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NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

SEPT. 23, 2020

CELEBRATING OUTSIDE



Father Douglas A. Decker welcomed two new members into the Catholic Church when he baptized cousins Riley Rey-Ann Dukett and Jonathan Artemus Doane. Riley's parents are Mathew and Amanda Dukett, grandparents are Nancy and John Merrihew and Cindy and Scot Dukett, and Godparents were Rebecca (Dukett) Doane and Joseph Merrihew. Parents of Jonathan are Rebecca Dukett Doane and Jonathan Doane, grandparents are Cindy and Scot Dukett and James Doane and Susan Jones, and the Godparents were Amanda and Mathew Dukett. These Baptisms were held outside on the side lawn of St. Alphonsus Holy Name Parish. The outdoor baptism easily enabled social distancing for those attending. Father Decker's outdoor celebration also allowed for Riley and Jonathan's siblings, Alexis and Elowen, to enhance the celebration by ringing the giant bell on the side lawn.

We appreciate our priests

Sept. 27 is Priesthood Sunday. The *North Country Catholic* is celebrating with its annual Priest Appreciation edition. In this edition, see how the priests serving two of the largest communities in the diocese are linking their parishes, how the two newest priests of the diocese are growing in their vocations, how a priest who is new to the diocese is serving the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center and how two retired priests are continuing to serve God's people. This edition also includes numerous notes of thanks to the priests who serve in our diocese. We truly appreciate our priests!

Editor's note:

Due to space constraints, the Sharing our Stories, Sharing our Faith series is not included in this edition. The series will resume in the Sept. 30 edition.

Pope thanks elderly, ill priests for witness

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis reminded elderly and ill priests that they need not be afraid of suffering because Christ is always there to help them carry that cross.

With God's grace, their situation, which was made even more difficult and risky because of the COVID-19 pandemic and strict protocols for containing its spread, can be "an experience of purification," he said.

For priests, fragility can be like a fire that refines and soap that purifies, and which, "raising us up to God, refines and sanctifies us," he said.

"We are not afraid of suffering; the Lord carries the cross with us," he said.

The pope's message was sent to priests taking part in an annual day of prayer and fraternity for elderly

and sick clergy Sept. 17 in Italy's northern Lombardy region – the region that had been hit hardest by coronavirus infections and deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Vatican released the message the same day.

Over the past several months, the pope said, "we have all experienced restrictions. Days spent in confined spaces seemed endless and always the

same."

"We have missed the affection of those dearest to us and of friends; the fear of infection has reminded us of our precariousness," and, he added, it has also given people an idea of what many elderly people experience every day.

Pope Francis said he hoped this period would help everyone understand how "it is necessary not to waste the time that is

given to us; that it will help us to enjoy the beauty of encountering others, to heal from the virus of self-sufficiency."

He said he was pleased the group could travel with their bishops to the town of Caravaggio and pray at the city's Marian sanctuary.

He thanked them for their faithful and silent witness, and their love for God and the church.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Serving through the struggles

It was a great piece of advice.

When I accepted this job, but before my start date, a wise priest of our diocese gave me these words of wisdom: "When you work with priests and religious 40 hours a week, you may seem them in moments when they're not their best and when they're not exactly Christ-like. Don't let that impact your faith."

While I have great respect and appreciation for our priests, I also see that they're human. They have bad days. They have struggles. They sin. As the wise priest correctly advised me, I've seen some of them

when they're not at their very best.

As I was reflecting on the impact priests have had on my life in preparation for this

Darcy L.
Fargo

Priest Appreciation edition, I realized that while it sometimes frustrates me when I see priests (or religious or ministry leaders) in the moments when they're not at their best, it's also a source of inspiration.

Cooperating with God's grace, our priests do amazing things. They are the conduits through which God turns water and wine into the literal body and blood of Christ. They are vehicles of God's forgiveness in the sacra-

ment of reconciliation. They instruct us. They guide us. They help keep the churches that nurture our faith running. They lead and participate in ministries that help the most disadvantaged among us, including the sick, the poor and the imprisoned. And that's just a short list of the amazing work our priests do. They do much, much more.

And they do all of that even though they're not perfect. They do all of that despite their sinfulness, bad days and struggles.

How beautiful is that? It's a model we're all called to follow. None of us are perfect. We all have sins, struggles and bad days, yet we can still be vehicles of God's grace to others. In fact, we're called to do

so.

We appreciate our priests. We appreciate that they are human – with all the imperfections that go with that – and still are vehicles of the divine, and we appreciate all they do in service of God and His people.

One note: While we appreciate all our priests, there are some who aren't mentioned in these pages. Despite best intentions, people miss deadlines. People forget to submit their notes of thanks. Though they may not be mentioned, these priests are still appreciated and loved.

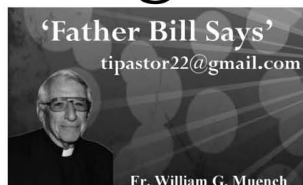
Please keep our priests in your prayers and don't forget to thank them for saying "yes" to God's call and the countless ways they help us all.

Spending time with St. Paul

This week, I have spent quite a bit of time with St. Paul. At each of the daily Masses this week, the New Testament Scripture reading was from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. This letter is simply filled with important and meaningful material about the early Church and ideas that are still very valuable for today's Church.

St. Paul lived in Corinth for a time. As he continued his missionary journey, however, in an effort to stay close to the people of Corinth, he wrote this powerful letter. All of the letters of St. Paul continue to be valuable messages for today's Church and for Christians of all times.

Now, much of what we say here will be familiar to you. However, let us review all this, especially the sections that are readings at Mass. In one of the readings, St. Paul introduced his people to the imagery of the Church as a body, as the body of Christ. Paul sees our Church as being like a human body, united and one Church. Like any



human body, our Church is made up of many parts. St. Paul reminds us that some are apostles, some are prophets, some are teachers – all are working together, sharing their gifts and making the Church alive and strong.

Today, we continue to use this image of the Church as the body of Christ. It is an excellent image. This body that is our Church has many parts. Each of us are a part of this body of Christ. Laity and clergy all have important and necessary parts to play in the Church's mission to unite us all and to bring the message of God's great love for us all on this planet.

On another day, the reading from the First Corinthians is the very familiar and popular reading on love. Everybody loves this reading. You have

heard this reading often at weddings or funerals. I know you remember it. St. Paul boldly begins telling us about the importance of living a life filled with love – a life filled with love like the love God has for us all. St. Paul writes that each follower of Jesus has received many gifts from the Lord, but they mean little when our life has no love. Remember this that St. Paul writes, "If I have faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing." Can you imagine? We are nothing without being a loving person.

Then in another reading this week, St. Paul defines love. Again, I know you will recognize this part. Here, St. Paul becomes very dramatic – "Love is patient, Love is kind." Then he adds all those negatives. "Love is not jealous, not pompous, not rude, does not seek its own interests, it is not quick tempered." Each segment in this section deserves a long and sincere meditation. I must ask myself: Do I, in all honesty,

match up with St. Paul's definition? What do I have to change?

On another day in the reading from Corinthians, St. Paul declares his confidence that he deserves to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus. He came to believe – in a new faith when the Lord lead him to conversion – that Jesus came to this world to be one of us; Jesus died for our sins; he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; and Jesus appeared to the apostles. Then, St. Paul reminds us of his conversion when truly Jesus appeared to him, literally knocking him off his horse, changing his life and making him an important missionary for the Church. St. Paul then humbly confesses to us that he is unworthy to be an apostle because he was once a persecutor of Christians. In a sense, he makes it clear to us that you can never tell who will become the greatest missionaries. With God's grace, we are all called to be great saints like St. Paul.

He can talk of linking parishes or the Yankees

By Deacon Kevin Mastellon
Contributing Writer

WATERTOWN – Father John Michael Demo has the same name as his father. But Mr. Demo did not want his son called “junior,” so he nicknamed him Mickey. The name stuck. The name Mickey had another significance too. Mr. Demo, from Brasher Falls, served in the U.S. Army with Robert Clinton Richardson, Jr., a South Carolina kid who went on to become the second baseman for the New York Yankees. Bobby Richardson played on the Yankees teams that boasted Kubek, Boyer, Berra, Maris and, oh yeah, Mickey Mantle. The nickname Mickey also served to honor Mantle a Yankee great.

“When young kids hear my name, they think Mickey Mouse, but the older ones want to know if there is a relationship to Mickey Mantle,” Father Demo said.

Obviously, there is. As a kid, Father Demo met those Yankees greats on a trip to the Stadium in the Bronx.

Father Mickey Demo is a lifelong Yankees fan.

“I was pretty much born into a Yankees fan family,” he said.

He is a University of Notre Dame fan too, for the same reason.

“Being a Catholic family, we were in step with most Catholic families and rooted for good ole Notre Dame,” Father Demo said.

He has been to Notre Dame Stadium too for a Navy-Notre Dame football game with his brother. “I can cross that off the bucket list,” he said.

Father Demo has another family inheritance: a strong devotion to the Blessed Mother.



DEACON KEVIN MASTELLON/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Father John M. “Mickey” Demo, joined by Bishop Terry R. LaValley and Father Deepak Baru, HGN, prays the Eucharistic Prayer during his installation as Pastor of St. Anthony’s and St. Patrick’s Churches in Watertown.

“My Mom’s name is Mary, and the name has always been important to me as far as the nurturing aspect of our Blessed Mother,” he said. “The family Rosary, that whole belief that the family that prays together, stays together was important. Like many Catholic families, during Lent, we would say the Rosary together and some of us said it slow, and others fast, but we all joined.”

Father Mickey has an older sister in Syracuse and a younger sister in Massena. He also has two brothers, one in Cazenovia, the other in Colorado.

Father John Michael Demo was ordained by Bishop Stanislaus Brzana at St. Mary’s Cathedral on September 24, 1988. It was a small class. Also ordained that day were Father Terry R. LaValley and Father Steven M. Murray. It was Bishop Terry LaValley who asked Father Demo to succeed Father Murray as pastor of The Church of the Holy Family in Watertown in 2019 and then to expand his pastoral role

to include two other Watertown parishes, St. Anthony’s and St. Patrick’s, in July 2020.

His experience as pastor of multiple parishes – he was previously pastor of both Dannemora and Redford – taught him that the process of bringing the parishes, he prefers to use the word “churches,” together will take time.

“It will take time to get to know the staff and the people of the three churches,” Father Demo said. “There are going to be times when I feel like I have one foot in the air and one on the ground, but there are a lot of good people in Watertown, and I know they will walk with me to carry out the ministry of the Church.”

Father Demo is particularly grateful for the assistance he will get from Father Herman Pongantun, MSC, and Father Deepak Baru, HGN.

“I am also fortunate to have five deacons in our churches,” he added. “Our people may not realize everything the deacons do, things they can do and some things they have not

been asked to do but will.”

Father Demo acknowledges the difficulties the pandemic has created. The COVID-19 response has interrupted efforts to bring a sense of family to the three churches.

“We have had to make adjustments, in terms of our Sunday worship and so forth,” he said. “So, it will be challenging, once we are able to return to the normal practice of our worship, to see if we have the same numbers we had pre-pandemic.”

There is also the challenge of maintaining and using the physical properties of the three churches.

“Father (Leo) Wiley who lives at the residence with me is quick to point out ‘you are now the landlord of buildings,’” Father Demo said.

Long range “it is my hope that we would have events at all three churches with attendance from all three,” Father Demo said. “St. Anthony’s Mt. Carmel Feast is a given. But things like sung evening prayer, or a concert by our church musicians, different things socially and spiritually that people will attend regardless of the sponsoring church.”

Other large communi-

ties in the diocese have been through linkages and mergers. Watertown will benefit from their experiences. And Father Demo points to the practice over the last several years of holding the institution of the Sacrament of Confirmation in one church for many faith communities as a wider experience of Church that he would like to foster.

“Sometimes we are too caught up in our own parish or church and miss the unity that comes from worshipping as a Church,” Father Demo said. “Sometimes when we talk in terms of the parish, we can get pretty territorial. St. Anthony’s, St. Patrick’s and Holy Family will eventually take on a new parish name with the three existing worship sites. I want to try and expedite that in the language we use; churches instead of parishes for instance.”

Father Mickey Demo faces the challenge of creating one family from several.

“The faith community, coming together as one, is going to take a lot of hard work by a good number of people,” he said.

The process has begun in Watertown.



To our Dear Shepherd, Father Art LaBaff

Thank you for your constant support, guidance, and love during the challenges we have all faced this year.

May our Lord continue to bless you as abundantly as you have blessed us.

