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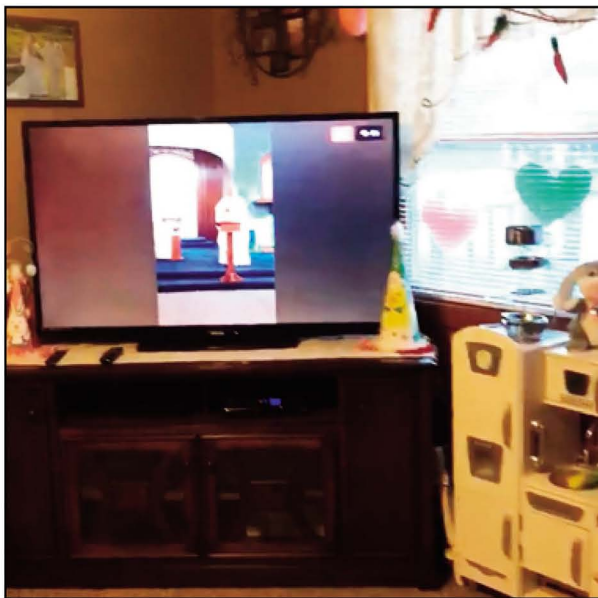
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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 74, Number 45

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

APRIL 15, 2020

THE DOMESTIC CHURCH



Landon and Declan O'Connor, along with their father, Ryan, make the Sign of the Cross at the start of the Paschal Triduum on Holy Thursday. Unable to attend Mass due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, the O'Connors, along with wife/mother Ashley, participated in a Facebook livestream Mass broadcast by Father Raymond J. Moreau from St. Augustine Church in North Bangor.

Diocese to be consecrated to St. Joseph

Bishop Terry R. LaValley announces that on Friday, May 1, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, he will consecrate the Diocese of Ogdensburg to St. Joseph in a consecration to be held in the chapel of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Watertown.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL



Father Howard J. Venette responded to God's call to the priesthood, and he now spends a portion of his time helping men who are discerning their vocations. His story is featured here as part of the North Country Catholic's annual edition focusing on vocations. The edition includes features on individuals living their vocations to single life, consecrated religious life, marriage and the diaconate.

STORIES ON PAGES 4, 5, 7 & 8

Pope: Easter proclaims victory of life

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — In a dark and nearly empty St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis blessed a fire, lit the Easter candle and called Christians to keep kindling sparks of hope, knowing that Jesus has risen and death will not have the last word.

Easter is a reminder that "God is able to make everything work unto good, because even from the grave he brings life," the pope said in his homily April 11 during the Easter Vigil Mass.

Like at the earlier liturgies of the Easter triduum, the pope celebrated a pared-down Easter Vigil at the Altar of the Chair in the back of the basilica.

In his homily, Pope Francis echoed the sentiments of many people mourning the deaths of loved ones because of COVID-19 and facing the tensions of living in prolonged lockdowns.

Even after the Gospel proclamation of the Resurrection, Pope Francis spoke of how, for many people, "we are experiencing, more than ever, the great silence of Holy Saturday."

"We can imagine ourselves" like the women disciples preparing to go to Jesus' tomb, he said. "They, like us, had before their eyes the drama of suffering, of an unexpected tragedy that happened all too sud-

denly. They had seen death and it weighed on their hearts."

"Then, too, there was fear about the future and all that would need to be rebuilt. A painful memory, a hope cut short," the pope said. "For them, as for us, it was the darkest hour."

Still, he said, the women were not "paralyzed" by fear. "They did not give in to the gloom of sorrow and regret; they did not morosely close in on themselves or flee from reality."

Instead, they prepared spices to anoint Jesus' body, he said. "They did not stop loving; in the darkness of their hearts, they lit a flame of mercy."

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Seeing the beauty, not the stumbles

He was extremely nervous and uncomfortable being in front of a camera.

I've always thought our parish pastor, Father Raymond J. Moreau, was the epitome of a showman. He comes across as outgoing, gregarious, funny and confident, especially in front of a crowd.

So, I was surprised – shocked really – when he revealed that being recorded makes him nervous. Despite his nervousness, Father Ray celebrated the Paschal Triduum at St. Augustine Church in North Bangor for a Facebook livestream and YouTube. De-

spite his apprehension, he stood up in front of an almost completely empty church and two cameras three days in a row.



Darcy L.

Fargo

At the conclusion of each stream, Father Ray, a man known for speaking clearly and beautifully, pointed out that he stumbled over names and words he's likely said millions of times before without an issue. While he was mostly his normal, smooth talking self, he focused on the mis-

steps.

And as the video liturgies went out over social media, the comments flooded in.

The parishioners of St. Augustine in North Bangor and St. Mary's of Brushton, as well as people with connections to the parish and/or Father Ray, typed their Amens, their messages of thanks and messages to each other.

The parishioners watching didn't notice the stumbles (though they did notice a few technical issues – livestreaming is not seamless). They noticed the beauty of the liturgies. They noticed the effort that went into bringing the liturgies to them. They noticed the inspiring words Father Ray delivered in his homilies.

The parishioners were so thankful for an opportunity

to connect to their faith, their parish, their pastor and each other, the little things – Father Ray's botched pronunciations, occasional glitches in the stream and a few suppressed laughs from behind the camera – didn't matter.

I think it's fair to say that we're all uncomfortable right now. We're all nervous. Father Ray reminded me this week that beautiful connections can be made when we're uncomfortable, vulnerable and exposed. He reminded me that when we stop relying on our own skills and gifts, we can make room for the Lord to work through us.

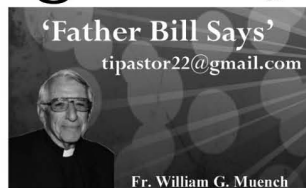
Even if we're on camera.

Walking with Jesus to Emmaus

Lent led us to Holy Week. Holy Week was a celebration of our salvation. We celebrated the Last Supper of the Lord. We stood at the cross of Jesus on Calvary. As people of faith, we believe that Calvary led us to Easter glory, the Resurrection of the Savior, new life.

The Resurrection of Jesus is a perfect representation of what we hope for in this pandemic. It will certainly be a resurrection when we are able to celebrate the end of this terrible time.

All the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles contain Resurrection stories. My personal favorite is the Emmaus story, Luke 24. I am certain you remember this story. Two people are walking home from Jerusalem to Emmaus. We are told it is three days after the crucifixion of Jesus – the day of the Resurrection. I like to think that these two were a couple – a husband and his wife. I once saw a painting of the Emmaus story that showed a man and a woman with Jesus



Fr. William G. Muench

at table. That painting was over the side altar in St. Mel's Cathedral in Longford, Ireland.

Let's review the story again. As the two were walking home, Jesus came along and caught up with them. They do not recognize him; they do not know it is Jesus. They explain to him why they were sad. They were disciples of Jesus and hoped that he was a mighty prophet, but the chief priests and rulers had arrested and crucified him. They had hoped that would redeem Israel. Then Jesus (they still do not recognize that it is Jesus) teaches them. He points out to them that the Messiah would suffer and then enter his glory. Then He begins with Moses and the prophets and teaches them all that the Scriptures write

about the Savior. Can you begin to imagine what a Scripture lesson that must have been being led by Jesus himself?

