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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 75, Number 17

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

SEPT. 2, 2020

Follow me: Safe return to education

In this, the *North Country Catholic's* Back to School edition, Bishop Terry R. LaValley discusses returning to school and religious education safely.

For months, as you know, due to health and safety concerns, our places of worship, public institutions and businesses needed to implement government directives and protocols before they could open their doors to the public. As the new school year approaches, we are especially sensitive to both the educational needs of our children and ongoing health concerns for them and for all school personnel.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

SCHOOL ACCREDITATION



St. Mary's School in Ticonderoga recently was presented with a Certificate of Accreditation by the North Central Commission on Accreditation and Improvement, the Northwest Accreditation Commission, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement. Pictured are school teachers with school Principal Sister Sharon Anne Dalton, SSI, with this certificate in hand.

SHARING OUR STORIES



Though she recently turned 90, Helen Guardino-Trim of Watertown says God isn't done with her yet. Read about Guardino-Trim in this week's Sharing Our Stories, Sharing Our Faith. To suggest an individual to be featured in this series, which features how lay Catholics are living out their faith here in the North Country, please call the North Country Catholic at 315-393-2920 or email dfargo@rcdony.org.

FULL STORY, PAGE 12

Pope: Christians must act to help those in need

VATICAN CITY (CNS) —Christians cannot stand idly by and watch as millions of people are deprived of their basic needs because of others' greed, Pope Francis said.

"When the obsession to possess and dominate excludes millions of people from having primary goods, when economic and technological inequality are such that the social fabric is torn and when dependence on unlimited material progress threatens our common home, then we cannot stand by and

watch," he said Aug. 26 during his weekly general audience.

Christians must act together, rooted in God and united in the hope of "generating something different and better" that is more just and equitable, he said.

During a livestream from the library of the Apostolic Palace, Pope Francis continued a series of talks on the principles of the church's social doctrine as a guide for building a better future.

Focusing on the universal destination of goods, the

pope said this is "the first principle of the whole ethical and social order."

God entrusted the earth and its resources "to the common stewardship of mankind to take care of them," he said, citing the Catechism of the Catholic Church (2402).

When God called on his children to "have dominion" over the earth in his name, the pope said, this was not to be interpreted as "a 'carte blanche' to do whatever you want with the earth."

"No," he said. "There exists a relationship of mutual responsibility between us and nature."

Communities must protect the earth, take only what they need for subsistence and make sure the fruits of the earth reach everyone, not just a few people, the pope said.

A person should see his or her legitimate possessions "not only as his own but also as common in the sense that they should be able to benefit not only him but also others," according

to the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World ("Gaudium et Spes").

In fact, the catechism says ownership of any property makes the "holder a steward of providence, with the task of making it fruitful and communicating its benefits to others," he said.

"We are stewards of goods, not masters" or lords keeping them "selfishly for yourself," he added.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

School concerns sure have changed

Dressed in matching red corduroy jumpers, white shirts and white tights, my twin sister and I, along with our older sister, waited for the bus at the end of the driveway. For my twin sister, Deanna, and me, it was the first day of kindergarten.

While I don't recall what happened next, my family loves to tell the story. Apparently, another student on the bus refused to let my twin sister share his or her seat on the bus. Always the more assertive of our twin pair, I didn't tolerate my sister being mistreated (well, unless I was

the one mistreating her). As my family tells it, I threw the other child – the one who wouldn't let Deanna share the seat – onto the floor of the bus. From what I'm told, I was almost kicked off the bus for my behavior.

Darcy L.
Fargo

As we prepare for the start of the 2020-21 school year, I was thinking it would be nice if misbehavior on the bus (though I still stand by my action, even if I don't remember it) was the worst thing we had to worry about.

I can't remember a more challenging school year in my lifetime. I'm pretty confident there's never been one.

As a parent, I feel like no decision regarding this school year is without risk. If I send my son to school, am I risking his health? If I don't send him to school, and I sign him up for remote learning, am I risking his mental health and social development?

Knowing how I'm feeling about this school year, I can't imagine how tough it's been for those making decisions about the school year and those tasked with putting those decisions into practice – the school administrators, faculties and staffs. No matter what decision they make, someone will be upset, angry or disappointed. No decision will make every stakeholder 100 percent

happy. Yet they persisted.

Having talked to Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, superintendent of our diocesan Catholic Schools, as well as some of the principals of those schools over the last two weeks, I can say with confidence that they've been working thoughtfully, carefully and prayerfully to bring students back to school in the safest way possible.

They've been planning extensively developing plans to meet every guideline and meet the needs of all the students entrusted to their care.

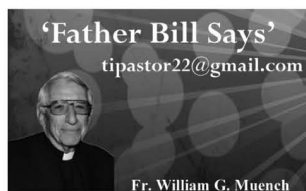
I'll be joining my prayers with theirs and hoping for the safest possible school year for all.

'Times when I have been hypocritical'

Today I celebrated the morning daily Mass. The Gospel reading was from St. Matthew's Gospel. In this reading Jesus criticized the Scribes and Pharisees calling them hypocrites. Jesus notices that these religious leaders concentrated on what they considered important for the way the people lived while neglecting what Jesus considered were more important in life: proper judgment, mercy and fidelity.

I am certain that these Scribes and Pharisees were annoyed – even angry – to be called hypocrites by Jesus. I would imagine you would be angry also to be considered a hypocrite. Now I must speak for myself here: I want to confess to you that there are too many times when I have been hypocritical. Jesus would certainly call me a hypocrite.

I preach at Mass, and I tell you about how to live a good Christian life. I suspect I



Fr. William G. Muench

have sounded a bit holy. However, I know that out there on the street, I have had times when I have lost my cool. I know I have had times when I didn't act very Christian. Added to that, I know I have missed opportunities to do something for others. I have truly been a hypocrite. I have acted like one of those Scribes or Pharisees.

Now in this regard I will let you judge yourself. My effort to solve this in my life is to bring my Lord Jesus more completely into my life. I know that I must strengthen my faith. I must make myself completely alive to the Lord, who will lead and guide me.

This means that I must allow my payers to lead me

into the darkness to find Our Savior, Jesus. I must continue to bring Jesus into my heart and life. Yes, I have done this often. I have tried to pray to bring Jesus into the silence of my heart, and I have found peace with the Lord. Yet, I know only too well that there have been too many times I have become busy and distracted, and I've truly left Jesus out. My prayers have only been words and have not opened myself to the Lord. These are times when I have become a hypocrite, times when someone would not recognized that I was a Christian, that I was a priest.

I know only too well that I need Jesus. I need the Lord to be a constant part of my life. This will mean that I need more than just speaking a few prayers. This is the time that I must redevelop my relationship with the Lord. I must renew my friendship with Jesus. I need him as a friend and a guide

to show me the way.

I believe that each and every day, the Lord places opportunities in my life, opportunities that are challenges for me from the Lord to bring God's love, mercy and peace to those who need God and, in this moment, need me.

These action may be small, they may be ordinary, yet the Lord knows that – at this moment – this may be the way for me to make this world a better, happier place.

This week the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Augustine who is one of the great Bishops and theologians of our Church, I want to share with you this prayer from "The Confessions of St. Augustine." "I looked for a way to gain the strength I needed to enjoy you, but I did not find it until I embraced the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who is also God, supreme over all things and blessed forever."

FOLLOW ME

Educating our youth safely

For months, as you know, due to health and safety concerns, our places of worship, public institutions and businesses needed to implement government directives and protocols before they could open their doors to the public. As the new school year approaches, we are especially sensitive to both the educational needs of our children and ongoing health concerns for them and for all school personnel.

Everyone – parent, student, and teacher have the same goal: educating our children in a safe environment. We all want what is best for our children, no matter the setting – Day Care, Pre-K, Elementary, High School or College. It is important to remember this common desire when we are tempted to lose patience with those who disagree with what we believe to be the best plan to achieve this goal. We all want the same thing.

Public school superintendents and our Catholic school principals must consider many factors, in collaboration with their staff, faculty and parents, as they make important decisions in providing a safe educational environment for all who enter the school. Additionally, our pastors and parish Directors of Christian Formation are determining how to best provide Christian Formation for our children in our parish programs. We cannot put our children's spiritual growth and formation on pause.

As you can imagine,

there are many “moving parts” that must be considered in the planning for re-opening our schools. We thank Sr. Ellen Rose Coughlin, SSJ, Diocesan Director of Catholic Education, Mrs. Karen Donahue, Assistant Superintendent of Catholic Schools and the diocesan staff for the direction and support they continue to offer to our hard-working Catholic School principals and faculty, as well as the Christian Formation staff in our parishes. Our pastors, parish staffs, CCD coordinators and catechists, are working diligently to provide our students with a learning environment

that is safe and conducive for their intellectual, spiritual and social growth.