Love Jack and Jennifer Lucia

Priests lead merger of Plattsburgh parishes

By Mary Beth Bracy
Contributing Writer

PLATTSBURGH—It was a combination of efforts from the priests, pastoral vicars and lay people that has helped unite the Plattsburgh Catholic Parishes.

Father Kevin D. McEwan, pastor of the Plattsburgh Catholic Parishes, noted that he “walked into a [unification] plan that was already place . . . they explained to me what the overall goal was, where they would try get to, what would be the end result.”

Rev. Msgr. Dennis J. Duprey, VF, who was pastor of St. Peter's in Plattsburgh when plans to merge the parishes began, stated that the local pastors were “all on the same page” and worked together for the “least amount of acrimony.”

With Father Timothy G. Canaan, then pastor of St. John's, and Father William G. Reamer, then pastor of Our Lady of Victory (OLV), Msgr. Duprey formed a committee. He was elected chairperson and is “especially grateful to the other two pastors,” who came together “working for the unity” of the people.

The goal was “protecting” and ensuring the “vibrancy of faith” for the future, Msgr. Duprey said. Each parish, regardless of size, had three representatives. Monthly meeting reports included: spiritual life, education and catechetics, finances, and use of buildings. After meetings, Msgr. Duprey wrote summaries of the discussions, which the other pastors edited, then they all made the same announcement in their parishes.

Although there are always “difficulties” in [parishes] giving up and change,” Msgr. Duprey said the meetings were rooted in prayer, he recalled, adding it is “not just our work, [but] God's work, or



MARY BETH BRACY/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Father Kevin D. McEwan is completing the process of merging the Plattsburgh Catholic Parishes.

we're all out to lunch.”

They had “good guidance from the diocese and Bishop,” observed Msgr. Duprey, and were given approval to implement the plan on January 1, 2020. Though there were some “hurdles,” such as the Capital campaign occurring at the same time, it turned out to be a blessing since it helped with building costs. Msgr. Duprey remarked that there were “several curve balls,” along the way, yet they relied on “the grace of faith.” Later, you “look back and see God working in it all,” he said.

When Father McEwan arrived, he reviewed bringing the staff together and the timetable of the unification process, and in August 2019, the office staff from the parishes moved to St. John's. Then, in January 2020, Father McEwan and Father Normand C. Cote moved into the St. Peter's rectory. The Parish Outreach is located at Our Lady of Victory, in the old school. The moving process happened earlier than originally planned and went smoothly; the offices relocated and setup again in just two days. The staff is pleased with the move. The last parts of

construction should hopefully be completed on the rectory soon.

It was an adjustment for the priests to live at the St. Peter's rectory with ongoing renovations, remembered Msgr. Duprey. They went to St. John's for dinner and, after the pandemic started, ate breakfast and lunch in the Emmaus room at St. Peter's.

“Father Kevin (McEwan) did a great job with construction,” said Msgr. Duprey.

Father McEwan mentioned that the two parochial vicars, Father Tojo Chacko, HGN and Father Eduardo Pesigan III, “are wonderful to work with and they have been very accommodating.”

The diocese approved the corporate structure for the Plattsburgh Catholic Parishes to become Holy Cross parish. The individual corporations of St. Peter's, Our Lady of Victory, and St. John's will merge into Holy Cross. There will be “one set of books” in terms of finances and liturgical matters, clarified Father McEwan. All sacramental records will be under Holy Cross parish. Father McEwan said he is hoping to have the state

and legal approval by January 1, 2021.

“We are trying to get people to realize that it is one parish that they belong to, it's kind of a new configuration,” he said. “We're one pastor now, we're one parish.”

According to the census, about 3,000 families comprise the Plattsburgh Catholic Parishes.

“COVID interrupted a lot of what we do, functionally wise,” but not “the end goal of what they [are] trying to become,” noted Father McEwan.

Although it may take a few years for people to get used to the unification, parishioners are already willing to go to one of the other Catholic parishes (St. John's, St. Peter's or Our Lady of Victory) due to Mass time preferences. Father McEwan commented that, in a few years, people will say “that's just the way it's always been.”

The priests are working hard to accommodate the faithful's preferences for Mass times, especially during the COVID-19 crisis, so that the doors are always open for everyone to participate in the celebration of the Mass. Mass is also available on-line from the parish, and people who aren't even from the area have sent notes expressing their gratitude for this.

Father McEwan is looking forward to “helping people in need” at the Outreach Center through the home goods store, clothing store, and soup kitchen. He'd like to have parish events, such as meals, there and have a celebration on the Feast of the Holy Cross. Father McEwan said he also hopes to see the parish reach out to increase families' participation, to see that children are receiving the sacraments, and to “promote being faithful and practicing the faith,” and “the importance of coming to Church.” He wants to make

sure that people are able to practice their faith “in a place that's spiritual, inviting . . . making sure that their relationship with God is a really good thing and fruitful for them is hopefully our goal,” he said.

We “didn't know if it [unification] would work, [but] in the end [we're] very grateful to God,” concluded Msgr. Duprey.

Father McEwan shared his “deep appreciation to all of the parishioners, who will hopefully continue to support into the future, in so many different ways whether financially or spiritually. The people that we depend on for different ministries—lectors, Eucharistic ministers to be-reavement, the list can go on and on of the things that people help us do, that we are still in need of . . . a parish this size cannot just be run by a couple of priests, it is so dependent on its people.”

Father McEwan said he is grateful for all of the “small” things that people do, like unlocking the church or setting up for Mass, to allow the priest to focus on offering Mass and the sacraments. It is a “joy” to see people live out “their Baptismal promises” and take responsibility for their church.

“It kind of reminds me of the beginnings of the Church,” Father McEwan said. “When you read the Acts of the Apostles and the different letters of St. Paul, the Church gathered in people's homes, they gathered as a community, all of these people doing different things, that is what we need, well into the future . . . Priests come and go, but the parishioners stay. For some of them, their whole lives, the Church is their home. There is a sense of ownership there for them. To make sure that they are engaged in that ownership is important.”

New priesthood is 'something sacred and holy'

By Jonathan Monfiletto
Contributing Writer

LOWVILLE – Rather than feeling a sense of his own accomplishment, Father Jude Nnadibuagha views his recent ordination into the priesthood as a continuation of his service to God and to God's people.

"I felt a transformation in me, and I believe that's the work of the Holy Spirit," Father

Nnadibuagha said of a moment he experienced during his recent ordination. "I see my priesthood as a call now. God has sealed this call He has on me to serve. I see that more of service to the people. There's nothing in me to be honored. ... I don't see anything like that. I see that as a continuation of my life and the continuation of that service God has called me to."

And part of that service to God has involved trying to bring back into the fold people who either haven't attended Mass in a long time or don't feel comfortable attending Mass even though the churches have reopened amid the pandemic. As the parochial vicar at the Catholic Community of St. Peter, St. Hedwig and St. Mary in Lowville, Father Nnadibuagha said he is listening to his pastor and trying to learn from him as together they navigate a situation that is much different than what they are used to.

"Our priority now will be more of trying to reach those people, find out what's up," Father Nnadibuagha said, adding he wants to see more people return to Mass especially as the Christmas season approaches.

With that in mind, Father Nnadibuagha said he has taken calls from – and



JESSE SOVIE/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Father Jude Nnadibuagha gives his first blessing as a priest to Bishop Terry R. LaValley.

placed calls to – people who came to Mass regularly during his time as a deacon in the same parish and whom he got to know personally but who haven't attended Mass in recent times.

He recalled one family who contacted him, wanting to receive confession but not feeling comfortable going into the church. He was able to meet them around the church and celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation with them in that way.

He also pointed to his work with the parish food pantry, where he delivers food to people who are afraid to come to the pantry or don't have the means to do so. He uses those opportunities to deliver encouragement as well as food, talking to people about their need to return to church or to attend for the first time.

As the pandemic continues, Father Nnadibuagha said it is important to talk to people about their

fears as well as to keep up with the news about the situation. That might mean suggesting a less-attended Mass that people could come to in order to worship God in a socially distanced atmosphere.

Father Nnadibuagha said he prepares to celebrate Mass in the same way he develops his own relationship with God – through prayer, meditation and reflection on Scripture.

When it comes to Mass, he gets the readings beforehand so he can read them well and reflect on them. After he reflects on them, he turns to Bible commentaries and other resources so he can have a good understanding of what the Scripture is saying. He also consults spiritual leaders, such as St. John Paul II.

From his own reflection and with his own knowledge, Father Nnadibuagha then commits himself in prayer and allows the

Holy Spirit to lead him during the Mass.

"Sometimes I prepare something to preach and then the audience or the situation at times, something might pop up ... then the Holy Spirit leads," he said. "Before the Holy Spirit leads, before I allow the Holy Spirit to come in and lead me, I must have something because grace builds on nature. ... I don't just come out and then expect the Holy Spirit to lead me. I must have something in mind I want to talk about, then the Holy Spirit can give me the direction I'll go."

In a similar way, Father Nnadibuagha said he strengthens his own spiritual life through constant prayer and meditation. Every morning, he spends an hour with the Lord.

"Sometimes I use this period of meditation to reflect on the Scripture passage that I want to talk to people about," he said.

He also uses spiritual leaders as a guide, currently reading about the life of St. John Paul II and finding encouragement from this pope who, like Father Nnadibuagha, lost both of parents at a young age and suffered alone.

"It gave me a lot of a courage that I'm not left alone," Father Nnadibuagha said. "I try to learn from the saints, their lives and their work and their spiritual life. It really helps me."

Now that he is a priest, Father Nnadibuagha is able to celebrate such sacraments as the Eucharist and reconciliation, an opportunity he calls "beautiful."

"When I see myself standing in the person of Christ celebrating the sacrament, it's something so glorious and honor-

ing," he said. "I know it's something sacred and holy. ... It's something so honoring and something so glorious. I love celebrating Mass, and I love celebrating the Eucharist."

And listening to confessions, he said, are among the most impactful moments he has had since becoming a priest.

"When people come to confess and use me as a channel to forgive sins of the people, it leads me to reflect more on my own self, fragile that I am, still God is using me to actualize His purpose."

Father Nnadibuagha said hearing confessions calls for him to seek holiness and to live an exemplary life as a priest.

"When people see that the priest is living a holy life, it changes them. They want to be holy," he said. When I see myself forgiving sins, listening to people, giving people comfort just like Christ, advising them, talking to them, telling them ways they can run away from sin and get reconciled to Christ and to the church, it's so wonderful and it's so glorious."

Father Nnadibuagha said he encourages young people also to study Scripture and read about the lives of saints to see if there is anything in their experiences that is similar to those of the saints, to build their own relationship with God and to discern whether God is calling them to the priesthood or the religious life.

"God is calling a lot of people, but because of the situation of the world and because of what is happening in the world, the noise in the world, people are not able – they have deaf ears – to understand and listen to this call," he said.

Environmental Stewardship

What about those autumn leaves?

During this Season of Creation (September 1-October 4) we are called to join in a "Jubilee of the Earth." This Jubilee is time to **renew, repair and restore** our relationship with the earth our "Common Home" and with all who share it. We are urged to pray and to work to further this goal.

With the season of fall upon us one way to celebrate this time is to find uses for what the earth has given us to renew the earth, i.e. fallen leaves. Some suggestions from *The Times of Ti Sun*, Fall HOME IMPROVEMENTS:

1. Spread leaves as a protective mulch to cover tender perennials or root crops/bulbs in the ground.

2. Create a pile of leaves that will break down and form a crumbly, compost-like material called leaf mold. It's actually a good amendment to garden soil, improving its structure and ability to hold water.

3. Brown leaves can be added to green materials in compost piles to improve the health of the compost being formed.

4. Store dried, mulched leaves in a dry spot so they can be used in the spring as a weed barrier for spring plantings.

5. Use shredded leaves as a lawn supplement. Pass a lawn mower over leaves left on the lawn to break them down into pieces too small to rake.

6. Bag dried leaves in paper bags and pack them tightly together in cold areas of the home, such as basements or garages. They can act as insulation.

7. **Family Activity:** Gather a few of the best-looking leaves and preserve them. Use an iron in a low setting and press leaves between two pieces of waxed paper until the waxed paper seals together.

Fall is a beautiful season to get outside not only to work. It is a blessed time to take walks, to enjoy the colors and smells of the fallen leaves and to praise God for all the gifts of this season of the earth. It may have valuable lessons for the seasons of our lives.