When they came to the village of Emmaus, the couple invites Jesus (whom they still do not realize it is Jesus) to stay there. Then we are told, when they joined at table, Jesus takes bread, says the blessing, broke it and gave it to them. In that moment, their eyes were opened, and they realized that this person was Jesus himself, the same Jesus they had seen crucified. We are told that Jesus then vanished. Then we are told that they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"

I believe that every one of us has experienced such Emmaus moments. Each time we read some Scripture and allow it to become our prayer, the presence of Jesus is truly part of our lives. And when we recognize the sacredness of the Scripture and

the reality of Christ's presence, truly our hearts will burn within us.

I believe also that many times the Lord comes along to walk with us. When our hearts are alive with faith and the love of the Holy Spirit, we will realize that Jesus has come and been part of our day and has carefully led us in love. Often, he leads us to do something special, I believe even miraculous. Sometimes, we may not recognize this until much later. I've had the experience myself of looking back over the day and realizing I did something good and meaningful and recognizing that it was truly the Lord who guided me at that moment. Such a moment of recognition is a time of deep gratitude that Jesus truly walked with me and showed me the way.

During this pandemic, during this time of social distancing, I often notice a couple out for a walk, and I can truly image Jesus joining them.

FOLLOW ME

Consecrating the diocese to St. Joseph

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

God desires that all children be entrusted to the love and care of a mother and a father. Mary is our spiritual mother. Joseph is our spiritual father. In 2017, the Diocese of Ogdensburg was consecrated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. On Friday, May 1, the Feast of St. Joseph the Worker, I will consecrate our Diocese to St. Joseph in the chapel of the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Watertown.

According to St. Pope John XXIII, God desires devotion to St. Joseph to surge forth in our day. My friends, it's time for our total consecration to Joseph. We need the spiritual fatherhood of St. Joseph to help us protect the Church, marriage and the family. As Protector of the Church, we rely on his powerful intercession in the struggle to combat evil, both outside and inside the Church. We go to Joseph to strengthen our resolve to protect our families and marriages. We go to Joseph for his assistance in regaining the gift of spiritual fatherhood for our dads.

St. Andre Bessette, OMI during an epidemic miraculously nursed many of the dying back to good health in the name of St. Joseph. Those of us who have made a pilgrimage to St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal are aware of

Joseph's powerful intercessory prayer for healing. The Oratory's walls, lined with crutches, give tangible testimony to the power of his prayer. As Hope of the Sick, we rely on St. Joseph's intercession for those suffering from COVID-19 and from all illnesses.

Joseph was the first missionary. We invoke the patronage of St. Joseph as an impetus for the Church's renewed commitment to evangelization in the world and to re-evangelization where religion and the Christian life were formerly flourishing and are now dormant. "With his powerful spiritual fatherhood..., our Church can be renewed as a light to the nations, a beautiful city on a hill" (Mt.5:14-16). (D. Calloway, Consecration to St. Joseph).

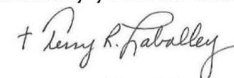
The man who helped to raise Jesus walks with us on this journey of faith. Joseph's steadfast trust in God and his patience with God's plan prepared him for events that he did not foresee or understand. St. Joseph is a model of persevering faith, courage and hope. With prayers of trusting abandonment, we confidently go to this carpenter who took the Child and His Mother on the perilous journey to Egypt and back.

On this Feast Day of Joseph the Worker, the faithful of the Diocese of Ogdensburg are deter-

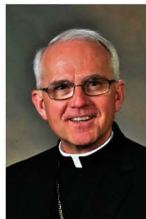
mined to go to Joseph, for the sake of our families, our marriages, our Church and our sick. While the current health crisis necessitates that the Consecration not be open to the

public, you will be able to participate by social media. Please refer to our diocesan webpage. Good St. Joseph, Pray for us!

Faithfully yours in Christ,



**Most Reverend
Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg**



**Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley**

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Sharing our Stories



Sharing our Faith

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RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL

Priesthood: Call and response

By Suzanne Pietropaoli
Staff Writer

TICONDEROGA – Gift and mystery, as Pope St. John Paul II intuited, are at the heart of the priesthood. This truth can be seen, too, in the unique way in which each individual priestly vocation develops. For Father Howard J. Venette, that call came early, and never really wavered.

Currently pastor of St. Mary's in Ticonderoga and Our Lady of Lourdes in Schroon Lake, this priest's vocation began to unfold in first grade when the teacher asked students what they wanted to be when they grew up.

"I began talking about the priesthood," Father Venette recalls. "In the fall of 1965, a few months after my First Holy Communion, my strong desire to be an altar boy was fulfilled. I couldn't get enough of serving at the altar, even for the 6:30 A.M. weekday Mass, even when it meant that my mother had to drive me to the church so early. My serving career continued through high school; singing in the choir and participating in the youth group also kept me close to the Church."

Good example and friendly encouragement further affirmed his call to priesthood.

"Our parish was blessed with some wonderful priests who inspired me," relates Father Venette. "Monsignor (Harold J.) Skelly was the first priest I got to know personally, since he was the one for whom I served at the altar. It always impressed me that when Monsignor came into the church before Mass, he would kneel and pray before the Blessed



Father Howard J. Venette poses with diocesan seminarians Tom Middleton and Aaron Akey. Father Venette runs one of several Fishers Clubs, organizations for men discerning vocations to the priesthood.

Sacrament before he came into the sacristy. His reverence, and his kindness to everyone, left their mark with me. He was truly a father to his parishioners. The Dominican Sisters who taught our religion classes were inspiring, too. Like Msgr. Skelly, they encouraged us to discover our vocations."

"Also, there were many parishioners who regularly offered me prayers and encouragement," he said. "Other pastors inspired and assisted me in my pursuit of the priesthood. Father (William G.) Muench took me for my first visit to Wadhams Hall and eventually wrote a recommendation and signed my application form. Father (Arthur J.) LaBaff was regularly fundraising on my behalf during seven of my seminary years. And Monsignor (Paul E.) Whitmore generously organized my Ordination and First Mass in my home parish of St. Patrick's in Chateaugay. I owe these brother priests great gratitude."

The long years of preparation, at Wadhams Hall and then at the North American College in Rome, passed quickly and surely. Then, during the extended retreat prior to diaconate

ordination, Father Venette remembers, "The notion that I shouldn't be ordained began to overwhelm me; it was completely out-of-the-blue, irrational. Fortunately, the retreat director helped me understand that the devil knows when to attack. Father Liddy asked me to consider St. Peter, who didn't want our Lord to wash his feet, but eventually gave in to God's will. Peace eventually returned, and I kept St. Peter in mind. Once back at the seminary, I found a gift from Father Doug Comstock: a bronze cross with the scene of St. Peter scratching his head while looking down at Jesus washing his feet! What a confirmation!"

Father Venette was ordained July 21, 1984. For two decades he had been, in differing measures, preparing to embrace the vocation which would connect his love for Christ with his "thirst to bring Jesus and his teachings to the world" (Father Brett Brannen). The sure knowledge of God's call has sustained him through nearly 36 years of varied parish assignments, changes and challenges.

"Knowing and loving

Christ is at the heart of priestly life," Father Venette said. "Family and faith formation helped me to know from an early age that God loves me. That love has grown through my prayer life. The 'interior life' isn't spoken of much these days, but that's where my priesthood finds its anchor."

