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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 75, Number 8

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

JUNE 3, 2020

## Pope: Church united by Spirit

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Just as the apostles were united once they received the Holy Spirit, the church is united by that same spirit and not by keeping company just with those who agree on a certain interpretation of Christian teaching, Pope Francis said on Pentecost.

Celebrating Mass May 31 in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope said that those who give in to the temptation to fiercely "defend our ideas, believing them to be good for everybody and agreeing only with those who think as we do," adhere to a faith created in their own image and "not what the Spirit wants."

"We might think that what unite us are our beliefs and our morality. But there is much more: Our principle of unity is the Holy Spirit. He reminds us that, first of all, we are God's beloved children. The Spirit comes to us, in our differences and difficulties, to tell us that we have one Lord – Jesus – and one Father, and that for this reason we are brothers and sisters," he said.

Reflecting on the feast of Pentecost, the pope said the coming of the Holy Spirit turned the lives of the apostles "upside down" and made them "courageous witnesses" to Christ's death and resurrection.

## DRIVE-THRU GREETINGS



Parishioners of St. Peter's Church, St. John the Baptist Church and Our Lady of Victory Church in Plattsburgh recently held a car parade in the parking lot at St. Peter's Church, greeting the priests and seminarians currently serving in the community. The parish was aided with traffic control by local Knights of Columbus and Boy Scouts.

## Follow me: The gift of Jesus' Spirit

On this Feast of Pentecost, we celebrate that remarkable event when the Risen Christ appears to His closest disciples and breathes on them, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Every Christian is home to God's Spirit. We've heard it so often before but, yes, every believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit. But does the presence of God's very Spirit within me make any real difference in the way I live?

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

## SHARING OUR STORIES



Several experiences of God's love led Massena resident Sylvie Marion on a path from being an uninvolved, unengaged Catholic to working for a parish and relying on God to direct her life.

FULL STORY, PAGE 5

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

## Finding ways to connect

Under the afternoon sun on a hot recent day, a small group of women gathered at a spot along the St. Lawrence River. Each brought their own snacks, beverages and chair, and each chair was set up more than six feet apart.

It was a "socially distant" gathering, but it was a gathering. After weeks and weeks of isolation, it was glorious. The setting was beautiful, the day was beautiful, and the gathering was beautiful.

Leaving that river-side so-

cial hour, I was hit with a wave of emotions. I was sad that I couldn't hug my friends (we're all trying to

**Darcy L.  
Fargo**

respecting the social distancing requirements). I was thrilled to have even the slightest semblance of normalcy returning. But beyond that, I felt connected again, both to these awesome women and to my faith.

While I see countless social media posts from people who say they've been able to find more time to read, pray and connect with their faith

in this period of isolation, that hasn't been my experience.

Losing my routine and losing my ability to connect with my friends of faith and my parish community left me feeling completely disconnected. I haven't found the discipline to establish a routine of prayer and spiritual reading, activities I've typically relied on to nurture my relationship with the Lord.

Enter the group of women. Some stated they were experiencing the same challenges. It was nice to know I wasn't alone in my struggles. And it was nice to talk

to people about faith and our relationships with the Lord.

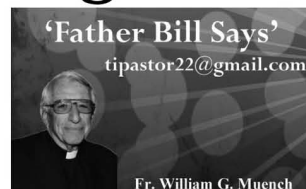
It reminded me that we are truly parts of the Body of Christ. Like a body, we need each part to be whole. We need each other to be whole. Connecting with each other helps us connect to the Lord.

As the world starts to reopen and we begin to return to our workplaces, our routines and worship, I hope and pray I can continue appreciating every opportunity to gather with others as much as I appreciated that socially distant water-front gathering.

## Honoring the Most Holy Trinity

Each time we, Catholics, begin to pray, we begin with the Sign of the Cross – "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Jesus taught his apostles to baptize those who find faith, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Each time as I close the celebration of Mass with a blessing, I am instructed to say in blessing, "May Almighty God, bless you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." We are a Trinitarian Church.

Our Church liturgical year closes the Easter Season with the Feast of the Holy Trinity. We believe that Jesus returned to the Father in the Ascension in order to send down on the Apostles and on us the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit prepared the apostles to take the message of Jesus to the world – a message of wisdom and power, a message of God's love for all people, a message of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit loving all people of all time. We are prepared

**Fr. William G. Muench**

through our baptisms to live a good life that leads others closer to God's love and peace in the power and peace and love of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The Feast of the Most Holy Trinity is our Feast Day of God. I agree that every Sunday, indeed every day, is a feast in honor of God. However, Our Church designates a special feast day in honor of God, in honor of the Most Holy Trinity, so that we remember in a special way to celebrate and remember our belief that our God is Trinity – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Why do we believe in Trinity? Because this is what Jesus has taught us.

So, I would like to go back with you to the Second Vatican Council to the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. This important Constitution

and teaching begins with a chapter on our belief in the Most Holy Trinity, our belief in God, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The eternal Father, "in accordance with the gratuitous and mysterious design of his wisdom and goodness, created the whole universe, and chose to raise up to share in his own life." Pope Francis realized our faith in God the Father, our dedication, our readiness to do all we can to love creation in his encyclical, "Laudato Si."

The Son – sent by the Father – who, before the foundation of the world, chose us and predestined us for adoptive sonship. For it is in him that it pleased the Father to restore all things. By his obedience he brought about our redemption.

As for the Holy Spirit, "when the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent in order that he might continually sanctify the Church, and that consequently those

who believe might have through Christ in one Spirit to the Father. He is the Spirit of life."

We are called by Jesus to be united in love and peace as one people, working together to make our world a better place, united with the same unity as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We are united in love as the love that unites the Holy Trinity. We close today with a prayer from Jessica Powers: "God of Abraham and Sarah, God of Mary and Joseph, open our ears to the sound of your voice, our eyes to the splendor of your plan. You call us to lives of holiness and service. Grant us your Spirit of charity and generosity, that we may further your kingdom by doing your will. Heal our deafness and cowardice. Form us into the image of Jesus, you Son and our Lord. Amen."

As the People of God, we close our prayer with the blessing of the Holy Trinity: In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## FOLLOW ME

# The gift of Jesus' Spirit

*Editor's note: The following is Bishop Terry R. LaValley's homily for Pentecost.*

On this Feast of Pentecost, we celebrate that remarkable event when the Risen Christ appears to His closest disciples and breathes on them, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Every Christian is home to God's Spirit. We've heard it so often before but, yes, every believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit. But does the presence of God's very Spirit within me make any real difference in the way I live?

*Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work in vain. But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.* These lines from the familiar spiritual, "There is a Balm in Gilead," speaks to the condition of us all, especially these anxious days. My sisters and brothers these are days in which we need to be revived, renewed, recreated, if you will. "OK," you say. "Just who is the Holy Spirit? How do I receive Him? Is it really possible that my soul can be revived and renewed and even recreated?"

Jesus received the gift of the Holy Spirit at His baptism in the Jordan. As far as the disciples were concerned, they didn't receive the gift of the Holy Spirit until after the resurrection of Jesus. This was in keeping with Jesus' promise on the last night of His life that through Him, the Father would send the gift of the Holy Spirit – a Comforter, an Advocate, a Counselor, a Paraclete. The disciples would receive a power from the Holy Spirit that would comfort, revive, restore, and renew.

You've probably heard of this scene before. Once upon an eternity, St. Peter greeted three new arrivals at the Pearly Gates. He began their heavenly orientation with the question, "What would you like most to hear your family and friends say about you at your wake?" The first replied, "I would like to hear them say, 'He lived a very useful life as a physician and a family man.' The second replied, "I would like to hear them say at my wake, 'She was able to inspire students as their teacher and she was a wonderful wife and mother.'" The third person responded to St. Peter's question, "I would like to hear them say at my wake, 'Look, he's moving!'"

Not at wakes, but here and now, at this Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral, what we should like to hear Jesus say is, "Look, all those folks participating through this livestreaming Mass, look at those very few in our pews, they're, they're moving!" Look, they're following my directions. Look they're engaging in the ministry of loving service to which I have commissioned them – As the Father has sent me, so I send you." "What does it profit a person," Jesus asks, "if he gains the whole world but loses his soul in the process?" It follows then that if we are not moving in the direction of ever closer union with the very Source of our lives, we have nothing. Jesus clearly stated that His call to follow Him and His appeal to us to transform

our lives are inseparable.

To follow Jesus Christ is to change our lives, necessarily, from who I am to who I am meant to be – from what I am doing, to what I ought to be doing. Jesus' faithful followers cannot be content with the status quo. Never. "Therefore, reform...repent...change," says the Lord. It is not merely a once-in-a-lifetime transformation Jesus is calling for. It's not

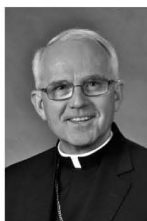
just – "I was saved on March 2, 1999 at three in the afternoon" and that's the end of the story or "I was confirmed when I was in 10th grade and now I can leave all that Church stuff behind." No, it's an ongoing, continuing change; a process of growth and development; a constant movement that stretches out over our entire lives where we are never content with where we are in our relationship with Christ. The call to holiness, to sainthood, doesn't end. And in the conversion process, through God's Spirit, God keeps guiding, protecting and loving us. Such a process impacts powerfully all those with whom we live and work.

The gift of Jesus' Spirit is so good for us, so life-enhancing, that we must put every part of our being, our whole self, into our response because it is truly an all-encompassing life-long project. I must allow the Holy Spirit of God to baptize my time, my talents, my feelings, my mind, my body, as I offer them to God in service to others. Our anointing with God's Spirit

enables you and me to make a difference.

My sisters and brothers, our world, our communities, our Church beg for you and me to make a difference. When we do, we will truly experience the peace Jesus came to give all the while knowing the

joy of the Gospel. In the process, we are sure to hear Jesus say, "Look! They're moving!" That's the Spirit at work and come Judgement Day, we'll be moving in the right direction. May God be praised...forever may God be praised!



Bishop  
Terry R.  
LaValley

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## Parishes begin getting approval to reopen

Parishes across the Diocese of Ogdensburg are continuing their efforts to prepare to resume public worship.

To reopen, each parish must have an approved plan for public worship. As of May 28, 25 pastors had received permission to reopen churches for public worship.

While worship is currently limited to 10 or fewer participants by state mandate, Bishop Terry R. LaValley and bishops from around New York are in dialogue with the governor's office to try to get the number who can attend Mass increased based on the size of each church and the number that can be accommodated while respecting social distancing protocols.

As a reminder, when public worship resumes, there will be a number of changes intended to reduce the potential for spreading the virus, including:

- Initially, only a certain number of people will be able to physically go to Mass. This is largely determined by the size of the church and the requirements of social distancing.

- All parishioners ages 2 and over will wear face coverings while in church to protect themselves and others.

- There will be no holy water in fonts.
- No passing of the collection basket. The basket will be placed in a fixed location and parishioners will be asked to drop their contributions into the basket as they enter or leave the church.

- The distribution of Communion will be different.
- No worship aids will be available for use, such as missalettes and hymns.

- There will be no choirs in the early phases of our return to public worship.

- There will be no congregating in the church, on the steps or at the doors of the church.

Bishop LaValley has extended the dispensation of the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until further notice. Online and televised Masses will continue to be available. For a complete listing of available television/web-based Masses, or to see the diocesan guidelines for returning to worship, visit [www.rcdony.org/covid-19](http://www.rcdony.org/covid-19).

## Pandemic teaches how to care for ill and aged

By **Kathleen M. Gallagher**  
Director of Pro-Life Activities  
New York State Catholic Conference

When you stop to think about it, everything we've been doing for the past two and a half months has been for the sole purpose of saving lives.

Every step we have taken – the quarantines, the masks, the distancing, the sanitizing – every bit of it is being done to protect human life, specifically the most vulnerable lives, those who are older and weaker with underlying health issues.

That's why I find it extremely ironic that as our state, our nation and other nations continue these unprecedented steps to protect the most at-risk citizens from a deadly virus, efforts continue to promote and legalize physician-assisted suicide as a solution to illness and suffering.

Even as society struggles to ensure that the elderly, disabled and ill have access to ventilators and quality medical care, even as researchers scramble to discover a treatment and develop a vaccine, states across this country are simultaneously taking steps to remove legal and moral restrictions on the intentional killing of patients.

Eight states and the District of Columbia now regard prescriptions for death-inducing drugs as a "medical treatment."

Make no mistake: Physician-assisted suicide is a policy of hopelessness and death, completely contrary to our current efforts to protect those most endangered.

Last year, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy signed a new law allowing terminally ill residents of the Garden State to access drugs to take their own lives.

A year later amid the coronavirus contagion, Governor Murphy says he is "fighting for every precious life," and calls the deaths at long term care facilities a "tragedy."