Normally, we think of school as the place where lessons are learned and then tests administered. However, there is little that is normal about the times in which we live. This pandemic has presented us with a time of testing first and then learning lessons about ourselves as we struggle through the challenges of the day.

Parents, students and educators are understandably fearful. There continues to be so much unknown about this virus. We find it difficult to accept the fact that sometimes there is no quick fix. Medicine & science do not have all the answers. They never will. It is vitally important, yet so difficult, to be a source of confidence and joy when struggling to stay afloat in a sea of uncertainty. One sure thing:

God is with us. We can reach deep within and find the patience and encouragement necessary because we are Christ-led, Christ-fed, hope-filled.

Perhaps, in our daily prayer, as we continue to pray for all the victims of this health crisis, we can reflect on lessons we might be learning in this time of testing. My self-examination might include questions such as:

- Where do I find the hope that motivates me in such uncertain times?

- Do I give authentic witness of confident hope to my children?

- How patient am I with myself, my family members, and my neighbor?

- Have I exercised self-discipline for the sake of the common good (i.e., keep safe-distancing and wear face covering when around people)?

- Have I consciously tried to develop a closer relationship with Jesus? (Has my prayer life been strengthened or has it suffered?) Why?

- Have I become a more grateful person?

- How has this pandemic been a “teachable” moment for me?

- Have I been able to tap into my creativity in developing new family activities?

- Have I become more sensitive to the plight of the unemployed?

My sisters and brothers, the school of the pandemic is in session. Albeit unwelcome, this can be an opportune time to gain wisdom and greater self-knowledge as we reflect on these questions and a host of others that enable us to grow closer to God and one another. Through it all, May God be praised. Forever may God be praised!



**Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley**

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Diocesan schools grow through challenges

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

OGDENSBURG— After a challenging end to the 2019-20 school year, Catholic schools in the Diocese of Ogdensburg are embracing the opportunities for growth presented by the ongoing pandemic as they prepare to begin a new school year.

"There are challenges going forward, and we're not returning to a normal situation," said Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, SSJ, diocesan superintendent of schools. "We can't use that as an excuse just to drift. We need to continue looking forward. We will need to embrace new methods, new tools and new approaches than we have used in the past. Moreover, we need to stay the course with commitment to our Catholic mission and worldview, our strong academic programs and attention to social and emotion learning."

Sister Ellen Rose noted

that the unprecedented school closure in March pushed the diocesan Catholic schools to a remote learning system, a move that required some adaptation and involved a learning curve.

"It was an opportunity to discover new approaches," she said. "Prior to the school closure in March, our schools did not regularly use technology to deliver instruction. After the closure, we were pushed to determine the best tools for instruction and those which would keep us in touch with our students and their parents. The adaptation has been, for the most part, positive. While I do not think a virtual model should ever replace person-to-person education and the interaction that takes place in a classroom, we recognized that we can use technology more effectively as an instructional tool."

While prepared to offer services remotely, all eight Catholic schools in the

diocese are offering full-time, in-person instruction when school resumes in the fall.

"Five-day instruction is the preference of the majority of parents who have children in kindergarten through grade eight," Sister Ellen Rose said. "For that reason, we have seen an uptick in enrollment at some schools, especially where the public school is not able to provide it. Some schools have waiting lists for some grade levels. We also have students who have health concerns or live with family members with health concerns who have opted for virtual learning. When factors require virtual learning, schools are able to provide it."

Sister Ellen Rose noted that extensive planning and discussions went into creating the plans for the 2020-21 school year.

"Each school successfully created two plans," she said. "They had to complete one plan to meet the mandates for the New York State Department of Health. Those plans were due July 31. In addition, they needed to submit a plan on August 7 that incorporated the New York State Office of Religious and Independent School guidelines. This plan included the Department of Health guidance but also state mandates regarding attendance, instruction, accountability, operational and facility procedures, lunch and breakfast programs, social and emotion learning, etc."

Sister Ellen Rose noted that school plans, as required by New York State, address the social and emotional needs of students.

"We were very fortunate that social-emotional learning has been a focus

area for us for the past three years," she said. "Our administrators and teachers have participated in extensive professional development in this area, resulting in every school developing a plan that implements the goals and best practices of social emotional learning aligned with our Catholic values."

The superintendent said that beginning in 2019-20, the Catholic schools were fortunate to have Family Support Coordinators.

"We have a family support coordinator in every school now," Sister Ellen Rose said. "Our family support coordinators were a valuable resource prior to the school closure. They were invaluable from March onward. Whether it was initiating and sustaining communication with families, providing the basic necessities of life, delivering education resources or supporting parents in meeting the challenges of the lockdown, the coordinators were a blessing for our schools and their families."

Sister Ellen Rose also credited the principals, faculties and staffs of the schools for their adaptability and commitment to Catholic education.

"I commend our principals," she said. "We met with them every week from March 20 to June 24. We thought we might be able to eliminate meetings in July, but we couldn't. We met at least twice in July and went back to weekly meetings in August. Their creativity, thoughtful questions and proposed solutions contributed to procedures and policies for a successful conclusion of the 2019-20 school year and reopening plans for the 2020-21 year. Our

principals, teachers and staffs were and continue to be dedicated to the families and students that comprise their school community and committed to our mission to educate the whole child."

She also noted the schools received outstanding support from outside entities, as well.

"It was the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation grants that allowed us to create the Family Support Coordinator positions," she said. "Moreover, an additional grant provides scholarships to students who meet the eligibility requirements. In June, we awarded 158 scholarships for 105 families. We expect another 70 to 90 students to apply during the second application cycle."

The diocesan schools also received support from other diocesan offices.

"We also had great support from diocesan offices, including but not limited to the information technology, the fiscal office and human resources office," Sister Ellen Rose said.

The superintendent said she looks to the new school year with gratitude, confidence, hope and prayer.

"I am grateful for the support we have received. I am confident that the schools' plans provide for the safe and healthy return of their students. I also know there will be challenges and hurdles to overcome. I thank God for His ever-present guidance and grace during this challenging time. In this Year of St. Joseph, we have commended our schools to St. Joseph, the protector and guardian of families. We rely upon his intercession and often ask for him ask for his assistance."

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School 'Doing Small Things With Great Love'

By **Andrea Kilbourne-Hill**
Principal, St. Bernard's School

SARANAC LAKE – The staff at St. Bernard's School have been busy preparing for the school's fall reopening.

St. Bernard's will provide students the option of five days of in-person learning per week or full-time remote learning.

The school will also continue to offer Before and After Care to help working families.

St. Bernard's has two new classroom teachers, Ali Miller and Karen Labonte, joining the fac-

ulty.

Recently, Miss Miller had the chance to have an outdoor Meet and Greet with her new kindergarten students and families. The school also hosted two School Walk-Throughs to give families the opportunity to see the classrooms before school starts on September 8.

St. Bernard's School is committed to helping our students become confident, compassionate, and connected in faith. That is why, for the 2020-21 school year, the school has adopted the theme, "Do Small Things With

Great Love," a motto of St. Teresa of Kolkata.

Throughout the year, the school will honor this theme by continuing its traditional service projects, such as making cards for Meals on Wheels recipients and hosting food drives. The school will also model and encourage our students to act in ways in which they can show great love simply, such as complimenting a friend or sharing a favorite toy with a sibling. These small actions will lead to great blessings for the students and for those who receive the benefits.



Students and families in Miss Ali Miller's kindergarten class have an outdoor Meet and Greet at the playground at St. Bernard's School.

Augustinian works to overcome challenges

By **Mary Ann Margrey**
Principal, Augustinian Academy

CARTHAGE – While It has taken many questionnaires to staff, parents and students, countless hours of reading guidance from the Department of Health, Center for Disease Control, and New York State Education Department, Augustinian Academy in Carthage has shared a reopening plan that works to provide a healthy and safe learning environment. Having served on the Carthage Central Reopening Task Force, Principal Ann Margrey was able to see the additional challenges public schools had to consider. The greatest difficulty was transportation. Once this was decided, Augustinian Academy was able to move forward with its school plan.

The week of August 17, the school hosted three parent meetings to give parents opportunities to address any questions or concerns. A follow-up parent letter was emailed to

all families highlighting the key points of the meeting. We will be offering an Open House for families the week of August 31. Families will be able to sign up for a 30-minute time to drop off school supplies and tour the building to see the safety protocols we have put into place.

We are aware that the best possible learning environment for the students is in-person instruction. With that in mind, along with the guidance provided, Augustinian Academy will be opening on September 8 with all students in session full-time. Pre-K four students will begin on September 10, and Pre-K three students will begin on September 14.

Parents are willing to transport their children on days busing is not available. As a result, we have increased the hours for the Before & After School Care Program to provide parents with some flexibility with their schedules.

Pre-Kindergarten classes have been limited to 10

students; grades Kindergarten through four are limited to 15 students; and grades five through eight are limited to 12 students. Unfortunately, Augustinian Academy had to put some students on a waiting list.

