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Sharing
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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 74, Number 43

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

APRIL 1, 2020

Cabrini Grants boost programs in our diocese

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation recently announced it has awarded nearly \$150 million in grants across New York State, including more than a couple dozen grants here in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

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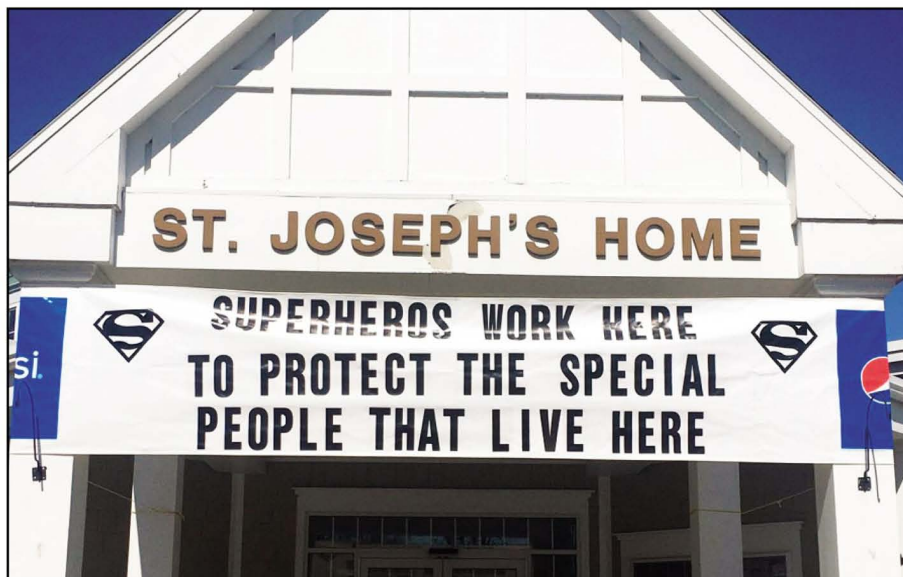
The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation was formed after the 2018 sale of Fidelis Care, a non-profit health insurer created by the Catholic bishops of New York State.

STORIES ON PAGES 4, 5 & 7

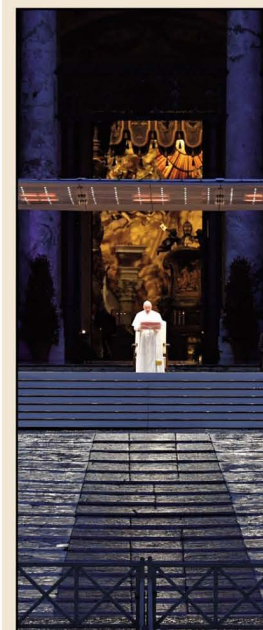
SIGNS OF THE TIMES



(Above) The sign at St. Agnes School in Lake Placid has been updated with commentary about the current coronavirus pandemic. (Below) St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg put up a sign recognizing its staff and residents during this trying time.



URBI ET ORBI BLESSING



CNS photo/Vatican Media
Pope Francis leads a prayer service in an empty St. Peter's Square at the Vatican March 27, 2020. At the conclusion of the service the pope held the Eucharist as he gave an extraordinary blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world). The service was livestreamed in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. During the prayer service, Pope Francis said, addressing God, "it is not the time of your judgment, but of our judgment: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others."

FULL STORY, PAGE 9

NORTH
COUNTRY
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EDITOR'S NOTE

There is humor, joy to be found

As I write this (Sunday, March 29), I'm on day 10 of not wearing real pants (nothing with a zipper, button or other closure). It's my mission to see how many days I can extend this streak. To me, it's a small thing I can do to make myself as comfortable as possible at a time when I, like many others, find myself very uncomfortable.

As I've previously indicated, I'm an "extreme extrovert." I'm energized by social situations. Previous experiences have taught me that a few weeks of home confinement – or anything close to it – can wreak havoc on my mental health. I guess I'm

lucky I know this about myself. It's made me aware I need to implement strategies to combat it. One of those strategies: Looking for humor and joy.

**Darcy L.
Fargo**

Since the official publication date of today's paper is April Fool's Day, it seemed appropriate to share a few of my observations so far:

- Cats make horrible colleagues. Since I started working at home just over a week ago, I've had a cat sit on my laptop keyboard, show his hind end on a video meeting and lick a plate I placed on my desk after eating while working.

- Pre-teen boys can sleep through ANYTHING. Stove

timer? Didn't hear it. Vacuum cleaner? No problem. I'm fairly certain a bomb could drop in the back yard at 8 a.m., and my son wouldn't even stir.

- The two introverts I live with – one I married and one I gave birth to – are living their best lives. The young introvert sleeps until noon, does a couple hours of schoolwork and housework, and spends the rest of his days playing with toys, board games and video games. The older introvert keeps jumping from project to project (furniture refinishing, home improvements, art projects...), taking breaks only to spend time online researching his favorite hobbies. Isolation looks good on them. They dig it.

- Trying to maintain "social distance" while still being kind and courteous can create rather comical results. I went to Stewart's for bread, milk and gas one day this week. As I exited the store, a kind, older gentleman pulled the door open for me. As I started to exit, I'm guessing it occurred to him that we were closer than six feet apart. He let go of the door and jumped back. I almost ran into the door.

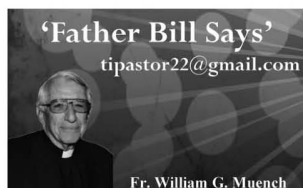
These are unsettling and uncertain times, but there is still so much joy in the world. God is everywhere, thus goodness and joy are everywhere. We just have to look for them.

I'll just continue to look for them while wearing comfy pants.

Annunciation was the feast we needed

I find it rather interesting that often a feast day will come along just when we need it. I am thinking today of the Feast of the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord that was celebrated on March 25. This feast comes each year during Lent. This year, this feast day comes in the middle of this pandemic crisis. I believe this celebration has much to show us these days. Our human race is suffering as a whole from the invasions of this coronavirus. This Solemnity of the Annunciation celebrates the glorification of the human race. Our feast celebrates Jesus coming to our world.

The Annunciation is the story of the Incarnation of the Lord. The Annunciation is the story of the Angel Gabriel coming to Mary, a young Jewish woman in Nazareth of Galilee to proclaim to her that she has been chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus, the Savior of the world. Gabriel



Fr. William G. Muench

greeted Mary by saying, "Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you!" This greeting is familiar to all of us. We say these words of Gabriel each time we say Mary's prayer – the Hail Mary. Gabriel speaks of Jesus, "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High." Mary accepts her part in our salvation, "May it be done to me according to your word."

We believe in the incarnation of the Our Lord. We believe that Jesus, the Son of God became one of us – Jesus became part of the human race, a man who was divine. Jesus lived among us, Jesus taught us of God's great love for us, Jesus died for us, Jesus rose again from the dead to a new life.