In Canada, just days before COVID-19 was declared a pandemic and all provinces were effectively put under a lockdown, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau put forward a proposal to allow non-terminally ill Canadians to access medically-assisted death. He wants to allow people with degenerative diseases like cerebral palsy and others who feel their disabilities are "intolerable" to choose to die via a lethal prescription.

Here in New York, there has been much debate

surrounding nursing home care and the coronavirus response. Governor Andrew Cuomo has said that "the cost of a human life is priceless," and that the most vulnerable population – our elderly – deserve the highest level of care.

Agreed. It is, and they do.

But what value do we place on our elderly and ill citizens? Setting aside our efforts to defeat this deadly virus, how do we treat our elders? If they're no longer useful, if they're dying anyway, if they have cognitive difficulties, do our policies neglect them or protect them?

Pope Francis has repeatedly warned of a "throwaway culture" in which unwanted people become disposable, and are routinely discarded like trash. He has said the abandonment and mistreatment of the elderly is a "hidden euthanasia."

When viewed through this lens, it really shouldn't surprise anyone that physician-assisted suicide has taken a foothold in our society.

No human being – no matter how old, sickly, disabled or debilitated – should ever be made to feel like they are an inconvenience, a burden or an unwelcome expense.

I'm praying that our collective COVID-19 prevention efforts raise our consciousness to the inherent preciousness of human life, lead us to always honor and respect our elders, and shut the door completely to a New York State-sanctioned policy of doctor-assisted suicide.



**Kathleen Gallagher**

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# 'My faith is like the compass in my life'

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

**By Darcy Fargo**  
Editor

MASSENA – While she was raised in the faith, Massena resident Sylvie Marion said she was just “going through the motions” until a series of experiences in 2015 changed her relationship with the Lord and her faith – relationships that have changed her life.

“I’m a cradle Catholic,” Marion said. “I went to Catholic School through eighth grade at Sacred Heart. I received my sacraments. I did my duty going to Mass. But I was never engaged. I went because I had a sense of duty, and because it had become routine and habit.”

Then, in 2015, St. Mary’s Church in Massena offered an eight-week course, “Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible.”

“As a robotic churchgoer, I had never really listened to the stories from the readings and the Gospels,” Marion said. “I learned a lot about my faith. The Old Testament and the Jewish roots had never meant anything to me. I guess what struck me most was that how the Israelites were God’s chosen people, but a lot of what they did – let’s just say it wasn’t nice things. There was a lot of violence, cruelty, immoral acts. But God always forgave them. It was like a re-



**Sylvie Marion**

peating journey of straying and coming back, but they were forgiven every time. I thought, ‘If God can forgive them for all the atrocious things they’ve done, surely I can be forgiven, too.’”

Shortly after completing the series, Father Mark R. Reilly, pastor of St. Peter’s Parish, gave a Sunday homily encouraging the faithful to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation.

“I hadn’t been to confession in 28 years at that point,” Marion said. “When I went, it wasn’t like I remembered confession – just spewing off things that are meaningless. It was a good experience. I felt really forgiven.”

That experience led Marion to attend a weekend retreat with other women.

“On Sunday, as the retreat was closing, we were sitting in the living room area, and we were asked to sit in silence, close our eyes and ask the Lord to

come into our lives,” she said. “I remember thinking, ‘I don’t know if I can do this.’ But I did it. I closed my eyes and invited Jesus into my life. It was a cloudy day, and I remember that at that moment, the clouds broke, and the sun came out. I felt like the sun was shining just on me, and I felt this warmth I’ve never felt before. I felt Jesus coming into my life. I knew Jesus loved me, despite my brokenness. I knew that my life, from that moment on, would never be the same. Although I was scared, I knew things would change for me. And they have. Things have changed in wonderful ways.”

The first change: Marion became engaged in the Mass.

“Going to Mass had a different significance,” she said. “I started listening to the readings. I started to participate. I never used to sing, and I started



singing. I didn’t care that I’m tone deaf. I started noticing who was attending. I made friends. I started looking forward to going to Mass and to the experience of Mass. It wasn’t just routine or habit anymore. It was something I enjoyed and needed. I started volunteering for the parish. I became the Lighthouse Catholic Media kiosk coordinator for our two churches. It meant a lot to me, even though it was a minor job. That following spring, I went on a pilgrimage to Italy with Bishop LaValley and then Father Doug Lucia, now Bishop Lucia.”

That pilgrimage further changed Marion’s faith life.

“I had had that encounter a year before, but I was still hovering around where I fit in,” she said. “When I went on that 14-day pilgrimage to Italy, it was the first time in my life I went to daily Mass. It was the first time in my life I said a rosary. I didn’t even own a rosary. We’d get on the bus, say a

prayer and say the rosary on the way to the next destination. Both daily Mass and the rosary have become routine in my life. I say the rosary daily and, up until this pandemic, I attended daily Mass.”

The pilgrimage also helped Marion develop a community of faithful friends.

“I made lifelong friends on that trip,” she said. “A few of us were the ‘back of the bus people’ – the loud, raucous ones in the back. I met people from around the diocese and people from out of state.”

While the Lord had already changed her and her life in many ways, more changes were on the horizon.

“After I came back, I remember a couple people told me that I had changed,” she said. “I reflected on it and realized that as my faith became more important to me, I had changed – almost without my knowledge. At the time, I was property manager for the St. Lawrence Centre Mall. Circumstances evolved in my

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## Environmental Stewardship

## How near is the Spirit?

Recognizing the presence of the Holy Spirit in our daily spiritual lives may be a little more difficult to contemplate than the presence of Jesus, our friend and companion. Yet we know in faith that the Holy Spirit was Jesus' parting gift to us.

A symbol used in Scripture to recognize this presence of the Spirit is breath/wind. In Genesis 2:7 we read "The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being." The Jewish people believe that their breath was indeed the very breath of God. How intimately connected we are to our God! In Book of 1 Kings (19:12), Elijah meets God in a gentle breeze. In John's Gospel we read that when Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about the Spirit, He referred to the wind. (John 3:8) At the time of Pentecost "There came from the sky, as of a violent wind blowing and it filled whole house where they were sitting..." (Acts 2:1-2)

Two ways we might extend our celebration of this gift of Pentecost into our daily lives are:

(1) Notice the wind. On some days it comes in a gentle breeze and on others in the form of a violent thunderstorm. No matter how it comes it is an essential element necessary for life itself, and it is a continuous way of experiencing the presence of God in our lives. In imitation of St. Francis' "Canticle of the Sun," let us give praise to God for this marvelous gift.