School will look a little different while the school wears face masks, conducts online health screenings, performs daily temperature checks, practices social distancing, and limits whole-school activities. Limiting the visitors and whole school activities will be the most challenging. The school has always encouraged families to be involved in events and to come for lunch with their children. Augustinian's older students have provided opportunities for the younger students to gather and share time together. School administration, faculty and staff are hopeful that by following the guidance, students will be able to return to these activities. The school is also planning ways to become creative

with how to connect without physically being together.

A group of staff members formed a professional learning community and spent a large portion of their summer working on a remote learning plan. The teachers have gathered to participate in training using Google Classroom. Should there be a need to return to remote learning, the students will use Google Classroom. Once school resumes, the school will offer training sessions for

parents.

While there are still many unknowns, we are excited to meet with students face-to-face. The school will rely on the learnings from previous social-emotional learning training to help everyone ease back into school, and work to establish positive and healthy relationships. The Augustinian Academy community is hopeful that while school will not open in the traditional ways, the school can provide a positive experience for everyone.



Augustinian Academy

Augustinian Academy

Carthage, NY

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St. Hildegard of Bingen, the twelfth-century Christian mystic, said that we need to fly with two wings of awareness. The one wing is an awareness of life's glory and beauty. The other is an awareness of life's pain and suffering. If we try to fly with only one of these, she said, we will be like an eagle trying to fly with only one wing. In other words, we will not truly see.

During the Season of Creation, we are called "to fly with two wings" of awareness, as expressed in the following prayer:

Season of Creation 2020 Prayer

Creator of Life, At Your word, the Earth brought forth plants yielding seed and trees of every kind bearing fruit. The rivers, mountains, minerals, seas and forests sustained life. The eyes of all looked to You to satisfy the needs of every living thing. And throughout time the Earth has sustained life. Through the planetary cycles of days and seasons, renewal and growth, you open your hand to give creatures our food in the proper time.

In your Wisdom, you granted a Sabbath; a blessed time to rest in gratitude for all that you have given; a time to liberate ourselves from vicious consumption; a time to allow the land and all creatures to rest from the burden of production. But these days our living pushes the planet beyond its limits. Our demands for growth, and our never-ending cycle of production and consumption are exhausting our world. The forests are leached, the topsoil erodes, the fields fail, the deserts advance, the seas acidify, the storms intensify. We have not allowed the land to observe her Sabbath, and the Earth is struggling to be renewed.

Inspire us with the creativity to share what we have been given. Teach us to be satisfied with enough. Send Your Holy Spirit to renew the face of creation. In the name of the One who came to proclaim good news to all creation, Jesus Christ. Amen.

* Check out other ways to celebrate:
seasonofcreation.org/catholic/

Bishop's Public Schedule

Sept. 2 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Sept. 3 – 9:45 a.m. – Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence

Sept. 4 – 7 p.m. – Deacon Candidates Class at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

Sept. 5 – 11 a.m. – Confirmation at The Catholic Community of Moriah (at St. Patrick's Church) in Port Henry with the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Crown Point

Sept. 8 – 3:30 p.m. – NYSCC Executive Committee Conference Call

Sept. 9 – 1 p.m. – Roman Catholic Center Board Meeting at Kateri Hall in Hogansburg

5:30 p.m. – Diocesan Review Board Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

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-
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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 Serv-
ice** at 800-276-1562 or
www.ReportBishopAbuse.org.

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters from readers of the North Country Catholic.

- Due to space limitations, we ask that the number of words be limited to 500.

- We cannot accept letters which support ideas which are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

- Send letters to North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY, 13669 or e-mail to news@northcountrycatholic.org

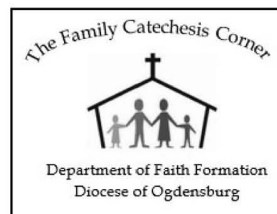
Gospel Weeklies workbooks make catechesis simple

By Jessica Hargrave
Contributing Writer

Textbooks can be expensive and bulky. When designing a home catechesis learning program, Pflaum Publishing Group went with a different approach and instead chose a simple activity book.

Gospel Weeklies from Pflaum integrates faith formation lessons with the Sunday Gospel for preschool children up to grade nine.

A parish subscription



comes with a catechism handbook called, "What the Church Believes and Teaches," the weekly lessons, a teacher's guide for parents, plus videos to access online. The handbook contains all the elements that are essential at every grade level. Parents and catechetical leaders can choose subscriptions that are hard copy, online or both. Children will receive their activity booklet that pertains to that Sunday's Gospel from their catechist or catechetical leader weekly.

"When I was asked to run our religious education program, I had no idea where to begin," admits Christine Ward, catechetical leader for Saints Philip & James Church in Lisbon. "The first program we used, we didn't like, as it was very hard to follow. I then switched us to the *Gospel Weeklies*, and my teachers as well as myself were so happy with the program. It gives

you step-by-step instructions on what the lesson needs to be for the week."

Gospel Weeklies is a great option for parishes who are still looking for answers on how to keep lessons going with the COVID-19 pandemic closing classrooms.

For parishes under financial burden, it is the best value compared to others, according to Pflaum.

The company will even customize lesson plans for overwhelmed catechetical leaders and parishes who don't know where to start for next year.

"We're here to help and guide you along the way," said Pflaum Publishing Sales Representative, Dave Barosci. "We want to make sure everyone is working together to better the families."

If a family would like to get *Gospel Weeklies* on their own, visit pflaumweeklies.com. There are free unit overviews, and The Gospel at Home provides a short description of the Sunday Gospel and suggested activities and discussion starters for each age level. Weekly review templates are also provided.

Rest in Peace

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

Sept. 2 – Rev. Timothy J. Mahoney, 1938; Msgr. Claudius Sechi, 1966; Rev. Thomas G. Votraw, 2007; Rev. Floyd J. Bleaux, 2009

Sept. 3 – Rev. David W. Driscoll, O.S.A., 1963; Rev. John S. Branche, 2003

Sept. 4 – Rev. Walter J. Charbonneau, 1982; Msgr. Robert J. Giroux, 2000; Rev. Patrick Mundy, 2017

Sept. 5 – Rev. Arthur Tardiff, O.M.I., 1961; Rev. John Sullivan M.S.C., 1962; Rev. Louis C. Gardner, 2000

Sept. 6 – Rev. James Connor, 1930

Sept. 7 – Rev. Manuel Belleville, 1964

Sept. 8 – Rev. Michael Jacobs, S.J., 1988; Rev. William H. Coffey, 2000

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg uses the training, Protecting God's Children for Adults. Due to CoVid-19, there are no live trainings scheduled. If you need to complete VIR-TUS training, contact Jean Grizzuto, jgrizzuto@rcdony.org or 315-393-2920 x 1413, who will coordinate assigning the training to be completed online.

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New tech, familiar faces at St. Agnes School

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

LAKEPLACID— After spending the summer planning and running a summer program, St. Agnes School in Lake Placid is ready to welcome students back to school for a safe 2020-21 school year.

"We're fortunate to be a small school in an area with limited community spread (of COVID-19)," said Principal Catherine Bemis. "We'll be returning to in-person education five days of the week with the option of remote learning for those who choose that option. We've been open since June for our summer program, so we've been operating for the past nine weeks with 50 students in the building. That experience has helped us prepare for the school year."

While the public schools in the community are also open for five-day in-person instruction, Bemis said the school picked up a handful of new students as new residents have moved into the area to escape more urban areas.

"People seem to be leaving the city and coming to the relative safety of the mountains," she said. "It's nice to have an influx of young families."

Both the new and returning students will notice a number of changes to the school environment.

"We have pop tents in the parking lot, where we'll be greeting students to do health screenings," Bemis said. "Of course, the staff conducting the screenings will be wearing (Personal Protective Equip-

ment)."

In addition, the students will notice additional technology in the classrooms.

"We'll be using swivel cameras – mobile tracking cameras that will follow movement in the classroom," Bemis said. "For the students learning from home, the feed will be dynamic and will pick up classroom discussions. Teachers will also be able to interact with the students learning from home."

In addition, Bemis said the school's pre-kindergarten classes have been split in half, and the additional classes necessitated using all available space, including the gymnasium, for classroom space.

"We're lucky to have large outdoor spaces available to use for physical education," she said. "Physical education requires 12 feet of separation."

Classrooms will also be set up to accommodate social distancing requirements, and students will be required to wear masks.

"We took our physical space and looked at each discipline and class, and we adjusted as necessary for safety," Bemis said. "We're feeling pretty lucky that we have such a small school. We have not had to create a 'new normal.' It's more like we had to modify our normal. Our classrooms look largely as they did with additional safety measures. We'll be wearing masks, of course, and there will be an emphasis on limited contact and lower-density activities while still maintaining ap-

propriate social and learning opportunities. It's been especially difficult planning for ages three to grade three. Those ages and grade levels use mostly collaborative learning."

