wave. Lake Ontario is huge. They weren't sure they'd find them. They were found, and they were found together. The fact that they were brought back showed me God was there."

Just a month later, in July, Greenwood's mother succumbed to an aortic aneurysm.

"My mother had been told approximately two years prior to her death that she had an aortic aneurysm," Greenwood said. "She opted to live her live day by day not knowing when it would take her. She didn't fear, and she trusted. She never let it concern her. She just kept living. She had been told she would probably die very quickly when it did rupture. Instead, when she became ill, she had a lot of pain with it. There about 10 days. It was just a slow tear. We didn't know how long she had. Each day could've been her last. Our priest, Father Don (Manfred) came right away – I'm so grateful to

our priests who come to us when hurting most. I was able to witness her getting last rights. Through the 10 days, family came. We prayed. We sang songs together, because she loved music. She was amazingly beautiful on her death bed. Every single person she saw – the nurses, cleaners, food service, priest, she'd tell them 'God bless you.'"

Even after experiencing three significant losses in four months, Greenwood clings to her faith and to the Lord.

"After mom passed, there were abundant signs from God that she was OK," she said.

Greenwood, now an occasional contributor to the North Country Catholic, said she hopes to someday use writing to share her love of the Lord and trust in Him with others.

"I've decided I'm going to write a book," she said. "It may take me 20 years, but it's going to be about trusting God through hard times."

Coronavirus restrictions could renew appreciation for community, faith

WASHINGTON (CNS) – During the coronavirus pandemic, life as most people have known it, including parish life, has come to a halt.

But despite closed churches, canceled parish gatherings and limited outreach, many church leaders are emphasizing that Catholics can take this time of recommended isolation and pause of normal and often-very-busy routines to strengthen their personal faith and reinforce bonds with families, neighbors and the church at large.

Many Catholics are relying on technology to tap into spiritual resources such as livestreamed Masses, Bible readings and prayers; they're also reaching out to others and staying connected through social media, emails or video conference calls.

"The internet is the blessing of all blessings" right now, said Sister Susan Francois, an assistant congregation leader for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace, who has been having Zoom video conference meetings with team members across the country and in other parts of the world.

And even social media, which does not always have a spiritual side, is reflecting one now as people turn to parish Facebook pages for information, to YouTube for online Masses and are searching the internet for advice on how to make a spiritual communion. Twitter also has been a platform where church leaders and everyday Catholics have voiced concern but also hope during

the uncertainty of this pandemic.

For example, a March 18 tweet by Bishop Mario Grech of Gozo, Malta, pro-secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, said: "We are going through the 'dark night of the soul' – the meaning we had given to lot of things is vanishing. Yet the bright side of this experience is that it can offer us a deeper sense of purpose and connectedness."

Father Paul Keller, a Claretian Missionary priest currently serving at St. Paul Catholic Newman Center Parish in Fresno, California, similarly spoke of a spiritual side to this difficult time. He said the current forced period of isolation provides a time for solitary prayer "that we don't have time to do in the hustle and bustle of our everyday lives."

He pointed out that people can take going to Mass for granted, but now this "fast from the Eucharist and the sacraments can increase our longing" for them, he told Catholic News Service March 17.

The priest also hoped many would embrace this time to connect as a community even by phone, which is one thing the young adults in his parish are doing: calling every parishioner to see how they are doing and if they need anything.

This reaching out to others, more than people might usually do, "can also help those who might need more care or resources but hadn't asked for it," said Dominican Brother Ignatius Perkins, director of provincial ad-

ministration for the Dominican Friars-Province of St. Joseph in New York.

He called this time a "defining moment for the church and for each of us to reach out to the lost, the last and the least among us, but most especially the abandoned, the unloved, and those who have no place to lay their head at night."

Mercy Sister Kathleen Ann Kolb, coordinator of health and wellness for the Sisters of Mercy in the New York and Pennsylvania area, similarly said she hoped the current health crisis would "build community in small areas but also in the global community," noting how in difficult times, people tend to band together.

Of course, community is something experienced on the parish level at church gatherings that are now canceled, and ultimately at Mass, but most dioceses in the U.S. are no longer having public Masses as of March 18, which is a loss for many Catholics across the country.