(2) The coronavirus carried in the air reminds us that air knows no boundaries of nations or peoples. Whether it is a virus or toxic pollution, it affects the air we breathe and the quality of life for all. Choose one action you desire to include in creating "your new normal" that will protect the purity of air by limiting and ultimately removing toxins from your kitchen, household, outdoor spaces. Continuing to reduce travel will also have a serious impact on our air quality.

## 'The compass in my life'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

employment, and opportunities changed. I was offered a job as business manager at St. Peter's Parish, where I work now."

Working for a parish creates both additional challenges and additional blessings in her life, Marion said.

"It was a huge change in lifestyle financially," she

said. "I had to simplify the way that I live. Some of the things I had – the extravagance – had to be eliminated from my life. In simplifying my life, I've found joy where I know I wouldn't have found it before. And I can say that working for the parish has its ups and downs – there are moments when I feel I'm on a roller coaster. Some days, I can't imagine being in a better or more rewarding place in the whole world. But it's a consolation/desolation thing. Other days, the desolation is definitely there, and I think 'what have I done? Why am I here and what does it matter?' Typically, after prayer and reaching out to some close friends, I can come back to consolation. And it's been well worth the ride."

Marion also noted that working in the parish has helped her learn to surrender her will.

"I came from a very task-oriented professional life," she said. "I'd start every day making a list of tasks to check off as I completed

them. As I started with the parish, I noticed my lists were never completed. I'd often get distracted or delayed. I expressed frustration about it to Father Mark (Reilly). I thought I was failing because I was consistently only getting to one or two things on my list. Father Mark listed other things I had accomplished that particular day and asked, 'are those on your list?' They weren't. He said, 'it's apparent God has a different list than the one you wrote out.' That was quite a revelation. I still write out my lists, and I'm happy to check off a couple things, but I'm less harsh on myself if I don't finish it. I've had to re-evaluate the way I see things, present things and my expectations of the world."

While she recognizes that the last few years have been years of change and transition for her, Marion said it's her outlook that has changed the most.

"I think that the biggest change in my life through all this transition is that I found that every single person can make a difference; every single person matters," she said. "That perspective has made me see that our journeys are meant to be shared with other human beings. We're not here to simply do our own individual tasks and get to our next destination as a single entity. And the way I was living before, I never saw God's hand in anything. Every goal I achieved, I saw as some-

thing I did on my own. Now, I see nothing I do was on my own. Albert Einstein once said, 'There are two kinds of people – those who believe nothing is a miracle, and those who believe everything is a miracle.' That really defines where I was and where I am today."

Marion also said she has found joy in her life in the Lord.

"My faith is like the compass in my life that gives me a reason to get up in the morning," she said. "I look forward to what adventure will come or what will happen to me during the day. I used to get up and just go to work. I had mullered over the idea that there has to be more to life than this for years. I knew there had to be more to life than just going to work, coming home and checking things off that list I had created that morning. Now, I know there's more to it. I create my list, and I know God will add things that I didn't see coming, and they will be awesome things. That doesn't mean they'll always be things I enjoy or things I wanted on my list, but I'll know they were meant to be there. And maybe I'll look back on those additions to my list at some point and see some fruits from them. My faith gives me that joy, that eagerness to start the day. I know I have a way to go. I learn something every day about my faith, I learn something about myself every day, and I learn about others every day. Most of it is amazing to me. And I realize that I am here because God willed it. The people in my life are here because God willed it. It's not for me to question it. It's for me to embrace and love, serve and praise my God."

## Rest in Peace

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

**June 3** – Rev. Auriemma Veroneau, O.M.I., 1962; His Holiness, Blessed John XXIII, Pope, 1963; Rev. Franz P. Romuald Reiter, 1971; Rev. Bernard W. Desnoyers, 1987

**June 4** – V. Rev. Ferdinand Richard, O.M.I., 1971

**June 5** – Rev. Charles Donaher, O.S.A., 1984

**June 6** – Msgr. Euclid Elie, 1962; Rev. John E. Silver, 2014

**June 8** – Rev. Anthime Constantineau, 1942; Rev. James J. McGowan, 1961; Deacon Ronald Coryea, 1995

**June 9** – Rev. James Bolton, O.S.A., 1925; Rev. John W. Ryan, 1982

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# Joseph, Head of the Family: Father knows best

*Editor's note: In May, Bishop Terry R. LaValley consecrated the Diocese of Ogdensburg to St. Joseph. To celebrate that consecration, the NCC will be featuring occasional columns highlighting St. Joseph.*

By Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ



## St. Joseph's Corner

We will soon be approaching Father's Day celebrating those Dads who provide care and love for their families. There was never any question who was the head of our family! My father, in partnership with my mother, worked to provide and care for us as family.

As I reflected on both my father and mother, the

person of St. Joseph was front and center, even though his presence was a silent one. He has had a strong influence on our family. During the plague of the early 20th century, my father had two sisters named Mary and Elizabeth and a brother named Joseph that died. He never knew them, but their

memory lives on. My sister has the name Mary Elizabeth and my youngest brother's middle name is Joseph. In my father's discernment of vocation, he went to St. Joseph's Oratory, Montreal, to pray to St. Joseph to guide him in his life's journey. It was there that he met Brother André. He

brought back a bust of Brother André, now placed next to St. Joseph in my bedroom. He also brought back a crucifix with a plaque on the back that reads St. Joseph's Oratory. This crucifix hung in our dining room until he went to the nursing home, where the crucifix again was hung. It was on this trip that he learned of a job offer with a tobacco company. It was soon afterwards he met my mother, married and began a family. He said it was his prayer to St. Joseph that guided his decision. It was in our home that our faith grew. We went to Holy Family School and IHA/IHC and were taught by the Sisters of St. Joseph. After graduation from high school, I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph. The youngest child in my sister's family, who is now in heaven, had Joseph as his middle name. Both my mother and father died on Wednesdays, the day dedicated to St. Joseph.

compassion, courage and strength to care for Jesus and her. She knew that "Father Knows Best." Joseph was a gentle and loving father who protected them and kept them from danger.

It was in the home of Joseph that Jesus learned the trade of being a good carpenter like his father, thus, sanctifying the work of human hands. Jesus never tired hearing those who knew him refer to him as "the carpenter's Son." It was in the home of Joseph that Jesus learned to pray, especially the psalms. Joseph took the Child and Mary on pilgrimage to the Temple to celebrate the Jewish festival feasts. On one occasion, after a three-day search, Joseph and Mary found Jesus in the Temple talking to the priests. Jesus obediently went home with Joseph and Mary. Jesus learned that the "Father Knows Best," and He grew "in wisdom and age."

