

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Youth director takes over Campus Ministry | PAGE 5

Father Chapin featured in *Maryknoll Magazine* | PAGE 10

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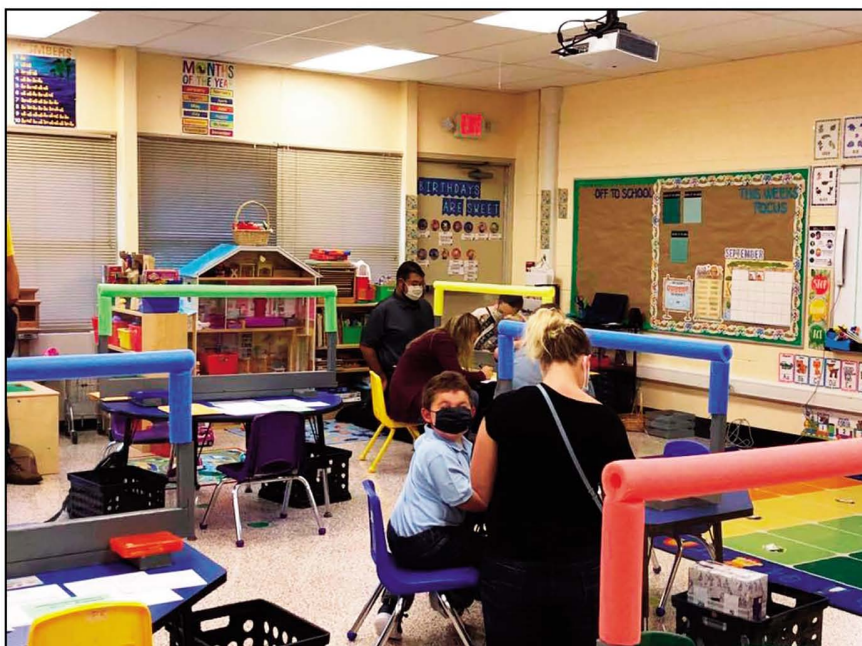
'Let the will of God be done in your life'

"Imagine that you come to a country where you do not speak its language. You need to communicate with the people around you but are not able," said Father Medenel Angrand, special parochial vicar at St. André Bessette Parish, describing his introduction to this country. "The day I arrived in Iowa (for English language school) it was -4 degrees and snowing. I had never seen snow, and when I left Haiti it was 90 degrees. I did not prepare for this weather, and I felt like I was dying."

Learn more about Father Angrand and his journey to the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

READY FOR SCHOOL



St. Mary's School in Ticonderoga invited students and families in pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade to meet their teachers and see their classrooms on Sept. 2. School resumes on Sept. 8.

SHARING OUR STORIES



Dr. Rose-Alma "Dolly" McDonald found her spiritual home at St. Regis Mission Church after more than 20 years away from her Catholic faith. Read about McDonald in this week's Sharing Our Stories, Sharing Our Faith. To suggest an individual to be featured in this series, which features how lay Catholics are living out their faith here in the North Country Catholic, please call the North Country Catholic at 315-393-2920 or email dfargo@rcdony.org.

FULL STORY, PAGE 9

Pope: Place people above 'idols of finance'

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – As many people around the world face economic uncertainty due to the pandemic, a paradigm shift is needed that places the good of the many over the benefit of the few, Pope Francis said.

As a general concept, economics should become "the expression of a care and concern that does not exclude but seeks to include, that does not demean but seeks to uplift and give life," the pope said Sept. 4 in a message to participants at an inter-

national forum sponsored by the "European House – Ambrosetti," an economic think tank based in Rome.

Economics should be an expression of "care and concern that refuses to sacrifice human dignity to the idols of finance, that does not give rise to violence and inequality and that uses financial resources not to dominate but to serve," he said. "Genuine profit comes from treasures accessible to all."

European House – Am-

brosetti was holding its annual forum Sept. 4-6 in the northern Italian city of Cernobbio. According to its website, the forum gathers government authorities, businesspeople, scholars and experts "to discuss current issues of major impact for the world economy and society as a whole."

In his message, the pope said the issues facing the world "call for extraordinary efforts to meet the challenges created or aggravated by the present

medical, economic and social emergency."

The COVID-19 pandemic, he wrote, "has taught us that none of us is saved alone."

"The turn of events has forced us to recognize that we belong to one another, as brothers and sisters dwelling in a common home," the pope said. "Having failed to show solidarity in wealth and in the sharing of resources, we have learned to experience solidarity in suffering."