Rest in Peace

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

Sept. 23 – Rev. P. Phillips, 1872; Rev. Marcel Dupont, M.S.C., 1982

Sept. 24 – Rev. John Talbot Smith, 1923; Rev. Leo Staves, O.M.I., 1994; Rev. Jude Belisle, 1994; Deacon Reginald F. Merrill, 2005

Sept. 25 – Rev. Frederick P. Shue, 1989

Sept. 26 – Rev. Francis Van Compenhandt, 1880; Rev. Stephen Royet, M.S.C., 1933; Rev. Michael F. Gallivan, 1939; Rev. Joseph Ludger Desjardins, 1941; Rev. Earl Mayo, 1994; Msgr. Francis A. White, 2007

Sept. 29 – Rev. Patrick O. Thompson, 1955

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 VIRTUS training, contact Jean Grizzuto, jgrizzuto@rcdony.org or 315-393-2920 x 1413, who will coordinate assigning the training to be completed online.

To Report Abuse

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

Bishop's Public Schedule

Sept. 23 – 9:40 a.m. – Mass at Immaculate Heart Central Jr/Sr School in Watertown followed by a school visit

Sept. 24 – 9 a.m. – Visit Immaculate Heart Central Elementary School in Watertown

7 p.m. – Confirmation at St. James Church in Gouverneur along with Sacred Heart Church in Edwards and St. Hubert's Church in Star Lake

Sept. 25 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral Saturday, Sept. 26

10:30 a.m. – Council of Deacons Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

Sept. 27 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

2 p.m. – onfirmation at St. Mary's Cathedral with St. Raphael's Church, Heuvelton, Ss. Philip & James Church, Lisbon and Our Lady of Grace Parish, Morristown

Sept. 29 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Sept. 30 – 7 p.m. – Confirmation at Sacred Heart Church in Chazy with St. Joseph's Church in West Chazy

OFFERING A BLESSING



Father Martin E. Cline, pastor of St. Bernard's Church in Saranac Lake, recently visited every classroom at St. Bernard's School to offer blessings. Father Cline also had the students in each classroom help him bless their teachers.

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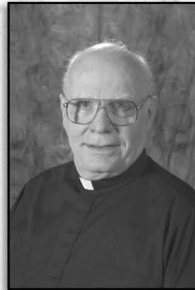
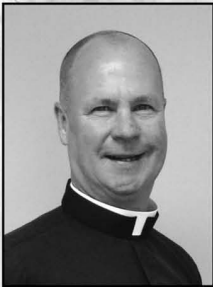
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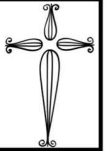


Fr. Tom Kornmeyer and Fr. John Looby:

For all you are, all you've done, and all that you continue to do, with much appreciation, St. Francis, St. George's, St. Joseph's, St. Patrick's, St. Mary's & Our Lady of Fatima Churches
May God continue to bless and keep you.

FATHER KEVIN,

You are appreciated at St. Raphael's and SS. Philip and James.



Bishop LaValley & Father Carrara,

We thank you for inspiring us to "be a light to the nation!" Your faithful ministry is appreciated.

From,
The Office of Vocations & Seminarians



Thank you to our Pastor,
Fr. Scott Seymour
and to Fr. Jay de La Rosa,
for making being part of these parish communities a joy.

In addition we would like to thank
Fr. William Gordon, Fr. Gilbert Menard, Fr. Vinny Flynn & Fr. Guy Edwards
for all the help you give us here at St. Alexander, St. James, St. Joseph's
& Assumption of Mary.

Your hard work and dedication does not go unnoticed.

From your staff & all your parishioners.

our gratitude

'I believe this is the will of God for me'

By Jonathan Monfiletto
Contributing Writer

MASSENA—Father Severinus Torwoe sees the ongoing coronavirus pandemic not as a challenge necessarily — “it’s challenging,” he said, “but we give thanks to God for everything” — but as an opportunity.

“This pandemic time has given us an opportunity to reach out to the people, especially those who are fearful and those who are confused, those who are angry with God and with the Church,” Father Torwoe said. “This is a time for us, for me as a new priest, to reach out to them and give them words of encouragement that they should rely on God, on Jesus and the Holy Spirit.”

It is an opportunity, he added, to follow the example of Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd, leaving the 99 sheep to seek out the one who was lost.

“We have to reach out to them and give them the hope of Christ,” Father Torwoe said. “It’s a good opportunity for us to reach out to them, not to leave them in their doubt but to bring them to the church.”

As the parochial vicar at St. Peter’s Parish in Massena, Father Torwoe said he is “learning many new things” as he adjusts to a new environment and learns from the pastor, his



DARCY FARGO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Father Severinus Torwoe is vested during his ordination in August.

fellow priests and the people of the congregation.

In addition to celebrating Mass, he has performed a couple of baptisms and a burial as well as celebrating the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist.

“It is not me who is celebrating,” he said. “I consider myself as a tool that Jesus is using as a means to reach out to the people, so any time I am celebrating the sacraments, I consider myself as a tool that the Spirit is using to reach out to the people. I do not see myself as doing it, but I see myself just as a tool that Christ is using in his ministry.”

Aside from celebrating the sacraments, Father Torwoe acknowledged there are still many things for him to learn as a new priest.

“To learn to understand the people, the people you are ministering to. To know what their need is and to be able to follow up with them and pray with them,” he said. “It is not just a matter of celebrating Mass and remaining where you are but to go further and be with them, stay with them, encourage them with the word of God.”

And when people come to Mass and ask him to pray for them, “you don’t just pray for them and leave them, but as a good shepherd you continue to pray for them, continue to reach out to them with your prayers,” he said.

Especially amid the pandemic, Father Torwoe said he is trying to reach out both to those who identify as Catholic but are no longer coming to church and to those who are homebound because of illness and cannot come to church. He said he visits them and talks with them and, if they so desire, celebrates reconciliation and Communion with them.

“We cannot just leave them alone because of the pandemic,” Father Torwoe said. “We have to move forward, go the extra mile,

and reach out to them and bring them to church.”

To keep himself spiritually grounded and help his congregation grow spiritually as well, Father Torwoe has been reading the entire Bible from the Old Testament to the New Testament. He had hoped to finish before his ordination in early August but continues to read the Bible and become familiar with God’s word.

“As a priest, you need to be familiar with the work of God sacramentally and biblically so you can speak to the people,” he said. “When Jesus is speaking, He spoke with authority because He is the word. I want to be familiar with the word so that I can speak to the heart of people to confer them to Christ. It has been my duty and responsibility to finish reading the Bible and be familiar with the word of God.”

Father Torwoe said he also prays the Liturgy of the Hours in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament every morning and prays to the Blessed Virgin Mary through the Rosary as well as praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet at least two to three times each day.

“I spend one hour in the morning with the Blessed Sacrament for Jesus to show me the way, for Jesus to lead me,” he said. “I always ask the Lord to lead me and to guide me to make me an effective instrument. I cannot ask the Lord to make me an effective instrument if I am not related to Him. That is why I continue doing my holy hour, reading the Scriptures to know more in the liturgy apart from celebrating the Mass. I have my own personal time with Him apart from the general prayers of the Church.”

Father Torwoe said he does not really write homilies; rather, he continues reading the Scripture and praying and meditating over it, asking the Holy Spirit to inspire him to preach what God wants him to preach.

“Sometimes I write down (a homily), but when I’m going to preach, I leave everything down and preach through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit what the Spirit inspires me to preach. All the time I pray over it, continue reading the Scripture to be familiar with the messages God wants to give me.”

He added that his homily preparation is twofold: first, reading Scripture and praying over it; and two, relying on the Holy Spirit to inspire him to say what people need to hear.

Father Torwoe first received his call to the priest at age 8 and later spent nearly three decades as a religious brother. Though he does feel a sense of accomplishment in being ordained as a priest, he also knows God has called him to be a priest in this specific time and in this specific place.

“I have been desiring all these years just to be a priest for the Lord. There’s no occupation or profession that attracts so much but to be a priest for the Lord. I have strived so many years to be a priest,” he said. “This is the time the Lord knows that I’ll be a priest and only during this pandemic time. I don’t know why because I believe this is the will of God for me. ... This is the perfect time for God to bring me. I think I am fulfilling and accomplishing my desire to be a priest in this Diocese of Ogdensburg.”



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Thank you to Fr. Mark Reilly, Fr. Scott Belina and Fr. Severinus Torwoe at St. Peter’s Parish in Massena. We truly appreciate the gift of your vocation and all you do for our Catholic Parish and the community! God bless you!
~From the Staff at St. Peter’s Parish

From offices in Africa to the psych center

Father Corneille E. Boyeye, a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, says he feels at home in this diocese

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

OGDENSBURG – After years working in various administrative positions for his community, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Father Corneille E. Boyeye, says he is very happy to be ministering to God's people.

"Since my ordination, I was involved in leadership, educating seminarians and finance for my community and congregation in Africa," said Father Boyeye. "I was tired of just working in the office. I asked to come to the United States for sabbatical and to learn English. When I got here, I took a year of classes and did my sabbatical. I then told my superior, 'I want to do pastoral work and be with people. No more office.'"

When he arrived in the United States after being raised and educated in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Cameroon, Father Boyeye spoke no English.

"I started learning English first," he said. "I didn't know how to read the Gospels even. I just kept learning and learning. I took one year of (English as a second language) classes, and I kept learning English by myself. I used a lot of audiobooks and CDs, listening to them to get better at English."

In addition to English courses, Father Boyeye's coursework during that time was a class in pas-

toral care in a healthcare context. The course made him want to pursue work in that field, but he learned he would need to complete additional training to become a hospital chaplain.

"I applied to programs in Illinois and Long Island," he said. "Two weeks later, I got a call from Long Island. They had received my application, but they needed a priest for the hospital there. I didn't apply for that position. It just happened. I got the job and completed my training while working in the hospital. My job was my clinical site when I was completing the training."

In December of 2019, Father Boyeye became a certified hospital chaplain. He continued working in Long Island as a chaplain at Saint Catherine of Siena Medical Center until March, when he was assigned to the Diocese of Ogdensburg to serve as a part-time chaplain at the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center in Ogdensburg.

"It's very different from the hospital in Long Island," Father Boyeye said. "There, it was a general hospital. I knew the diagnoses and how to talk to people. It's very different in a psych setting. I'm working with people who are mentally despondent and can be violent. There was training in prevention and management of crisis situations and how to deal with violent situations to protect the pa-



Father Corneille E. Boyeye, MSC

tient and yourself."

Further complicating his transition, Father Boyeye arrived in the North Country the exact day the state shutdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"I left Long Island and got here on March 16 – the day of the lockdown," he said. "I was stuck home until June. I went from a full-time job to stuck in a house. Even now, people in the psych center don't mingle. Everyone stays in their own wards. On Wednesday, I had four Masses in four different wards. Today, I'll have two Masses."

Despite the challenges, Father Boyeye said he is glad to be back living with his community, as he currently resides in the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart's residence in Watertown.

"In Long Island, I was

far away from my community," he said. "I was in a parish, and I had a room. For four years, I was out of the community, though I was able to go to Pennsylvania once a month to meet with my community there. Living in community, I feel like I'm home."

Because his ministry at the psychiatric center is a part-time position, Father Boyeye has also filled in at parishes within the diocese when a priest is needed and has spent some time ministering in area healthcare facilities.

"Under the dean of the Jefferson Deanery, I have been assigned to work as a volunteer in the hospital in Watertown for Catholic patients and in two nursing homes," he said. "The rest of the time, I do parish work. I enjoy that. The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart are about being witness

to God's love. That's done in relationships. I'm very happy to be out and being that witness of God's love. I'm a missionary, and I have a mission.

Father Boyeye said he's enjoying the people of the North Country and the pace of life here.

"In Long Island, people are just job, job, job," he said. "After Mass, everyone rushes out the door. Here, people stay after Mass and say 'hi.' In Watertown, I've been able to get to know families. They invite me for parties or for dinner. I didn't have that in Long Island. You come here, and you feel welcome."

There's one part of life in the North Country that Father Boyeye isn't looking forward to, though.

"It's going to be a challenge to face the winter," he said, laughing. "Being from Africa, I'm not used to cold weather. I don't know if I can survive!"

Father Boyeye said he's especially glad he's received such a warm welcome, since the pandemic has made it impossible for him to visit his family back in Africa.

"I was supposed to go on vacation, but I can't go because of the pandemic," he said. "I call my mom and siblings, and we talk, but it's better to be there, meet with people and enjoy the food. I miss those things. I hope I'll be able to go home next year and be with them. But it's ok. It's part of the sacrifice of being a missionary."

Until he can go to his homeland, Father Boyeye is happy to be here in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

"I feel like I'm part of this diocese," he said. "It's very good."