Maybe many of us remember the series, "Father Knows Best" with Robert Young and Jane Wyatt. Whatever we remember from the series, there was always the children who could turn to their father because "Father Knows Best." This is also true of the story of St. Joseph. The journey for Joseph was not an easy one - to Bethlehem, to Egypt, back to Nazareth. Joseph was strengthened by his faith amid the weariness and suffering he endured through these trials. Mary needed Joseph for wisdom, guidance,

During this Year of St. Joseph, why not place a picture of St. Joseph or a picture of the Holy Family in a prominent place in your home. Pray to St. Joseph to protect your family, strengthen it as family and to guide it on this journey of faith. Let us pray for all fathers who love, provide, care and protect their families that they may continue to create a nurturing environment in which their children may grow and thrive. The "Father Does Knows Best." Go to Joseph. Happy Father's Day to all fathers, especially to my own father.

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# Bishops say racism is a 'real and present danger'

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The U.S. Catholic bishops said May 29 they "are broken-hearted, sickened and outraged to watch another video of an African American man being killed before our very eyes."

"What's more astounding is that this is happening within mere weeks of several other such occurrences. This is the latest wake-up call that needs to be answered by each of us in a spirit of determined conversion," they said in a statement about the May 25 death of George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis.

In recent weeks, Ahmaud Arbery, an unarmed 25-year-old African American man in Georgia, was fatally shot, and three white men were arrested and are facing murder charges in his death. In March, Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old African American woman, died at the hands of white police officers when they entered her apartment in Louisville, Kentucky.

"Racism is not a thing of the past or simply a throwaway political issue to be bandied about when convenient," the bishops said. "It is a real and present danger that must be met head on."

"As members of the church, we must stand for the more difficult right and just actions instead of the easy wrongs of indifference," they said. "We cannot turn a blind eye to these atrocities and yet still try to profess to respect every human life. We serve a God of love, mercy and justice."

"Indifference is not an option," they emphasized and stated "unequivocally" that "racism is a life issue."

The statement was issued by the chairmen of seven committees of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops:

Bishop Shelton J. Fabre of Houma-Thibodaux, Louisiana, Ad Hoc Committee Against Racism; Archbishop Nelson J. Perez of Philadelphia, Committee on Cultural Diversity in the Church; Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City, Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development; Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas, Committee on Pro-Life Activities; Bishop Joseph C. Bambera of Scranton, Pennsylvania, Committee for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs; Auxiliary Bishop David G. O'Connell of Los Angeles, Subcommittee on the Catholic Campaign for Human Development; and Auxiliary Bishop Joseph N. Perry of Chicago, Subcommittee on African American Affairs.

Floyd, 46, was arrested by police on suspicion of forgery. Once he was handcuffed, a white officer pinned him down on the street, putting his knee on Floyd's neck for eight minutes. A now widely circulated video shows Floyd repeatedly saying, "I can't breathe." He appears to lose consciousness or die and was later declared dead at the hospital.

The next day, hundreds of people protested at the intersection where police officers subdued Floyd, demanding justice for him and the arrest of the four officers involved. The officers were fired May 26 and as of midday May 29, local prosecutors filed criminal

charges against at least one of the now former officers: The one seen putting his knee on Floyd's neck, identified as Derek Chauvin, was arrested and charged with third-degree murder and manslaughter.

The federal Justice Department promised a "robust" investigation into the circumstances surrounding Floyd's death.

Protests in Minneapolis have turned to violent demonstrations and lasted several days, prompting Gov. Tim Walz to bring in the National Guard May 29. The protests sparked similar rioting in at least a dozen U.S. cities, including Los Angeles, Phoenix, Denver, New York, Louisville, and Columbus, Ohio.

The bishops in their statement pointed to their "Open Wide Our Hearts" pastoral against racism approved by the body of bishops in 2018. In it, they said: "For people of color some interactions with police can be fraught with fear and even danger. People of good conscience must never turn a blind eye when citizens are being deprived of their human dignity and even their lives."

In their May 29 statement, the committee chairmen called for an end to the violence taking place in the wake of the tragedy in Minneapolis but also said they "stand in passionate support of communities that are understandably outraged."

They joined with Archbishop Bernard A. Hebda of St. Paul and Minneapolis in praying for the repose of the soul of Floyd "and all others who have lost their lives in a similar manner."

## CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

### Shelter in place is nothing new to Mercy sister's ministry

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (CNS) – The key to sheltering in place is having a place to go. That has been the driving force behind Mercy Sister Grace Miller's homeless ministry in Rochester, New York, long before the coronavirus pandemic. But these days, more people are knocking at her shelter's doors even though many of its outreach programs have been temporarily put on hold. The House of Mercy shelter she started in 1985 has always been open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, but now it is open only at night. Because of pandemic restrictions, it also had to discontinue its daytime soup kitchen, food pantry and drop-in program, volunteer groups and events, and the acceptance and distribution of donations. "We will, of course, stay open and continue to serve those in our community," an announcement on the shelter's website says. Or as Sister Grace, the shelter's 84-year-old director and fearless advocate for the city's homeless, put it: "When they come here, they know we will take care of them." Finding ways to provide shelter is nothing new to the Mercy sister described as both the city's Mother Teresa or Dorothy Day.

### Buffalo initiative will assess resources, 'bring about renewal'

BUFFALO, N.Y. (CNS) – Bishop Edward B. Scharfenberger, apostolic administrator of the Diocese of Buffalo, has launched a broad-based initiative focused on reenvisioning the mission of the Catholic Church of western New York "and bringing about diocesan-wide renewal," according to a May 22 diocesan news release. The initiative will be led by the diocese's new chief operating officer, Franciscan Sister Mary McCarrick, appointed to the post April 18; Msgr. David LiPuma, chair of the priests' council; and James J. Beardi, chair of the Diocesan Finance Council. They will work closely with pastors and parish leaders "to obtain a full picture of the challenges facing the diocese and define steps to ensure the long-term sustainability of Catholic ministries and institutions," including "the extensive ministries of Catholic Charities of Buffalo," the diocese said. "We have no more urgent priority than to reassert the vital relevance, role and tremendous impact of our Catholic faith in serving so many needs across Western New York," Bishop Scharfenberger said in a statement. "The very harsh realities that have caused so much hurt and disappointment and damaged credibility in recent years must in no way obscure the vitality of our parish communities."