The pope said the pandemic also has forced people to "refrain from the superfluous and concentrate on the essential" and to discern "what is lasting from what is fleeting, what is necessary from what is not."

In this time, he continued, science and technology, while necessary, "have proved insufficient" and "what has proved decisive instead is the outpouring of generosity and courage shown by so many people."

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EDITOR'S NOTE

I carry it with me nearly everywhere

The message on the card was simple, but meaningful. It was a message from a friend who was helping me overcome a problem I was facing.

Now, months removed from when my friend initially gave me that card, I still carry it with me nearly everywhere I go. I look at that card when I'm struggling.

I'm fairly certain I'll never forget the sentiment my friend conveyed in that card, but sentiments are fleeting. Holding the card in my hand and re-reading it affects me much more than just thinking about it. Having that tangible experience

— opening the folded card, seeing my friend's handwriting, reading my friend's exact words — makes me relive the emotions I felt when I read the card for the first time. It reminds me of the love and care that went into writing it. It reminds me of the lesson I continue to take from it.

**Darcy L.
Fargo**

As I reviewed the card for what I'd call the eleventh billionth time and reflected on how important it is to me, it suddenly struck me why tangible elements are such a critical part of our Catholic faith (yes, it amazes me it took me this many years for that to sink in).

Our faith is a physical faith. Our sacraments include physical signs — water in baptism, oil in confirmation, raised hands in confession and, bread and wine becoming the Body and Blood of Christ...

We hang icons, crucifixes or other images on our walls as reminders and calls to prayer (I have an icon of St. Maximilian Kolbe on my office wall and a miniature statue of St. Frances de Sales on my desk — both are patron saints of journalists — to remind myself to pray for their intercession when I'm struggling to find the right words to include in a story or this column).

We hold rosary beads in our hands as we pray and

reflect on the mysteries or as we pray a Divine Mercy Chaplet. And these are just a few examples of the many I could list.

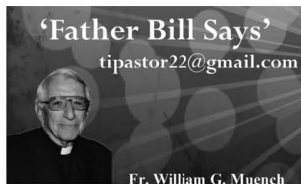
Our faith includes many tangible elements. Why? I'm no theologian, but I believe it's in part because we're whole beings — body, mind and soul. It's only appropriate that our whole beings — our bodies, our senses, our thoughts and our spirits — would be included in our worship. But I also find that these tangible things help us. They make our faith more real and more alive.

May we carry that living faith — and maybe even a few signs of it — wherever we go, much like I carry that card.

Following Jesus often involves suffering

There are times when our Sunday Scriptures are rather harsh, and this has been true during these recent weeks of the pandemic, and for good reason. I am certain you and I would like more joyful readings. We want to be some encouragement. However, we must learn that following Jesus means that finding that happiness and peace often involves pain and suffering for our Savior. Our joy has meant pain for our Savior.

One Sunday recently demonstrated this for us. I am certain you will remember. The first reading was from Jeremiah and began with the expression, "You duped me, O Lord." The Gospel reading that Sunday was when Jesus spoke to the apostles about his coming sufferings, and Peter became angry. You will remember that Peter took Jesus aside, and the Gospel goes on to tell us Peter rebuked Jesus. Peter loved Jesus so much that he could not accept that Jesus

**Fr. William G. Muench**

would suffer and be killed.

We are surprised when Jesus immediately gets upset with Peter. He was aware how Peter felt, but he needed Peter to understand that suffering would be part of the declaration that would demonstrate how much God loves Peter for all time, as seen in the crucifixion of Jesus. This must become Peter's teaching all the way to Rome; Peter must help people understand God's great love for us all through the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus wants Peter to understand, so he challenges him, and I am certain surprises him by saying, "Get behind me, Satan." You have so much to understand and so much to believe.

Jesus has always been as-

sociated with Jeremiah, the seventh century B.C., prophet. In that Sunday's reading, Jeremiah is upset with God. He has been inspired by God to preach a message that is so violent to his people, urging the people to find God. But his violent message upsets the leaders of the city, and he is punished for preaching in this fashion. He is put into stocks — that wooden structure that was actually used in our own country during revolutionary days to punish law breakers. When Jeremiah is released, he writes a long poem, like a song. When I hear this reading each year, I call to mind this wonderful story. He writes, "You duped me, O Lord." Then he adds to the message, "I say to myself, I will not mention him. I will speak in his name no more. But then it becomes like fire burning in my heart, imprisoned in my love; I grow weary holding it in. I cannot believe it."