Our world changed completely because Jesus became one of us. Our human race is saved. Jesus is one of us. Our race is glorified and special. In addition, one of us, Mary, a woman and mother like all other women and mothers, is chosen by God to be the Mother of Jesus.

When I think of the Incarnation of Jesus, I am reminded of an essay written by Thomas Merton, the well-known Trappist Monk and author. He writes this about Jesus, "It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race, though it is a race dedicated to many absurdities and one which makes many terrible mistakes: yet, with all that, God Himself gloried in becoming a member of the human race. A member of the human race!"

Merton speaks so highly of this image. We are a very special people. We are a holy and sacred people. Jesus is one

of us.

Merton offers us this image: "There is no way of telling people that they are all walking around shining like the sun. There are no strangers! If only we could see each other as we really are all the time. There would be no more war, no more hatred, no more cruelty, no more greed."

I would like to think that such a spirit in faith and confidence would mean that we, the people of this world, would be always ready to work together. We are united in this race because Jesus is one of us. We should have a deep concern for each other, a true spirit of cooperation. This is more than a powerful image. In faith this is a powerful reality. This human race – made glorious for Jesus is one of us – must recognize how glorious and sacred we are.

May we work together with God's help to make this a loving and peaceful world.

'My faith is important to me every day'

By Jonathan Monfiletto
Contributing writer

WEST CHAZY – Not going to church was never an option for Debbie Biasini, even when the bumps in the road of her faith journey caused her struggle to find her place in the church.

Biasini calls herself a “dye-d-in-the-wool Catholic,” having been born and raised in the faith and grown through the transitions from Mass in Latin to Mass in English, of the priest facing the congregation instead of the altar and of churches doing away with the altar rail.

One thing she didn't see change during her childhood was women being allowed to do much of anything in the church “but wash the altar linens,” she said.

“That was a struggle for me, trying to find how I fit in and where I fit,” Biasini said. “But, I never stopped going to church. That, to me, wasn't how I was going to find an answer. Also, my family was very adamant that you went to church, period. There were no excuses unless you were dying.”

Sticking with her faith allowed Biasini to put her faith into action when her sister asked her to volunteer as the cook at Camp Guggenheim for a weekend in May 1980. Cooking for 35 people during a youth weekend turned into cooking for several years' worth of campers.

“Once you volunteer in that position or you're in that position, you don't get out of that position easily,” Biasini said, adding she cooked for youth, family, and summer camps and also served as the summer camp nurse for a while.



Debbie Biasini

Though Camp Guggenheim wasn't around when Biasini could have gone as a youth, she attended family camp while she was single and after she was married. Her son, who just turned 26 years old, has been going to family camp “since I was pregnant for him,” she added.

“Guggenheim was a really good experience for me,” Biasini said. “It allowed me to share my faith with the kids, but it allowed me to see their faith in action, which helps everybody grow.”

Biasini doesn't cook at Guggenheim anymore but still takes part in family camp with her son, calling the experience “my renewal ... the big shot in the arm.”

That renewal was first needed as Biasini struggled with her place in the

church, but she said she was “lucky enough” to find people who could talk to her and urge to have faith that things would change, people who could validate her feelings and tell her that her faith and prayer would get her through.

In her college years, Biasini went to Mass at the Newman Center on campus, and when she got on her own she attended the Newman Center at SUNY Plattsburgh for many years.

“It was a parish. It was a community. At the time, it wasn't just the college. It was families,” she said. “If you went into it and you did not know it was a Newman Center, you would assume it was any other parish in the diocese. We had old families. We had young families. My son was baptized there, so that can tell you



how young families were. ... We had the baptisms and the weddings, and we even had funerals.”

At the Newman Center, Biasini served as the pastoral associate, taught sacraments and worked with college students on faith formation and college retreats.

“All those experiences just made my faith stronger,” she said. “It was just getting through that transition period. You always have somebody who God puts in your life to give you perspective.”

Nowadays, Biasini and her son give each other perspective, sharing their faith with each other and helping each other grow closer to God.

“I love sharing my faith with my son. He sometimes challenges me to grow in my faith when he starts questioning, but that's OK because that's good for me,” she said. “His faith means a lot to him. It is an anchor in his life as well. It's nice to be able to share that with him.”

One way Biasini grows in her faith is by taking classes at St. Peter's

Church in Plattsburgh or Church of the Holy Name in AuSable Forks on subjects such as Mary, apologetics, and penance. Those classes help her son grow in his faith as well.

“Even by osmosis, my son gets some of it because I come home and go, ‘You want to know what I learned tonight?’” she said. “I get to talk to him about ‘what I learned tonight’ and ‘you ought to take a look at this.’ He doesn't have to sit in the class, and yet he gets the benefit of what I do.”

Aside from her son, Biasini helps others grow in their faith by serving as a lector, minister of the Eucharist, and sacristan and teaching religion at Holy Name.

“It keeps me grounded and level,” Biasini said, noting her faith is particularly sustaining her during the global coronavirus pandemic. “My faith is important to me every day, but when these monumental things come up in life it's my ground, my strength. It keeps me focused, and that's really important.”

Cabrini Foundation grants boost local entities

By Deacon Kevin Mastellon
Contributing Writer

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation recently announced it has awarded nearly \$150 million in grants across New York State, including more than a couple dozen grants here in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

The grants are helping to fund more activities, programs, and initiatives focused on improving the health and well-being of low-income and underserved communities.

North Country human services agencies were awarded over \$5 million in the first round of Mother Cabrini Health Foundation grants. Agencies from Plattsburgh to Watertown were recognized among the 500 grants statewide which amounted to \$150 million. The Diocese's Department of Education, Catholic Charities and St. Joseph's Home were major beneficiaries, but other organizations will receive funding for specific initiatives. Among them:

Citizen Advocates applied for and received a \$500,000 grant from the Foundation in support of the Harrison Place Project in downtown Malone. The Harrison Place Project involves the removal of blighted property in order to achieve revitalization of Main Street in the village of Malone with the development of a 40-unit supportive housing initiative, including commercial space on the ground floor.