The school will also be incorporating technology into the classrooms much more than it has in the past, Bemis said.

"This has been an opportunity to innovate and try new things," she said. "We've fully jumped into technology integration in the classroom. Being in such a rural area, that's not something we've been able to fully prioritize in the past. Now, we have to plan for continuity of learning if the situation changes.

We want our students to be able to continue on their learning trajectories regardless of location. If we need to pivot to remote learning for the whole school, we will be prepared to do that. We'll be using one-to-one technology in all the classrooms. Every student will have a device. Our pre-kindergarten students will start the year using Kindles, and the school-aged children will be using touchscreen Chromebooks. They'll be using them in the classrooms, so they'll be fluent in how to use them and with what's expected of them. If we have to switch to a remote

learning situation, they'll be familiar with the technology and all the programs we'll be using."

Bemis said the school surveyed families in the spring and learned that all school families have access to high-speed internet connections.

The school will also be using a new digital platform, Seesaw, to communicate with families.

"If a student is given an assignment for completion either in the classroom or at home, the student can use their device to take a photo of their assignment or to video themselves completing a reading assignment," Bemis said. "The student can send the photo or video to the teacher for assessment and feedback, and the parent also gets a notification that the work is completed. We can also use it to share newsletters, classroom photographs, classroom work and any other communications."

The principal said the school was already evaluating the Seesaw program when schools were shuttered in the spring, but the pandemic expedited its launch.

Bemis said the school has been working hard to communicate its plans for

the new school year with families via their previous communications platform, Blooms, as well as through Facebook, email and telephone contact. The school also communicated with many of its families during its summer program, which included 50 of the school's 115 students.

While the school year will include many new features, Bemis said students and families can expect a lot of familiar faces and programs in the new school year, as well.

"We had no turnover," she said. "We have all returning staff. We've had some internal shifts, but no new staff. We're very fortunate going into what promises to be a challenging year with solid returning faculty. We have an amazing team here."

The school will also continue to offer its extended school day and extended school year programming for families with childcare issues.

"Even if academic programs are closed, we plan to continue offering our childcare program," Bemis said. "Our enrolled families will have a safe space for their children. We're excited to assure families that their children have a place to be regardless of what's going on."



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St. Joseph's remote learning

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 Lisa Parson

As we read about the life of Jesus in the Bible, we learn much about him through snippets of information about his family. We know that Mary said "yes" to God when the angel Gabriel visited her with the annunciation. We know, likewise, Joseph, Jesus' foster father, was visited by an angel and told that Mary's child was conceived by the Holy Spirit. We know both Mary and Joseph were very dedicated Jewish people, closely adhering to the beliefs and traditions of their faith. Joseph was a quiet man with a solid reputation as a devout Jew and a skilled carpenter. Joseph was understanding and compassionate, as was evident when he was going to quietly divorce Mary to save her from public scrutiny and negative fallout because of her unwed pregnancy. What could possibly lead him away from this reputable life and risk all that he had? Faith!

Faith in God brought Mary and Joseph together, and it was faith that kept



St. Joseph's Corner

them together. It was that same faith that allowed them both to say "yes" to God's calling. Their faith and trust in God led them to that stable in Bethlehem where Mary would give birth to the son of God – Emmanuel – "God with us." Joseph would obediently give him the name Jesus as he was instructed in the dream. Their faith and their trust were evident as they welcomed shepherds and wisemen who followed signs and traveled from near and far to visit this baby. They stood firm in their faith as their world turned upside down, somewhat like our world, which has been turned upside down as a result of this pandemic. We live with more questions than answers today, but we move forward in faith.

Imagine the questions, the confusion, the joy! Imagine the new father, the elation of a newborn baby boy! There's something very special about the first boy for any father! Imagine the thoughts that would be going

through Joseph's mind. What will life be like? How will I parent the Son of God? How will I protect him? How will I care for him?

We can be quite sure he wasn't worrying about being able to provide, and he wasn't worried about Jesus getting more attention than him in this new marriage, and he certainly wasn't worried about Jesus playing on the "right sports team" or going to the "right school" or getting a scholarship to study at the best temple.

In a more pragmatic sense, Joseph was probably playing through his mind how he would need to get two turtle doves for the presentation. He may have been thinking about planning for pilgrimages the family would be taking together. Maybe he thought about how he would now have an apprentice in his wood shop or someone else to help with the animals and the household chores? Following the second visit by the angel and the warning

about Herod, we can assume Joseph turned his thoughts and efforts toward the safety and security of his new son. We can be sure like Mary, Joseph pondered. He would worry about Jesus's safety, his well-being and his upbringing. What should I teach him? What could I teach him?

In education we always refer to parents as the "first teachers." Today, in the midst of a pandemic with remote learning taking place in many homes, there are many parents who have had to ramp up their role as "first teacher." Many, I suspect, are ready for parent/teacher retirement. I doubt Joseph felt the anxiety that is rising today. Contrarily, Joseph unconditionally accepted the role as Jesus' first teacher. He undoubtedly embraced the opportunity to have Jesus 24/7 to teach him the tricks of the trade as a carpenter, the practices of a devout Jew, and the behaviors that help one build strong character and a solid reputation.

Joseph was given a gift of understanding his role as "first teacher" and foster father of Christ. He did not need a written curriculum with "next generation" standards. He didn't need lesson plans or progress reports. Joseph was what we would call an intuitive teacher. He was a responsive teacher. He had one class, one student, one son. Joseph knew what he needed to teach Jesus. He knew what, and how he would teach him.

Joseph would give Jesus an understanding of the best of humanity! He would give him the unconditional love of an earthly father. He would teach him the value and importance of family. He would

share quality time with him. He would model great patience.

We know this because we don't read about Joseph yelling at Jesus when he dawdles behind in Jerusalem for days causing Joseph and Mary to double back for the lost child. And when his mother asks; "son where have you been," Joseph patiently lets mom handle this one, as their son quips back, "did you not know I would be in my father's house?" Joseph would teach Jesus what mortal forgiveness looks like and feels like.

He would show him sacrifice and service. He would teach him genuine respect and loyal obedience. Joseph would model homage and worship. His actions would embody dignity, empathy, and compassion for self and others. Joseph's lessons served as a precursor for the judgement and wisdom Jesus would show to others.

For as much as Joseph may have had a preconceived notion of his son building and crafting wood products, he instinctively, knew his Son was destined for building and creating greater things.

So as a master teacher, of one class, one student, one son, Joseph guided, mentored and modeled, teaching Jesus about life and about man's faith. Joseph personified the best of humanity. He taught Jesus how beautiful the gift of life from God is. What a beautiful lesson of faith this is for the ages.

Action Step: Place a picture or statue of St. Joseph in a place of honor in your home. Consecrate your family and loved ones to St. Joseph.

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Formation for Ministry trains laity for service

By Catherine Russell
Coordinator, Formation for Ministry

Back in 1986, pastors recognized the need for well trained laity to assist in various parish ministries. A planning committee was formed, and the first director, Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, was named. The first class of 54 candidates was welcomed in 1990.

Since its inception, the Bishops of our diocese have commissioned more than 1,500 graduates of the program into parish ministry. Today, the program, in its 30th year, continues to provide an excellent academic, pastoral, and personal spiritual foundation for those desiring to share their love of Jesus Christ with others in their parishes.

The two-year program has evolved to meet the changing needs of parishes and those who seek to serve. Yet, the commitment of the program to provide an excellent foundation for lay ministry has not changed. The success of the program hinges on working closely with the pastor to meet the needs of both parish and the candidate.

Through a partnership with Boston College's Crossroads program, candidates take classes in an online format. The classes include Old and New Testament, Creed, Sacraments, Spirituality, Morality, Catholic Social Teaching, Church History and Eucharist.

During year one, candidates participate in two workshops: "Vision of Ministry" and "Recogniz-

Formation for Ministry in the Diocese of Ogdensburg is supported by funds raised through the annual Bishop's Fund Appeal. Thank you for generously supporting this ministry and other vital ministries through the annual appeal.

ing Gifts." There is a day of reflection at the end of the first year. This day is an opportunity to take the time to integrate what they have learned into their own spiritual lives.

During the second year, candidates choose a ministry area from liturgical, youth, faith formation, sick and elderly and parish outreach. They then attend four all-day workshops to sharpen skills in their area of choice. The second year ends with a weekend retreat and the commissioning by the bishop.

The current class will be commissioned by Bishop LaValley in June 2021. We will be looking for a new group of candidates who are called to lay ministry and willing to enter the program. More information can be found on the diocesan website under Office of Formation for Ministry or by contacting the Director, Cathy Russell, crussell@rcdony.org.

Your generous contributions to the Bishop's Fund allows the program to continue to meet the ministry needs of parishes.



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Funeral Mass held for Father James Bucaria

Father James Alfred Bucaria, 75, a retired priest of the Diocese of St. Petersburg who served previously in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, passed away suddenly on July 30, 2020 at his home in Largo, Florida.