"After Holy Mass itself," Father Venette continues, "my daily hour with the Blessed Sacrament sustains me. The Rosary has been special to me since the Dominican sisters taught us how to pray it. As a kid, I used to ride my bike to church to kneel before Our Lady's altar and pray it. From early on, I would pray the beads before going to sleep. No doubt the angels really did finish a lot of those rosaries for me! St. John Paul II's beautiful words struck a chord with me when he called the Rosary 'a compendium of the Gospel.' Another favorite prayer practice is Lectio Divina, which I usually employ with the Sunday Gospels as I prepare my homilies."

The fruits of this prayer are not for the priest alone, as Father Venette explains. "There is no greater joy for me than celebrating Mass and administering the sacraments. In all that I do, I attempt to bring the truth of who Jesus is, and of what the Church teaches. Many don't know they are thirsting for it, until they find out what it is! In my homilies, encounters with those I prepare for Baptism or Marriage, in working with the school children, in every meeting with parishioners, hopefully the truth is transported by the joy of my own witness as a priest."

That joy in his vocation

has inspired special concern for those discerning priesthood.

"Some years ago," recalls Father Venette, "when Father Bryan Stitt was diocesan Vocation Director, we frequently shared ideas about vocation promotion. From this came the idea of regional discernment groups, with the first inaugurated in Potsdam with 10 men in 2016. A call to the priesthood is unique, to say the least. One of the key accomplishments of the Fishers Club is that participants meet others with this same call. That takes the edge off, and a brotherhood forms. The group format is simple: prayer, a meal, and guided discussion using Father Brett Brannen's book, *To Save A Thousand Souls*. Eight of our current seminarians participated with the Fishers groups."

This zeal for vocations extends to international candidates for our diocesan priesthood, some of whom Father Venette met when he was pastor in Old Forge. "Some of the men were discerning diocesan priesthood and visited me for a chat about it. I simply connected them with our vocation personnel. It became a further blessing for me to have John Ojuok and Deacon Severinus Torwoe assigned with me for some pastoral experience. This is completely a gift of Providence!"

This same Providence moves Father Venette to encourage those considering priesthood.

"Since the priesthood is being challenged within and without the Church, I want to say something like, 'Filter the hype. Follow the HOPE.' And certainly, the wisdom of St. John Paul II encourages us all: 'Do not be afraid.'"

RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL

Linda Bouissey: Loving, serving, single

By Suzanne Pietropaoli
Staff Writer

MALONE—Like most single people, Linda Bouissey did not set out in search of this path. Yet from the beginning, she has lived out this calling with exceptional generosity.

Now a retired nurse, Bouissey's instinct to help others in need began very early.

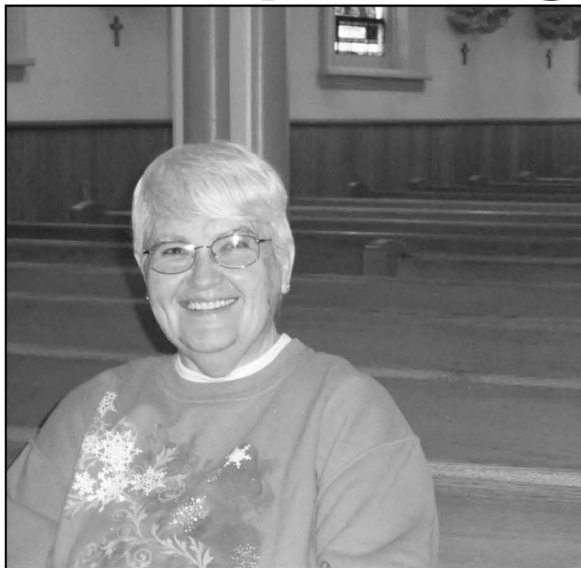
"My mother told me that from age three, I was always wanting to take care of people — offering comfort, putting on bandages," she said. "As the oldest of five, I had lots of opportunity to help care for others!"

This came into play later as Bouissey considered career choices.

After graduating from St. Joseph's Academy in 1965, Bouissey went on to earn her R.N. degree at Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in Watertown.

"That experience confirmed my decision," she says. "I did very well and knew that I had found my niche in life. I worked in Watertown for a year after graduation and planned to join the Navy. But a broken leg ended those plans, and I went home to Malone to recuperate."

There began Bouissey's 38-year career at Alice Hyde Hospital, which she describes as "varied, challenging, interesting, and rewarding." Her positions there included charge nurse, supervisor, and director of medical services.



SUZANNE PIETROPAOLI/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

"God doesn't require you to know everything about him," says Linda Bouissey, "only that you love him and stay in contact with him." The single woman and long-time nurse prepares to do just that in Notre Dame Church at St. André Bessette Parish in Malone.

In the latter post, Bouissey helped to build a computerized documentation system, and got the system up and running for the emergency and operating rooms. At retirement, she was working full-time in information/IT for the hospital.

But it was always the patients who mattered most, and whatever position she held, Bouissey was frequently called upon to lend a hand in their care.

"My nursing background made me comfortable with patients and families," she relates, "which made me good at explaining things and solving problems in patient care.

Probably the most dramatic instance of this was the time a young man died in the ER following a motorcycle accident. I was called in because his brother had arrived and was crazed with grief. He was punching walls and screaming that this could not be, that his brother had only gone to the store for a loaf of bread. The ER staff were ready to call the police, but one of them called me instead. The bereaved brother was terrified. I put my hand out, and said softly, 'Let's go see if it is your brother.' We were both crying. I put my arm around him and held him for a bit and he was fine. It is so important to look behind someone's actions, to see the person and his pain."

One of Bouissey's favorite patients was a seven-year-old girl with pernicious anemia who came regularly for blood transfusions.

"Her growth was stunted by the disease, and she was nearly blind," Bouissey explains, "but she had a beautiful spirit. She would endure these painful procedures, and still smile. We would hug and she would chatter. She gave me a picture she had drawn of me with a big smile on my face. What an amazing and loving little girl!"

The loving care which marked Bouissey's four decades as a nurse did not end with her retirement. Volunteering has provided varied ways for her to keep on giving: at the hospital two mornings a week; at WIC clinics; at St. André Bessette food pantry; and with Habitat for Humanity, where she has helped build houses and also served on the local board of directors for five years.

Retirement also brought other changes. Having cared for her grandparents and parents before they died, Bouissey now took on the care of an aunt who lived alone and was starting to show signs of dementia. This path led to utterly unexpected blessings.

"Besides Aunt Norma's health issues, I focused on getting her to Mass on Sundays because it was so important to her," recalls Bouissey, who had been away from the Church for many decades. "She needed to sit up front to hear, so I sat there with her. I was amazed that I still remembered the responses after all those years, and eventually I started listening to the sermons."

"One week it was Father Joe Giroux, explaining how the Good Shepherd left 99 sheep to search out the one who was lost. Then it was Father Scott

Belina using Finding Nemo to show how far a father will go to find a lost son or daughter. At that point," Bouissey relates, "I began to think that someone was trying to tell me something. So, I called Father Joe, explained how long I had been away from the Church and asked if that meant I was excommunicated. It turned out that all I had to do was make a good confession. What a welcome home that was!"

Her return to the Church was life-changing, says Bouissey.