Ministry goes on even in retirement

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

WATERTOWN – Even though they're retired, they continue in ministry.

Msgr. Paul E. Whitmore, 91, and Father Leo A. Wiley, 89, say they've slowed down in retirement, but both continue to celebrate Mass regularly and participate in ministry.

"Mainly, I celebrate the Mass every day with the Sisters of the Precious Blood," said Msgr. Whitmore, who retired in 1977. "That's every day at 8 a.m. I move slower now, so I have to get up a lot earlier to get there."

Father Wiley, who retired in 2006, celebrates Mass with the Sisters of St. Joseph.

"I do one Mass daily with the Sisters of St. Joseph," Father Wiley said. "I've been doing that for probably around 10 years."

Both say they enjoy ministering to the religious sisters.

"It keeps me in touch with Scripture," said Father Wiley. "Also, there's something in common with the religious and being a parish priest. It's been an opportunity to develop relationships with the sisters."

"That sense of being useful is very important to priests," Msgr. Whitmore added. "We both feel useful. If we didn't celebrate those Masses, the other priests here would have to do it. We try to relieve the pastoral responsibilities of the other priests here."

Msgr. Whitmore noted, though, that he couldn't continue in that ministry he loves if not for the support he receives from others.

"Deacon (Lawrence) 'Larry' Ambeau usually helps with the Mass, but he's out for a few weeks," he said. "Right now, I have



Msgr. Paul E. Whitmore

Deacon (Donald) 'Don' Wilder helping. The deacons who assist, as well as the sisters, are very upbeat about their Mass."

In addition to celebrating Mass with the religious sisters in Watertown, both Msgr. Whitmore and Father Wiley serve as spiritual advisors to Legion of Mary associations. They also hear confessions and provide the anointing of the sick when needed.

Msgr. Whitmore also continues to write a column for the North Country Catholic.

"It all started when (former editor) Mary Lou Kilian attended a Priest Council meeting," he said. "I was on the council. She begged for someone to do a column for the four Sundays of Advent. I was gradually drawn into the whole thing. I enjoy it. For one thing, I consider it a good ministry. I love doing it. I hope and pray I can keep doing it."

While both Father Wiley and Msgr. Whitmore say there are aspects of parish ministry they miss, they note that they are also glad

to not manage several parishes.

"I liked every aspect of parish life, but especially the preaching and instructing," Father Wiley said. "But as I've seen the development of parishes being joined together and things like that, I realize I'm glad to be retired."

"I miss the people," added Msgr. Whitmore. "I loved every parish I was ever in. But seeing the great shortage of priests and the fact that our priests in Watertown are constantly on the go with the merry-go-round of Masses here and there, I'm very relieved not to be a pastor with all the responsibilities of three parishes."

With the additional time they have in retirement, both retired priests say they continue to focus on their personal spiritual development.

"I find spiritual reading very important," said Msgr. Whitmore. "I try to keep up on some of the new spiritual works. I'm very fond of Ronald Rolheiser and Joyce Rupp. And I so enjoy the



Father Leo A. Wiley

Divine Office and the rosary, of course. And I still spend time counseling different people via email or telephone. Through counseling people, I find I'm nourished myself."

"I pray daily, and I have a spiritual director," added Father Wiley. "I used to go on annual retreats, but I don't do that anymore. I also do a little bit of reading and a little spiritual direction."

Both priests noted they chose to retire in Watertown because of connections to the area, and they hope to continue serving there as long as they are able to do so.

"It's my hometown," Msgr. Whitmore said. "I grew up here. I went to school with the Sisters of St. Joseph from first grade through high school and into seminary. I feel truly blessed to be able to continue ministering to the Sisters of the Precious Blood here. I want to hang in there. I told them, 'I want to stay there until the Lord takes my last breath.'"

"My hometown is Cape

Vincent, but I've always been in some way connected to Watertown," added Father Wiley. "My maternal grandparents lived here in the city. My uncle offered his first Mass in 1940 here at Holy Family Church. Coming back here was returning to my roots. While I'm looking forward to going to heaven, I plan to continue saying Masses here as long as I'm able."

Father Wiley also asked the North Country faithful to "pray for vocations," since he attributes such prayers to fostering God's call in his life.

"I had an uncle who was a priest," he explained. "I have a first cousin who was a priest. My family had a Sister of Mercy and two Sisters of St. Joseph, and I guess I can claim a Sister of the Poor. My grandfather told me that my grandmother O'Neil prayed every day that there would be religious vocations in the family. I know my grandmother Wiley also prayed for vocations in the family. It seems their prayers were answered."

The greatest adventure: Answering God's call

By Mary Beth Bracy
Contributing Writer

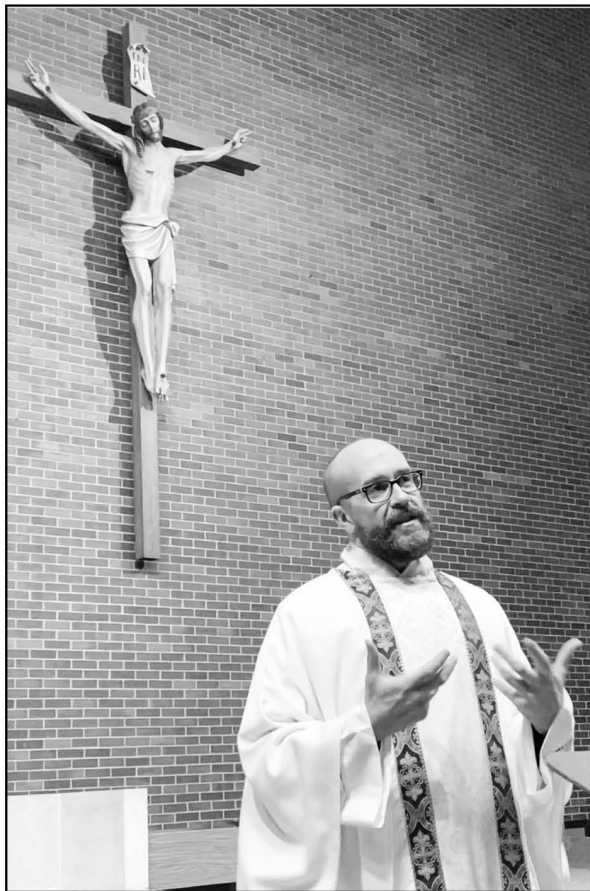
St. Augustine of Hippo wrote: "To fall in love with God is the greatest romance; to seek him the greatest adventure; to find him, the greatest human achievement."

Father Joseph W. Giroux

When asked what inspired him to be a priest, Father Joseph W. Giroux, who is currently studying Canon Law at St. Paul's University in Ottawa, provided a glimpse into his vocation journey:

"Last month, it was 20 years since I was ordained, so those inspirations have gotten a bit murky with the passage of so much time," he said. "Of course, there are the stories of when I'd make my siblings play Mass with me and told the parish priest then visiting our home that I'd take his place when he got 'too old.' And I can still name particular priests and religious who recognized and encouraged my vocation from a rather young age. But an awful lot has changed during these past two decades – in myself, in the world, in the Church – both for better and for worse. Which leads me to think I can more aptly share why I'm still a priest, and that's likely a bit more compelling to boot.

"What my elders no doubt saw from childhood is that the Catholic priesthood suits me – my spiritual gifts, my human talents, my personality and interests. And from the feedback I have gotten over the years, I think I might even be fairly good at it. But being a priest has been a whole lot harder than they ever told us in the seminary. It comes with fewer perks



Father Joseph W. Giroux

than I imagined, but is a far greater privilege than I could have dreamed, mostly because it's so completely undeserved.

"Priesthood has been full of surprises, like being a student again at 45, as a rather up-to-date example. (If a guy finds his priestly life boring, it's because he's doing it wrong.) It has also been a source of much suffering, stemming from my own sinful brokenness, the huge secular shift in wider society, and the scandalous corruption of many priests and bishops that has been brought out into the light.

"Yet I am more convinced now than on the day of my ordination that

I'm exactly where I ought to be, doing what God desires me to do. A new volunteer firefighter recently posted on Twitter that being part of the department 'is revealing something to me: those who put themselves in harm's way for the sake of others don't do it because of the touchy feelings. They do it because it is in their nature – it's when they are most being themselves.' Ditto. I couldn't have said it any better myself.

"If a young man is looking for a safe, respectable, comfortable career, then the Catholic priesthood is definitely not for him. But if he's up for an adventure; if he's



Father John A. Pietropaoli, LC

ready to embrace a way of life that will constantly challenge and stretch him; if he's open to letting God make use not only of his strengths but even of his weaknesses to bring healing to other deeply wounded souls, then there's likely a place in this brotherhood for him – maybe even the

very best place to truly be himself."

Father John A. Pietropaoli, LC

Father John A. Pietropaoli, a Legionary of Christ and Malone native, reflects on the awesome love and mercy of God for souls, which He pours out through the priesthood:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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The greatest adventure

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

"When I think about the priesthood, I'm always reminded of Pope John Paul II's 1996 memoirs which he entitled *Gift and Mystery*. The mystery – that sinners are called to be God's face for the world; the gift – that they are

able, with God's grace, to do so. The mystery – that a selfish man is called to live for others, in Christ; the gift – that God trusts him and will never revoke his call. The mystery – that a man can say 'this is my body given up for you...this is my blood,

poured out for the forgiveness of sins... I absolve you from your sins;' the gift – that by his priestly ordination these words come true.

"This gift and this mystery inspired me in my own calling. To be able to turn bread and wine into

the Body and Blood of Christ, to be able to forgive sins in the sacrament of Reconciliation – these are gifts we can never fully understand. As someone put it to me years ago: 'No priests, no Jesus.'

"A priest is a living reminder that the great work of our life is to let God love us, to let him work in our soul and give us the unimaginable gifts he has planned for us. A priest gives Jesus to the world. To anyone who believes that the Lord may be calling him to this vocation, I would give this advice: we only discern what to try. It's easy to lose ourselves in attempting to figure out the Lord's entire plan for every moment of our entire lives. We can't. We only discern what to try; we take the next step, and surrender the outcome to God. And in that surrender, we discover his love, his care, and his salvation."

Let us pray every day

for our priests and for more vocations; only in Heaven will we know how many souls are saved through one Mass. "Jesus, Mary I love you, save priestly souls, save souls!"

St. Faustina wrote: "O my Jesus, I beg you on behalf of the whole Church: Grant it love and the light of your Spirit, and give power to the words of priests so that hardened hearts might be brought to repentance and return to you, O Lord. Lord, give us holy priests; you yourself maintain them in holiness."

O Divine and Great High Priest, may the power of your mercy accompany them everywhere and protect them from the devil's traps and snares which are continually being set for the souls of priests.

May the power of your mercy, O Lord, shatter and bring to naught all that might tarnish the sanctity of priests, for you can do all things."

FR. PHILIP ALLEN,

Thank you for keeping St. Joseph's open and well nourished (*with your seasoned veggies*) the past 6 years.

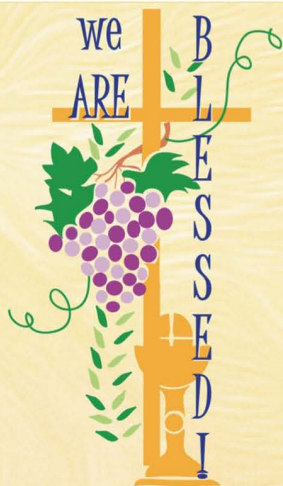
~Diane McNally



**To all the Priests
of the Diocese**

Thank you for answering
God's call and becoming
Shepherds of our church.

*Diocesan Council for
Consecrated Life*



**Fr. Amyot is a wonderful
priest to travel with.**

~Larry & Laurie LaPoint

Picture is in Ireland 2018



Thank You!

**Fr. Martin Cline,
Fr. Alex Guimpol,
Fr. Joe Giroux
and
Msgr. McAvoy**

*Prayers,
Jimmy and Robin Law*



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*Father Shane,
We appreciate your
service to our parishes!*

*Parishioners of
St. James, Sacred Heart
and St. Hubert*

**Father Christopher
Looby**

Congratulations on becoming Pastor of St. Mary's Church, Ticonderoga and Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Schroon Lake, NY.

You are such an inspiring "Good Shepherd"

God Bless,
Deacon Bernie Slate



Father Philip Allen,

Thank you for being a priest and part of our lives. You are the best and an inspiration to both of us!!

Love, Deacon Jim and Christine Chaufy

We appreciate our priests

Fr. Don Robinson

Thank you for your guidance and all that you do for our parishes.