### House bill condemns China's treatment of religious minorities

WASHINGTON (CNS) – In a late vote May 27, the U.S. House overwhelmingly passed a measure condemning the Chinese Communist Party for forcing Uighurs, ethnic Kazakhs and other Muslim minorities into indoctrination camps in the country's Xinjiang region. The Uighur Human Rights Policy Act, which passed 413-1, also recommends a tougher U.S. response to the human rights abuses suffered by these religious minorities. Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Kentucky, was the only opponent. "Communist Party General Secretary Xi Jinping's ongoing genocide against the approximately 10 million Uighurs living in Xinjiang in northwestern China demands action," Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, said in comments from the House floor before the vote. "Today, more than a million Uighurs are in concentration camps. Millions more are harassed, beaten, raped and tortured." Smith, a Catholic, is ranking member of the House Global Human Rights Subcommittee. The Senate approved its version of the bill May 14. With the House vote, it now goes to President Donald Trump for his signature.



# Congress urged to make vulnerable a priority

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Congress needs to remember the needs of "the poor, the vulnerable and people on the margins" when considering additional pandemic economic relief packages, said the chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

"The focus should be on those most in need" in federal stimulus packages "to offer them some hope and assistance in desperate circumstances," said Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City.

"Since early April, some of my brother bishops and I have sent five letters to express this touchstone

principle to Congress and its various committees," he said in a May 22 statement.

The U.S. bishops have highlighted several issues they have urged lawmakers to address, such as: food security and housing; protections for the unborn; access to affordable health care and racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes; assistance for the poor and unemployed; care for migrants and refugees; safety for detainees and the incarcerated; education; international assistance and debt relief; and help for charities serving vulnerable populations.

Archbishop Coakley and the chairmen of several

other USCCB committees, including education, migration, pro-life activities, religious liberty, communications and international justice and peace signed letters April 9 and May 7 that went to various House and Senate committee chairman calling attention to these issues.

"Additional needs have emerged," Archbishop Coakley said May 22, "such as sufficient protective equipment for all essential workers; protection of familial well-being and integrity; additional research on the link between air pollution and coronavirus health outcomes; and the need to address disruptions to the food supply chain and its

impact on farmers and farmworkers, food waste and public health."

The archbishop's statement followed his March 12 and March 28 statements issued ahead of votes on federal economic stimulus packages, such as the \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, or CARES Act. In concert with this measure, Congress approved the Paycheck Protection Program, setting aside \$349 billion for Small Business Administration loans.

Another emergency funding bill called the Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions Act, or HEROES Act, was passed

by the House mainly along party lines May 15, but the Senate has not taken up the measure.

Archbishop Coakley said the U.S. bishops welcomed the commission created by Pope Francis to confront the challenges the world is facing in battling the coronavirus pandemic and what it will inevitably face in its aftermath. The pope named Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, to head the commission.

"(We) will continue our advocacy in the same mode as this critical work for the common good continues," the archbishop said.

## Panel explores connections found in encyclical

CLEVELAND (CNS) – Pope Francis' message in his 2015 encyclical on the relationship of people to the environment is simple, agreed a panel of speakers during an online dialogue.

It's a message that focuses on how each person is connected to each other and to the natural environment, while recognizing there is a call to be good stewards of God's creation by respecting each other and the communities in which people live.

The pope's call in the encyclical, "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home," was the starting point for the hourlong discussion sponsored by the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought and Public Life and Georgetown University May 29.

The encyclical builds upon the teaching of the pope's predecessors, including St. Paul VI, St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, said Cardinal Peter

Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. The document focuses on an "integral ecology" that incorporates the "ecology of the human person, the ecology of nature and the ecology of peace," he said.

"The word ecology is not something academic, far away removed from us," he said. "It is the environment in which we live. Let us recognize we all create the environment in which we live, and recognize how we all play a role in building and maintaining a clean environment," Cardinal Turkson said.

The document also draws from the experiences and teaching of bishops around the world who have witnessed the struggles of people who have lost land, seen access to water reduced, live with heavily polluted air and are threatened by industries eyeing critical natural resources, the cardinal

said.

Throughout the document, the pope invites people to dialogue with each other and from that dialogue can come the desire to care for the earth, he explained.

Further, he continued, a deep sense of care for all of creation – people and nature alike – can emerge and lead to deep conversion to work for social, economic and environmental justice and to institute changes in lifestyle from one of waste and overconsumption to one of stewardship.

Other panelists unpacked the encyclical by exploring the connection of people to each other while citing specific actions in response to the threats of climate change on poor and vulnerable people around the world.

"The ecology is not just about the environment," said Christiana Zenner, associate professor of theol-

ogy, science and ethics at Fordham University. "It's that we humans are not separate from the environments that we inhabit, that climate change is not just about science and industrialized nations. Ecology permeates everything."

Zenner urged viewers of the livestreamed broadcast to step back to reflect on "who do we understand ourselves to be and who are we beholden to."

Participant Kim Wasserman, executive director of the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization in Chicago, explained how the community organization worked for 12 years to close a pair of outdated coal-fired power plants that dumped pollution across a wide expanse of the southwestern part of the city.

Utilizing their own air, soil and water samples, the organization managed to convince utility officials

and Chicago city officials the plants were harming the community of 95,000 residents, she said.

The properties have since been bought by a company seeking to build a department store warehouse, and Wasserman said residents are concerned that pollution from tractor-trailer rigs will raise pollution levels in the neighborhood again.

So people are organizing to block the project, especially since a demolition crew tore down a smokestack on the property April 11 – Holy Saturday and in the middle of government-imposed stay-at-home orders – without informing the strongly Catholic community.

Such disrespect for the lives of the working-class people who live in Little Village is a prime example of the kind of challenges Pope Francis addresses in his encyclical, she explained.

## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

# The mystery of the Holy Trinity

The world we live in is so full of beauty and mystery! We are always questioning “why” and “how.” There is one in particular that is beyond the rest. It’s the mystery of the Holy Trinity – three Persons in One God.

Just as a rose doesn’t have a “how” or a “why,” neither does the Holy Trinity. It just exists as the foundation of all that is.

In the first reading today, God summons Moses to Mt. Sinai to present him with two stone tablets on which were written the ten com-

mandments. There He reveals that He is one God who does not tolerate worship of any other gods.

He also reveals to Moses that His real name is “He who is.”

There, he also reveals that He is slow to anger, and full of mercy and love.