Paulist Father Larry Rice, director of the University Catholic Center at the University of Texas at Austin, said he understands this disappointment not only because of the importance of Mass but also because participating in it has been "emphasized for centuries."

He said the current separation might help Catholics "come to a deeper appreciation that we are the Body of Christ together, and for each other, even when we are not able to gather for worship."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Vatican issues decree for Holy Week liturgies with restrictions

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – While conferences and meetings can be postponed for months because of the coronavirus pandemic, the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter cannot, with the exception of the chrisem Mass, said the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments. "By the mandate of the supreme pontiff for the year 2020 only," the congregation issued guidelines March 20 for celebrating the Triduum and Easter liturgies without the presence of the faithful. "Easter is at the heart of the entire liturgical year and is not simply one feast among others. The Easter triduum is celebrated over the arc of three days, which is preceded by Lent and crowned by Pentecost and, therefore, cannot be transferred to another time," said the "Decree in the Time of COVID-19." Because the chrisem Mass is not formally part of the Triduum, they said, a bishop can decide to postpone its celebration. Usually the Mass is celebrated in the Holy Week and includes a gathering of all the priests of the diocese to renew their priestly promises. During the Mass, the oils – the chrisem – used in the sacraments are blessed by bishop and distributed. Where public Masses have been canceled, the decree said, the bishops, in agreement with their bishops' conference, should ensure that the Holy Week liturgies are celebrated in the cathedral and in parish churches. The faithful should be advised of the times for the celebrations, so that they can pray at home at the same time.

Papyrus fragments at museum not pieces of Dead Sea Scrolls

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Long before the privately owned Museum of the Bible opened near the U.S. Capitol in 2017, there were published doubts about the authenticity of its 16 papyrus fragments supposedly from the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 2018, the museum announced that after five fragments had been tested at Germany's Federal Institute for Materials Research, the pieces were likely forgeries. Scholars compared the museum's fragments with the texts of the 100,000 real pieces of the Dead Sea Scrolls first discovered in the Qumran Caves in 1947, which reside at the Shrine of the Book in Israel. The scrolls, considered the basis of the Hebrew Bible, date from approximately from around 250 B.C. up to A.D. 70. On March 11 of this year, the museum confirmed the fakery of all of them. Independent researchers concluded, in a report that spans more than 200 pages, that the fragments were probably made of ancient Roman leather – from sandals – artificially aged even more with chemicals, with the script added in the 20th century.

Chinese diocese donates masks to help fight COVID-19

HONG KONG (CNS) – A Catholic diocese in China's Shaanxi province has donated thousands of face masks to communities in the Vatican and Italy to help them fight the coronavirus. Ucanews.com reported Xi'an Diocese has donated 24,000 disposable medical masks to the Vatican and religious communities and dioceses in Italy such as Milan and Bologna. "When mainland China experienced the epidemic, the Holy See and the Italian church group helped by sending medical masks. We have now effectively contained the virus, but Italy is now suffering. It is our turn to help them," Father Chen Ruixue of Xi'an told ucanews.com. The coronavirus, he said, "is the public enemy of humanity. Only when all people work together to fight the disease can we overcome the pandemic." The virus was first reported in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December, slowly spreading across the globe. In China, the "people's economic life is returning to normal" as the infections have come down, Father Chen said.

NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

THE TRIALS OF GABRIEL FERNANDEZ

NEW YORK (CNS) – Though overlong and uneven, "The Trials of Gabriel Fernandez" is, nonetheless, a searing indictment of our collective failure to protect our most vulnerable children.

The docuseries – which has already met with considerable popularity, despite its somber theme – is currently streaming on Netflix in six one-hour episodes.

Veteran documentarian Lowell Bergman ("60 Minutes," "Frontline") is one of the program's executive producers. The other, Brian Knappenberger, directed the film.

The series opens with a dramatic 911 call concerning 8-year-old Gabriel Fernandez (Johnny Jett Mercado). Vivid reenactments follow, portraying the hectic but ultimately futile efforts of the trauma workers at Antelope Valley Hospital in Los Angeles County to save their young patient.