"This project is a major undertaking, and we are greatly encouraged as we build support through various funding sources that are vital to making this transformational project a reality," said James Button, Chief Operations Officer for Citizen Advocates. "To

| NORTH COUNTRY GRANT RECIPIENTS AND AMOUNTS | |
|--|--------------------|
| Adirondack Foundation Adirondack Birth to Three Alliance: Bringing it to the Next Level | \$150,000 |
| Adirondack Health Foundation Light at Mercy | \$150,000 |
| Behavioral Health Services North (Plattsburgh) for the Clinton County Behavioral Health Improvement project | \$195,334 |
| Canton/Potsdam Hospital | \$27,885 |
| Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Bridges Out of Poverty Program | \$207,080 |
| Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Case Management Services Enhancements | \$371,168 |
| Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Community Soup Kitchen and Pantry | \$297,962 |
| Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Foster Care Visitation Program | \$75,624 |
| Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Healthy Families/Healthy Communities | \$200,500 |
| Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Migrant Services | \$127,261 |
| Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Parenting Education Program Enhancements | \$123,773 |
| Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Seaway House | \$217,404 |
| Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Transitional Housing and Support Services | \$120,768 |
| Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Ogdensburg Digging Deeper into Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) | \$60,000 |
| Citizen Advocates, Malone | \$500,000 |
| Dept of Education Diocese of Ogdensburg Healthy Families for a Hopeful Future - Family Support Coordinators for Schools | \$550,000 |
| Diocese of Ogdensburg's Department of Education (Ogdensburg) MCHF Regional Scholarship Program | \$250,000 |
| Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization, Inc. Health Career Army Pathways Program | \$150,000 |
| Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Organization, Inc. Impacting Drivers of Health Care Utilization | \$184,800 |
| Mental Health Association of Franklin County Inc., d/b/a Community Connections of Franklin County Tupper Lake Community Recovery Center | \$161,500 |
| Mercy Care for the Adirondacks, Inc. Age Friendly Communities Initiative | \$340,000 |
| North Country Prenatal/Perinatal Council, Inc. Choices for Children | \$125,000 |
| St. Joseph's Home (Ogdensburg) Behavioral Strategies and Community Outreach for People Affected by Dementia, Chronic Illness, and Mental Illness | \$69,000 |
| St. Joseph's Home (Ogdensburg) Various Social Determinants of Health | \$500,000 |
| Watertown Urban Mission | \$77,776 |
| TOTAL | \$5,232,835 |

that end, we are eternally grateful to the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation for supporting this project, and our shared vision for improving the health and well-being of low income and underserved residents in our community."

The Watertown Urban Mission will receive almost \$78,000 to fund its share of the Getting Ahead program. "The material covered during the Getting Ahead workshop helps people to develop their own individualized plans for change while the experience of learning and sharing as part of a cohort encourages long-term community involvement. Locally we have seen graduates take on leadership roles in community level initiatives. Getting Ahead is a game changer in terms of how we address poverty, and we are extremely grateful for the support of the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation which allows us to expand the program."

The Fort Drum Regional Health Planning Agency will receive two grants, totaling \$334,000 "Thanks to the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, we will be able to better prepare and connect transitioning soldiers to educational, career skills development, and networking opportunities in one of the most critical industries in the State and region - healthcare."

The Adirondack Birth to Three program received \$150,000 as did the Adirondack Health Foundation. "This generous contribution will allow Adirondack Health to better serve the frail and elderly in the Tri-Lakes region by giving them the services needed, decrease isolation and improve the quality of life for many. It will make a difference in the lives of our community members for years to come."

Clinton County's Behavioral Health program (\$195,334), Franklin County Mental Health Association (\$161,500), Can-

ton-Potsdam Hospital (\$27,885), Mercy Care of the Adirondacks (\$340,000) and the North Country Prenatal/Perinatal Council (\$125,000) were also funded.

Rooted in Catholic principles and teachings, the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation was founded to support activities, programs, and initiatives that improve the health and well-being of the poor and underserved of New York State. To reach those in need, the Foundation funds a wide range of projects by partnering with both faith-based and secular institutions whose organizational mission aligns with the values of the Foundation.

Although some positions and practices of these institutions will not always be consistent with the full range of Catholic teaching, the Foundation's association with these institutions is always and only focused on their projects that are fully consistent with Catholic teaching. Further-

more, the Foundation neither facilitates, endorses nor enables any violation of those teachings. The Foundation has a careful review system to ensure fidelity to Catholic moral teaching and to ensure that all funds distributed by the Foundation are used only for purposes complying with that teaching, and it strives to ensure that the Foundation's association with them does not advance those practices to which it is opposed.

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation was formed after the 2018 sale of Fidelis Care, a nonprofit health insurer created by the Catholic bishops of New York State. For more than 25 years, Fidelis Care expanded under the bishops' oversight to become one of the highest rated and most successful insurers operating in the state.

For more information about the foundation and the grant program, go to <https://www.cabrini-health.org/grants>.

Catholic Charities grows programs with grant

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

OGDENSBURG— Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg received a major boost from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation Grants, securing nine separate grants totaling more than \$1.7 million to supplement existing programs and create new ones.

According to Catholic Charities Director Deacon Patrick J. Donahue, \$200,500 in grant funding was a “transitional grant,” funding that was previously provided by Fidelis that was continued in the Cabrini Foundation funding.

That funding is used to pay for four Catholic Charities case managers, employees who help connect individuals in need with services and help coordinate those services.

“We’ve been able to improve case management services across our four main offices – Watertown, Malone, Plattsburgh and Ogdensburg,” Deacon Donahue said. “We were able to add staff where we didn’t have it before.”

Catholic Charities also received \$217,404 to expand Seaway House, a clubhouse for individuals with long-term mental health issues.

“Right now, we’re serving around 50 people every day at Seaway House,” Deacon Donahue said. “It’s one of our largest programs, but it’s almost invisible. This grant allowed us to purchase the two buildings next door. One building is a carriage house, and it’s being renovated to serve as a program space, a home program and offices. Right next door, there’s also a two-family house that was really beat down. We’re

going to be renovating that space for opportunities to place individuals into supported apartment living.”

The apartments will allow individuals receiving services to have safe, affordable and supported living arrangements as they develop the skills they need to live independently.

“Our goal is that they’d live in the apartment for maybe six months as they work toward independent living skills,” Deacon Donahue said.

Catholic Charities also received \$75,624 for a Foster Care Visitation Program and \$297,962 for a community soup kitchen and food pantry. The bulk of that funding will be used to expand services in the Malone area.

“We identified a need in that area for foster care visitation with court-ordered supervision,” said Deacon Donahue. “This funding gave us an opportunity to provide structured visitation. We’ve added staff to do that and to run a parent education program. Such programs can be ordered by the courts, but there aren’t many providers.”

Malone will also be getting a community outreach center, housing a food pantry, soup kitchen and other services. The center will be housed in the former Holy Family School.

Catholic Charities is also augmenting its services to migrant workers and their families thanks to \$127,261 in funding from the Cabrini Foundation Grants.

“We’ve been able to reopen an office in Lewis County – in Glenfield – through the Cabrini funding,” Deacon Donahue said. “There are between

250 and 300 migrant workers working full-time in Lewis County on the large farms.”

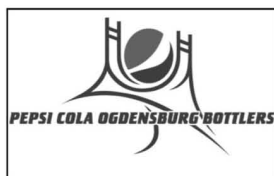
Deacon Donahue said Catholic Charities is hoping to connect those workers with needed services, including medical care, dental care, mental health and substance abuse services. Catholic Charities will be working with St. Peter’s Parish in Lowville and St. Mary’s in Glenfield to implement the migrant services.

The Lewis County offerings were also boosted by \$120,768 for transitional housing and support services, a program that will provide shelter to homeless individuals and help them find permanent housing.