"As I got older, I had gotten lonelier, and after my parents died, I really felt like an orphan," she said. "Now I have this enormous family that I belong to! Up to that point, I had always been looking for something. Now I don't have to look anymore, because I have found it. Where formerly I had a lot of acquaintances, now I have some very good friends. Now, there are so many God-moments, those points in everyday life where God just breaks through — not just in Church on Sunday, but anytime, anywhere. Now there is a happiness, a contentment, that I have never had before."

Today, Bouissey looks back on her life with renewed gratitude.

"I would have loved to have married and had a family of my own, though I have always appreciated the extended family I do have," she said. "I feel blessed that I have been able to help people. Looking back, I was doing God's work, even though I didn't know it. Loving God and loving others, we each have to find our own way. Thank God that He kept better track of me than I did of him!"

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Environmental Stewardship

The world is changing

All change is difficult; we like routine.

Routine is comfortable; we can go about our day without even thinking very much.

That is until the coronavirus hit. Life abruptly changed; we hardly realized what had happened... until it happened.

The scenes in the city hospitals are horrific; the lines of people waiting to be tested are disheartening; the numbers of dead have numbed us, fear has gripped us.

Watching the accounts of the virus can cause us to be discouraged; but wait, we have a Savior who is with us — Emmanuel, God with us.

We may be a Palm Sunday people... one minute calling Hosanna and yet living the material life... grab, hold, save for ourselves; the crowds calling crucify Him!

But we remember that we are an Easter people also, and we believe in the Resurrection and Life!

The time has arrived to understand what: "We are all connected really means."

Watch the world; we ARE all connected... in every sense of the word.

Perhaps this is a wake-up call.

Listen to the directives from our leaders and follow them. We are responsible for the wellbeing of each other.

We know from our life experience that God is with us in this pandemic. We must remain patient and reflective along with staying at home and away from each other.

We can bring our doubts and concerns to the Lord.

Sing, "Hosanna! Blessed be the Name of God!" Perhaps the change in our lives, appearing as a disaster, will bring forth new fruit, a new beginning.

May we become more sensitive, more aware, more conscious of each other... more God-centered.

This is our hope, for today and always.

"Blessed be God!" Alleluia!

Reflections submitted by:

Bernie Clarke, St. Agnes Church, Lake Placid and Faith and Ecology Member

Rest in Peace

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

April 15 — Msgr. Peter O. LaRose, 1918; Rev. Alfred J. Chevalier, 1996

April 16 — Deacon Vernon J. Chamberlain, 1993

April 17 — Rev. Peter J. Devlin, 1915; Rev. Vernon L. Doe, 1975; Rev. C. Albert Richardson, 1988; Msgr. Joseph G. Bailey, 2000

April 19 — Rev. William S. Kelly, 1908; Rev. Edward C. Laramée, 1932; Rev. William P. Fraser, 1961

April 20 — Rev. James Igo, 2007

April 21 — Msgr. Michael E. Fogarty, 1936

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terri-
anne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terri-
annyanulavich@yahoo.com
Phone: 518-651-2267 days; 518-569-0612 evenings; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; ccarrara@rcdony.org Phone: 315-393-2920 ext. 1340. If you have a complaint of suspected sexual abuse or related misconduct by the bishops, contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at 800-276-1562 or www.Report-BishopAbuse.org.

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration online is required. Participants may preregister at www.virtus.org.

Due to CoVid-19, there are no live trainings scheduled. If you need to complete VIRTUS training, contact Jean Grizzuto, jgrizzuto@rcdony.org or 315-393-2920 x 1413, who will coordinate assigning the training to be completed online.

Modeling good behavior

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

Our work together to protect children is ongoing and never ending. That is what Love is all about. It is the message of the Gospels and the clear and certain teaching of Jesus: "Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19: 14).

For adults, living out the message of Christianity is a way of life. It is not only words, but also actions. It permeates the presence of each person so that what remains after an encounter is reminiscent of the "odor of sanctity," said to have been emitted from the Saints who led lives of extraordinary holiness. For example, after an encounter with another person, our presence, good deeds and kindness leave a pleasant odor behind, and the people we speak to are left feeling good about themselves and their life. When we act in this way, we become "manna personalities" defined as "divinely supplied spiritual nourishment." We feed others through nourishing them with our good words, actions and deeds.

It is a good way to look at how we live—do you leave behind a good odor? Do we feed the people we

encounter? Even when we have a difficult duty or obligation to perform, there is always a kinder way to do so. With just a little reflection and thought, we can change the way we affect others. The old song from the 1960's comes to mind: "They'll Know We are Christians" by our Love (written by Fr. Peter Scholtes and inspired by John 13:35). Being a witness for our Faith in many ways makes us first responders to the situations we encounter along the way. Protecting children is one of those ways in which we all take part. While we may not always think of the ways in which this happens, the small things that we do make a big difference. Consider the following times you may be protecting children each and every day:

- Following rules, without trying to break them or go around them in places where children and minors gather. This sets a good example and goes a long way in offering kids safe spaces.

- Watching and being alert to the behaviors of other adults when there are gatherings of children, serves to protect youth.

- Listening to the children in your life, attending to the details, being interested in their stories—this form of paying attention gives them confidence in the way they communicate with you.

- Helping children who appear lost and getting them to a safe person in charge, and waiting with them until their parents come forward (lost children in stores, etc.).

- Having another adult present with you when you are in a position of trust with kids.

- Being the other safe adult for someone who is

ministering to children.

- Making sure you don't curse or act inappropriately in the presence of children and within their earshot.

- Supporting child protection efforts by participating and volunteering.

- Educating children, teaching them and being positive in the way you help them.

- Helping parents when they have their arms full of their children, baby carriages and other things.

- Smiling, nodding with understanding and a kind look when a parent is in a tough situation with their kids and trying to manage.

- Reporting any suspicions of inappropriate behaviors of people you know or don't know to the appropriate leadership, and even the authorities.

- Being present, not ignoring others in need.

- Coaching kid's sports.

- Praying for the safety of all children and vulnerable persons.

- Being involved in family activities where you can show your leadership.

- Acting on the adage, "if you see something, say something."

- Being trained in safe environment programs, first aid classes, emergency drill protocols, etc.

Proclaiming the Gospels isn't left only to those ordained to the priesthood and diaconate. Each person who hears God's word and takes it into their heart and acts on it, does this effectively and boldly no matter how small the gesture may seem. We contribute to the good of the world and the safety of those entrusted to us by being fully alive and present to God working within us. You don't have to be certified in anything to do this.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL

Bringing Christ to the sick and dying

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

WATERTOWN – Far from her family's home in India, Sister Maria Flavia D'Costa has been bringing the love of Christ to the sick in her role as a hospital chaplain.

Sister Flavia has been in Watertown with the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod for ten years. She's been with the community for 29 years.

"I grew up in a very strong, devout Catholic family," she said. "We have a joint family system in India. When I was growing up, my grandparents lived with us. I give a lot of credit to my grandmother on my mother's side. She was very, very holy and instilled the love of God in us."

Despite her grandmother's strong influence, it was a prayer her mother taught her that made Sister Flavia open to hearing God's call.

"Growing up, my mother taught me to pray, 'Lord Jesus, teach me or show me how you want me to serve you in my life,'" Sister Flavia said. "I would say that prayer my mom taught me when the priest holds up the Eucharist during Consecration. One day, I was in eighth or ninth grade, I said that prayer during Consecration, and I felt Jesus' words in my heart – 'Come follow me.'"