Jeremiah just has to bring

God's message, no matter how painful it will be for him. It will be difficult, he will suffer as he attempts to convince people of God's love. Jesus decided that he must make certain that Peter gets the real message. Peter will never forget that moment when he brings to others his message that Jesus had to suffer to demonstrate God's great love for all peoples. Peter learns that he must accept the pain of suffering. His sufferings and his own crucifixion will demonstrate how much Peter loves Jesus and that he was dedicated to bringing that love to others. We are called to be like Peter. And in many ways, we are to be like Jeremiah also. Often the message of God that we, priests, must bring to people is harsh, and we are almost like Jeremiah: we resist being so bold and harsh, and yet the Lord inspires us with the importance of the message. Like Jeremiah, it often becomes like fire burning in our hearts.

'Let the will of God be done in your life'

By Suzanne Pietropaoli
Staff Writer

MALONE— "Imagine that you come to a country where you do not speak its language. You need to communicate with the people around you but are not able," said Father Medenel Angrand, special parochial vicar at St. André Bessette Parish, describing his introduction to this country. "The day I arrived in Iowa (for English language school) it was -4 degrees and snowing. I had never seen snow, and when I left Haiti it was 90 degrees. I did not prepare for this weather, and I felt like I was dying."

Then there was the unfamiliar cuisine: "For weeks whenever I went to the dining room, I could not stand even the smell of the food," Father Angrand said.

Two successful semesters later, the priest was off to study at Holy Apostles College in Cromwell, Connecticut, where he made connections that eventually led him to the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Interestingly, Holy Apostles represented a change of plans for Father Medenel. Ordained a priest for the Diocese of Fort-Liberté, Haiti, in 2003, he had served for 15 years in various parishes and diocesan-level positions, including as director of Caritas, equivalent to our Catholic Charities.

Following this experience, he recalls, "I asked my Bishop for permission to study in the U.S. My first choice was a master's degree in Philanthropy and Development because of my positive experience with Caritas. However, after my language studies I could not find a scholarship to study in that pro-



Father Medenel Angrand

gram. With the consent of my bishop, I chose to pursue a master's degree in Moral Theology when I was offered a full scholarship for that at Holy Apostles."

Father Angrand was awarded that degree in May 2019. But while studying at Holy Apostles, he met seminarians who were members of the Dominican Missionaries for the Deaf Apostolate. Through them he met Father Thomas Coughlin, a Malone native and founder of the apostolate, and connected with the group's summer camp in Old Forge. Visiting Camp Mark 7 brought Father Angrand into contact with the parishes in Old Forge,

Inlet, and Raquette Lake.

"I fell in love with the Diocese of Ogdensburg at that time," he explains, "and I was honored by the invitation of Father Howard Venette to come to celebrate Mass at St. Anthony of Padua in Inlet for one month. With his support and the authorization of my home bishop, I applied to work as a priest in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. I was then ap-

pointed as Special Vicar at St. André Bessette parish by Bishop Terry R. LaValley for a period of one year, from October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020."

This year, Father Angrand explains, has brought both blessings and challenges.

"Unfortunately, I lost my father 22 days after coming to Malone," he said. "But I was grateful to God and to Father Steve Murray, our pastor, who allowed and supported me to go to Haiti to celebrate my dad's funeral. I am also grateful to all in St. André's parish, especially those who have prayed for my father and had Masses offered for the repose of his soul."

In fact, the priest says, "Although I am far from my home country, my blood family, and friends, I feel at home here and belong to a bigger family. Since my first day at St. André's, I have felt very welcome by the clergy, staff, and parishioners. I am very impressed by the faith of the people and by their fraternal solidarity. The Christian community of St. André's is my new family."

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic inevitably brought concerns for his family in Haiti, and for the country itself, which is one of the poorest in the western hemisphere.

"I have worried," Father Angrand relates, "because I know there are not enough health structures in Haiti to deal with a pandemic. Even the few structures we do have are ill-equipped to deal with COVID 19. I have prayed to the Lord – it is all I can do – to stretch out his powerful hand to protect and save the world from this pandemic. By God's grace, it has not so far hit Haiti as hard as the government predicted."

The priest is grateful that technology lets him stay in close touch with friends and family in his home country, especially with his mom.