In addition, Catholic Charities received \$207,080 for its Bridges Out of Poverty program. That funding will be used to coordinate services for individuals in need, working with existing agencies such as the Urban Mission in Watertown and JCEO in Malone.

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation was formed after the 2018 sale of Fidelis Care, a nonprofit health insurer created by the Catholic bishops of New York State. For more than 25 years, Fidelis Care expanded under the bishops’ oversight to become one of the highest rated and most successful insurers operating in the State.

For more information about the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation grants, visit <https://www.cabrini-health.org/>.



St. Joseph’s Home grant funding to help residents, community

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

OGDENSBURG— St. Joseph’s Home in Ogdensburg plans to use the \$569,000 in Mother Cabrini Health Foundation Grant funding it received to improve the lives of residents of the nursing home and to assist local residents in advancing their skills to rise out of poverty.

According to the nursing home’s administrator, Colleen Steele, a \$69,000 grant will help St. Joseph’s Home drive quality of life improvements for individuals with dementia and mental illnesses.

“It’s about improving quality of life through enhancements to the activities program, staff education and outreach to families,” Steele said.

The larger grant, \$500,000, will be used to provide educational opportunities to local residents to give them skills they can use to obtain and maintain employment.

“It deals with assisting people out of poverty,” Steele said. “It gives us the ability to support people in becoming further educated to obtain gainful employment. It enables us to provide CNA training, to pay for courses in medical coding – we’re able to provide training directly connected to employment opportunities in our facility or elsewhere. It’s about building people up.”

The funding has also been used to provide education and certifications to existing staff to meet facility and community needs.

“We had a need for foot care in the facility,” Steele said. “We’ve been able to provide staff training in podiatry care. That helps our residents, and it could potentially assist the community, people outside our facility.”

The grant pools are also enabling St. Joseph’s Home to upgrade facility security systems and make other improvements to the residents’ environment.

“These grants have been a huge blessing to us,” Steele said. “As a facility, we’ve tried to do everything we can in regards to managing expenses and ensuring all money we take in goes toward bettering the lives of our residents. Working that way, it reduces our ability to do trainings and other enhancements. This funding has allowed us to meet those needs, too. It’s just a huge blessing.”



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Environmental Stewardship

Take the challenge

During our Lenten journey, Jesus walks with us during this time of great pain, suffering and uncertainty in our world community. As Jesus entered his passion and death that culminated in His resurrection, He showed us that the way of the Cross is the way of love for all of us to carry.

While we are deprived of receiving the Eucharist during this time, we are challenged to be the presence of Christ to those around us through our prayers and actions. We witness the presence of self-sacrificing love among us as people join together to find ways to relieve the suffering of the sick and the needs of children, families, workers and businesses.

Despite the uncertainty and fear evoked in these times, there are some opportunities inherit in them also. One blessing is the temporary reprieve from our often hectic lives that prevents us from taking time to stop, breathe and be grateful for the gift of life and/or all that we often take for granted.

For many of us, this shut-down period may offer more time to pray, to enjoy the beauties of springtime unfolding around us and to spend time with family and friends, even if only by digital means and telecommunications.

As we unite as a human family to heal this sickness of the virus, there are two anniversaries being celebrated in the next two months that call our attention of the need to heal the sickness of the earth. On April 22, we observe 50th Anniversary of Earth Day, and on May 24 we celebrate the 5th Anniversary of *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*.

Resources abound for learning more what we can do to heal this global sickness. If you have not taken time to read Pope Francis' encyclical, you can access it online from USCCB or request a free copy from DynamicCatholic.com.

Check out: Earth Day Eco-challenge and then challenge another family or parishioners to compete with you.

Bishop's Public Schedule

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

Rest in Peace

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

April 1 – Rev. James H. Roche, 1927; Msgr. Herbert J. Hannan, 2002; Rev. Mark McDonald, MSC, 2018

April 2 – Pope John Paul II, 2005

April 3 – Msgr. Philius Garand, 1942

April 4 – Rev. Ronald Brabant, 1963; Rev. Francis J. Beyette, 1984

April 5 – Rev. Florence McCarthy, 1901; Rev. Amedee Lacasse, M.S.C., 1941; Msgr. Francis P. Devan, 1992

April 6 – Rev. Joseph E. Berard, 1942; Msgr. Arthur M. Gilbert, 1965

April 7 – Rev. Fabien Barnabe, 1883; Rev. Francois Cing-mars, 1902; Rev. James E. Duffy, 1934

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terri-ann Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY, 12955
terriannyanulavich@yahoo.com
Phone: Day: 518-651-2267, Night: 518-569-0612; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy at 315-393-2920

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters from readers of the North Country Catholic.

- Due to space limitations, submissions should be no longer than 300 words.

- We cannot accept letters which support ideas 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

Heightened awareness needed during time of crisis

Editor's note: April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. The North Country Catholic will be sharing information about preventing child abuse throughout the month. This article is the copyrighted property of National Catholic Services, LLC. All rights reserved. To provide constructive feedback, or request permission to redistribute, please communicate with: editor@virtus.org

There are so many things to consider during this time of crisis. Kids are staying home from school and are home, perhaps alone.

A recent *USA Today* report indicated that "Hundreds of thousands of vulnerable U.S. children could face a heightened risk of abuse and neglect as coronavirus-related school closures keep them at home and away from the nation's biggest group of hotline tipsters-educators."

We owe teachers, school administrators and counselors for the keen way in which they watch and report signs of abuse and neglect.

Because kids are not in school, we must be vigilant about protecting children more than ever.

The media reports are overwhelming, and many



APRIL IS NATIONAL

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH



#PROMISETOPROTECT

folks get easily scared; some get paralyzed and don't know what to do. An effective stance of heightened awareness is the best approach for all of us to embrace during this difficult time.

We know that when the stress levels of parents run high, kids feel it.

The best thing we can do is to remain calm and be as communicative with your children as possible about what is happening and the safety measures that we all must take.

Of course, let them know that you have things under control and that you will protect them.

Remind them of the

safety rules in your family and home.

If you are not with your children during the day, check in on them randomly via text, Facetime or phone. Let them know that they can contact you anytime.

Refer to the basics of the Protecting God's Children Program by reviewing the Warning Signs of adults, and also by following Step 4: Be Aware of Child and Youth Behavior; so watch, listen to, and observe your children.

Be a good neighbor when you can and do the same for the children of your friends and family. Enlist other trusted family and friends to check in on the kids electronically in some format.

We are all in this together and together will fight this.

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Catholic schools benefit from three grants

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

OGDENSBURG – Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Ogdensburg plan to help students advance in Social and Emotional Learning, help connect students and the communities that house them to services needed to be healthy, and help families afford Catholic schools with funding the school system received through the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation Grant program.

In a continuation of a grant previously funded by Fidelis, the Cabrini Foundation provided the school system with a \$69,000 grant to be used for “Digging Deeper into Social and Emotional Learning.”

According to Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, superintendent of diocesan Catholic schools, and Karen Donahue, assistant superintendent, some of that funding was used to train teams from each of the diocesan Catholic schools to implement a Social and Emotional Learning program.