Father Bucaria was born in Weatherford, Texas on December 1, 1944, to Alfred and Catherine (Sheridan) Bucaria. Shortly thereafter, the family moved to upstate New

York, where Father Bucaria attended St. Bernard's Seminary, in Rochester, New York. He was ordained to the priesthood on March 4, 1972 for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

During his 48 years of priestly ministry, he assisted in parishes throughout the Diocese of Ogdensburg, including Ticonderoga, Potsdam, Keeseville, Black Brook, Wilmington and Evans Mills. He served for several

years as chair of the diocesan Music Committee, having a Certificate in Sacred Music from St. Pius X School of Music, in Uniondale, New York.

In October 1985, Father Bucaria moved to the Diocese of St. Petersburg, where he was first appointed as parochial vicar of St. Jerome Parish, Indian Rocks Beach, followed by appointments as parochial vicar of St. Michael the Archangel Parish, Clearwa-

ter, St. Paul Parish, St. Petersburg, St. Vincent de Paul Parish, Holiday. He was incardinated into the Diocese of St. Petersburg in October 1990. In May 1991, he was appointed as parochial administrator of St. Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows Parish, Masaryktown, where he was named as pastor in May 1992 and where he faithfully served until his retirement in March 2014. He is remembered for his reverence

and love of tradition in liturgy and music.

A Funeral Mass was held on Wednesday, August 12 at the Cathedral of St. Jude the Apostle, 5815 5th Avenue N., St. Petersburg. Burial will take place in New York at a later date.

Please keep Father Bucaria's brothers, Thomas and Stephen, his cousins and all family members and loved ones in your kind thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

CLINTON

TAKE-OUT HARVEST DINNER

Chazy – Sacred Heart will have a take-out only Turkey Harvest Dinner.

Date: Sept. 27

Time: Noon to 2 p.m. – prepaid Home Delivery within 5 miles and prepaid curbside pick up ONLY; 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. – unreserved take out ONLY

Place: Sacred Heart Church

Cost: All meals are \$12

Contact: For information or to reserve and prepay for your dinner, call Noreen at Sacred Heart Rectory 518-846-7650 by Sept. 15.

ST. LAWRENCE

DRIVE-THRU CHICKEN BBQ

Gouverneur – Drive through Chicken BBQ to be held.

Date: Sept. 6

Time: Noon until gone

Place: St. James School

Cost: Adults, \$12; Children, \$6; under 5, Free

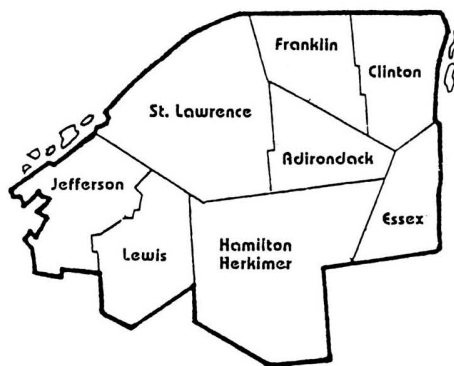
DIOCESAN EVENTS

VIRTUAL FALL RETREAT

Join in a Fall virtual retreat with the theme of Putting Forgiveness and Love into Practice.

Date: Sept. 19-20

Features: Retreat will explore Scriptures on forgiveness and consider barriers and aids to making these teachings a reality in our daily lives. The retreat will be held using Zoom and includes presentations, time for personal prayer and optional times for sharing. Facilitators will be Sister Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ, Molly Amoriell, and Jane Wells. Free will offering grate-



Send information about activities to: North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY 13669; fax, 315-394-0670; e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

fully accepted.

Contact: For more information, contact srbehssj@gmail.com, 315-212-6592.

VIRTUAL PRIEST DISCERNMENT

Zoom in to Priest Discernment. High School Junior men & older are invited to join Father Howard Venette & guests for 60-minute virtual discernment sessions.

Dates: Sept. 20, Oct. 4 & 18, Nov. 1, 15 & 29 and Dec. 13

Time: 3 p.m.

Contact: Father Venette at hvenette@gmail.com for meeting access.

VIRTUAL FAMILY LIFE CONFERENCE

Watch the "Iron Sharpens Iron" project

from the virtual Family Life Conference at <https://www.rcdony.org/vlifc>

Description: see the videos from the Virtual Family Life Conference or to submit a video of your family doing something fun.

LIFECHAIN

Stand up for LIFE at this year's LIFECHAIN! Join in the 33rd annual peaceful, prayerful, public, pro-life witness to the sanctity of life. Rain or shine. All faiths welcome! Bring a friend! Signs are provided. LIFECHAIN practices social distancing. Please stand 25 feet apart.

Date: Oct. 4

Contact: For information about the LIFECHAIN in your area, visit www.lifechain.net

'Just Mercy' among award winners

NEW YORK (CNS) – The hit movies "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" and "Just Mercy" were among this year's Christopher Awards movie winners.

Television winners in the awards' 71st anniversary year include the documentary "College Behind Bars," the docudrama "I Am Somebody's Child: The Regina Louise Story" and "Dolly Parton's Heartstrings: These Old Bones."

These and other TV and film winners, announced Aug. 25 in New York, join book winners announced in April by the Christophers, which is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition of service to God and humanity. The ancient Chinese proverb, "It's better to light one candle than to curse the darkness," guides its awards programs.

In "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood," an assignment to interview children's television host Fred Rogers inspires a cynical journalist to face his demons and transform his family relationships for the better. "Just Mercy" chronicles crusading lawyer Bryan Stevenson's real-life battle to exonerate an innocent African American man

condemned to death row in Alabama, following a trial marked by racism and lies.

In the third film winner, "The Peanut Butter Falcon," a young man with Down syndrome, tired of living in a nursing home for senior citizens, escapes and embarks on an exciting and dangerous road trip with two lost souls who become like family.

"College Behind Bars" profiles a small group of incarcerated men and women transforming their lives as they pursue college degrees in one of the most rigorous and effective prison education programs in the United States.

In "Dolly Parton's Heartstrings: These Old Bones," family, faith and forgiveness come into play when a young lawyer struggles to maintain her principles while suing a clairvoyant old woman with whom she feels a mysterious connection.

"I Am Somebody's Child: The Regina Louise Story" dramatizes the true story of an African American foster child who is separated from the white case worker who wants to adopt her because of the state's racial policies.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Vatican representative calls on U.S. to sign nuclear-test-ban

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the absurdity of "pouring valuable resources into the maintenance of weapons of destruction while so many on this planet are struggling to survive," a Vatican representative told a U.N. meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day Against Nuclear Tests. "It is impossible to make a moral case for continued nuclear weapon testing," said Msgr. Fredrik Hansen, charge d'affaires at the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations. "There should never be another nuclear test explosion," he told the online meeting Aug. 26. The United Nations has designated Aug. 29 as the International Day Against Nuclear Tests, and Msgr. Hansen used the occasion to call on China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the United States to ratify the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

For blind educator, pandemic poses unique hardships

DAVIE, Fla. (CNS) – Social distancing and lockdown protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic are challenging enough for most people. But for someone who is vision impaired, there are added complications and twists. That's the experience of Francesca Marinaro, a college educator and Catholic who is navigating the crisis while living independently and managing a career. "When you are coping with any disability, there are certain things that become a little trickier," said Marinaro, assistant professor of English at Broward College. In a time when people rely more than ever on working remotely, online conferencing and internet grocery ordering, Marinaro said she has a slight leg up in the technology department from her years of using digital tools for the blind. But the pandemic still presents real-world dilemmas for the handicapped. One issue is touch, Marinaro told the Florida Catholic, newspaper of the Miami Archdiocese. She explained that people who are visually impaired need assistance such as having someone hand them something or guide them somewhere. "Isolation and social distancing for a person who is not sighted is a challenge when trying to keep your distance from others," Marinaro said.

U.S. bishops to meet virtually, not in person, in November

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The U.S. bishops will conduct their annual fall general meeting virtually in November rather than meet in person as has been the bishops' practice. The move was brought about by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The bishops had canceled a spring meeting set for Detroit in June due to the pandemic. The cancellation was the first time since the formation of the bishops' conference in 1917 that a meeting of all bishops had been called off. Bishops voted 219-5, with one abstention, to change the format of the meeting from in-person to virtual. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops also consulted with the Vatican prior to making the decision. The USCCB's Administrative Committee, which governs the activities of the bishops' conference between meetings of the full body of bishops, will continue its practice of setting the agenda for the November meeting when the committee meets in mid-September. The original dates for the fall meeting, which would have been held in Baltimore, were Nov. 9-12. No dates were announced in the Aug. 28 press released informing the public about the virtual meeting.

'Faithful Citizenship' reminder: Gospel cannot be parsed in partisan terms

The U.S. bishops' quadrennial document on political responsibility is rooted in the Catholic Church's long-standing moral tradition that upholds human dignity and the common good of all, Archbishop Paul S. Coakley of Oklahoma City said.