Sister Flavia said she spoke to her parish priest and told him she felt she was called to religious life.

"He thought I was too young," she said. "He told me to keep praying."

A couple years later, she witnessed a group of religious sisters distributing food and clothing to children in need.



Sister Maria Flavia D'Costa

"As I was watching, I noticed that as soon as the kids got something, they had nice smiles on their faces," she said. "I thought, 'when I grow up, that's what I want to become. I want to be someone who puts a smile on someone's face.'"

Sister Flavia said she was confident she was called to religious life by the time she was in tenth grade. Her parents wanted her to finish eleventh and twelfth grade.

"As soon as I finished 12th grade, I told my mom there was no more waiting," she said.

She then joined the Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod. In India, she served with the community as a nurse.

"Ten years ago, my provincial – the superior of the convent – called me," she said. "I was told that a convent was opening in the United States, and my provincial was thinking of sending me there. I did not

say 'yes' right away. I needed to pray about it. When I prayed about it, I felt at peace. I told God I'd serve Him. I didn't say I'd only serve Him in India."

While she initially planned to pursue her nursing licensure in New York, as she was studying for the credentialing exams, a hospital chaplain position became open.

"Father LaBaff, our dean, asked me to take that position," Sister Flavia said. "At first, I hesitated. I'm a person who likes doing. This is more about just being there for people. But now I feel like I do more for people as a chaplain than I would've done as a nurse. I get to stay with people. I enjoy the sacred moments I have with patients and their families."

Sister Flavia said it can be challenging dealing with patients who may be mad at God or don't want to accept Him.

"I don't have all the answers," she said. "Some-

times, I'm faced with questions and I don't know what to say. When people are asking 'why did God allow this or that to happen,' I don't always know what to say. It's a great challenge to bring to these people that God is a loving and forgiving God."

At the same time, this great challenge can also be a source of great joy.

"The greatest joy I experience is spreading God's love and joy through my ministry," Sister Flavia said. "It's not me doing this. God acts in me. My greatest joy is when I'm with people, especially when they're dealing with death, and I'm able to be the face of Christ to them. I sometimes get to accompany them as they find the real God."

Sister Flavia said serving as a chaplain during the coronavirus pandemic is challenging, but also a blessing.

"I'm still able to serve as a chaplain, but there are a lot of limitations," she said. "I feel a little helpless, not being able to minister to people the way I used to. I'm not able to visit anyone with the virus. I have to protect myself and protect the other patients."

Sister Flavia said she has, however, been able to visit other patients who are otherwise not allowed to have visitors.

"There was an incident two weeks ago," she said. "A patient was dying. He was not there due to the virus. I went into the man's room – I wore gloves and mask – and he was unconscious. I was praying with him. When people are unconscious, I try to say the prayers loud and clearly. I believe some words get through. I did not know the phone receiver in the

room was active. The patient's wife was on the phone. She heard this loud voice praying with him. She called the nursing station to ask who was praying with her husband. She wanted to talk to me. I got on the phone and introduced myself. She told me that since she could not go see him, it gave her great comfort to know I was there praying with him and for him."

Sister Flavia said she has "no regrets" about entering religious life at a young age.

"There have been ups and downs, but I'm very happy," she said. "I take great joy just in knowing I am called and loved by God despite my own failures. God called me to be his messenger. God doesn't call just the highly qualified. I'm an example of that. I'm shy and timid, and I never thought I'd drive. Now, I'm driving everywhere, I'm going out and meeting people. If you allow God the opportunity, He works wonders in your life. God takes the initiative, but He awaits our 'yes.'"

She advised anyone who is considering religious life to "pray, pray, pray."

"If you feel that nudge in your heart, and you feel God may be calling you, be open to it," she said. "I think a lot of the younger generation says, 'no, not me.' Pray, pray, pray. God will show you the way."



RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL

‘Pray together and pray for each other’

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

PLATTSBURGH— What started with an initial meeting at a popular local eatery turned into a marriage that has spanned 50 years.

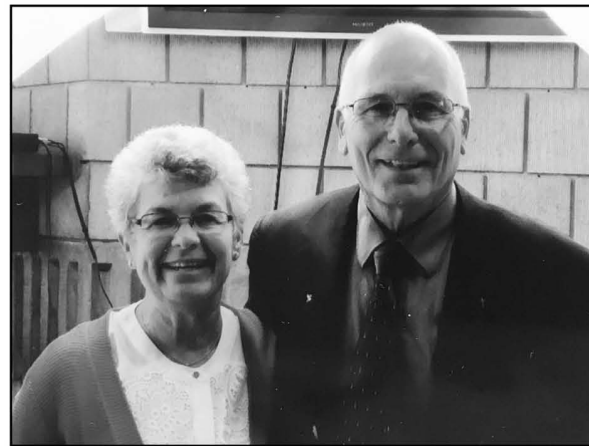
Ken and Kathy Racette, who typically attend St. John the Baptist Church in Plattsburgh, were first introduced to one another by Kathy's sister, who thought the two make a good match.

“The funny thing was that her sister, Barbara, got to know me because her husband was a student at Plattsburgh when I was going to school,” Ken said. “He invited me over to their house for dinner. I didn't want to go over empty handed, but I also didn't have any money, so I cut gladiolas from my sister's garden so I could bring them a bouquet. Barbara was so impressed. My sister was not as impressed.”

Kathy's sister facilitated an introduction in the parking lot of Gus' Red Hots.

“My reaction was, ‘wow! He's cute.’” Kathy said. “We went back to (Kathy's sister's) house and had dinner. It was history from there. We dated from a distance. I was living in Albany, and he was here. We'd travel back and forth on the weekends.”

When the couple was



Ken & Kathy Racette

married, seven priests concelebrated.

“I worked at my old high school in the Albany Diocese for a year before we married,” Kathy said. “All the priests teaching there were invited and wanted to concelebrate. God has surely blessed us over the years.”

While faith was always part of their lives as a couple, there was a period of time when Ken was in graduate school that they didn't attend Mass regularly.

“We were slackers,” Ken said. “We would go when we felt like it.”

Then, the Racettes moved to Vermont, where they found a community of faith.

“Our faith really grew in Vermont,” Kathy said. “We raised our children there. We were there for 30 years. Not long after we

got there, we met a wonderful young couple, Jim and Grace. They had nine children. He was a deacon. They did a lot for our faith. They introduced us to things like Cursillo, Marriage Encounter, Life in the Spirit, and we tried to form community. We'd get our families together once a week to pray together. God was so good to us. Our faith grew.”

During that time, Kathy said she felt called by God to home school the couple's children.

“In 1985, I started to homeschool them,” she said. “We were able to teach our children the faith and give them our values. There was no option for a Catholic school where we lived at that point, so we home-schooled five of our six children right through high school. Ken taught math and science, I did English, history and religion.”

“I think that's the reason none of our kids went into math and science fields,” Ken added, laughing. “But all of our kids are still practicing their faith, as far as we know.”

In fact, Kathy noted that

she and her daughters are currently doing a consecration to Mary together.

“It's a beautiful thing,” Kathy said. “Because we're doing it from different locations, we're all sharing our reflections. As I read what my daughters are sharing and see what they're getting from this consecration, it's just beautiful. They're really growing in their faith. We don't always get to see the fruits of that. It's really great to see what's in their hearts.”