~The Kepler Family



Father Todd,

Thank you for serving our communities, especially during this time of crisis.



St. Bernard's & St. Edmund's Parish



Thank You

Monsignor Whitmore



Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood

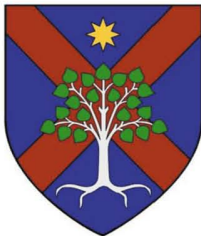
Fr. John Yonkovig

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St. Mary's School of Ticonderoga welcomes our new Pastor, **Father Chris Looby.**

While visiting the classrooms, Father Chris makes everyone feel special, especially on their birthdays. We are happy to honor Father Chris and to say **THANK YOU!**



Fr. Steven Murray,
Fr. Michael Jablonski and
Fr. Medenel Angrand



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Linda S., Betty L., Bob M., Lucy M.,
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for all our fellow parishioners.



Pew eyes religious voters' support for 2020 nominees

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Support for Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden from voters who identify as religious appears to adhere to earlier patterns, a Pew researcher told a Georgetown University panel Sept. 15.

According to recent Pew Research Center polling, 59% of white Catholics say they're voting for Trump, with 40% supporting Biden. Hispanic Catholics shift the other direction, favoring Biden 65%.

Ninety-two percent of Black Protestants say they're voting for Biden, and as for Trump, 83% of white evangelicals say they're either voting for him or leaning in his direction.

Elizabeth Podrebarac Scrupac, senior researcher at Pew, said the data also was consistent with exit polls from 2016. "Those might not be too surprising for anyone following these trends," she observed.

Trump voters appear to be more deeply motivated. About two-thirds of white evangelicals say "their vote for (Trump) is a true vote for him" and not just a vote against Biden, Scrupac said.

Abortion, survey results indicate, is a more important issue for white evangelicals (61%) than for white Catholics (38%), Hispanic Catholics (39%) or Black Protestants (33%). The response on abortion trailed the COVID-19 pandemic, foreign policy, immigration and climate change as top election issues.

Former Vice President Biden, a Catholic, and his running mate, Sen. Kamala Harris, both support legalized abortion. Trump and Vice President Mike Pence both oppose abortion and would like to see the

Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling, which legalized abortion on demand, reversed.

While the economy led all concerns, closely related to abortion is the issue of the appointment of Supreme Court justices — a bigger issue for white Catholics (69%), closely followed by white evangelicals (67%), Hispanic Catholics (64%) and Black Protestants (58%).

Carl Cannon, the Washington bureau chief of RealClearPolitics, described Trump as "unchurched — in a very literal way."

Biden, by contrast, "doesn't have to do much to remind people he's Catholic. He is Catholic. He crosses himself, he makes these religious allusions, and Donald Trump wants to say, 'But he's not really a Christian.'"

Cannon pointed out, "Trump knows, at least his campaign knows, strongly religious Christians favor the Republican Party," and further, "knows that devout Catholics back him."

From that standpoint, he said, the bad news for Biden is, even though that group identifying as "devout" — daily Mass attendance, regular recitation of the rosary — may be a minority of Catholics, "they're the most motivated voters."

Although both campaigns are dedicated to religious outreach, unlike Hillary Clinton's campaign in 2016, the Democrats are "clearly very dedicated to their religious outreach work," said Kelsey Dallas, national religion reporter for the Deseret News in Utah.

But Trump's campaign, in her view, is doing the better job with voters who identify as religious, hammering home the message "that this man is going to

defend you. Either in court, or with policies. "He's truly lived up to his promises of the last four years on issues such as religious freedom," Dallas said.

Faith outreach "probably played a big role on why Biden is the nominee to begin with," said Jack Jenkins, a national reporter for Religion News Service. After hiring an outreach director specifically to address Black Protestants, "it's why he won resoundingly" in the South Carolina primary, which made him the presumptive nominee long before the Democratic National Convention.

Biden's "faith as a person" is something likely to be "trumpeted" until Election Day, he predicted.

"We've never had a president quite like this president when it came to his own personal faith journey," Cannon said. "This is a guy who said he doesn't forgive his enemies. He said that recently at the National Prayer Breakfast. Think about that for a minute."

The Republicans, as a result, aren't trying to portray Trump as a man of faith, but rather are saying to evangelicals and conservative Catholics, "he's your champion," Cannon said.

"I would make the argument, based upon the data we see ... that race and ethnicity probably factor more into how they view this particular situation more than faith," said Eugene Scott, a political reporter for The Washington Post. "Race and ethnicity are often the prime way of how people engage with politics rather than their faith."

"From evangelicals," he added, "you could conclude that 90% of people make their decision based on abortion, and we know that's not true."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Abraham Accords called 'truly historic milestone'

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A Catholic congressman who is a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee called the Middle East peace accord signed Sept. 15 at the White House a "momentous pact" he hopes "is the beginning of several future peace accords to strengthen peace within the region. The United States has again brought strength to Israel — one of our strongest allies in the region — and strength brings peace," U.S. Rep. Chris Smith, R-New Jersey, said in a statement. President Donald Trump, first lady Melania Trump and Vice President Mike Pence welcomed Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed and Bahrain Foreign Minister Abdullatif Al Zayani to the White House, where the leaders signed the document, which is being called the Abraham Accords. "It is important to note, after decades of conflict, this is the first such agreement between Israel and any major Arab country since 1994," said Smith, who was at the White House to witness the signing, which he called "a truly historic milestone in Middle East peace."

Study: Teens' religious practice less than that of their parents

WASHINGTON (CNS) — A Pew Research Center study released in September shows that teens' religious practice is less than that of their parents. The lessened observance cuts across all denominational lines. And religious practice by adults, the study noted, has itself declined in recent decades. One key finding of the report is that 43% of parents said religion is "very important in their lives," and that, of teens ages 13-17, only 24% feel the same. Surveys were taken of 1,811 adults who had given Pew permission for one of their teen children to later take the same survey. The surveys were conducted in April-June 2019, long before the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Christina Lamas, executive director of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, told Catholic News Service that she finds it hard to square the figures in the Pew report with what she sees at her organization's biennial conventions in Indianapolis. "When you're able to witness the fire and engagement of 20,000 young people ... who are sharing on social media about their relationship with God, it's hard to process what the statistics are saying with what we're witnessing," Lamas said.

Hope is dying in Syria, cardinal says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — With no end of conflict and no path toward economic recovery in sight, the Syrian people are losing hope that any sense of peace and normalcy will return, said the apostolic nuncio to Syria. "Unfortunately, what is dying in the hearts of many people, is hope," Cardinal Mario Zenari told the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, Sept. 17. "After 10 years of war, many — after no longer seeing economic recovery and reconstruction — are losing hope and this hurts a lot," he said. "Losing hope means truly losing something fundamental and essential for life. We must try to restore confidence, to give hope back to these poor people." While hostilities in the country have dramatically decreased since the signing of a ceasefire in March and the COVID-19 pandemic, the cardinal said, the destruction wrought by the conflict continued to devastate the lives of countless men, women and children.

Oh, how great is a priest!

By **Mary Beth Bracy**
Contributing Writer

"There can be no Eucharist without the priesthood, just as there can be no priesthood without the Eucharist" (St. Pope John Paul II). I owe my faith life largely to the ministry of priests. Without priests, there is no Holy Eucharist, and it is the healing presence of our Lord in the Eucharist that has brought me strength. In life's most difficult moments, God blessed me with priests who encouraged me, reminding me how much He loves me and not to give up hope.

Many priests have acted as confidants and guides on my spiritual journey. In the sacrament of Confession and through spiritual direction, they have offered words of compassion and comfort. In times of illness, they have prayed for, with and over me. Through the sacrament of the Sick and their intercession, I was restored and renewed by God's healing balm.

How can I forget the priests who "stood by the Cross" with me as loved ones were dying, who gave them the Apostolic Pardon, and who prayed with my family? In a world where many shrink from suffering, our spiritual fathers heroically enter into the pain with their faithful, in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd who gave His life for His sheep. They tirelessly live out the challenge of St. Pope John Paul II: "Do not be afraid. Do not be satisfied with mediocrity. Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

During this pandemic, I know priests who daily walk the streets to remind souls that they are not alone and that God has

not forgotten them. Not deterred by risks, while taking safety precautions, many go to hospitals and nursing homes to offer Last Rites. There are priests who go from church parking lot to church parking lot to hear "drive-thru confessions." Some have led prayers on the internet, organized virtual 40 hours devotions, catechesis, and conferences on-line to help nourish the faithful. Others have kept their churches open for Eucharistic Adoration or have outdoor Exposition, so that the weary may look upon Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and experience His saving power. Some priests spent Easter Sunday traveling through the neighborhoods of their parishes and blessing the faithful with Our Lord in the monstrance. Priests went to the homes of First Communicants – who couldn't receive the Holy Eucharist yet because of COVID-19 – and held Marian devotions on their lawns, offering inspiring words to them and their families.

In a technological age, I am so thankful for the priests who make their homilies available online. Additionally, I am grateful to the priests who use social media to share Catholic truths and uplifting posts on the faith. It is a blessing to be able to request guidance or prayers, and to receive timely help.

Priests stand in persona Christi, praying the office for God's glory and the faithful. Msgr. William F. Furlong wrote of this important duty, explaining that the prayers of priests are united to Jesus, Mary and all of the saints. He recounts that when St. Felix Valois went to the chapel to recite his office "he be-

held Our Lady, and all about her were angels. When Felix had taken his place among the angels, Mary intoned the opening prayer. And with inexpressible joy, St. Felix had the privilege of singing his office in chorus with Mary and the angels. That is what every priest does every day."

Above all, I am grateful for the priests who – even as their health is failing – continue to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass every day. In the words of St. Alphonsus Liguori: "One single Mass gives more honor to God than all the prayers and penances of the Saints and the labors of the Apostles."

I am grateful to my spiritual fathers' in Christ who reminded me that, although there is much interior suffering in the work of mercy, it leads to resurrection. My heartfelt thanks goes out to all of the priests who encouraged me to "be not afraid," and wait for the SON to

rise. Each day, I pray for all of the priests of our diocese and those in other places whose counsel, direction and prayers enabled me to trust that the Holy Spirit would enlighten me. I am thankful for the priests whose unceasing friendship, guidance and prayers have fortified my faith. I remember and praise God for those priests whose courageous witness shines amidst the darkness of our times.

St. John Vianney, patron of parish priests, reflected in his *Catechism on the Priesthood*, "Everything has come to us through the priest; yes, all happiness, all graces, all heavenly gifts. If we had not the Sacrament of Orders, we should not have Our Lord. Who placed Him there, in that tabernacle? It was the priest. Who was it that received your soul, on its entrance into life? The priest. Who nourishes it, to give it strength to make its pilgrimage? The

priest. Who will prepare it to appear before God, by washing that soul, for the last time, in the blood of Jesus Christ? The priest – always the priest. And if that soul comes to the point of death, who will raise it up, who will restore it to calmness and peace? Again the priest. You cannot recall one single blessing from God without finding, side by side with this recollection, the image of the priest."

He later continued: "Oh, how great is a priest! The priest will not understand the greatness of his office till he is in Heaven. If he understood it on earth, he would die, not of fear, but of love."

I owe my eternal gratitude to these priests, and the many holy priests, who spend their lives in imitation of Christ each day. May God bless and reward you for spending your life for Jesus and souls. We are so thankful for your life of sacrifice for your sheep!

Father Douglas G. Comstock,
*We, of the Catholic Community of Alexandria,
are so blessed in having you as our pastor!*

From Deacon Bernie Slate, Deacon Joel & Dawn Walentuk,
and your parishioners,
St. Cyril's Church, Alexandria Bay
St. Francis Xavier Church, Redwood



CLINTON

TENT SALE

Peru — St. Vincent's will have their Fall Tent Sale.

Schedule: Sept. 14 – Sept. 19 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Sept. 17, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Features: Special large bag price of \$8 Sept. 17 - 19

FRANKLIN

GARAGE SALE

Malone — St. Andre Bessette Parish is holding its annual garage sale.

Date: Sept. 26 to Oct. 3

Place: Former Holy Family School

Features: Furniture, household goods, tools, toys, books, bedding, miscellaneous. There is something for everyone.

HARVEST TURKEY DINNER

Brushton — The Catholic communities of St. Augustine and St. Mary's are sponsoring a take-out only harvest turkey dinner.