Centuries later, when a Son is miraculously born of a Virgin, and grows to manhood. He reveals himself as having been sent by God, His Father, to bring salvation to all mankind. How? By doing a makeover – to redeem us from the terrible sin of



**Monsignor  
Paul E.  
Whitmore**

June 7

**Trinity Sunday**

READINGS

Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9

2 Cor 13:11-13

John 3:16-18

our first parents that lost us paradise.

Also, through the teaching of Jesus and His constant referral to His Father, we see that the love between them was a strong bond.

In the Acts of the Apostles, after his resurrection from the dead, Jesus assures his apostles that He will not leave them alone, but will send them His own Spirit whom he calls an Advocate.

Then, at Pentecost, it is revealed to them that this Spirit is a Person, who is the love between God the Father and God the Son. This Holy Spirit is so intense that it is always moving.

Sometimes it is a gentle breeze, and sometimes like a hurricane. It is dynamic, creative, frightening, consoling, refreshing.

On this feast day, we acknowledge Him as our creator to whom we owe every breath of our being. He is our Redeemer who suffered and died as a human person like ourselves to whom we are joined in love and suffering.

He is our Father, our

brother, our friend, in whom we have faith, in whom we find our hope. He is the One to whom we are invited to use up all our energies in service and in desire until He takes us out of this human existence, exhausted and spent.

He will gather us into His arms, embrace us, breathe into us the new life of Eternity.

He will exchange our faith for vision, our hope for possession.

Only love will remain, raised into the ecstasy of fulfillment, forever and ever.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

## CALLED TO SERVE

# McGivney, on path to sainthood, had local ties

Talk about stream of consciousness. In the middle of all this pausing and reopening church, linking and a new pastor came the word from Rome at Noon on May 27 that Venerable Father Mike McGivney would become Saint Michael McGivney. That announcement pretty much shut the door on everything else.

My deacon brain tried to remember where I had safely stored the book about the man who founded the Knights of Columbus. I remember it was a good read, a biography. *The Parish Priest* was the name of it. I did not remember that name; it was in something I Googled about Father Mike.

Follow the stream. I joined a Knight of Columbus Council in Valley Stream, New York, when I was 18. “Join for the insurance,” my Mom said. So, I did. It was a great organization to be part of as a young adult. When I came north, I let my membership lapse. Sam Tufo finally convinced me to re-join. I am not active in the Council 259, but I applaud the work all the Knights do for the Church and our communities, and I am proud to be a Brother Knight.

And that got me thinking about Garry McGivney, a Brother Knight. When the cause for saint-

hood for Father Mike started to pick-up steam, I wondered if the Garry McGivney who ran the NYS Labor Department office in Watertown might be related to the newly named “venerable.” Well, he was. A distant second cousin he told me. I made a mental note to follow-up someday. That relationship might make a good story.

Then Garry hit the lottery. An \$8.00 a week habit at Gold Star Deli produced a \$56 million ticket. He took cash; about \$20 million.

Garry McGivney was an interesting guy. He was very well read. He was

very bright. A tad eccentric, even before he became instantly wealthy. And it turns-out he was very generous.

Millionaire Garry did not just throw cash around, but he made very disciplined contributions to the institutions he loved. Each of the four parishes in Watertown received very generous donations. Garry was not the kind of guy who bragged about his donations, or his wealth. He kept everything quiet, but we know his generosity had long arms. I wrote the story about him in 2007 for the North Country Catholic.

Garry McGivney believed his second cousin from Connecticut should be elevated to Sainthood

for his concern for the poor and widows in particular, and, if for no other reason, because he founded the Knights of Columbus. He told me in 2007 he would continue to pray for sainthood for Venerable Father Michael. Garry died in 2014, but I think he continued to pray on Father Mike’s behalf. Rest in peace, friend. Your fondest dream is about to come true.

Oh, I found the book. It was hiding in plain sight in a bookcase. I think I’ll read it again, Garry. Thanks.

*Deacon Kevin Mastellon ministers in Watertown.*

*He is the Director of Permanent Deacons for the Diocese of Ogdensburg*



**Deacon  
Kevin Mastellon**

# Death and burial in the 'beautiful valley'

By Father Daniel Chapin

Early in my time here in Bolivia, I began to visit prisoners in one of the five penitentiaries located in this large geographical area whose capital is Cochabamba, founded by the Spanish on August 15, 1571; the city, at 8,400 feet above sea level, is nestled in an agricultural valley of the Andes mountains.

El Abra is a men's maximum-security prison and, as of January 2018, held some 800 inmates in a facility that was built for 360; an additional block was constructed later, allowing for an even greater number of incarcerated. Unfortunately, overcrowding is chronic in Bolivia's prison population of more than 19,000 according to the census of April 2019; official prison capacity as of June 2018 was 5,000; this is a situation that is common in many such penal institutions throughout the world. This overcrowding



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creates miserable conditions. In El Abra, there are some 30 inmates in dorms that were meant for 15; some prisoners sleep on the floor or wherever they can find room. There are some with severe and even terminal illness. Throughout the prison system nationally there is on average one doctor for every 410 prisoners, and there is a lack of medical supplies.

It was December 21, 2016, and as was the custom, it was time to hear pre-Christmas confessions and to celebrate Mass at El Abra.

On this occasion there were three of us priests present. In addition to me, there was one from

Venezuela and a Maryknoll priest from Texas, all three of us residing and working in Cochabamba. As confession time approached, the first man to come forward had his shoe-shining supplies with him; inmates carry out small jobs to earn a little spending money. He was not interested in going to confession – he wanted to shine my shoes, but first I wanted to dialogue a little. He was 21 and had killed his brother-in-law in a drunken fight; "I plunged a knife right into his heart," he told me. Then he proceeded to shine my shoes. The next man simply wanted to talk. He had been a

Catholic but was now an Evangelical. He was a young father with a year-old son. "I never knew my own father; he left when I was born," he said.

It is important to be with prisoners; many have few or no visitors at all and simply want to talk; a ministry of listening means a lot to them. There were a few confessions and then it was time for Mass.

The chapel at El Abra is quite large, spacious and well-lit. It was built in the 1970s with funds from the Diocese of Bergamo, Italy; the majority of Bolivians in Italy live in Bergamo, so there is a definite spiritual connection. The chapel contains many large, beautiful paintings of biblical scenes and stories. People are presented with indigenous characteristics. The altar is simple, made by hand. There is a large crucifix near the altar. At the back of the sanctuary, there is an impressive painting of the resurrected Christ. The in-

mates take an active part in Mass, leading the singing with the accompaniment of a guitarist, proclaiming the Scriptures, leading the Prayers of the Faithful and bringing up the gifts at the Offertory. Mass is celebrated on Sunday mornings, Holy Days, and other days of liturgical importance.