The Racettes continue to work together to try to grow in faith and grow their relationships with the Lord.

“We pray the Liturgy of the Hours together almost every morning,” said Ken, who is in formation to become a deacon. “She supports me with the diaconate and comes with me to the meetings at Wadhams. We're both very involved in the church in different ways. Our faith is the center of our lives together, as well as our own personal lives.”

“If you can pray together, it's really important,” added Kathy. “It

doesn't matter how you do it. It could be the Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, going to Mass together. Pray together and pray for each other.”

The pair attributes their success in marriage to their faith.

“If it wasn't for our faith, we wouldn't still be married,” Ken said. “We've had disagreements and difficult times, but our faith kept us going. It still does.”


The Racettes noted that they hope our world reverses course and returns to seeing marriage as vital.

“I think it's sad that marriage is being attacked on every front possible,” Ken said. “Divorce is rampant. People don't see marriage as a lifelong commitment. They see it as a commitment of convenience, if they even see that. There are so many different weird options people are calling marriage. Our culture has moved away from God, and those things are considered mainstream. Our culture has changed so radically. We need to change back to God.”

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CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Catholic Charities 'on front lines' as hunger needs increase

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Feeding the hungry – one of the Works of Mercy described by Jesus in Matthew 25 – unfolds every day in the outreach of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington. But with the coronavirus outbreak and the resulting financial crisis impacting many individuals and families, the agency has seen a dramatic growth in the need for providing food to those in need in the nation's capital and in surrounding Maryland counties. "It's multiplied greatly," said Scott Lewis, the executive director of Catholic Charities' Enterprises, Education and Employment Department. As an example, he noted, "I was working three weeks ago at the Spanish Catholic Center's food pantry in Washington, D.C., and we saw 54 families. This was just before the stay-at-home order (for D.C. residents)." On April 8 at that food pantry, Lewis said they served 200 families and expected to distribute another 200 food packages the following day – which amounts to a nearly eight-fold increase in less than a month. As of April 9, 10% of the U.S. labor force was out of work because the pandemic has forced the closure in most states of all but the most essential businesses for weeks. As a result, food banks and pantries are seeing what some have described as a "tsunami" of people in need.

On Holy Thursday, pope thanks God for world's priests

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Unable to invite Rome's priests to mark Holy Thursday in St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis thanked all priests for their service and called those who died ministering to the sick and health care workers part of the community of "saints next door." More than 60 priests have died of COVID-19 in Italy after contracting the coronavirus while carrying out their ministry helping others, he said during the Mass of the Lord's Supper, broadcast on Vatican media April 9. For Holy Thursday, the usual morning chrisem Mass with Rome's priests was postponed to a later unspecified date; the optional foot-washing ritual was omitted; and the traditional procession with the Blessed Sacrament at the end of the Mass was also omitted, with the Eucharist placed directly in the tabernacle. In the past, Pope Francis celebrated the Holy Thursday Mass in detention facilities, rehabilitation centers and with refugees. This year, the pope presided over the Mass in a vast and empty basilica with a handful of assisting deacons and priests, a reduced choir and a small congregation of about a dozen people.

Priest volunteers to be incarcerated rather than leave inmates

TORONTO (CNS) – With the federal prison system shutting down all visits, a Catholic priest has volunteered to be incarcerated rather than leave inmates without spiritual care. "He offered to go there and live in the institution 24-7," said Bishop Gary Gordon of Victoria, British Columbia. "For a bishop to hear that from a priest, you say 'OK, this is what it's all about. This is the vocation – lay it on the line.' It's really beautiful." As COVID-19 infections begin to emerge in prisons, spiritual care for inmates has dwindled amid growing anxiety over the dangers faced by inmates and prison staff alike. Bishop Gordon, who is the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' representative for prison ministry, said the priest who volunteered to remain with inmates has a deep and long commitment to prison ministry. For privacy reasons he would not divulge the name or location of the priest. Bishop Gordon hopes to persuade officials not to completely cut off prisoners from their chaplains. "If someone is gravely ill, then the priest should be allowed to bring them the holy anointing of the sick and viaticum," he said.

COVID-19 worries loom on farms, in rural America

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Making a living as a farmer in the United States has never been easy. But the coronavirus pandemic has added new layers of complexity for farmers and the people living in the small towns that dot the rural landscape.

The issues have to do with planting, harvesting, production, health, prices and housing – all of which have to do with people.

"In Ohio, we were hearing from one of our chapter leaders who was concerned about farmers," said James Ennis, executive director of Catholic Rural Life. "Because they do a lot of work themselves, if they get sick, who's going to help them?"

In Catholic Rural Life's chapter in Owensboro, Kentucky, "they were concerned about the farmworkers. They weren't getting enough farmworkers. Usually they get a lot of migrant workers coming from Mexico. And that's not happening," Ennis said. "What's going to happen if those workers can't come into their particular area of Kentucky?"

That's a serious issue, "especially when consulates and embassies were starting to reduce services," said Mike Stranz, vice president for advocacy at the National Farmers Union. Farmers relying on immigrant labor to harvest crops are "in a tough spot," he agreed. "We've talked with the State Department. They have become more flexible about immigrant workers changing employers while they're here."

"We're definitely watching the issues of farmers, but now is the time that crops need to be planted

and crops need to be harvested," said Lorette Picciano, executive director of Rural Coalition, which focuses on immigrant farmworkers and minority farmers.

Social distancing is a dream to farmworkers. Picciano spoke of workers from Mexico who line up at a bridge at 1 a.m. each night to be scrutinized by U.S. immigration authorities in Texas in time to be packed into a van that leaves at 6 a.m. to drive them to farm fields. In some migrant communities in Florida, she added, 15 will sleep in a building that has just one or two bathrooms.

"All the relief that's in the stimulus package cannot go to someone who is not documented," Picciano told Catholic News Service, adding farmers are "not necessarily getting tested" and "not getting payments."

"I'm a Catholic, and how can we make sure our government does its duty to supply Americans with what they need during this emergency?" she asked. "It's devastating, and there's a lot of work to do."

The health of farmworkers is precarious. Picciano cited the case of a date-packing plant in California's Coachella Valley where "the COVID-19 was already found in one worker. They cleaned everything, then they found that eight more workers were infected," she said.

Ennis was told by a Catholic Rural Life chapter in Davenport, Iowa, that a Tyson pork processing plant in nearby Columbus Junction suspended operations after some workers there were found to have

the coronavirus. "That was really scary. It's a big deal when it's 1,400 jobs and they decide they're going to suspend operations," he said. "That was disconcerting and a big deal – a really big deal. That's impacted that community very significantly."

Dairy and livestock markets "have seen significant impacts already," Stranz said. "It's not a matter of supplies, it's a matter of shipping and demand. It's how people are eating. It would normally take decades (to alter consumer preferences), but it's happened in a matter of weeks."

He added, "Dairy is particularly hard hit by this. Other than getting rid of cows, you can't slow production. They need to be milked three times a day. ... The price of dairy futures went down 40% in two weeks, and those prices were low to begin with. We're seeing a lot of threats to dairy farmers and farmers who were already hurting."

One case in point: school lunches and breakfasts. "That demand has dried up, and there's been a glut of milk in that side of the market, where retail food and milk consumption is probably up," Stranz said. "It's tough to flip a switch and get milk flowing through a different channel. They can't all of a sudden go from getting lunch milk and it all going to supermarkets."