A depressed skull fracture was probably the most serious of the multiple injuries the boy suffered on "every part of his body," as nurse Christine Estes recalls. Similarly, Dr. James Ribe, who conducted Gabriel's autopsy, remembers that it took two days to document all his wounds.

Well acquainted with the indicators of child abuse, hospital staff were properly dubious when Gabriel's mother, Pearl, said that he sustained his numerous injuries by slipping in the bathtub. The reality was far more gruesome.

After assuming guardianship of her son six months prior to his death, Pearl and her live-in boyfriend, Isauro Aguirre, engaged in what Assistant District Attorney Scott Yang describes as a "systematic progression of torture." The couple kept Gabriel handcuffed in a cupboard for long

stretches, fed him cat litter, shot him with a BB gun and extinguished cigarettes on him.

Aguirre, here portrayed by William Guirola, has been sentenced to death and Gabriel's mother to life in prison in the case. But Jackie Lacey, the first woman and African American to serve as Los Angeles County's district attorney, didn't let the matter rest there.

She determined that four social workers with the local department of child and family services also bore some culpability for missing numerous warning signs about Gabriel's peril. So she charged them with child endangerment resulting in death and falsification of public records.

"The Trials of Gabriel Fernandez" also implicates the deputy sheriffs who were called to the Fernandez home multiple times. Deputy District Attorney Jonathan Hatami, himself

a survivor of child abuse, memorably recalls the frustration he experienced when he had to file a court motion to obtain their internal report on the case.

A whistleblower from child and family services speaks for the filmmakers when he says, "So many could have intervened, but chose not to. Why not?"

Given its grim subject matter, the documentary is obviously suitable for adult viewers only. All the more so since it includes occasional strong language and a cohabiting same-sex couple.

Propelled by John Drag-onetti's insistent musical score and by its immersive reenactments, "The Trials of Gabriel Fernandez" will grab audience attention immediately. But the show ultimately fails to sustain this initial momentum.

Mystifyingly, for instance, the narrative digresses to review the algorithm that Allegheny

County, Pennsylvania, has developed to detect child abuse more quickly. The documentary also loses track of Pearl's story and of the social workers' plight for long stretches.

When the program focuses on Aguirre's fate, by contrast, it raises fundamental moral questions about capital punishment. Is he an irredeemable monster or something more? Can mercy play any role in such an extreme situation?

These tough questions will challenge viewers, and perhaps engender debate. What isn't open to question is the service the show's creators perform by shinning a spotlight on Gabriel's suffering and the neglect that led to his tragic death.

Its artistic flaws notwithstanding, "The Trials of Gabriel Fernandez" will prove a valuable piece of filmmaking if it motivates people to prevent such horrors in the future.

Groups offer tips to stay connected while isolated

CLEVELAND (CNS) – Social distancing and sheltering in place doesn't have to mean total isolation for people of faith accustomed to advocating for peace and justice concerns.

Prayer, keeping in touch with friends and colleagues through online technology and digital communication, and creativity in continuing to address social issues are among the tips offered by longtime advocacy groups as people hunker down to reduce the spread of the coronavirus.

It is important to stay connected through prayer and by reaching out to each other and people fac-

ing uncertainty and upheaval caused by the coronavirus pandemic alone, said Johnny Zokovitch, executive director of Pax Christi USA.

The Catholic peace organization plans to post a prayer on its website – paxchristiusa.org – that anyone can use to reflect on, knowing that people everywhere are offering the same words to God.

"It's these times that bring people together," he told Catholic News Service March 18.

In a message emailed to members and supporters March 17, Zokovitch encouraged people "to keep being the 'peace of Christ'

in the world as you are able in your own communities."

"Pax Christi USA and other faith-based groups are well-suited for this moment because it's our faith that reminds us who we are even though all the evidence is pointing to a sense of desperation and despair in the world," Zokovitch said.

Stephen Schneck, executive director of the Franciscan Action Network, said the organization is taking advantage of new technologies to help people reduce the sense of isolation they may feel, allowing them to stay in touch with family, friends and fellow advocates.

"For the social justice advocacy groups, we are probably more attuned to issues like solidarity on one side and the problem of social isolation on the other side. It's in our DNA," Schneck explained.