Date: Oct. 4

Time: 11 a.m. until all is gone

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center, 769 County Route 6 (Gale Road), Brushton

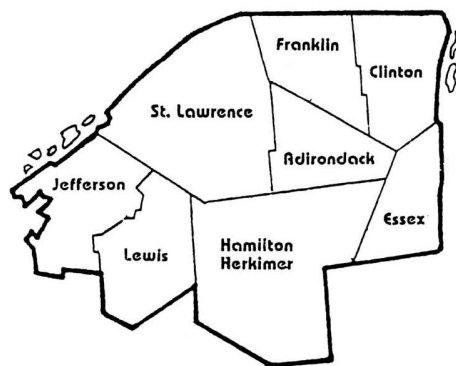
Features: Roast turkey, mashed potatoes, squash, stuffing, cabbage salad, rolls and dessert.

Cost: Meals are \$12

LEWIS

MYSTERY BAG

Lyons Falls — Mystery Bag Sale to be



The North Country Catholic welcomes contributions to "Around the Diocese."

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

North Country Catholic, PO Box 326,
Ogdensburg, NY 13669; fax, 1-866-314-7296;
e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

held.

Date: Sept. 26

Time: 10 a.m. until gone

Place: Riverside Park Ladies' Auxiliary Building

Cost: \$10 per bag

Features: Pay \$10 and get an envelope with a number in it. Your number will match a bag with the same number! Everyone wins! You can purchase as many bags as you want. Contents worth \$10 or much more! There will be attendants there to assist with this sale. Masks are required. Proceeds will go to St. John's Catholic Church.

ROSARY PROCESSION & HIGH MASS

Port Henry — St. Patrick's Church will host an outdoor Candlelight Rosary Procession followed by a Missa Cantata in the Extraordinary Form for the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary.

Date: Oct. 7

Time: 6 p.m.

Features: Latin/English worship aid will be provided. Masks, physical distancing and COVID-19 protocols will pertain.

ST. LAWRENCE

VIRTUAL ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Waddington/Zoom — Online zoom sessions will be held with the topic of "What Happens When We Die."

Dates: Sept. 16, 23, 30 Oct. 7, 14

Time: 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Features: The Last Things: Judgment, heaven, hell, purgatory. These are all teachings of our faith. It's important for us to get a good grasp on what we believe. Knowing that what we believe must be rooted in scripture and not in popular beliefs. Msgr. Aucoin is offering a series of sessions via ZOOM on what we call in Catholic teachings "The Last Things." With the assistance of videos from Bishop Barron, we will offer five sessions with these topics: What will happen when we die? Does God really send people to Hell? Why Purgatory is actually a good thing... What can we know about angels? What is the goal of Christianity?

Contact: If you are interested in participating, you will need to register email Msgr. Aucoin at pastor@mwccatholics.org

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 time will explore Scriptures on forgiveness and consider some of the barriers and aids to making these teachings a reality in our daily lives. The retreat will be virtual using Zoom on the computer. It includes presentations, time for personal prayer and reflection with optional times for sharing. Facilitators will be Sister Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ, Molly Amoriell, and Jane Wells. Free will offering accepted.

Contact: For more information,

contact srbethssj@gmail.com (315-212-6592).

VIRTUAL PRIEST DISCERNMENT SESSIONS

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 access.

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.org.

CLM FALL GATHERING

Watertown — Special Mass and program for all CLM's in Jefferson and Lewis County.

Date: Oct. 14

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Holy Family Church

Features: Deacon James Crowley will speak on the topic of Catholic Leadership in a COVID-19 World.

VIRTUAL FAMILY LIFE CONFERENCE

Watch the "Iron Sharpens Iron" project from the virtual Family Life Conference at

<https://www.rcdony.org/vflc>

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



Stand up for LIFE at this year's LIFECHAIN SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4

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.

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



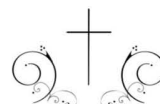
Father Ted

Our Parish is so blessed to have you as our Pastor. We love you!!

Friends and Parishioners of Sacred Heart, Chazy

Thank you for all you do for us
Father Scott.
We are fortunate to have you as our pastor.

~Cecile Filion



Thank you
Rev. J. Michael Gaffney


St. Andrew's,
Sacket Harbor
Altar & Rosary Society

We appreciate our priests

Father Marullo
 Thank you for your service
 to us all!
 We are truly blessed to have
 you in our churches!!
 You are the best!!




St. John's Church, Lyons Falls
 St. Martin's Church, Port Leyden
 St. Mary's Church, Constableville
 St. Mary's Nativity, West Leyden




Msgr. Duprey,
 Thank you for bringing much sunshine in my
 life when I lost my dad and for welcoming me
 into St. Peter's Church.
 ~Veronica "Ronnie" Rothermel

In grateful appreciation to
Rev. Philip Allen




*From the parishioners of Saint Paul's Church,
 Blue Mountain Lake*

Fr. Don,
 You feed us
SPIRIT & TRUTH
 along with a little
 Irish humor.
 Your Parish
 appreciates you.



With Sincere Thanks
for your Priestly Ministry



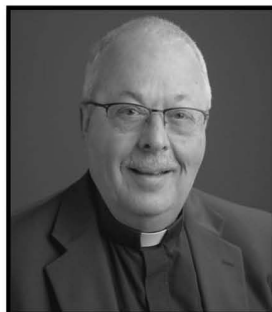
The parishioners of Our Lady of Grace Parish
 of Morristown, Hammond, and Rossie are
 grateful to Father Chris Carrara for his
 dedicated ministry, his spiritual presence, and
 his leadership among us.

*God Bless our current and former priests
of Sacred Heart Church, Massena.*

The Dishaw Family

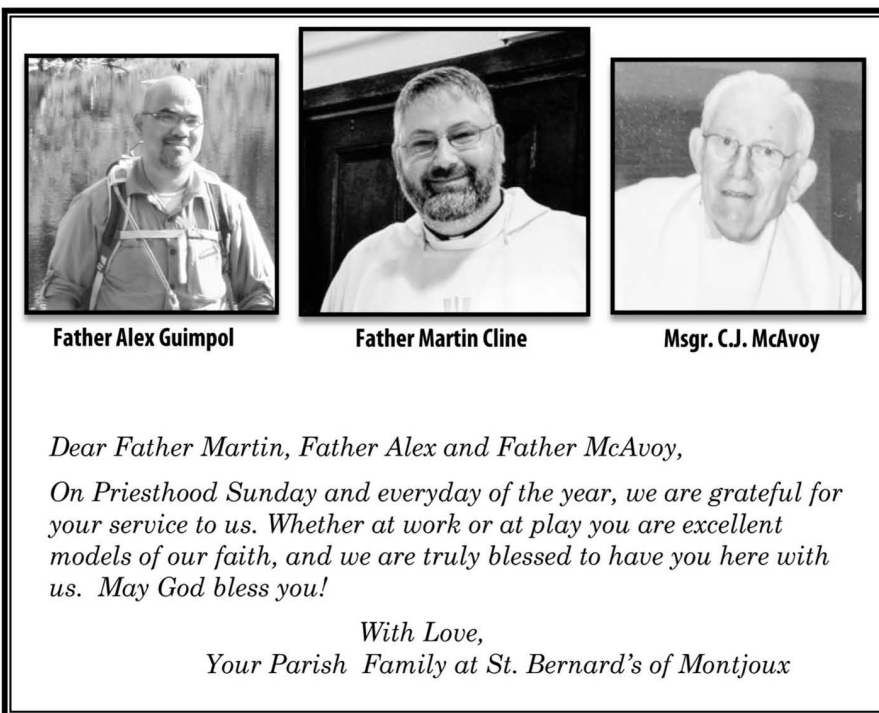
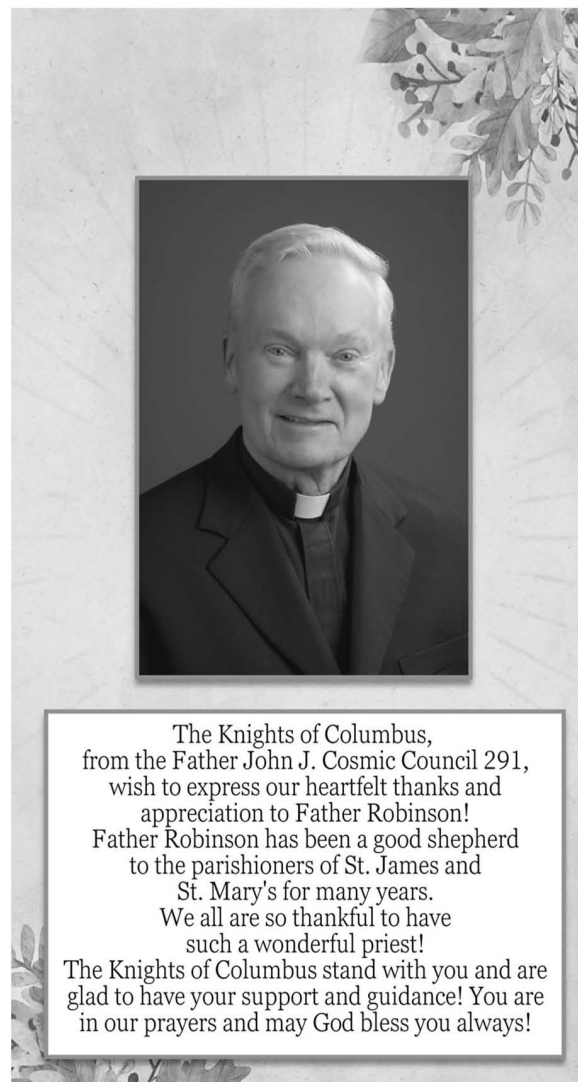
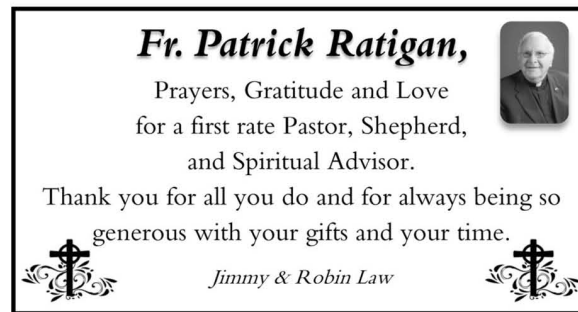
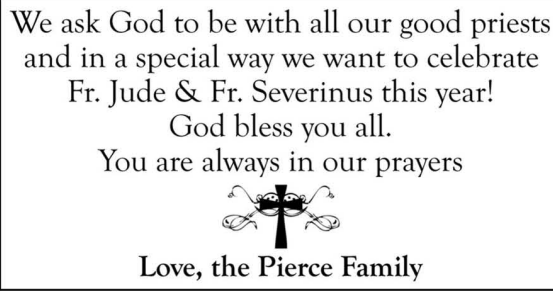
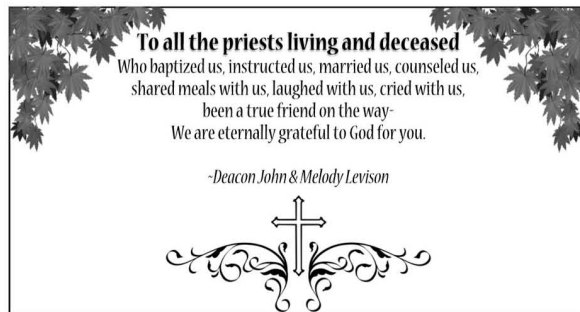


We appreciate our priests



**Thank you
FR. RAY**

for all that you do for
your faith families at
St. Mary's, Brushton
&
St. Augustine's,
North Bangor



Fr. Martin,
We appreciate
everything you do!
Thanks for being you!