“These leadership teams left the training with long-range plans to implement the program,” Donahue said. “Since then, they’ve been implementing those plans.”

Social and Emotional Learning focuses on helping students grow in five competencies – self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness – with the goal that the students will extend those competencies from the classroom into the schools and into the communities.

That funding also enabled the school system

to offer an enhanced educational program on digital citizenship.

“We’re training kids in grades kindergarten through 12 to be responsible citizens while using digital products and being in a virtual world,” Donahue said. “This includes six to eight sessions per year, per grade level. In most schools, the program is offered by a media specialist or technology teacher. It includes a wide variety of topics, and the topics are targeted to each grade level.”

The program, which will be fully implemented in the fall, includes a parent/family component.

“There’s text messaging for parents and weekly articles and information on working with your family in the use of technology,” Donahue said. “It’s all voluntary, though.”

“The digital citizenship part certainly dovetails with the Social and Emotional Learning,” added Sister Ellen Rose. “And our program incorporates a Catholic perspective. New York now mandates Social and Emotional Learning in schools, but we’ve been offering it since long before it was mandated.”

In a separate grant, the diocesan Catholic schools received funding to launch its “Healthy Families for a Hopeful Future” program.

“The aim of this grant is to promote healthy family lifestyles and choices, assist families in nurturing and developing the ability to take ownership over their lives and choose healthy lifestyles that support the whole person,” said Sister Ellen Rose.

As part of that program,

a network of family support coordinators have been hired for the diocesan schools. The coordinators work closely with school staff and administrators to identify key areas for students and their families and make plans to meet those needs; educate families about available resources, provide programming and educational/social opportunities for families; aid families in overcoming identified issues and meet identified needs; and develop relationships with community resources.

“The Family Support Coordinators are part of a network of related services, including people at social services, Catholic Charities and a number of other community organizations and groups,” said Donahue. “Those agencies know about our family support coordinators and can refer people to them for services, and our family support coordinators can work with those agencies and organizations to ensure families’ needs are being met.”

Each coordinator customizes his or her approach to the needs of the school community.

“They’re in touch with the local needs, and they work to address those specific needs,” Sister Ellen Rose said.

Sister Ellen Rose also noted that the services of the family support coordinators were not limited to Catholic school students and their families.

“The family support coordinators are also in the

service of the parish,” she said. “It builds into our diocesan priorities of strengthening family life.”

In a third grant for the Catholic school system, the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation provided \$250,000 for a regional scholarship program, the Sustaining Hope for the Future Scholarship.

“The purpose of this grant is to improve the ability of families to afford tuition for grades kindergarten through eight,” said Sister Ellen Rose. “Both existing students and new students can apply for funding.”

To qualify for funding, families must have household incomes no more than 20 percent above the free and reduced-price meal program guidelines or have needs due to personal circumstances, such as a job loss, illness or fixed income.

“This will reach a financial category (the existing aid formula) doesn’t reach,” said Sister Ellen Rose. “And it allows us to consider personal circumstances that may make paying tuition difficult.”

Each individual school will be promoting the

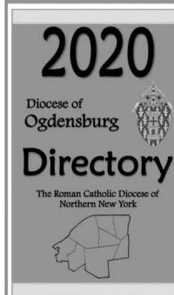
scholarship and taking applications for it.

“We have a one application for families re-enrolling students and another for new perspective families,” Sister Ellen Rose said. “This program helps us have a new mindset in terms of financial aid for grades kindergarten through 12. People are very familiar with that concept at the college level – almost every family needs financial aid at that level. They’re not as familiar with it for K-12. Now, with (the existing tuition assistance program), this grant and our school endowments and scholarship funds, we’re in a position to say to parents, ‘this is the tuition. Here’s what you can offer us, and this is the financial assistance we can offer you.’”

Sister Ellen Rose said the Catholic school system is grateful for the grant funding.

“The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation is allowing us to introduce programs that, without the grants, we would not be able to do, at least to this magnitude,” she said. “This is an awesome boost with terrific potential to build bridges.”

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Catholic entities expect aid under emergency relief bill

CLEVELAND (CNS) – Catholic hospitals, parish schools and charitable agencies are among the entities hoping to receive partial relief under a massive \$2.2 trillion emergency aid package

They are just not sure when the aid will begin to flow, however. President Donald Trump signed the legislation into law soon after he received it from Congress March 27.

"At this point everyone is trying to figure out what got in and how it's going to help out," said Lisa Smith, vice president of advocacy and public policy at the Catholic Health Association of the United States.

Senators approved the 880-page Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act, during a late-night vote March 25. The House approved the measure by an overwhelming voice vote March 27 after members were forced to return to Washington by Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Kentucky, who insisted that a quorum be present.

Despite such a large expenditure, about half of the federal fiscal year 2020 budget, leaders of Catholic organizations said they expect another package will be needed before the coronavirus runs its course.

Democratic leaders in the House of Representatives were seeking a quick vote on the measure March 27 through a voice vote, which would not require elected officials to reconvene in Washington.

The bill includes \$180 billion in health care spending, designating \$100 billion for hospitals

and care providers that are the hardest hit in responding to the coronavirus since the first U.S. case of the illness was confirmed Jan. 20.

Another key provision finds aid in the form of grants to small businesses and nonprofit organizations if staffing levels are maintained. In addition, unemployment insurance would be expanded for people who have suddenly found themselves out of work as companies – sometimes under government ordered shutdowns – have reduced hours or closed altogether in an effort to stem the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

The Catholic health care system has taken a large financial hit, Smith told Catholic News Service March 26.

She described how one hospital not affiliated with any health system was losing \$1 million a day. Some hospital systems are seeing losses from \$100 million to \$600 million a month in the first weeks of the outbreak of the illness as they shift from normal operations to focus on the public health crisis, Smith said.

"The problem is that the margins are not high, being not-for-profit hospitals, so it's creating a huge toll," she explained. "We need a sustained cash flow. ... Those are the things we were really advocating and trying to educate folks in the Senate and the White House and the House about."

Smith said funds in the bill have been allocated for paying for hospital staffing as extra workers have been called in, supporting on-

site day care for the children of hospital workers where possible and buying protective gear.

Support for private and public schools is included in the bill, with \$30.7 billion set aside in an Education Stabilization Fund. Of the total, elementary and high schools will receive \$13.2 billion and higher education \$13.9 billion.

The funds are part of \$377 billion allocated for small business assistance.

Presentation Sister Dale McDonald, director of public policy and education research at the National Catholic Educational Association, told CNS the bill calls for money to be sent to states and then allocated to local school districts. Catholic schools will be able to apply for funds through those local school districts.

Funds can be used for cleaning supplies, disinfecting schools and widening the use of technology to enable at-home learning. By using funds for such purposes, schools will be able to keep teachers and other staff members employed, which is the goal of the bill, Sister McDonald said.