That means the advocacy work on social concerns such as homelessness, lack of health care, hunger and poverty remains vitally important to address even as government at all levels focuses on limiting the spread of the coronavirus, he added.

For Schneck, such work must be rooted in faith. He also said he expects that people "are feeling the importance of their faith in

ways they might not have been two months ago."

The Franciscan Action Network offered on its website – franciscanaction.org – several ideas for people to connect with their Catholic faith, including participating in Mass, prayer and Scripture study online. The website also lists ideas for advocacy in the time of the coronavirus.



SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

'Overcoming death through resurrection'

This Sunday was formerly called Passion Sunday, which intensified our preparation for Holy Week. This year, we have experienced the coronavirus pandemic, with its disruptions of normal life and social contacts. We have all the more reason to join this with our last efforts to cleanse ourselves of darkness and sin through prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

The readings this week are all about overcoming death through resurrection – both death of the body and death of the



**Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore**

soul. The first reading from the great prophet, Ezekiel, takes us back to the time of Israel's captivity in Babylon. Ezekiel has a vision of dead bones strewn all over the desert. God asks him if he thinks these bones will ever come to life again. God tells Ezekiel to challenge Him and tell the bones to put on sinews and flesh. He does so. Then

He asks Ezekiel to further challenge Him to put His spirit into those bones. When Ezekiel obeys, the dead bones come fully alive! Today's reading is

March 29

Fifth Sunday of Lent

READINGS

Ezekiel 37:12-14

Romans 8:8-11

John 11:1-45

the conclusion of this vision, in which God tells the Israelites that He will do for them what He did for those dry bones – raise them from the death of bondage to freedom in His Spirit.

Today's Gospel narrates the last of the seven signs that John tells us about by which Jesus makes clear that He is the long-awaited Messiah. It's about His raising his friend Lazarus

from the dead. He has known for some days that Lazarus is very ill, but instead of hurrying to his side, he deliberately delays until Lazarus is dead. When Jesus finally arrives in Bethany, Lazarus has been dead four days. He is reproached by both Martha and Mary, who are not quite convinced that he is the Messiah. As he approaches the tomb, he weeps not only for Lazarus, but even more for the disbelief of so many. He calls loudly, "Lazarus, come out." When Lazarus emerges, Jesus tells those standing by to "Unbind him and let him go free." Many more believe, but many do not.

The second reading shows St. Paul's firm belief that if we live in the Spirit, our dead bones will rise by the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. To live in the Spirit, however, demands that we sincerely repent of our sins and let God change whatever needs changing in our lives. During this fifth week of Lent, we need to let the power of Jesus' spirit work freely in us.

The vision of Ezekiel and the raising of Lazarus from the dead should be proof enough for us. Jesus is calling loudly to us this Sunday to come forth from whatever darkness and death that still clings to our spirit.

Encouraging the diocese to walk with moms

Imagine that you are a young, unmarried woman making very little money and have recently learned you are pregnant. What kind of pressures would you face? In your desperation, would you feel the pressure to consider abortion? The challenges for pregnant women and mothers with young children are enormous and are compounded when these women are living in poverty. Where can these women turn for help?

Bishop Terry R. LaValley, along with the other bish-

ops of the United States, is encouraging the people of the Diocese of Ogdensburg to participate in **Walking with Moms in Need: A Year of Service.** This program aims at highlighting the pregnant and parenting moms in our parishes, identifying resources available within local communities, and connecting these women to the resources they need.

The program begins March 25, 2020 and runs until March 25, 2021. In addition to coinciding

with the Feast of the Annunciation, the program marks the 25th anniversary of the famous Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, which highlighted the value and sanctity of life and those responsible for the transmission of life.

Archbishop Joseph Nauman, Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities, said "A parish focus on help for pregnant and parenting moms in need can be a unifying message. It can initiate or improve upon the collaboration of those who work on social justice and pro-life efforts. It can also move the conversation from what sometimes seems like a partisan divide into pastoral unity."