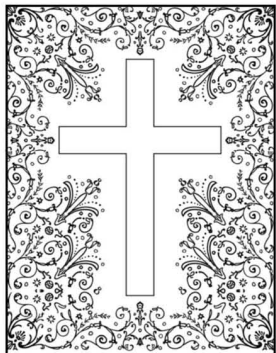
~Love,
The McBrides/Miners



We appreciate our priests



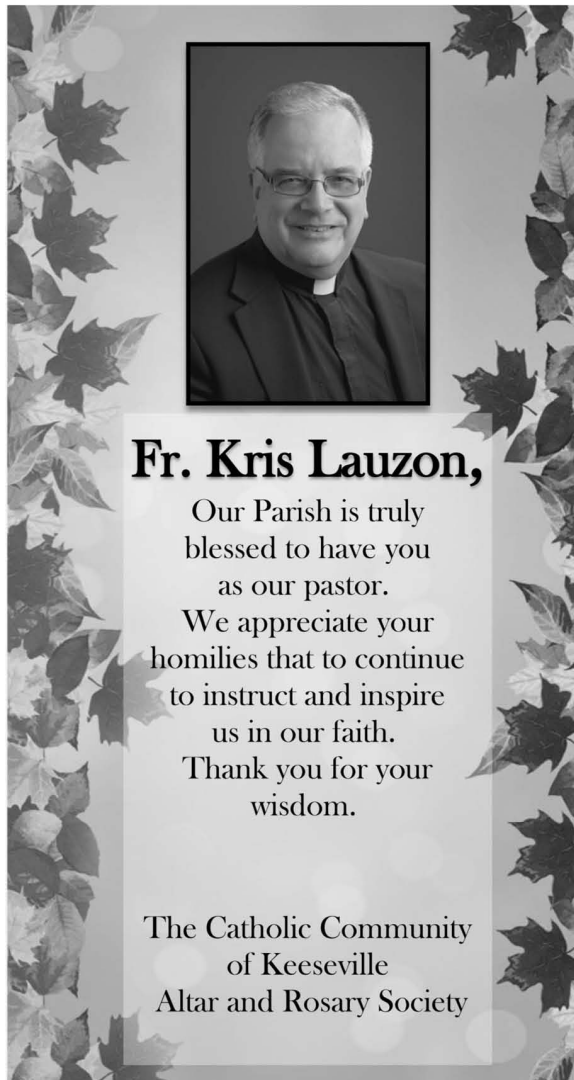
Fr. Don,
Thank you for all that you do for us!
St. James, Carthage
Augustinian Academy
St. Mary's, Copenhagen



Rev. Scott Seymour
Rev. William Gordan
Rev. Jay de LaRosa

Thank you all for your hard
work & for just being
yourselves & guiding us.
You have never let us down.

God Bless & keep you.
~Walma & Ken Masters



Fr. Kris Lauzon,

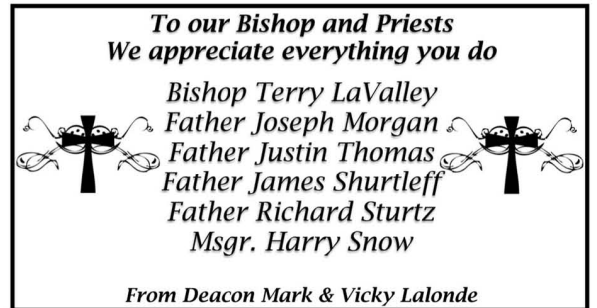
Our Parish is truly
blessed to have you
as our pastor.
We appreciate your
homilies that to continue
to instruct and inspire
us in our faith.
Thank you for your
wisdom.

The Catholic Community
of Keeseville
Altar and Rosary Society

Monsignor Whitmore,
Thank you for our
marriage. It's because of
you we got together!!! We are
blessed by your friendship and
service to God!!!



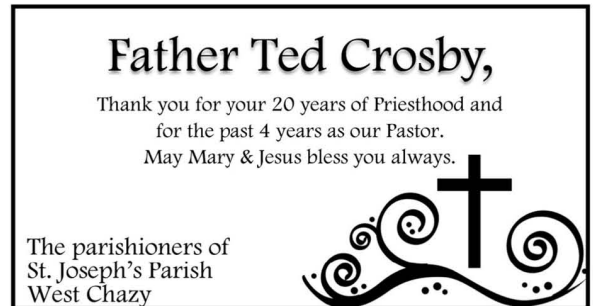
Love,
Deacon James and Christine Chaufty



To our Bishop and Priests
We appreciate everything you do

Bishop Terry LaValley
Father Joseph Morgan
Father Justin Thomas
Father James Shurtleff
Father Richard Sturtz
Msgr. Harry Snow

From Deacon Mark & Vicky Lalonde



Father Ted Crosby,

Thank you for your 20 years of Priesthood and
for the past 4 years as our Pastor.
May Mary & Jesus bless you always.

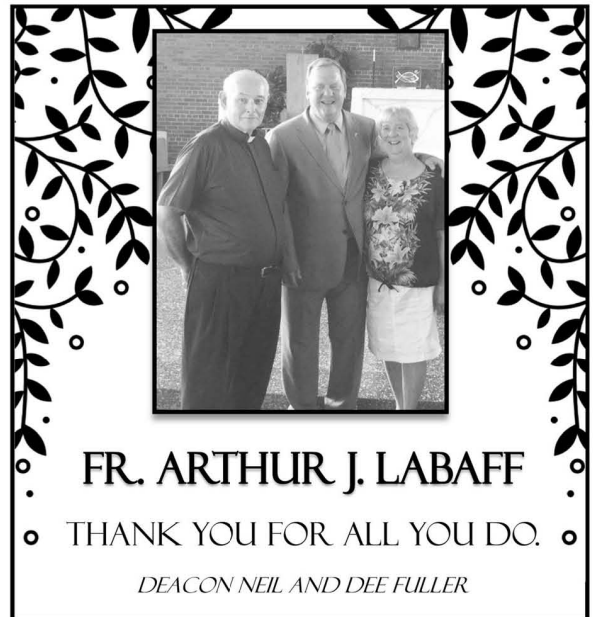
The parishioners of
St. Joseph's Parish
West Chazy



Fr. Bryan Stitt

We appreciate all you
have done for our
parish.

-William & Carol
O'Horo



FR. ARTHUR J. LABAFF

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO.

DEACON NEIL AND DEE FULLER

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

How do we know when to change our minds?

I'm sure you've heard the old saying, "A wise man changes his mind sometimes; a fool, never!" It's a great response to give when someone says to you, "But you said a month ago... (etc)." In this Sunday's readings, God is giving us advice on when to change our minds and when not to. If we're pretty well secure in habits of



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

a good idea to give in to the persuasions of friends who call us "old-fashioned" or foolish for following the teachings of our parents and childhood religion classes and, in doing so, act contrary to our principles. To change because of fear of losing face or being the butt of ridicule could risk God's displeasure, loss of grace, and even loss of eternal happiness. As the old wis-

dom warns, why risk losing heaven for a few hours of the wrong kind of pleasure.

There's another kind of change discussed in the readings. And that's the kind of change that may be defined as conversion – the movement from sinful ways to virtuous ones. That's the kind of change that won the approval of Jesus in

the Gospel – the first son in the parable. He is the one who said "no" to his father's request. He was ready to disobey the father, risking his displeasure and even punishment. Then, wisely he began to feel guilty. He decided it wouldn't kill him to cut short a good time with his friends to work for his father. Let's hope that it was really love that made him change his mind. But even

September 27

26th Sunday of Ordinary Times

READINGS

Ezekiel 18:25-28

Philippians 2:1-11

Matthew 21:28:32

if it was just shame, and maybe a little fear of the consequences of his refusal, he did change his mind. If his friends were real friends, they more than likely respected him for his decision.

How different was the behavior of the second son who said "yes" to his father, but then never followed through. He just wanted to look good and to avoid the disappointment and perhaps anger in his father's eyes. He was quite possibly a hypocrite, who had no intention at all of helping in the vineyard. No one likes a hypocrite, not even the hypocrite himself. Of course, he may just have

been a weakling, of whom it is said, "The road to hell is paved with good intentions." His problem was loving himself and his own pleasure more than the Father.

How do we know when to change our minds and when not to? The second reading gives us sound advice: "Do nothing out of selfishness... rather, have that mind in you which is in Christ Jesus who humbled himself even to the point of death." To change one's mind is often humbling, especially if we risk the ridicule of worldly friends or even worldly family members. But isn't it far better than to stubbornly keep to the road that will eventually send us over? Christ is ever present and working in his church, particularly through the sacraments. Christ is the source of our faith, the model of every believer, and our teacher in prayer.

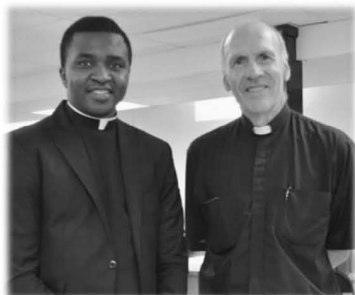
This past Sunday we celebrated Catechetical Sunday. The word "catechetical" is unfamiliar to many people. What does it mean?

The word might be more familiar than you think. Many Catholics have used the word "catechism" for years, and they know it has something to do with a collection of the teachings of our Catholic Church. The root word "catechesis" is from a

Greek word meaning "to echo or resound." Catechesis is the act of resounding or bringing the Church's teachings to the world. A catechist is one who teaches in the name of the Church.

Why do we have a special day set aside to commission catechists? Catechesis is a distinct and special ministry in the Church. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* makes clear, "Catechesis is intimately bound up with the whole of the Church's life, Her inner growth and correspondence with God's plan depend essentially on catechesis" (no. 7). The ministry of teaching in the name of the Church has a profound dignity, which is why catechists are formally commissioned by the Church. It is only fitting that we set aside a day to highlight this ministry and invite the entire church community to think about our responsibility to share our faith with others. It assists but does not replace the responsibility of parents to be the prime teachers and models for the faith-life of their children.

We are grateful for the readings of this Sunday that teach us when to change and when not to change. May we ponder deeply on the wisdom of these readings for our journey to our home in heaven.



Thank you
Rev. James Seymour
Pastor
Rev. Jude Nnadibuagha
Parochial Vicar
Our "Frontline Workers."

You ensure we remain spiritually grounded; you guide us; you stay connected to us; and you give us hope during these difficult times.

You are a source of blessings for our Community.

Catholic Community of St. Peter ~ St. Mary ~ St. Hedwig
5457 Shady Avenue
Lowville, New York

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CALLED TO SERVE

Taking a look at the statistics

Statistics: A branch of mathematics dealing with the collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation of masses of numerical data.

We are being bombarded with statistics regularly these days. Here are a few I researched for this column.

We have 55 active priests in the diocese according to the diocesan website. That's a 38% increase over the number of priests Bishop Wadhams found in the North Country when he became the first Bishop of Ogdensburg in 1872. That sounds pretty good, right?

The fifth Bishop of Ogdensburg, Bryan McEntegart, had 191 priests when he was appointed in 1943. Statistically, Bishop

McEntegart had 378% more priests than Bishop Wadhams but Bishop LaValley has 247% fewer priests than Bishop McEntegart. Or something like that.

The bottom line is we need to continue to pray for vocations to the priesthood. Whether any of that interests you is neither here nor there. I rambled on about those percentages to illustrate that we can use statistics to our advantage anytime we want. This is really oversimplifying, but if you want to argue for vocations, use the 1943 versus 2020 percentage decrease. If you think everything is just wonderful,

compare the 2020 numbers to when Bishop Wadhams took the train to this new diocese from Albany.

Which brings me to a recent statistical study released by the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA). The report tells us that "36 percent (of young adults) said they plan to attend Mass less frequently when stay-at-home orders related to the Covid-19 pandemic end and churches fully reopen." That was the headline item in America Magazine. But if you read on, 51% of young adults said they would not change their church going habits

and 14% said they will attend more frequently. That's a different headline.

We should all be concerned about bringing everyone back to church and work to evangelize the 36%, but let's not forget the majority who will happily return to the word and Eucharist celebrated at Mass.

The mother of all numerical data collections is underway now. The decennial census is close to completion. The Census Bureau reports 90% of US households have been counted as of this writing. "The census population count determines how many representatives each state will have in Congress for the next 10 years and how much federal funding communities

will receive for roads, schools, housing and social programs." Billions of dollars are at stake, state legislative lines are drawn based on the numbers, a numerical picture of our country from every conceivable angle comes into focus. The census is a big deal. I hope you were counted. If you were not, call your county planning office. Joseph took Mary who was pregnant with Jesus by donkey to make sure they were counted. You can go the extra mile too.

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



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon



Happy Ordination Anniversary, Fr. Mickey

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for their vocation, dedication and prayer-filled leadership of our churches.



Educating future and current priests

By Father Christopher C. Carrara
 Vicar for Clergy &
 Director of Seminarians

In addition to being the pastor of Our Lady of Grace Parish in Morris-town, Hammond and Rossie, Bishop LaValley has appointed me the Vicar for Clergy, Director of Vocations, and Director of Seminarians. While life can certainly be busy, the truth is it is only possible to fulfill these various roles because of the generosity of the donors to the Bishop's Fund Appeal. The Bishop's Fund makes it possible for the Diocese to employ a very dedicated and competent individual, Catherine Russell, as diocesan Vocation coordinator. She and I collaborate well in the ministry of Vocations recruitment. Her salary and one-half of mine is subsidized by pro-

The education of seminarians and priests in the Diocese of Ogdensburg are supported by funds raised through the annual Bishop's Fund Appeal. Thank you for generously supporting vocations and other vital ministries through the annual appeal.

ceeds from the Bishop's Fund.