"How that's all going to work and the particulars of what you can spend it on are very broad," she said. "The really intensive part of this will be working with the Department of Education on what the actual guidelines look like and how this money gets into the hands of people who need it."

While welcoming the funding, Sister McDonald said, "For many of our schools, the funds under the Education Stabilization Act are not going to be enough."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Vatican confirms pope does not have COVID-19

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Neither Pope Francis nor any of his closest collaborators have the COVID-19 virus, said Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office. In a note March 28, Bruni confirmed that a monsignor, who works in the Vatican Secretariat of State and lives in the Domus Sanctae Marthae, where Pope Francis lives, did test positive for the coronavirus and, "as a precaution," was hospitalized. The Italian newspaper *Il Messaggero* and the *Je-suit-run America* magazine published reports March 25 about the monsignor testing positive. Bruni said that as of March 28, the Vatican health service had conducted more than 170 tests for the virus. No one else who lives at the Domus Sanctae Marthae tested positive, Bruni said. As soon as the monsignor tested positive, he said, his room and office were sanitized and all the people he had come into contact with over the preceding days were contacted.

Catholic organizations urge communities to respond to census

WASHINGTON (CNS) – A baker's dozen of Catholic organizations, from dioceses to religious orders to Catholic Charities affiliates, have signed on to a joint statement urging all to take part in the 2020 U.S. census. "We affirm the right of all people to participate in the 2020 census and remain committed to helping our neighbors be counted," said the statement, issued March 26 by the group Faith in Public Life. "All people, regardless of race, religion or immigration status have God-given dignity and it is imperative that our government counts every person living in this country." The Catholic signatories were part of a larger multifaith effort to encourage participation in the decennial census, which is a constitutional mandate. The Leadership Conference of Women Religious, one of the signatories, has long been part of Faith in Public Life's "Faithful Census" initiative, said Sister Ann Scholz, a School Sister of Notre Dame, who is LCWR's associate director of social mission. LCWR also has signed on to the Census Bureau's National Partnership Program, she added. "We've been spreading the word about the critical importance of the 2020 census count," Sister Scholz told Catholic News Service.

Catholic nurses often only spiritual connection to patients

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (CNS) – A tightening of some hospital visitor restrictions on religious ministers and patient family members has begun as the coronavirus pandemic ramps up around the U.S. "It has been about two weeks – it started out with a limit on the times ministers or family members could come in, then a week later they completely stopped it," said Maria Arvonio, a night-shift nursing supervisor for a large community hospital near Mount Laurel, New Jersey, and the lower Northeastern regional director of the Chicago-based National Association of Catholic Nurses. Catholic nurses, Arvonio noted, are now often the only spiritual connection for those in their care. "The patients can make phone calls, but eucharistic ministers, volunteers and family are not allowed to visit at this time, so Catholic nurses are the only Catholic lifeline to their spirituality," Arvonio said, adding that historically the church has encouraged strong collegial associations of Catholic nurses. The Joint Commission, an organization that accredits and certifies over 22,000 health care organizations in the U.S., likewise acknowledges that offering spiritual care to patients is vital toward supporting their health.

Pope: Virus is not God's judgment on humanity

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—The worldwide coronavirus pandemic is not God's judgment on humanity, but God's call on people to judge what is most important to them and resolve to act accordingly from now on, Pope Francis said.

Addressing God, the pope said that "it is not the time of your judgment, but of our judgment: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others."

Pope Francis offered his meditation on the meaning of the COVID-19 pandemic and its implications for humanity March 27 before raising a monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament and giving an extraordinary blessing "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world).

Popes usually give their blessing "urbi et orbi" only immediately after their election and on Christmas and Easter.

Pope Francis opened the service — in a rain-drenched, empty St. Peter's Square — praying that the "almighty and merciful God" would see how people are suffering and give them comfort. He asked to care for the sick and dying, for medical workers exhausted by caring for the sick and for political leaders who bear the burden of making decisions to protect their people.

The service included the reading of the Gospel of Mark's account of Jesus calming the stormy sea.

"Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives," the pope said. "Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer

them."

Like the disciples on the stormy Sea of Galilee, he said, "we will experience that, with him on board, there will be no shipwreck, because this is God's strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things."

The Gospel passage began, "When evening had come," and the pope said that with the pandemic and its sickness and death, and with the lockdowns and closures of schools and workplaces, it has felt like "for weeks now it has been evening."

"Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void that stops everything as it passes by," the pope said. "We feel it in the air, we notice it in people's gestures; their glances give them away."

"We find ourselves afraid and lost," he said. "Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm."

However, the pandemic storm has made most people realize that "we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented," the pope said. And it has shown how each person has a contribution to make, at least in comfort-ing each other.

"On this boat are all of us," he said.

The pandemic, the pope said, has exposed "our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities."

In the midst of the

storm, Pope Francis said, God is calling people to faith, which is not just believing God exists, but turning to him and trusting him.

As Lent and the pandemic go on, he said, God continues to call people to "convert" and "return to me with all your heart."

It is a time to decide to live differently, live better, love more and care for others, he said, and every community is filled with people who can be role models — individuals, "who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives."

Pope Francis said the Holy Spirit can use the pandemic to "redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people — often forgotten people — who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines," but are serving others and making life possible during the pandemic.

The pope listed "doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves."

"How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a shared responsibility," he said. And "how many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer."

"How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all," he

said. "Prayer and quiet service: These are our victorious weapons."

In the boat, when the disciples plead with Jesus to do something, Jesus responds, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?"

"Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us," the pope said. "In this world that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything."

"Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things and be lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet," Pope Francis said.

"We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick," he said. "Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: 'Wake up, Lord!'"

The Lord is calling on people to "put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be foundering," the pope said.

"The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith," he said. "We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been re-

deemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love."

Pope Francis told people watching around the world that he would "entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, health of the people, and star of the stormy sea."

"May God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace," he said. "Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak, and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm."

Introducing the formal blessing, Cardinal Angelo Comastri, archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica, announced that it would include a plenary indulgence "in the form established by the church" to everyone watching on television or internet or listening by radio.


An indulgence is a remission of the temporal punishment a person is due for sins that have been forgiven.

Catholics following the pope's blessing could receive the indulgence if they had "a spirit detached from sin," promised to go to confession and receive the Eucharist as soon as possible and said a prayer for the pope's intentions.

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SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Sharing in the Passion of Jesus

Today we begin the most sacred week of the year – Holy Week. It all begins with the Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem seated astride a donkey, with the crowd shouting "Hosanna," and it ends with the most astounding event in history, the God-man, Jesus, rising from a borrowed tomb. He rises with the light shining from the wounds of His horrible passion and death.

As our Savior rode towards His great confrontation with the powers of evil, the words of today's first reading were very possibly in His mind: "I have set my face like flint,

knowing that I will not be put to shame." No, the shame is ours that our sins and those of the millions before us have brought Him to this hour. This is the week for us to bow our heads and hearts in sorrow and compassion as we put aside our daily distractions and focus on the events of the dying and rising of our loving Redeemer.