Kat Talalas, from the USCCB Pro Life Secretariat,

said "while parishes are well positioned to provide assistance to these women, one thing the



**Stephen M.
Tartaglia**

Church doesn't do very well is to track its efforts. A major goal of the initiative is to have an inventory of the resources and get a better idea of what the Church really offers."

Each month, our diocesan newsletter, E-Notes, will have ideas for people to consider and possibly implement in their parish. For example, a suggestion might be to publish in your weekly bulletin local resources to assist women in their role as mothers or mothers-to-be. In addition, each month in the *North Country Catholic*, there will be articles highlighting what parishes around the diocese are doing for moth-

ers.

Prayer is our greatest resource in all areas of our ministry. To help us kick off this program, I invite you to pray "A Prayer for Pregnant Mothers":

O Blessed Mother, you received the good news of the incarnation of Christ, your Son, with faith and trust. Grant your protection to all pregnant mothers facing difficulties. Guide us as we strive to make our parish communities places of welcome and assistance for mothers in need. Help us become instruments of God's love and compassion.

Mary, Mother of the Church, graciously help us build a culture of life and a civilization of love, together with all people of good will, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life.
Amen.

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The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

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It's a good time to turn to prayer

The world has turned upside down on all of us. While many of us saw this coming, it is now here, and we are entering a new phase of normal for our world. The COVID-19, also known as the Coronavirus, is tearing through our world leaving a path of sickness, death and economic despair.

The Mission Office here in the Diocese of Ogdensburg realizes the fears you have. We understand that the ripple effects of this affliction on all of us, even here in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, which at times seems so far from the rest of the world.

The Mission Office appeals to all of you to follow state, federal and local guidelines as we fight the virus together. Look out for each other. Help each other where you can.

Realize that the fears we are dealing with now is sometimes part of normal life in the Mission Lands.

May we be resourceful in our utilization of our tools and treasures here to heal the world.

As we go into the unknown together, may we all remember to continue to have our faith. Pray. Be a good person. Do good things. Make a difference where you can.

Help your family, neighbors and community.

Take care of yourself and follow the advised protocols to keep this virus away.

Remind yourself in prayer of the greatness of God. "Heavenly Father, If someone is sick at this moment, I pray Lord kindly touch them and heal them, let them feel your joy and divine presence and make them whole again. In Jesus's mighty name, Amen.

Take the time to pray now. Remember as hard as it may seem here, be assured its more challenging in the mission lands.

Keep them in your hearts at time like these we are now experiencing.

Be well. and God Bless.

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

OBITUARIES

Cadyville – Joan E. (Venne) Herron, 83; Mass of Christian Burial at a later date at St. James Church.

Carthage – Christopher J. Gamble, 26; Funeral Services March 20, 2020 at Lundy Funeral Home & Cremation Service, Inc.; burial in Swinburne Cemetery.

Copenhagen – Thomas E. Carroll, 74; Mass of Christian Burial May 2, 2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in West Lowville Rural Cemetery.

Croghan – Edward Nicholas Boliver, 73; Mass of Christian Burial March 21, 2020 at St. Stephen's Church; burial in Indian River Cemetery.

Ellenburg – Leona I. (LaValley) Martin, 81; Mass of Christian Burial March 16, 2020 at St. Edmund's Church; burial in St. Ann's Cemetery, Mooers Forks.

Ellenburg – Bruce J. Nicols, 74; Mass of Christian Burial at St. Edmund's Church; burial in Whispering Maples Memorial Gardens.

Louisville – Margaret (Lantry) Hammill, 86; Mass of Christian Burial March 18, 2020 at St. Lawrence Church; burial in St. Lawrence Cemetery.

Lowville – Elizabeth J. "Betty" (Boliver) Pleskach, 89; Mass of Christian Burial at a later date at St. Peter's

Church; burial in Old Glendale Cemetery.

Malone – Cynthia M. (LePage) Brown, 62; Mass of Christian Burial March 23, 2020 at Notre Dame Church.

Malone – Beatrice I. (Derosia) Charland, 92; Funeral Services March 21, 2020 at the Bruso-Desnoyers Funeral Home; burial in St. Augustine's Cemetery, North Bangor.