Nebraska was one of a dwindling number of states – there were just eight as of April 9 – that did not have a blanket stay-at-home order, according to Sandra Renner, farm and community director of the Center for Rural Affairs in Lyons.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

A fitting time for Divine Mercy

Alleluia! The Lord is Risen! Our joy is not just for a day... it's for a lifetime.

The Easter season has the most exciting Scripture readings of the year. They take us from the empty tomb all the way to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

On Easter Sunday, we left the Apostles huddled in fear in the empty room. They weren't so sure that the women's report was believable. They weren't singing for joy! Now, a whole week has gone by. They still felt "rocky" about their future.

In today's Gospel, Thomas wasn't the only

one who had doubts about Jesus. The Apostles were still huddled behind locked doors, pondering the shocking experience of a week before.

Jesus had broken through those doors to assure them that He was alive. And His message must have troubled them: "As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

Just when they were planning to go back to their former occupations, Jesus wants them to continue the message... to take up His Mission.

While on his earthy ministry, He had preached with mixed success. Would they have any bet-

April 19

Second Sunday of Easter
Divine Mercy Sunday

READINGS

Acts 2:42-47

1 Peter 1:3-9

John 20:19-31

ter results?

The Resurrection made all the difference, of course. Was it really true? When Jesus showed Thomas the wounds in his hands, his feet and his side, not only Thomas but the rest of the Apostles were strengthened in their faith and trust in the Lord. And the Gospel hints at many more miraculous events and appearances.

In today's first reading from Acts, we see what life was like in the early

Christian community. Their faith was firm, and they were unified in their faith. They catechized all who would listen. Their fears and doubts were replaced with joy.

The second reading describes for us an early sermon of Peter, written down a few years after he had already been martyred for his staunch faith. He is writing to a group of churches in Asia Minor to whom the Good News has already been preached.

His prayer speaks of the promise of Eternal Life and salvation at the end of time. He speaks of the suffering they will have to endure, and also of the reward of praise, glory and honor that awaits them.

Today is also Divine

Mercy Sunday. It is quite appropriate that today we celebrate the canonization of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II, who established this Feast based on the appearances of the Lord to a Polish nun, Blessed Faustina Kowalska.

Christ's message to her was (and is for us today) that, if we trust in His Divine Mercy, He will transform us sinners through His merciful love.

As Pope Francis directs us, we must courageously continue to beg God in His divine mercy to free us from the scourge of the coronavirus pandemic. Compassion towards those who are suffering so much and sacrificing for them as much as we are able.



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

CALLED TO SERVE

Deacons find ways to serve in trying times

Have you been safe in your home or imprisoned during the coronavirus pandemic? I would like to think the former, but let's not be naïve. There are some who feel locked-in, unable, perhaps unwilling to spend time all day, every day alone or with their spouse, children, cats and/or dogs, fish and four walls.

We can only pray the

virus will run its course, and we can return to normal lives.

Deacons have been doing their share of extraordinary things during the quarantine. Many have assisted their pastors at the weekend private Masses, particularly when the service is live streamed. Some of us have been asked to preach.

Deacon Jim and Chris Chaufy visited parishioners in their Lyons Fall - Port Leyden area to deliver stations of the cross text for at-home meditation.

Deacon Bill O'Brien at St. Mary's in Ogdensburg told us the bible study group he is part of, now meets electronically.

Deacon Brian Dwyer in the Chateaugay area has become an expert, as so many of our priests and deacons have, in streaming audio and video from private Masses.

Deacon Joe and Beryl Szwed have been delivering Meals on Wheels in the Saranac Lake area.

Deacon Neil Fuller runs the Elderly Nutrition Program for Jefferson County from the Clayton senior citizens center. The drivers deliver upwards of 5,000 meals a week.



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

These only scratch the surface of the contributions to parish life deacons are making in our Diocese during these trying and difficult times. Our parishes are blessed too, with many lay people offering and helping clergy meet the needs of parishioners.

Priests and deacons are called to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. We are looking for creative, and occasionally extraor-

dinary ways to bring the love of Christ to the people we serve. It is painful to not be able to distribute Jesus in the Eucharist to those who seek Him. But that is the reality of the day. We should face each day with optimism. Lee Iaccoca, the late 20th century business icon, once said, "In times of great stress or adversity, it's always best to keep busy, to plow your anger and your energy into something positive." If you feel imprisoned, find a release. It is good for you, body and soul.

Deacon Kevin Mastellon ministers in Watertown. He is the Director of Permanent Deacons for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.



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Vocations in the Mission lands

The Society of St. Peter the Apostle was founded in Cain, France in 1889 by two laywomen, Jeanne Bigard and her mother, Stephanie. These women overcame personal tragedies in their lives and dedicated themselves to working for the missions. In 1888 the Bigards were approached by a French missionary working in Kyoto, Japan, who asked for their assistance to build a church. They sold some of their possessions and raised enough funds to complete the building of the church. A year later, the Bishop of Nagasaki turned to them for assistance and support of his seminarians. The St. Peter the Apostle Society— a society that supported and promoted the formation of local clergy in the Missions — was born.

The Bigards travelled throughout France promoting the work of the society. In 1922, Pope Pius XI placed it under papal patronage and gave it the task of supporting seminarians in mission dioceses — the young churches.

These missionaries helped to support the call to a vocation over 130 years ago. It is hard to imagine if these devoted individuals had not answered these prayers and went to work supporting the work to form local clergy in the mission lands.

The Society of St. Peter the Apostle promotes awareness in the Christian communities regarding the need to develop the local clergy and consecrated life in the recently founded missionary churches. It animates and coordinates missionary collaboration in all the local churches through the offering of prayers, sacrifices and money to support the formation of the future priests and the men and women religious of the young churches, and the necessary preparation of their formators.

It collects and distributes financial aid to support the seminaries and formation houses of the young men and women religious in collaboration with the local Christian communities and under the guidance of their pastors.

The Society of St. Peter the Apostle's economic collaboration is carried out through the Ordinary Subsidies for the support of the seminarians and the men and women novices; the Extraordinary Subsidies for building new seminaries and for the self-financing projects of the already existing ones; Scholarships and "Holy Mass Intentions" to support the formators and their programs of study.

Please pray for an increase in calls to vocations. Please pray for the St. Peter Apostle program set to roll out its appeal in late June. Thank you and God Bless.

OBITUARIES

Au Sable Forks — Thomas Michael Nugent, 74; Funeral Services to be held at a later date.

Canton — Susan Buhay Briggs, 98; Funeral Services to be held at a later date.

Churubusco — Diane Katerine (Ryan) Lagree, 77; Memorial Services to be held at a later date.

Fort Covington — Raymond D. Cartier, 83; Private Mass of Christian Burial April 4, 2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Hammond — Mary Aline Constance (Amyot) Decker, 99; Private Mass of Christian Burial to be held at St. Peter's Church; burial in Fineview Cemetery.

Henderson — Mark T. Boyle, 78; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date.

Massena — Jean V. (Dillabough) Arquette, 82; Funeral Services to be held at a later date.

Massena — Mary (Smutz) Besio, 99; Memorial Services to be held at a later date.

Morrisonville — Marion E. (DeCarlo) Carron, 83; Memorial Mass to be held at a later date at St. Alexander's Church.