We need to reflect prayerfully on the ancient Christian hymn that forms our second reading for this Mass: "...he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave... he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross." No wonder every



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

April 5

Palm (Passion) Sunday

READINGS

Matthew 21:1-11

Isaiah 50:4-7

Philippians 2:6-11

Mattew 26:14-27:66

knee must bow at the mention of His name! The early Church fought long and hard to establish the doctrine for all time that it was both God and man that took up that cross for our redemption.

So, what is our cross? It's the cross of responsibilities, the cross of sickness, the cross of loneliness and failure. We gain so much strength to carry those crosses when we take time this week to journey with Jesus to Calvary

The Church is a master

of drama in the liturgies of this week. Through the use of the celebrant and two readers for the Passion this week, and in the voices of the congregation, we all become part of the action. Most feel embarrassed to cry "Crucify Him" with the palm branches still in our hands. We feel like hypocrites. Yet it was our sin which brought Him to Calvary.

The Passion narrative of Matthew is a reminder of the ugliness of sin – Judas' betrayal of Jesus, the denial of Peter, the hearings before Caiaphas and Pilate, the awful scourging by the Roman soldiers, the thorny crown jammed upon His weary head, the whip cutting slashes into His flesh, the blood run-

ning down his shoulders and back, the cursing by the crowd, the nails tearing through His hands, the thud of the cross into the ground... As He hangs on the Cross, He cries, "I thirst!" How that cry echoes down the centuries as a reminder of His search for our love.

The shock of Palm Sunday's liturgy compresses 2,000 years into this present time. We have no place to hide. This year, because of the coronavirus, we must confine our response to online Masses and ceremonies. This, in itself, is our sharing in the Passion of Jesus. All this will prepare us for the coming out of darkness into the new light, the new saving water of the Easter Vigil – and Resurrection.

Relevant Radio broadcasting litany of prayers

MINNEAPOLIS (CNS) – JunFen Freihammer, a senior at DeLaSalle Catholic High School in Minneapolis, seems a perfect fit to record a prayer to lift hardships caused by the coronavirus.

Freihammer, 18, was born in Wuhan, China, considered by many researchers as the origin of the virus that has infected tens of thousands of people and disrupted lives worldwide.

She also stayed with a family in northern Italy last summer during an exchange program through her school in Minneapolis.

Freihammer enjoyed her host family's hospitality and helped teach English to children. More recently, northern Italy was hit hard as the coronavirus spread. The entire country has been quarantined.

The teenager recently recorded a five-minute "Litany in Time of Need" with Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis. On March 19, the feast of St. Joseph, the litany started airing daily on Relevant Radio.

Father Francis "Rocky" Hoffman, executive director of Relevant Radio, suggested involving a student from a Catholic school. With the recording planned for the next day, Freihammer offered to do it, after hearing about it from her mother, Karin, who is senior development director for Relevant Radio.

"It was an honor for me to be with someone pray-

ing for my home country and praying with the U.S. as we go through this national crisis," she said. "Hopefully, it will touch many people," she said. United in prayer, people can overcome adversity, she said.

In a March 18 letter to archdiocesan priests and Catholic school leaders, Archbishop Hebda and Auxiliary Bishop Andrew H. Cozzens of St. Paul and Minneapolis invited them and Catholic school students to face the challenges of the present moment through prayer.

"Throughout the ages, faced with all manner of illness and calamities, believers have petitioned for God's grace and assistance through litanies," they wrote. "A litany is a prayer that we can offer when we are alone, at home together with family, or gathered as a virtual

community."

"We adopted JunFen at age 6," Karin Freihammer told The Catholic Spirit, newspaper of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. "How beautiful that she can pray the litany with the shepherd of the local church. It's special for her. All the dots are being connected."

The recording will air seven days a week indefinitely until the pandemic subsides, Karin Freihammer said.

Relevant Radio stations "from Maui to Maine" will play the litany, she said, reaching a potential audience of 220 million. Those who want to tune in can use the Relevant Radio app or go to the radio network's website for programming information, <https://relevantradio.com>

"This is an important moment in history for Relevant Radio to be of serv-

ice to our country and our world by inviting listeners to join in prayer and to trust in the Lord together as one human family," she said.

Jason Slattery, director of the archdiocesan Office for the Mission of Catholic Education, said the church has many ways to reach people in faith, and the Litany in Time of Need is one of them.

"In support of the leadership of Archbishop Hebda and Bishop Cozzens, the Office for the Mission of Catholic Education believes that the church has an age old toolbox of tools and teachings that are essential aids in constructing a response during this national emergency," Slattery said. "We believe that the present moment is a good one to put these tools, like the Litany in Time of Need, into the hands of our students and families.





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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSI, Director

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Light and darkness. Sight and blindness. The readings for today address the way we see with our eyes and through our souls. Our vision, both physical and spiritual, affects our whole life. In the Old Testament reading, we are reminded that not as man sees does God see. We tend to make quick judgments based on appearances, but what we see in a glance must only be the beginning of our understanding. What is in the heart of another – and in our own heart – is what matters. In the Gospel, we have the profound story of the man born blind and his meeting with Jesus as well as the many other people who involve themselves in the situation. Christ's disciples start by asking who is guilty of sin: the blind man or his parents. It was taken as a given that his blindness must be a punishment from God. Jesus refutes this and, calling Himself the light of the world, heals the man. Then controversy comes from neighbors and, especially, Pharisees who question the miracle and whether it was really from God. "They called the man who had been blind and said to him, 'Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner.' He replied, 'If He is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see'" (John 9:24-25).

This man must have been afraid of the power of the religious leaders, yet he would not deny the truth. He who had never before seen anything but darkness now saw not only with his eyes but also with his soul. The Pharisees could not recognize Jesus for who He was. What was worse, they did not want to accept Him. Despite our Lord's words of hope and wisdom, despite His many miracles, despite the loving goodness He embodied, they persisted in their self-imposed spiritual blindness. Now, as we celebrate Laetare Sunday and move into the final weeks of Lent, let us open ourselves to our Savior, the Light of the World, and humbly invite Him to reveal Himself to us more clearly.

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Bishop LaValley issues video message in time of pandemic

OGDENSBURG—Recognizing that the faithful are separated from worship and some sacraments in an unprecedented way, Bishop Terry R. LaValley, bishop of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, has issued a video message to the faithful.

In the message, Bishop LaValley recounts the story of Jesus walking on water, approaching His disciples as they and their boat was tossed by the stormy seas.

"Peter got out of the boat and started walking toward Jesus on the water," Bishop LaValley said. "But when he looked at the turbulent waters below him, he became frightened. Peter took his focus off God. It was then that he began to sink. Matthew tells us that after Jesus saves Peter, they get in the boat and the waters calmed. Peter and the disciples praised Jesus, 'Truly, you are the Son of God.'"