Malone – Janis (Griffin) Stone, 90; Mass of Christian Burial March 17, 2020 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Massena – David E. Talarico, 80; Mass of Christian Burial March 17, 2020 at St. Mary's Church.

Mooers Forks – Thelma Gloria (Miller) Gadway, 95; Mass of Christian Burial March 18, 2020 at St. Ann's Church.

Morrisonville – Bernard C. Trombley, 82; Mass of Christian Burial March 19, 2020 at St. Alexander's Church.

North Bangor – Joseph A. Cherrier, 59; Mass of Christian Burial March 18, 2020 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Port Henry – Judith Ann Thompson York Armstrong, 8; Mass of Christian

Burial March 16, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Redford – Veronica R. (Bruce) Rock, 83; Mass of Christian Burial June 10, 2020 at Church of the Assumption; burial in parish cemetery.

Rouses Point – Phyllis Theresa Jefferson, 86; Mass of Christian Burial at a later date at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Champlain.

Saranac Lake – Gerald G. Macey, 63; Mass of Christian Burial March 16, 2020 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Watertown – Frances E. (Greco) King, 82; Funeral Services to be held at a later date; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Helen Dailey Kulesza, 59; Mass of Christian Burial March 19, 2020 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Brookside cemetery.

Watertown – Sarah B. "Sally" (Flynn) Palumbo, 93; Mass of Christian Burial March 18, 2020 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Charles L. Schweinsberg, Jr., 93; Mass of Christian Burial March 17, 2020 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Decree issued for Holy Week liturgies with restrictions

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – While conferences and meetings can be postponed for months because of the coronavirus pandemic, the liturgies of Holy Week and Easter cannot, with the exception of the chrisms Mass, said the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments.

"By the mandate of the supreme pontiff for the year 2020 only," the congregation issued guidelines March 20 for celebrating the Triduum and Easter liturgies with-

out the presence of the faithful.

"Easter is at the heart of the entire liturgical year and is not simply one feast among others. The Easter triduum is celebrated over the arc of three days, which is preceded by Lent and crowned by Pentecost and, therefore, cannot be transferred to another time," said the "Decree in the Time of COVID-19."

Because the chrisms Mass is not formally part of the Triduum, they said, a bishop can decide to

postpone its celebration.

Where public Masses have been canceled, the decree said, the bishops, in agreement with their bishops' conference, should ensure that the Holy Week liturgies are celebrated in the cathedral and in parish churches. The faithful should be advised of the times for the celebrations, so that they can pray at home at the same time.

"Live – not recorded – televised or internet broadcasts are helpful," the decree said.

No Mass, no offertory: Finances take a hit

WASHINGTON (CNS) - One byproduct of canceled Masses is no offertory collection. And a byproduct of no offertory collection is puncture wounds in the budgets of parishes, dioceses and national collections.

"It's a big hit, and it's gonna hurt," said Patrick Markey, executive director of the Diocesan Fiscal Management Conference, based in Phoenix.

Rare is the U.S. diocese that has not canceled public Masses in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. Some announced a two-week cancellation in hopes of resuming them for Passion Sunday. Others, following the Vatican's lead, have opted to call off any public celebrations through Easter. Still others are in an "until further notice" holding pattern.

How long a parish can go without receiving revenue from parishioners is a still-unanswered question. Dioceses that assess parishes a percentage of offertory income also would feel the pinch, so help from them for financially hurting parishes is limited, according to Markey.

"Rather than the chancery giving them money, the chancery needs the money from the parishes to allow it to operate," he said.

Another factor is national collections, with one slated for the weekend of March 21-22 in most U.S. parishes. The Catholic Relief Services collection helps more than CRS, the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency. It also provides funding for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Offices of International Justice and Peace, Migration and

Refugee Services, and Pastoral Care for Migrants and Refugees, the Vatican's own relief work and the Catholic Legal Immigration Network.

CRS' annual Rice Bowl campaign in U.S. parishes concludes in early April. Also due up: the Pontifical Collection for the Holy Land, traditionally done on Good Friday - April 10 this year - and the Catholic Home Missions Appeal, scheduled for the weekend Masses of April 25-26.