"I call her often, and she never ceases to pray for me and my ministry," Father Angrand said. "I have been blessed to grow up in a Catholic family in my hometown of Terrier-Rouge, Haiti, with four lovely sisters and one brother. All my nine nephews and 11 nieces are Catholic."

From an early age, Father Angrand recalls, "I had felt this ardent desire to give myself entirely and unconditionally to God in the priesthood. Various people suggested that I study medicine or engineering, but I opted for minor seminary. After three years there, I firmly decided to give myself entirely to the Lord. And I had great encouragement

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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MEET AND GREET



Seton Catholic in Plattsburgh held an elementary Meet & Greet for students and their families to meet teachers and drop off school supplies on Sept. 3.

The will of God

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

from my mother, Immacula, who has prayed for me unceasingly and always said to me, 'Let the will of God be done in your life.'

Over the past 17 years, the will of God has led Father Angrand to different parishes in Haiti and to different areas of ministry, to studies in the U.S., and eventually to Malone. However diverse, these assignments have all been "a source of joy" for the priest.

"While there are ups and downs in all human existence," he notes, "I have been blessed by God with many joyful and responsible collaborators in the parishes and in diocesan assignments. For me, the 'downs' have included the impossibility, sometimes, to help my parishioners or any fellow citizen in urgent need. I always put together in my priestly ministry 'love and service of God' and 'love and serv-

ice of my brothers and sisters.' I am truly blessed that the joy of the priesthood remains in me as it was on the day of my ordination."

"From my perspective," he continues, "the essence of the priesthood is the Holy Eucharist, which is the heart of Christian life. Our strength, the courage to teach, sanctify, lead God's people, share God's undeserved love to everyone, and to serve others selflessly, can only come from the precious gift of the Eucharist and the power of the Holy Spirit."

That is equally true here or in Haiti, in English, French, or Creole.

"The Church," Father Angrand affirms, "is the same everywhere – the same faith professed and celebrated, and the same mission."

He does note, though, that cultures and traditions differ from place to place, and that those differences influence liturgy

and the life of the Church.

"In Haiti, for example, people have and give more time for the Church than in the USA, where people are very busy with work and other activities," he said. "Also, there are many young people and children in the Church in Haiti, which is quite different from the USA, where active parishioners are mostly adults and elders. However, I find as a great blessing that those who remain active in the Church in the U.S., according to my experience, are very devoted and strong in their faith."

Yet the future of the Church does depend on the presence of the young.

"This reality calls our conscience as disciples and missionaries of Christ to put more efforts in the mission of evangelization that our Lord and Master entrusted to the Church," Father Angrand concludes. "Pray for more vocations in the Church, especially in the U.S."

Youth director takes over Campus Ministry

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

OGDENSBURG – While Thomas Semeraro, the new coordinator of Campus Ministry is still acclimating to the role, he says he's looking forward to working with the campus ministry team to serve the college students of our diocese.

Semeraro has served as director of Youth Ministry for two years and will continue in that role, as well.

"I think it made sense to combine those two offices," he said. "First, I'm hoping we'll be able to get the college students involved with the youth. Also, many of our youth attend colleges in the diocese, so we'll have that continuity and continued connection."

Semeraro said he plans to continue working with the campus ministers spread across the 10 colleges in the diocese to advance the Campus Ministry mission. The department's mission statement states: "Catholic Campus Ministry in the



Thomas Semeraro

Diocese of Ogdensburg exists to create opportunities for college students to encounter Christ through the Sacraments and through each other. Through our ministry, we hope to walk with students as they grow in understanding of our Catholic faith while creating a community of students that encourages each other to increase in holiness and grow closer to Christ."

The Diocese of Ogdensburg is home to 10 colleges, which include a mix of private and public insti-

tutions, as well as two-year and four-year colleges. There are roughly 23,000 students divided between the 10 colleges.

The coordinator plans two annual retreats for college students, as well as the college students' participation in the March for Life. Semeraro will also provide support for the campus ministers as they work to provide the sacraments and worship opportunities.

"Our Newman Centers and Newman Clubs offer a lot of events and activities," he said. "It's my goal to help give them ideas and help connect them with resources."

The coordinator also serves as a liaison between the campus ministers and other diocesan offices, including the Vocations Office, the Office of New Evangelization, Faith Formation and Education to tap into the resources and expertise of those office for event planning and ministry.

Semeraro said he also hopes to expand the role,

working with the campus ministers to make their programs more visible to students who may not be practicing their Catholic faith and to students who aren't Catholic.