Catherine does the lion's share of the work in the office, and I am grateful. Since I believe she will be writing about vocations, I would like to share with you one responsibility that goes hand in hand with Vocations director, that of director of Seminarians.

As a diocese, we are blessed to have 14 men of varying ages and ethnic backgrounds in the program for priestly formation. As director of Seminarians I have the privilege of working with these men in the many aspects of their formation. I

have an opportunity to visit them at least yearly at their seminaries, meet their professors, bring back any of their concerns to the bishop and, oh yes, take them out to dinner just like my father did for me when he visited me at college.

What is the relationship like? I suspect it is something like what a parent must experience when they have folks away at college. I get the phone calls to just talk, discussing joys and challenges, news about car problems or health issues and not being able to afford the bill, and so on.

When I visit them at seminary I go to the equivalent of a "parent teacher conference," where I meet with the rector and professors to review their progress in the areas of intellectual, spiritual, personal, and pastoral formation. I have to tell you, being director of Seminarians is a wonderful ministry because it gives me the chance to help future priests along the journey. At times, I must challenge them, encourage at other times, and support them all times. If not for the Bishop's Fund, we could afford to send me to visit them, take them out to dinner, help with the occasional financial need or educate these very committed men. In the year and half I have held the position, I have been very impressed with these men

and have been moved by their dedication and sincerity.

I should add as the Vicar for Clergy, I work with priests who the bishop asks to go on for further studies. It is also the Bishop's Fund that makes this possible. Currently, Father Joseph W. Giroux is working on his degree in Canon Law. I do laugh when he sends me his grades to review. Don't tell him, but he is a great deal smarter than I am! What I do know is higher education is expensive for both seminarians and priests, and your support makes it possible. I thank God for the blessing of dedicated seminarians and priests, and I thank you for making their training and support possible through your donations. Thank you and pray for vocations!

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The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669

(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296

mbrett@rcdony.org

Gratitude for our priests

In a world where we have so much to be thankful for, the Mission Office would like to celebrate and acknowledge the endless, tireless and prayer-filled efforts of our priests here in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. We recognize that every priest in our diocese wears many hats. They are always accessible and try to assist us in every way possible. The Mission Office truly appreciates our priests. We are aware that they not only help us in our quest for prayers and resources, but they are truly carrying out the call to be missionaries.

The Mission Office (officially known as the Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Inc.) would like to show special gratitude and appreciation for our Priests who are members of our Board of Directors. Chaired by Bishop Terry R. LaValley, board president, Father Joseph A. Morgan, vice president, Father Kevin J. O'Brien, officer, and Father Jay Seymour, director, our Board is blessed to have their experience, guidance and intellect helping steer our ship through calm waters and turbulent times. We are grateful and appreciative for their time, talent, and treasure.

In a world full of extraordinary missionaries, the Mission Office would like to show special appreciation for Father Daniel Chapin, MM, a Maryknoll priest from Malone who is living out his call to mission in Bolivia. Ordained in 1972, Father Chapin spent almost three decades in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Now, Father Chapin is a real-life contact and voice for the Missions. He is always willing to come and speak in our parishes when he is home on leave from South America and is the first to volunteer to write a piece for the *North Country Catholic*. His writings of life in the mission lands are wonderful first-hand accounts of his ministry and the amazing people he has met along the way. Father Chapin contributed a great deal to our promotions in recent months for both the MPDO collection and Extraordinary Mission Month. In the September/October 2020 issue of *Maryknoll*, Father Chapin is quoted, "I grew up in a small rural community. It was a very ecumenical spirit." Further, his views on parish ministry, "really listening, is the key in the ability to respond." Father Chapin is a champion for the missions but is fundamentally an inspiring spirit. He is appreciated near and far. We are blessed to have his help. We appreciate Father Dan Chapin.

Finally, on behalf of Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ and diocesan director of the Mission Office, let us once again reiterate our appreciation and support for our Diocesan Priests. As you can clearly read here, we could not be what we are today without the efforts, support and time of our Priests residing both here and around the world. We thank you all for your grace-filled missionary spirit.

Funeral Mass celebrated for Sister Frances J. Comeau

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Frances J. Comeau, a Daughter of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, was held Sept. 14 at St. Rose of Lima Church in Littleton, New Hampshire.

Sister Frances was called to God on Sept. 9, 2020, at the age of 91, after 69 years of religious profession.

Sister was born on Feb. 27, 1929, in Newport, Vermont.

Sister Frances served God's people through her gifts of teaching and music. She was missioned by her Congregation to St. Mary's Academy in Champlain, New York, where she taught piano, instruments, choruses and choirs, as well as regular classes in the elementary and high school.

After 15 years, Sister was missioned to Sacred Heart Elementary and High School in Newport, Vermont, where she taught music for 45 years of her active life in ministry, as well as a few years teaching in the elementary school. The music department at Sacred Heart High

School became very renowned in the area during these years.

In August 2007, Sister was transferred to the retirement home of the Daughters of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus at Mount Sacred Heart, in Littleton, New Hampshire, where she enjoyed a much deserved rest after her intense years of service in the music and teaching ministry. In February 2019, due to the necessity for supervised medical attention, Sister went to Holy Cross Health Care Center in Manchester, New Hampshire. After a tragic fall, Sister was hospitalized and soon entered hospice care, at the Community Hospice Center in Merrimack, New Hampshire, where she passed peacefully.

Sister Frances is predeceased by her father, Eusebie Comeau, formerly of Chicago, and her mother, Edna Comeau (Gagnon) of Newport, Vermont; her sister, Claudia Smith; her brothers, Stanley and Homer; as well as her nephew, Anthony Pare.

Sister is survived by her

sister-in-law, Claire Comeau; nieces, Lynne Fullington, Janet and Dawn Pare, Adele and Carol Comeau and Ann Ames; and nephews, Erick and Allan Pare, Steve, Robert, David, Barry, Denis Comeau.

The Daughters of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus are very grateful for the professional and loving care Sister Francis received by the nursing staff of the Mount Sacred Heart Infirmary, in Littleton, the staff of Holy Cross Health Care Center in Manchester, and the Community Hospice Center in Merrimack. Sister Frances will be sorely missed by family and her Sisters in the community.

Interment took place at St. Mary's Cemetery, Newport, Vermont.

Memorial donations in Sister Frances' name may be addressed to: Daughters of the Charity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, 226 Grove St., Littleton, NH 03561.

To offer your condolences to the family please visit www.rossfuneral.com

OBITUARIES

Chazy – Keith C. Collins, Sr., 71; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 14, 2020 at Sacred Heart Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Dannemora – Virginia LaDuke, 78; Memorial Mass Sept. 12, 2020 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in St. George's Cemetery, Burke.

Dannemora – Arlene Kennedy Patnode, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 17, 2020 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Lake Placid – Beatrice (Frayne) Clarey, 101; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 17, 2020 at St. Agnes Church; burial in St.

Agnes Cemetery.

Lowville – Joseph M. Kenealy, 61; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 19, 2020 at St. Peter's Church.

Massena – Betty J. (Kellison) Deleel, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 15, 2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Constance Sue (Stevenson) Miller, 74; Graveside Services June 13, 2020 at St. Peter's Cemetery Columbarium.

Port Henry – Benjamin J. Snow, 55; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 12, 2020

at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Potsdam – Sheila M. (Enslow) Pitcher, 81; Graveside Services Sept. 16, 2020 at Bayside Cemetery.

Raymondville – Duane L. "Joby" Richards, Sr., 77; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 19, 2020 at St. Raymond's Church.

Watertown – David P. Hagan, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 21, 2020 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Oakwood Cemetery, Theresa.

Ginsburg remembered as 'jurist of historic stature'

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, who died Sept. 18 at age 87, has been described in countless tributes as a cultural icon and a giant despite her small size.

"Our nation has lost a jurist of historic stature. We at the Supreme Court have lost a cherished colleague. Today we mourn, but with confidence that future generations will remember Ruth Bader Ginsburg as we knew her – a tireless and resolute champion of justice," said Chief Justice John Roberts in a statement released by the court.

Ginsburg was surrounded by her family at her home in Washington when she died from complications of metastatic pancreatic cancer.

The second woman appointed to the court, who served there for more than 27 years, is primarily remembered for her pioneering work for gender equality and for writing pointed dissents and asking tough questions. In anti-death penalty and pro-immigrant opinions, she sided with Catholic Church leaders, but she differed with them in her support for legalized abortion, same-sex marriage and the mandate that contraception be covered in all health insurance plans.

Ginsburg, who was Jew-

ish, had a framed passage from the Book of Deuteronomy on her chamber wall: "Justice, justice you shall pursue."

"I am a judge, born, raised and proud of being a Jew," she told the American Jewish Committee after her 1993 appointment to the court by President Bill Clinton. "The demand for justice runs through the entirety of Jewish history and Jewish tradition," she said.

Ginsburg had what many describe as an unlikely friendship – sealed with humor and a shared love of opera – with fellow Justice Antonin Scalia, a Catholic, who disagreed with her on many issues in the courtroom. After his death in 2016, Ginsburg wrote: "From our years together at the D.C. Circuit, we were best buddies. We disagreed now and then, but when I wrote for the court and received a Scalia dissent, the opinion ultimately released was notably better than my initial circulation."

After Scalia's death, Msgr. Peter Vaghi, pastor of the Church of the Little Flower in Bethesda, Maryland, said the friendship of the two justices, on opposing sides in the court, represented "the way things used to be in Washington. ... One can differ and disagree on issues, but still respect each

other as individuals. We've come a long way from that," he told the Catholic Standard, archdiocesan newspaper of Washington.

A native of Brooklyn, New York, Ginsburg, graduated from Cornell University, attended Harvard Law and graduated from Columbia University School of Law in 1959. Before she served on the nation's highest court, she argued six cases there over gender-based discrimination. She then served as a judge of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, appointed to that court in 1980 by President Jimmy Carter. While serving on the federal appeals court, Ginsburg wrote key opinions on civil rights, freedom of speech and religion, and sex discrimination.

In 2018, two movies about her were released: "On the Basis of Sex," which focused on her early career arguments for women's equality, and the documentary "RBG." The latter focused on her work as a legal pioneer and a pop-culture phenomenon whose moniker "Notorious RBG" was a spin on the name of the deceased rapper, "The Notorious B.I.G."

Ginsburg, who worked out with a trainer, faced two bouts with cancer and missed her first oral argument last year while recuperating from surgery. In a talk at the University of Notre Dame in 2016 she said that she had no immediate retirement plans and would continue to work "as long as I can do it full

steam, and that means I have to take it year by year."

She also spoke at Fordham University in the New York borough of the Bronx that same year where she challenged students to use their legal talents to help their communities. She also reminded them the law is to "serve a society of people – all people, not just the wealthy."

For the past five years, including this February, she addressed students at Georgetown University Law School, where her husband, Marty, who died in 2010, had been a professor.

Georgetown Law Dean William Treanor said he will never forget Ginsburg's visits to the school and her interactions with the students. "It was a joy to watch their faces as they saw their hero. She embodied the best in the law, and I admired her more than I can say. Her death is a profound loss."

Sister Helen Prejean, a Sister of St. Joseph of Medaille and longtime anti-death penalty activist, said on Instagram that she was "deeply saddened to hear that Justice Ginsburg has passed away. She was a trailblazer in the truest sense ... Our nation is the poorer for her loss."

Political leaders also expressed their admiration for Ginsburg, and depending on their political leanings, spoke of the urgency of not filling her post right away or quickly doing so, before the presidential election. Crowds also gathered outside the court for hours

after her death was announced chanting, "RBG!"

Ginsburg told her granddaughter days before she died that she felt strongly that her Supreme Court seat should not be filled "until a new president is installed," National Public Radio reported.

As tweets speculated who might take her seat on the bench if she is replaced soon, the name of Amy Coney Barrett, a Notre Dame law professor on the seat of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit, was raised. Barrett's confirmation hearings for that post received considerable attention when Senator Dianne Feinstein, D-California, grilled Barrett on the role of her Catholic faith.

At her Georgetown Law School talk in February, Ginsburg alluded to current political strife and a hope that things could improve.

"Susan B. Anthony never got to see the 19th Amendment ratified, but she knew it would happen," she said.

"In my long life, I have seen such positive change. Yes, there are things that make us all worried. But I am hopeful there will be leaders on both sides of the aisle who will say, it's time to get together and work for the good of the country. That is my hope, and I would be content if I could see it happen in my lifetime."

Ginsburg is survived by her two children, four grandchildren and one great-grandchild. She will be buried in a private interment service at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

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