For many national collections, the collection itself is the primary source of funding, said Mary Mencarini Campbell, executive director of the USCCB Office of National Collections. "We literally have all of our eggs in the collection basket," she added.

"We've seen in other downturns, they've given immediately to help out," Markey said, but "if they're not in a church to hear that appeal, they're not going to think about it. It's going to have a big impact. I just would urge people to remember the church, even though they're not home. Send a check to the parish anyway, just as you would if you were in church. All those parishes rely on those donations to operate."

He added some U.S. Catholics "may not be receiving their own paycheck" as government-ordered closures have thrown many people out of work. It may become a situation that parishes and dioceses also face.

Dioceses and churches are "trying to make contingency plans," Markey said. "They understand from an HR (human resources) perspective how

to do it. They'll want to pay everybody, but they have to be realistic about that." He added, "In the short term, they can continue making payroll to all of the employees, but at some point, they'll have to start looking at other options."

The main reason for the uncertainty is that no one knows for just how long life on lockdown may last.

"It's one thing as we watch Mass attendance go down. It's another when the only situation we have similar to this is when a major blizzard hits early in the year and it really impacts giving in particular regions, but it's not the entire country," Campbell said. "This is uncharted waters."

"Uncharted waters" was a phrase used also by Archbishop Paul D. Etienne of Seattle, chairman of the USCCB Committee on National Collections.

"The focus clearly for bishops today is on our people," he told Catholic News Service. "We are facing a pandemic, and every bishop in this country right now is making many, many, many decisions about keeping our people safe, our parishioners, our workers, our volunteers."

As archbishop of an area that became an early epicenter of the pandemic, he said: "We're already working with parishes to get a sense of what their cash reserves are and how long that can carry them, and what we as an archdioceses will hopefully be able to do to help bridge things until normalcy returns again."

"But we're in uncharted waters now. Right now, people's health and safety is our primary concern. But we're looking at

the present reality and we will start putting in place a plan to help our parishes get back on their feet again - and the archdiocese."

Archbishop Etienne added, "But we trust always in the goodness of our people. They always step up and I have trust in God and I have trust in the people of God, and I'm not going to let go of that - either one."

Mark Melia, CRS executive vice president of charitable giving, said in a March 19 statement: "With the situation in flux and so much uncertainty, we don't know what the impacts on giving could be. However, around the world CRS is helping our church partners to respond to this crisis in creative ways. Given the adverse economic implications, donors likely too will be facing economic challenges themselves."

There are about 17,000 Catholic parishes in the United States, but a small percentage offer online donation services. One such service, Faith Direct, counts about 900 Catholic clients, less than 5.3% of all U.S. parishes.

However, as the number of diocesan Mass cancellations began rising, Faith Direct sales manager Mike Walsh said inquiries have gone "through the roof."

The intent of online giving is to move away from the offertory envelopes that have been used for generations at parishes and toward a "managed giving" system that can provide income to the parish, and for second collections, even when the parishioner isn't at church on a given Sunday, said Brad Otto, Faith Direct general manager.

"We target 25-30% using

Faith Direct within the first year, then we look to increase that number by 10% annually. Within the first five years of the Faith Direct program, we want to see roughly 60-65% percent of their donors using Faith Direct," Otto said. Pastors, he added are generally happy if they see "well over 50% of their donating households, or 50% of their offertory, coming through Faith Direct."

Both Otto and Markey, another fan of online giving, said that one obstacle is that the older the giver - who tends to be the parish's most generous donor - the less inclined they are to switch to online giving.

Regina Haney, executive director of the National Association of Church Personnel Administrators, told CNS parishes are taking varied approaches with their staff without offertory money coming in.

One parish, rather than carrying out layoffs, may slot an employee into a lower-paying job to keep them on the payroll, Haney said. Another parish, without much of a cash reserve, may have to let a staffer go but offer to pay their health insurance; "pay us back when you can, but we'll pay the premium," is how Haney put it.

"They're trying to keep people employed," she said. "They would cut hours. There would still be income."

"We're all going to have to pray more," Markey said, "and we should all pray the Our Father," with special emphasis on the phrase, "Give us this day our daily bread." "We're asking God to help us," he added. "Rely on God more than ourselves."