"The document is meant to give Catholic voters an opportunity to reflect upon how their faith intersects with their political and civic responsibilities," said the archbishop, who chairs the bishops' Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development.

Titled "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility From the Catholic Bishops of the United States," the document has been offered as a guide to Catholic voters every presidential election year since 1976.

It has been updated and revised at four-year intervals to reflect changes in the issues confronting the country since it first appeared.

One thing "Faithful Citizenship" is not is a mandate on which candidate for public office to vote for, Archbishop Coakley said.

Voting, he added, is a responsibility to be taken seriously and that requires prudential judgment in determining who can best serve the common good.

"No candidate will likely reflect all of our values," he told Catholic News Service Aug. 18. "But I think we need to begin in prayer. We need to know our faith. We need to study our faith. We need to have recourse to the catechism and what it might teach about certain

questions.

"This document is intended to be that, an official guide for the formation of consciences that Catholics can utilize as they weigh these questions," the archbishop said.

Furthermore, he continued, "the Gospel cannot be parsed in political or partisan terms. The Gospel calls us to live by standards and our Catholic faith calls us to embrace standards that are not divisible into left or right, Republican or Democratic terminology."

The document went through no major revisions for this year's election, but it is being supplemented by an introductory letter, which underwent a long debate before its adoption by the full body of bishops during their fall general assembly in November.

This time around, the document also is accompanied by a series of five videos that highlight vital public policy issues.

The document has three parts.

The first part outlines the responsibility of Catholics to incorporate Catholic teaching as they consider their vote as well as their support for myriad public policy issues that confront society.

The text explores a series of questions related to why the church teaches about public policy issues; who in the church should participate in political life; how the church helps Catholics to speak about political and social questions; and what the church says about social teaching in the public square.

Part two outlines policy positions of the bishops on

numerous issues. Topics addressed include human life and dignity, promoting peace, marriage and family religious freedom, economic justice, health care, migration, Catholic education, promoting justice and countering violence, combating unjust discrimination, care for the environment, communications, media and culture and global solidarity.

The bishops said they wanted to "call attention to issues with significant moral dimensions that should be carefully considered in each campaign and as policy decisions are made in the years to come."

Part three lists goals for Catholics' participation in political life, whether they are citizens, candidates or public officials. Notably, it invites Catholics to assess moral and ethical questions emanating from public policy issues. It also lists nine goals for Catholics to weigh in public life.

"Faithful Citizenship" also draws from the teaching of Pope Francis, Pope Benedict XVI, St. John Paul II, St. John XXIII, the Second Vatican Council, and "Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church."

The introductory letter reminds Catholics that "we bring the richness of our faith to the public square" and that "faith and reason inform our efforts to affirm both the dignity of the human person and the common good of all."

The text of "Faithful Citizenship" can be downloaded as a free PDF from USCCB.org, or it can be purchased by going to Store.USCCB.org.

'God has something else for me to do'

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

WATERTOWN – Though she's tried to serve God and her parish throughout her life, Helen Guardino-Trimm says she's not done yet.

"I just turned 90," said Guardino-Trimm. "I still feel that God has something else for me to do. I know what it is, but I know it's coming."

Guardino-Trimm said she was raised in the Catholic faith, receiving all her sacraments at the church she still calls her faith home, St. Anthony's Church in Watertown.

"I've been so many gifts in my life," she said. "St. Anthony's has been a gift. I received all my sacraments there, and I've gone to the St. Anthony's Novena every Tuesday for years."

After graduating from high school, Guardino-Trimm started her professional life working for the City of Watertown Recreation Department, a position she held until the birth of her first son, Gus.

"I had him on a Friday morning," she said. "He was two weeks early. They were planning a shower for me in city hall the day I had him."

She then stayed home raising her sons, Gus and Tony, until Tony reached fifth grade. She then started working for the Watertown School District, first in the cafeteria at Boon Street School and later as a teacher's assistant. She later moved on to Harold T. Wiley School, where she worked in an experimental education setting.

"There were no classrooms," she said. "First, second, third and fourth grade were in one large area. I helped students with math, reading and how to get along with one another."

After five years in that position, Guardino-Trimm said she needed a break



Helen Guardino-Trimm of Watertown poses with an Award of Recognition she received several years ago from Bishop Terry R. LaValley. She was nominated for the award by Father Donald A. Robinson.

from the educational setting. Soon, though, God put another opportunity in her path.

"We had a store down in Wescott Beach," Guardino-Trimm said. "I was there when a woman came up to me and said, 'Helen Guardino? How would you like a job at the (YWCA)? It was definitely God's plan.'"

Guardino-Trimm said she lead a teen program at the YWCA for three years, when she was called into a meeting with the organization's leadership.

"I was asked to talk to the grade seven and eight students about the (birth control) pill," she said. "I said, 'no. That's between mothers and daughters.' They asked, 'You're a good Catholic girl, aren't you?' I said, 'Yes, I am.' I was released from my duties and told I wasn't to talk to these teenage girls. I was depressed for a few days."

But God soon put an-

other opportunity in her path.

"I went to Msgr. Milia, and I told him, 'if you ever need help, I'm available,'" Guardino-Trimm said. "Two weeks later, he told me he needed help with the bulletin. I did the bulletin."

Her career at St. Anthony's Church was born.

Guardino-Trimm's duties continued to expand, and she continued to become more and more involved in the life of the parish. She became a lay minister and an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist. She later started volunteering as a teacher with the Faith Formation program, working in First Communion and Confirmation preparation. She's served with the Altar-Rosary Society, including serving as the organization's president a few times. She has assisted with the parish Bingo program and cleaning the church, and also taught for



32 years with the Special Religious Education Program.

"The children and adults in that program are just beautiful," she said. "They have so much joy."

Guardino-Trimm worked for St. Anthony's parish for 40 years, working for both Msgr. Milia and Father Donald Robinson.

"I've been able to work for two wonderful priests, and I've been able to get to know a lot of others," she said. "St. Anthony's is warm and receiving. I love it. A lot of us grew up together. And the new people are sweet and wonderful. We've had differences (within the parish community), but those have never become the focus. Everyone is willing to work together. As we've combined with St. Patrick's and Holy Family, that community keeps growing."

While Guardino-Trimm retired from her job with the parish several years ago, she continues to be involved in the Mount Carmel committee, aiding with preparation for the community's annual Mount Carmel Festival and its related publication.

"Every time I needed to step away from one of my activities, I would pray to

the Holy Spirit, and you know what? God would put the right face right in front of me," she said. "God really has been my guide."

To cultivate her faith, Guardino-Trimm said she reads the "Living Faith" devotional regularly. She also prays Padre Pio's "Stay with Me" after receiving Holy Communion; prays the Prayer to St. Gertrude for the souls in purgatory; prays to a grandparent's prayer for her four grandchildren; prays for the intercession of Our Lady of Mount Carmel; prays a prayer inspired by speaker and author Matthew Kelly and prays the Rosary.

While she devotes much of her time to the Lord, Guardino-Trimm says the Lord has also given much to her.

"I've lost two husbands," she said. "God was my strength. My faith gives me purpose in life. I know that in my suffering, I suffer with Jesus. In my happiness, I laugh with Jesus. I'm not doing this by myself. I always have this wonderful, wonderful person and God looking over me. That means a lot to me."

"I always pray, 'Lord, help me to realize that nothing can happen today that you and I can't handle.'"

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

We are our brother's keeper

"Am I my brother's keeper?" That was the lame excuse Cain gave to God ages ago when asked where his brother Abel was. At many different times, God tells that we are responsible for each other's well-being. Each person on this earth can have an effect for the good or evil of our society, and He will call us to an accounting at the end of our lives.



**Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore**

In today's first reading, God says to Ezekiel, "You, son of man, I have appointed watchman for the house of Israel." Then, by order of God, Ezekiel is to draw a picture for his fellow countrymen showing what a watchman is like and what he is expected to do. He draws a picture for them of Israel at war. A

watchman is chosen to be on the lookout for the enemy forces. When he spots them, he is to sound a trumpet to warn them. If they heed his warning and take shelter, then they will be saved, but if they ignore the trumpet alert and perish, it will not be held against the watchman. He incurs no guilt because he has done his duty. He has given them due

warning. Now, it is the duty of each individual citizen to act accordingly; if he fails to do so, he bears the responsibility for whatever harm comes.

In an earlier chapter of Ezekiel, we find the same words, but with a shocking twist; God is seen as warning the people that He Himself may come at an unexpected hour to call

Sept. 6

Fourth Sunday of Advent

READINGS

Ezekiel 33:7-9

Romans 13:8-10

Matthew 18:15-20

them to judgment! We are indeed our brother's keeper. We are watchmen for the Lord's coming!