Christmas is a celebration of the birth of Jesus into our world, into human history, into our lives. As His name indicates, He comes as Savior. I would see these inmates again on other occasions, and as I prepared to celebrate my first Christmas in Bolivia, I thought of them and of our visit on that December day of 2016, and I hoped that our time together had brought about some sense of redemption and true spiritual liberation.

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## OBITUARIES

**Chaumont** – Helen L. (Genga) Macaluso, 87; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at All Saints Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery, Watertown.

**Lisbon** – Jarett K. "Jiggy" Kroeger, 5; Private Services to be held.

**Malone** – Margaret Elizabeth "Pen-nie" Sansone, 79; Private Funeral Mass to be held.

**Massena** – Catherine Ann "Kay" (Loftus) Case, 93; Private Services to be held.

**North Bangor** – Veronica Williams, 72; Graveside Services to be held at

St. Augustine's Cemetery.

**Parishville** – Jerry F. Sullivan, 80; Graveside services to be held May 30, 2020 at Chapel Hill Cemetery.

**Port Henry** – Frank J. Wojewodzc, 92; Private Services to be held.

**Potsdam** – Paul Joseph "P.J." Hafer, 66; Private Services to be held.

**Watertown** – Elisabeth R. McKinney, 86; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.



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# Knights 'praying for years' for beatification

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Father Michael McGivney, the founder of the Knights of Columbus, may be an ideal prospective saint for the current age, said Carl A. Anderson, supreme knight of the international fraternal order.

"We've been praying for years for this to occur, and finally this day has arrived," he told Catholic News Service May 27.

First, he's a pro-life hero. The miracle recognized by the Vatican paving the way for his beatification occurred in 2015 and involved an U.S. baby, still in utero, with a life-threatening condition that, under most circumstances, could have led to an abortion.

He was found to be healed after his family prayed to Father McGivney. "The Vatican likes to be the one to discuss more details than that," Anderson said.

The Vatican announced early May 27 that Pope Francis, who met with the board of directors of the Knights of Columbus in February, had signed the decree recognizing the miracle through the intercession of Father McGivney. Once he is beatified, he will be given the title "Blessed."

Father McGivney (1852-

1890), ordained a priest for what is now the Archdiocese of Hartford, Connecticut, founded the Knights of Columbus at St. Mary's Church in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1882. The fraternal order for Catholic men has become the largest lay Catholic organization in the world with 2 million members and sponsors a wide range of educational, charitable and religious activities.

The initial work on his sainthood cause began in 1982 on the Knights' centenary. His cause was formally opened in Hartford in 1997, and he was given the title "servant of God." In March 2008, the Catholic Church recognized the priest heroically lived the Christian virtues, so he was given the title "venerable."

His beatification ceremony will be held in Connecticut sometime this fall – like all other events, scheduling is uncertain because of the COVID-19 pandemic – "and sometime after that, we'll be looking for another miracle," Anderson said.

Generally, two miracles attributed to the candidate's intercession are required for sainthood – one for beatification and the second for canoniza-

tion.

Father McGivney, who will be the first American parish priest to be beatified and has long been a hero of working-class Catholics, can be viewed as a martyr of a pandemic. When he died from pneumonia complications at age 38 in 1890, it was during an outbreak of influenza known as the Russian flu in Thomaston, Connecticut. Some

recent evidence, according to the Knights, indicates the outbreak may have been the result of a coronavirus.

Anderson praised Father McGivney's modesty and "dedication to charity and unity and the way he embodied the good Samaritan" after founding the Knights of Columbus, originally a service organization to help widows and orphans, in New

Haven. At the time, Father McGivney, the son of Irish immigrants, who was born in Waterbury, Connecticut, was an assistant pastor at St. Mary's Parish. He is buried in New Haven.

"Father McGivney did not want to be the leader of the Knights of Columbus," Anderson observed. "He was at first the group's secretary and then the chaplain."

## A cousin in his corner

By Deacon Kevin Mastellon  
Contributing Writer

WATERTOWN – Garry T. McGivney was convinced his second cousin, Michael, should be made a saint in the Catholic Church. On May 27, 2020, his conviction was a step closer to being satisfied. The Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus issued a press release: "This joyful news is the culmination of many years of determined effort, and I ask for your continued and increased prayers as we prepare for the day when our founder will be known as 'Blessed Michael McGivney.'"

The joyful news was that the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome had confirmed a miracle attributed to the intercession of Venerable Father Michael McGivney, paving the way to a Mass of Beatification and the title Blessed.

Father McGivney founded the Knights of Columbus in 1881 in Connecticut. His cousin is quoted in a North Country Catholic article in 2007, "When you look at the success of that organization, the charitable works the Knights are involved in, the interna-

tional reach of the Knights, it is logical to seriously consider his cause."

Most of Garry's knowledge of his famous cousin came from conversations with an aunt. Father Michael and Garry's grandfather were cousins. Father McGivney was the first chaplain of the newly formed fraternal benefit organization. He died in 1890.

"The first four Supreme Chaplains of the K of C were McGivneys," Garry said, "finally relinquish the post in 1960."

"The primary motivation for the Order was to be a mutual benefit society. As a parish priest in an immigrant community, Father McGivney saw what could happen to a family when the breadwinner died and he wanted the Knights to provide insurance to care for the widows and orphans left behind," according to the web-based encyclopedia Wikipedia.

Caring for others and promoting their welfare appears to be in the McGivney spirit. Garry, a former employee of the New York State Department of Labor, found personal fortune through the New

York Lottery. He took a cash payout in excess of \$20 million. He quickly shared his new fortune with a number of well publicized donations. Among the beneficiaries were his home parish of The Church of the Holy Family and the other three parishes in Watertown, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, St. Anthony's and St. Patrick's Church. Garry McGivney died in July 2014 at the age of 75.

His pastor at Holy Family at the time of Garry McGivney's death was Father Steven M. Murray. "Before he even won the lottery, he was a very generous man," Father Murray said. "He also was generous after that. He was a very quiet man and didn't want a lot of notoriety. He hoped his generosity would spur others to be generous and to realize money is not the end-all and be-all."

In 2007, Garry McGivney observed this about his cousin, "Father McGivney was a visionary, His life as a priest in Connecticut and his desire to care for those struggling through an organization of Catholic men are what set him apart. I guess sharing is in our blood."

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