"My sisters and brothers, through the ages, the Church has taught that the boat about which Matthew writes, symbolizes the Church, the people of God. The coronavirus has certainly agitated and stirred the waters around us. Like Peter and his

friends learned, when we stay in the boat and remain focused on Jesus, the Son of God, we will weather the storm."

Bishop LaValley indicated he continues to pray for the residents of the Diocese of Ogdensburg and their loved ones, and he encouraged the faithful to stay connected to each other and Jesus.

"Let's remain in the boat and keep our eyes focused on Jesus, continue our daily prayers and devotions," he said. "Know that Jesus is your constant companion. Stay informed by clicking onto our diocesan website. Stay in contact with your pastor and share your pastoral needs or that of a neighbor. Through the present health crisis, through it all, we stay in the boat, ministering to one another... at a proper social distance. God Bless You All."

The diocese continues to update its website offering resources and tips for staying connected to the faith during this challenging time. To access those resources and tips, visit rcdony.org/covid-19.

Bishop's video message can be viewed on the diocesan YouTube channel, <https://youtu.be/F5IXEjOe-QY>.

OBITUARIES

Carthage – Candace C. (Fields) Pignone, 87; Mass of Christian Burial March 24, 2020 at St. James Church; burial in Fairview Cemetery.

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

Dannemora – Colleen Marie McCorry, 60; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Joseph's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

Ellenburg Center – Theresa Ozina (Graves) Garrow, 85; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Edmund's Church.

Ellenburg Center – Shirley L. Prevo, 85; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Edmund's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Ellenburg Depot – Rita Jane Darrah Cronin, 83.

Fort Covington – Shirley J. (Mainville) Gorrow, 80; Mass of Chris-

tian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Mary's of the Fort; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Bombay.

Hogansburg – Alexander John Roundpoint, 65; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Regis Mission.

Lowville – Elizabeth J. "Betty" (Bol-liver) Pleskach, 89; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Peter's Church; burial in Old Glendale Cemetery, Glenfield.

Malone – Bruce Tremblay, 54; Funeral Services March 24, 2020 at the Brusodesnoyers Funeral Home; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Bombay.

Morrisonville – Elsie M. (Henaghan) Golovach, 72; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Morrisonville – Vivian M. (Florentine) Nazak, 98; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Norwood – Randy J. Cutler, 70; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Andrew's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Gary J. Butler, 79; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Barbara A. (Ryan) Gero, 90.

Saranac Lake – Elizabeth "Betty" (Dupree) Doyle, 97; Funeral Services to be held at a later date; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Tupper Lake – Carolyn (Meagher) Shaheen, 82; Mass of Christian Burial March 27, 2020 at St. Alphonsus Church; burial in St. Alphonsus Cemetery.

Watertown – Patricia Catherine Company, 80; Funeral Services Cummings Funeral Service, Inc.; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Louis Jeffery Stabins.

Memorial to be held later for Deacon David L. Clark

Deacon David L. Clark, 70, of Plattsburgh, passed away on Monday, March 23, 2020 at the UVM-CVPH Medical Center with his family by his side. He was born in Bath, New York, on August 20, 1949, the son of Lawrence and Alberta (Jones) Clark.

He was a Registered Nurse and retired as a Colonel from the United States Air Force after 30 years of service and known as the BUNAF to his fellow nurses, a term of endearment.

Following his honorable discharge from the Air Force, he continued to work as a Registered Nurse for the State of New York until his full retirement. He was a devoted Catholic and proud to be a Deacon at St. John's Church. Dave was a member of the Knights of Columbus for over 40 years serving several positions.

"As a deacon...I look forward to making a difference to those in need within and around Plattsburgh," he said, at the time of his ordination to the diaconate. "I hope to find some method of providing charitable works for those who are suffering and have no other options. I don't know what that will look like just yet, but I hope the Lord sends me some guidance. My job



Deacon David L. Clark

now is to listen for God's gentle whisper inspiring me to take a pathway. I pray I can hear Him."

He'll be missed for his story telling, jokes and caring nature. In his free time, he continued to travel the world with his wife, Mary. Above anything else, he treasured his family and the time they spent together.

He was predeceased by his parents, and his

brother, Kelly.

He is survived by his wife of nearly 49 years, Mary (McMillan); their children, Matthew and his wife, Teresa, Amy Clark, and Sarah Matthews and her husband, Shawn; his grandchildren, Brody, Kyle, Caleb, and Amelia; and his sister, Jennette Mospaw.

Due to circumstances, services will be private for the family. A memorial Mass at St. John's Church will be announced at a later date. Burial will be in Divine Mercy Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be offered to a charity of one's choice.

Arrangements are entrusted to Brown Funeral Home. Online condolences may be at www.brownfunderalhomeinc.com.

Brooklyn priest is first in U.S. to die of COVID-19

Catholic News Agency

NEW YORK - A Brooklyn parish announced the death of its pastor, Father Jorge Ortiz-Garay, who died of coronavirus at approximately 6 p.m. Friday evening, March 27. The priest is the first in the U.S. known to have died from the virus.

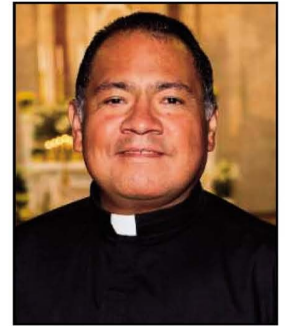
Journalist Rocco Palmo was the first to report that the priest died from the virus, which is the cause of a global pandemic.

On March 24, the Diocese of Brooklyn announced that a priest at St. Brigid's Parish in Brooklyn, where Ortiz was pastor, had contracted the coronavirus. On the same day, the parish posted on its Facebook page that Father Ortiz-Garay was "under observation in the hospital" and requested prayers "for his speedy recovery."

On March 27, the parish posted on its Facebook page again:

"With a very sad heart, we inform you of the death of our dearest pastor, Father Jorge Ortiz Garay. We ask for your prayers for his eternal rest. We also ask you in a special way to pray for his parents, siblings, nieces and nephews who have lost a very special and loved person by his family, our community and many people around the country."

Father Ortiz-Garay was born in Mexico City, and, according to his parish website, "At age 18, he joined the communities of the Neocatechumenal



Father Jorge Ortiz-Garay

Way. It was through the involvement with this group that he felt his calling for the priesthood."

He was ordained a priest in 2004 in Newark, and served parishes, along with missions of the Neocatechumenal Way, in New Jersey and New York City. He became pastor at St. Brigid's in 2019.

In addition to his parish and missionary work, Father Ortiz-Garay led Hispanic ministry initiatives in the Diocese of Brooklyn. He is remembered by friends as a fervent evangelist.

The first cleric in the U.S. known to have died of the virus was Deacon John-Sebastian Laird-Hammond, OFM, who died March 20. Worldwide, more than 60 priests and at least one bishop have died of the virus.

More than 100,000 people have tested positive for coronavirus in the US, and more than 1,700 have died. In the state of New York, which has become the epicenter of the pandemic of the virus in the US, more than 600 people have died.



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