Morrisonville — Wayne H. LaDuke, 79; Memorial Mass to be held at a later date at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Plattsburgh — Lucille Collins, 83; Memorial Services to be held at a later date at St. Peter's Church.

Plattsburgh — Marie A. (Mousseau) Dumas, 95; Memorial Mass to be held at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's

Cemetery.

South Colton — Michael Edward Long, 50; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Paul's Church.

Watertown — Donald W. Curtis, 84; Funeral Services to be held at a later date.

Watertown — Donald L. Powell, 82; Memorial Services to be held at a later date.

West Chazy — Shirley P. (Bordeau) Mattott, 86; Memorial Mass to be held at a later date.

West Chazy — Anne Maria (Tebo) Morgan, 88; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Joseph's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery, Norwood.

Papal preacher: Pandemic awakens humanity

VATICAN CITY (CNS)— The coronavirus is not some form of divine punishment but a tragic event that, like all suffering in one's life, is used by God to awaken humanity, said the preacher of the papal household.

"The coronavirus pandemic has abruptly roused us from the greatest danger individuals and humanity have always been susceptible to: the delusion of omnipotence," Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa said during an April 10 service commemorating Christ's death on the cross.

"It took merely the smallest and most formless element of nature, a virus, to remind us that we are mortal, that military power and technology are not sufficient to save us," he said.

Pope Francis presided over the Good Friday Liturgy of the Lord's Passion at the Altar of the

Chair in St. Peter's Basilica, which was nearly empty and completely silent.

After processing into the sacred edifice in silence, the 83-year-old pope, aided by two assistants, got down onto his knees and lay prostrate on the floor before the altar in a sign of adoration and penance.

During the liturgy, the pope and a small congregation of nearly a dozen people stood as three deacons read the account of the Passion from the Gospel of St. John. As is customary, the papal household's preacher gave the homily.

Taking preventative measures into account, the pope was the only one who took part in venerating the cross. After reverently kissing the cross, he stood behind it while those participating knelt in adoration.

Father Cantalamessa said the Gospel reading of

Christ's death "is the account of the objectively greatest evil committed on earth." While Jesus' Passion can be looked at from various perspectives, "the cross is better understood by its effects than by its causes."

Christ's cross, he said, changed the meaning of pain and human suffering, in that both are no longer viewed as divine punishment or a curse. Instead, suffering "was redeemed at its root when the Son of God took it upon himself."

"What is the surest proof that the drink someone offers you is not poisoned?" Father Cantalamessa asked. "It is if that person drinks from the same cup before you do. This is what God has done: On the cross he drank, in front of the whole world, the cup of pain down to its dregs. This is how he showed us it is not poisoned, but that there is a pearl at the bottom of it."

'It is my reason for being, for living'

By Suzanne Pietropaoli
Staff Writer

MALONE – St. Thomas Aquinas and Hollywood appear to have something in common: Jimi Kohler.

For 30 years, Kohler worked 12-hour days, six days a week, as a chief lighting technician in the movie industry. These days, though, his focus is very different. Echoing Aquinas, he explains: "I have, we all have, 'an invitation to the ineffable banquet.' That's what draws me here."

"Here" is St. André Besette Parish. Each day Kohler quietly and faithfully spends several hours performing the duties of sacristan: setting up for Mass, clearing the altar after Mass, keeping the sacred vessels clean and polished.

Kohler is also privileged to care for the monstrance, and for the altar before and after daily Adoration.

"This is an overwhelming blessing for me to be so close to the Tabernacle," he explains. "And of course, spending this time in Church also gives me plenty of time for prayer. I'm in love with God, with the Church, with all of it. That's why I do what I do."

Kohler is quick to point out that his life did not always look like this, though his faith story did have a promising beginning. Born in Hollywood, California, and raised in that area, Kohler credits his "devout Catholic parents" with having sent him and his siblings to Catholic grade school and later to Sunday school.

"This was an important formative time for me," he recalls. "With 35 nuns and seven priests on campus, the faith surrounded us constantly. Mass and Benediction were a regular part of school life, along with



Jimi Kohler

Sunday Mass with our parents. This really taught me my faith. I thank God and my parents that they made me a Catholic."

After two years of college, Kohler went to work in Hollywood.

"I had grown up working with my dad, who owned an electrical contracting business," he relates, "so I had plenty of experience with lighting and electrical codes. And there was plenty of work: movies, TV, videos, commercials, we did them all. I was a gaffer, a lighting director. I even had a chair with my name on it."

The demanding work and the glamorous socializing that went with the job exacted a high price.

"I was a self-described 'bad boy' for a long time," Kohler said. "And I put my faith on the back burner while life was so busy."

Then everything changed in an instant. After three decades in Hollywood, Kohler had a terrible accident on the job. Devastating injuries left him with multiple health issues, unable to work again. Then, having lost so much, he began at last to recover his faith.

"My parents' funerals really brought me back," recalls Kohler, "especially my mom's. At her funeral, I asked the priest if I could receive Communion. He reminded me that I would need to go to confession first, which really started me thinking."

The homecoming process continued when Kohler moved to Malone in 2002 to be near his brother and family.

"I started coming Sundays to Mass, and soon it was all days of the week," he said. "Faith was a gift my parents had shared with me, and I wasn't going to let them down. Above all, I did not want to let God down. I wanted to make up for lost time. And I rediscovered the truths of our faith, learning again that the Eucharist is the Food of life, given for us by Jesus. I found the joy of those 15 minutes after Communion, when God's presence is strongest in your heart. What a gift!"

In addition to the Eucharist, Kohler treasures his daily prayer, especially the Rosary, and reading the saints.

"Thomas Aquinas has always been special to me,



since he was the patron of our parish and school when I was growing up," he said. "But once I began reading about him, and using his book of prayers, my appreciation really deepened. He has prayers for everything, but my favorites are those for Adoration and Communion."

Another favorite, St. Therese of Lisieux, inspired Kohler toward evangelizing.

"I prayed to her very day for an opportunity," he relates, "and even brought it up in confession. Two weeks later, it happened. One morning after Mass, on my daily trip to the drugstore, the young cashier whom I saw every day, asked me why I was always smiling. I was awed! I explained that I had just come from Mass, from receiving Jesus. Chelsie wanted to know what it took to be a Catholic, so I invited her to Mass. She came and has never stopped coming. She knew Jesus was present and yearned to receive him. After going through RCIA, Chelsie was baptized, confirmed and received the Eucharist at the Easter Vigil in 2019. What joy! I am still in touch with her, and of course I still pray for her."

Kohler's zeal to share the faith continues. "Recently Andre's Brothers (parish men's group) prayed a 54-day Rosary novena for the return of Catholics to the faith. I was glad to join this, because I pray non-stop for this intention. I pray constantly for those in need. Sometimes people will ask me about the medals I wear. I don't push but am more than happy to answer questions and encourage people to come to Church. And God is good to allow me to help the person in front of me any way that I can."

"My faith means more to me than anything, and it only gets stronger," Kohler concludes. "It is my reason for being, for living." If he could tell others how to find what he has found? "Believe! Truly believe. Be in Church as often as you can because God waits for you there. He loves you! There is no finer thing than to be in relationship with God – Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Remember that God can do all things, and that he always hears our prayers. And look to Mary, the human being utterly transformed by God. Her faith and love gave Jesus to the world, and she still gives him to us."