In the Gospel reading from Matthew, we have the same message. Each one of us has a duty to warn our brother and sister of the consequences when they sin. First, take them aside privately so as not to embarrass them. If they don't do anything about it, then take one or two witnesses with you when you warn them. If all else fails, call the Church together (i.e., ask the pastor to help you out). These are the rules for fraternal correction. When are we "off the hook"

from this procedure? Spiritual writers say we're excused if we know the person will get extremely angry or when we're certain that it won't work!

St. Paul, in the second reading, backs up this teaching when he says, "Owe nothing to anyone, except to love one another, for one who loves another has fulfilled the Law." All ten commandments are fulfilled when we love God and our neighbor as we love ourselves.

We mustn't let ourselves off too lightly. The process of forgiveness and the work of reconciliation is likely one of the most difficult aspects of Christian life for many followers of Jesus. The well-worn maxim "forgive and forget" can apply to many grievances. Indeed, psychologically it may be easier to settle on forgiveness in one's heart and let go of

the past, than to wrestle with the complicated process of reconciliation. Forgiveness can allow us to put the past behind us, to achieve a certain measure of peace even if relationships are not restored. Then, reconciliation is more difficult because it struggles with the demands of justice. Reconciliation requires an encounter between offender and offended and a movement on the part of both toward a restored equilibrium. It is no wonder that in his Second Letter to the Corinthians, St. Paul calls this task the ministry of reconciliation, for it is truly that kind of work. And it's hard work. We pray this weekend for all world leaders who send ambassadors to other nations to engage in that work, and we pray that each one of us can engage in that ministry when it's needed at home.

CALLED TO SERVE

'They are always watching'

Social media is filled every day with nicely presented profundities. Just today a friend posted "Great attitude is like a perfect cup of coffee, don't start your day without it." Let me sip my cup and think about that for a moment. Another friend shared "Blessed are they who see beautiful things in humble places." That is a Beatitude I do not recall. Anyway, you get the point. We are living in a time of sayings. We are encouraged each day to be inspired by one person who found meaning and direction in some saying, or comment or statement penned by another. Then they share it. Thanks for that.

One of my favorites over the years is "They are always watching." I have no idea who said it first nor do I recall who said it to me. But I have found the axiom to be true. "They are always watching." They can be anyone in your circle of friends, relatives and acquaintances or not. They are usually folks you least suspect are keeping an eye on you and always are individuals who can change your life. It might be the department head or boss who has been quietly watching you work, your attitude, your demeanor, how you present yourself. One day, out of the blue, that watcher invites you in to offer a promotion or a

new job opportunity. They have been watching.

We have all heard of the performer who was discovered by someone who has been watching from afar.

A fellow I admire used to invite others to a new task or leadership position by saying, "I have an opportunity for you to excel!" That will get your attention.

Perhaps it is a member of the clergy in your parish who says to you have you ever thought about becoming a lay minister, or a religious, or a deacon or a priest? Perhaps you have been invited

to lead or become involved in a ministry in the parish. The invitation did not come out of the blue. Father is not looking to fill slots. The pastor is looking for people he feels will contribute in a major way to our mission to spread the good news of Jesus Christ.



**Deacon
Kevin Mastellon**

Borrowing from Peter's line to Jesus in last week's Gospel, we might react with "God forbid, Lord! No such thing should ever happen to me." Perhaps we laugh off the notion or invitation. Don't. You are being watched for a reason. I believe the Holy

Spirit is at work inspiring others to keep an eye on you. The invitation would not have been extended unless someone believes you are capable and worthy. My own vocation to the diaconate was influenced greatly by the parishioners who would say, in one fashion or another, "you should be a deacon."

Here's another one of those clever quotes. This one seems very appropriate. "Time is limited, and some opportunities never repeat themselves."

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

Seeing, grace and three men named John

By Matthew Pietropaoli
Guest Contributor

In the late 1950s, white journalist John Howard Griffin worked with a dermatologist to make his skin color appear much darker. Griffin then traveled around the southern United States, posing as a black man in the midst of segregated and very volatile states like Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama. Griffin's main intent was to experience and then subsequently describe what it was like for black people living the south in the 1950s. Griffin's travels, depicted in *Black Like Me*, showed the dark side of the ostensibly idyllic 1950s Americana: widespread and often unaddressed segregation, as well as animosity, fear, distrust, hatred, anger, abuse, and violence directed against black people. Griffin recounted being forced to flee from prospective muggings, undergoing the humiliation of being constantly called "boy," and even having to endure a lurid rant about black genitalia. Yet Griffin persevered, convinced of his mission to articulate the racism rampant in the South and its ramifications in the black community. Of course, his courage and tenacity cost him: pursuant to the publication of his book, Griffin and his family were forced to relocate, due to the constant harassment and death threats they received. Griffin's life, however, is also remarkable for another reason: he experienced a seemingly miraculous cure of his blindness in the early 1950s. Griffin's sight was thus restored to him, and his sight enabled him to partake of and describe

the aforementioned journalistic trip throughout the South.

"I was blind, but now I see." Those words should be quite familiar to most Catholic readers, since they are the first lines of "Amazing Grace." John Newton, who penned that song, was, moreover, a former slave ship captain. His seismic change of heart and forsaking of the slave industry led eventually to his writing the world-famous song. Newton's eyes were opened – opened to the horror and evil of slavery, opened such that they could never close again. The grace which came into his life made present to him – in an unavoidable and undeniable manner – the atrocities wrought against black people who were stolen from Africa and forced into chattel slavery in the New World. Grace made clear to him the absolute wickedness of transporting other human beings in chains as if they were merchandise to be bought and sold. One final note: Newton's physical eyesight failed him in his later years, and he was nearly blind by the time of his death in 1807.

Thus, in reflecting on these two men named John, what comes to mind is the connection between grace and sight. John Griffin's physical blindness was healed, which gave him the grace-filled opportunity to witness to and describe in moving detail the racism suffered by black people in America. John Newton's spiritual blindness toward the humanity and dignity of the African slaves was healed by that same "amazing grace," leading to his conversion and ministry. Griffin came to see and understand some-



Matthew Pietropaoli

thing about the experience of black persons living in the United States. Newton came to see and understand the value and humanity of the slaves and the absolute evil of slavery. Hence, grace fostered the capacity of both men to sympathize and indeed empathize with the sufferings, pain, and misery experienced by their black brothers and sisters.

Grace, of course, may also be on the minds and hearts of many Catholics these days. After all, the grace of the Eucharist – and in some cases even the grace of confession – have not been available to all because of COVID-19. The coronavirus prompted the suspension of Mass across much of the country, and only recently are churches re-opened. Hence, we feel overjoyed and delighted that, after an almost three-month hiatus, we can return to the grace of the sacraments. The current crises of corona virus cannot ultimately prevent the grace made manifest in the sacraments.

Yet, the return to the grace of the sacraments ought, I think, coincide with a deeper awareness of and reflection on another crisis in the United States, that of

systemic racism. For over 400 years, black people in the United States of suffered from one injustice after another: slavery, Jim Crow, segregation, lynching, the KKK, the denial of voting rights, poor and segregated housing, redlining, prejudice in the job market, etc. Now, we see that racism expressed in the killing of George Floyd involving four Minneapolis police officers. The protests and demands for change that have arisen consequent to this death have exposed the tremendous and long-lasting prejudice of Americans toward black people. There is a serious and significant need to assess and re-evaluate the manner in which and extent to which racism has run rampant, both in our country and in our own hearts and minds. A central question I have been forced to ask myself is this: In what ways do I participate in that same evil of racism which strangled the life out of George Floyd?

Such heartfelt and soul-searching reflection is not pleasant or easy. But it was not easy for John Howard Griffin to endure taunts, altercations, segregation, near-constant fear, death threats, and a forced relocation. It was not easy for John Newton to confess to and repent from trading human beings as chattel. "Ease" is not the operative phrase here; rather we should, like Griffin and Newton, be more concerned with "seeing." That is, we should be concerned with how we see our black brothers and sisters. Do we see them as fully children of God, made in His image, deserving of our love, respect, compassion, and

sympathy? Or do we see them primarily as threatening, as different, as lazy, as overly-demanding, as prone to criminality? Do we see the pain and suffering endured for hundreds of years by the black community? Or do we turn a blind eye to it, either intentionally or out of laziness? Do we truly attend to and desire justice for our black brothers and sisters, even if it means the revocation of our social privilege? Or, are we more content with the status quo, unjust though it may be? Finally, are we willing to undergo the discomfort of having truths about racism made known? Or, do we prefer keeping in the dark the challenging and demanding facts about racism and our own possible participation in it?

Another man named John. In the 9th chapter of the Gospel of St. John, a blind man encounters Jesus, who restores his sight. The Pharisees hear of this healing and interrogate the man about who healed him. The formerly blind man, in response to their questions about the identity and character of Jesus, exclaims, "whether he is a sinner I do not know; one thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see." As we come to meet Jesus again in the Eucharist may we pray for and be willing to receive the grace of sight, the ability to see our black brothers and sisters as He sees them, as His beloved children. May we no longer be blind to racism but come to see it more fully and comprehensively. And may we come also to see our black brothers and sisters as fully deserving of compassion, kindness, love, and justice.



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

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Back to school in uncertain times

When it comes to our children, if there is anything that is certain right now, it is uncertainty. As the school year returns for the youth in our diocese, and the administrations, teachers and staffers who work in our schools attempt to make sense of it all, let us pray for their safety and security. Let us pray for them to have good health and secure environment. Let us pray that the students can learn and experience growth in conditions that are beneficial for all involved.

As our world battles a great foe, the COVID-19 virus, we must try to remain calm despite the presence of much despair, grief and uncertainty. We can attain that peace when we seek calm through prayer and reflection on what is good in this world. We must continue to be grateful to God for all that is good and will always be good in this world. Through prayer and faith, we can get through this together and attain the wisdom we seek to make for the best possible outcome, especially for our young people.

There will be much that we cannot control. There will be even more that will make us possibly turn against each other. So, let us pray for peace. Let us recognize that we will have our differences and that it is these differences that make us all unique and wonderful in God's eyes. We will need to find some common ground and work together peacefully. Peace will be needed to help us guide our youth and their teachers through turbulent times ahead as they are confronted with difficult decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mostly, let us pray for a good school year and the best possible outcome. At the end of the day, it is really about our youth being equipped with the tools needed to transition to adulthood in this world. They need education, regardless of the format. Also, let us remember this one thing: the uncertainty our schools are dealing with here and now is what the mission lands experience every day.

The mission lands do not all have the luxury of technology and virtual learning. Society can learn so much from our counterparts who live and work in the mission lands and from those they serve. A lot of what they do is simply to pray and love one another. They ask for help and show much gratitude when it arrives. They make matters work in times of uncertainty.

To start, we can pray, help each other and be resourceful. It is going to be filled with uncertainty, but together we can help each other learn, love, grow and be safely at school – virtual or otherwise.

God bless our schools and students. Pray for a cure.

OBITUARIES

AuSable Forks – Sarah Richards, 77; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 28, 2020 at Holy Name Church; burial in Holy Name Cemetery.

Edwards – Carol A. (Perrin) Brayton, 74; Graveside services Aug. 24, 2020 at Fairview Cemetery.

Lowville – Donald J. “Donnie” Company, 76; Graveside services Aug. 26, 2020 at Lowville Rural Cemetery.

Massena – Alexander S. Kozsan, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 29, 2020 at The Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Angel M. (Deshaies) Ouimet, 98; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 31, 2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Lucas R. Purser, 30; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 28, 2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Arlington National Cemetery.

Massena – Mary Kathryn Spangolo, 78; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 28,

2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Walter B. Hovendon, 94; Private Services to be held.

Ogdensburg – Bruce J. Richer, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 28, 2020 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Henry Tynon, 59; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 3, 2020 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Peru – Gabrielle (Lussier) Coryea, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 27, 2020 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Peru – Karl Frederic Schweikert III, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 25, 2020 at St. Augustine's Church.

Plattsburgh – Sheila (Gilroy) Bond, 61; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 24, 2020 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Nicholas Richard Gadbois, 29; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 27, 2020 at St. Peter's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Roy Lynch, 63; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 26, 2020 at Our Lady of Victory Church; burial in St. Peter's Columbarium.

Potsdam – Eleanor E. Doyle; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 4, 2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in old St. Joseph's Cemetery, Malone.

Redford – Donna M. (Waldron) Couture, 65; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 29, 2020 at Church of the Assumption.

Saranac Lake – Sandra A. Walker, 77; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 31, 2020 at St. Bernard's Church.

Watertown – Kenneth F. Baker, 94; Private Mass of Christian Burial to be held.

Watertown – Margaret Mary (Stieve) Phillips, 98; Graveside Services Aug. 29, 2020 at Glenwood Cemetery.

German bishops: Talks with Rome must include laity

WURZBURG, Germany (CNS) – The German bishops plan to seek talks with the Vatican about its instruction on parish reforms in the Catholic Church.

The German Catholic news agency KNA reported the bishops said they want lay Catholics to be involved in the discussion. The bishops' conference made the announcement after a meeting of its 27-member Permanent Council.

The announcement said the president of the bishops' conference, Bishop Georg Batzing, would accept an offer for talks recently conveyed by Cardinal Beniamino Stella, head of the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy.

Bishop Batzing will suggest to the congregation

that the discussion be held with the leaders of the synodal path reform project because the Vatican instruction addressed bishops, priests, deacons and laypeople alike, the bishops said.

The synodal path is an effort by the bishops' conference and Central Committee of German Catholics to restore trust following a September 2018 church-commissioned report that detailed thousands of cases of sexual abuse by Catholic clergy over six decades.

In addition to Bishop Batzing and his deputy, Bishop Franz-Josef Bode, the presidium of the Synodal Path includes Thomas Sternberg, president of the Central Com-

mittee of German Catholics, and Karin Kortmann, vice president of the committee.

In their statement, the bishops' conference said the Vatican instruction on parishes “can only be the initiation and the starting point of a conversation, so that it becomes a real help for the various situations in the local churches.”

The Vatican published the instruction July 20. Many German bishops criticized the paper, while others, such as Cologne Cardinal Rainer Maria Woelki, praised it. The meeting in Wurzburg focused on “an assessment of the situation and a discussion of individual sections of the instruction,” the bishops said.

Parish launches home-based faith formation

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

CANTON – Young parishioners of St. Mary's Church will have the opportunity to learn their faith with their families, as the church unveils a new catechesis program for these challenging times.

"The format is designed to help people stay safe at home while learning about their faith with their families," said Father Bryan D. Stitt, pastor of the Canton parish. "As we face the challenges of a COVID world, the beautiful silver lining is keeping parents in the loop."

Father Stitt recently announced that the parish would continue religious education for the 2020-2021 school year by using an online program, "Spirit of Truth," created by Sophia Press Institute.

"The program offers two formats, and we're getting both," Father Stitt said. "There's an app and a book. With the app, there's a backdoor entrance for parents where they can get the handbook for the program. For kids who may do better with a book, that's also an option."

While both the book and the web-based app offer the same instruction, the app offers some interactive features not available in the book.

"Every lesson has a beautiful piece of art as a focal point," Father Stitt said. "There are 'hot spots' on the pictures that users can interact with to get more information."

The program will be used with youth in kindergarten through grade eight. While there are basic themes that run through all grade levels, the program is broken down into age-appropriate lessons based on grade level.

"We want the program to be accessible to everyone," Father Stitt said. "There are different lessons for different grade levels, though sometimes there is overlap."

"Spirit of Truth" is divided into 32 lessons for each grade level. Lessons take a maximum of around 90 minutes, though most can be completed in less time,

depending on how many of the features the families decide to use.

"This is an opportunity for families to grow in holiness together," Father Stitt said. "It's hard to be holy as an individual. Holiness is catchy. The most essential group is the family. We want to give our families an opportunity to grow in holiness together by discussing these lessons and learning together."

The program will also give families the flexibility to develop their faith on a schedule that meets their needs.

"If Sunday at 10 a.m. doesn't work for them, they can do it on Tuesday evenings," Father Stitt said. "Each family can do it when it works best for their schedule."

For families who don't feel confident with the materials, the parish is offering a support team.

"First, our catechists still want to help," Father Stitt said. "They understand why we're not able to have a classroom experience, but they still want to be involved. These are professional teachers who are willing to advise parents and give tips on that front. For parents who know their children are going to ask tough theological questions, we have people on staff with theology backgrounds who are willing and able to help. And if all else fails, I'm available to help, as well."

To help parents, each lesson comes with "a primer," a one page introduction to the themes that will be dis-

cussed.

"Hopefully, those will serve as refreshers, though they may also serve as introductions to particular topics for parents," Father Stitt said. "The program is meant to be something simple and beautiful."

The parish also hopes to offer quarterly in-person catechetical offerings but will watch and follow current pandemic guidelines in planning such events.

Father Stitt said the parish chose this program after extensive research into available options and a "holy spirit moment." During the research period, the pastor received an email from an individual he knew as "a punk kid from the youth group from my first parish."

"The subject line was 'religious education,'" Father Stitt said. "It turns out, this 'punk kid' has grown closer to the Lord and was working as a marketing manager and promoting the 'Spirit of Truth' program. I was dumbfounded to see how he was so dedicated to this program. It made me give it a second look."

St. Mary's hopes to begin using the program Sept. 13. Father Stitt created a YouTube video to announce the launch.

There will be no charge for participation.

For more information about Spirit of Truth, contact the parish office or visit <https://canton-catholics.com/religious-education> or <https://sophiainstitute-forteachers.org/shop/spirit-of-truth/parish-edition>.

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