"I'd like to assist the campus ministers in creating a more visible presence for their Newman Centers and Newman Clubs," he said. "We'd like to boost the number of programs and event offerings on the campuses and in the parishes that support them."

Such events and offerings could include Theology on Tap, in which discussions about Catholic topics take place in secular settings, such as restaurants or bars, as well as social justice projects. Semeraro also hopes to increase the Catholic campus ministries' visibility at student functions such as concerts, movie nights and social gatherings.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the Campus Ministry team will face challenges, though, Se-

meraro noted.

"We're still discussing how to hold events, how to connect with students and how to meet their needs while respecting the safety protocols," he said. "There are a lot of unknowns this year, and there's a lot of work to be done."

Semeraro said the pandemic, as well as the current generations reliance on digital media, has him also looking to help the campus ministers expand their digital presence and offerings.

Semeraro said he looks forward to working with the Campus Ministry team as they work to bring Christ to the college students and campuses.

"My job is to support the ministers," he said. "I'm there to support them on diocesan level as they grow the Campus Ministry programs. We want to ensure our Catholic students have fellowship and the sacraments, and we want to reach out to the larger campus communities and the world."

Meet the new seminarians: Youmarcks Jacques

By Catherine Russell
Coordinator, Vocations Office

Youmarcks Jacques comes to our diocese originally from Haiti. He is one of four new seminarians now studying for the priesthood in the diocese of Ogdensburg.

Jacques has been assigned to the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. His home parish in the diocese is St. James in Carthage.

Jacques has a philosophy degree earned in

Haiti and will soon complete a Master's degree in Theology with a concentration in bioethics from Holy Apostles Seminary in Connecticut.

Jacques comes from a devout family with two cousins who are already priests and two cousins who are religious sisters. At the age of 15, he decided he might want to follow them. Both parents farm in Haiti. With a French last name that means James, it is no wonder the family has a devotion to St. James.

Before discerning his vocation to diocesan priesthood, Jacques belonged to two religious orders. Since 2015, he has been in the United States.

During this past summer, Jacques was assigned to St. James in Carthage. While there, he helped in whatever way he could and got to know many of the parishioners in Carthage and in Copenhagen. To read more about Jacques, check out his biography on the Vocations Office webpage.



Youmarcks Jacques

Environmental Stewardship

How will you celebrate Jubilee of the Earth?

The 2020 theme for the Season of Creation is *Jubilee for the Earth*. This year's theme is chosen because it reflects three interlocking themes. Jubilee is a time to renounce over-consumption and economic systems based on constant economic growth at the cost of the earth and those who are poor. Jubilee is a time when those who have consumed the most must make restitution to those who have suffered the most. Jubilee is a time of rest for the land from constant exploitation, to restore ecosystems and people.

The past Sunday's scripture readings challenge us as Christians to take up the prophetic responsibility in love to invite each other gently and prayerfully to conversion and care for creation in these times of ecological crisis. The question is deep — how do we as sisters and brothers in Christ stop sinning against creation and the generations to come? *Taken from: Creation 2020 A Catholic Liturgical Guide by LISTEN

Some ways we can respond to this challenge to be good stewards to counteract the "Throwaway Culture" as Individuals and families:

In *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis brings our attention to our culture that "quickly reduces things to rubbish." (#22) In your daily routine, identify the ways in which you can choose reusables rather than disposables, i.e. reusable containers for food leftovers and take-out lunches instead of plastic zipper-locks, cloth napkins instead of paper, beverage containers instead of disposables. How many more can you find and do?

Before and after meals, say a short prayer of thanksgiving for the life giving food that sustains and nourishes us. When possible, visit your local farmers market to purchase fresh fruits and veggies that are in season now. Be mindful of the preciousness of the soil, water and sun that nurtured their growth and the hands that cared for them and brought them to your table. This "moment of blessing," however brief, is a reminder of our dependence on God for all life. (#227)

Bishop's Public Schedule

Sept. 9 — 1 p.m. — Roman Catholic Center Board Meeting at Kateri Hall in Hogsburg
5:30 p.m. — Diocesan Review Board Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg
Sept. 10 — 10:30 a.m. — Investment Advisory Committee Meeting at Bishop's Residence
Sept. 15 — Noon — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
Sept. 16 — 9:30 a.m. — Diocesan Department Head Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg
6 p.m. — Confirmation at St. Augustine's Church in Peru

Rest in Peace

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

Sept. 9 — Rev. Michael Olivetti, 1863; Rev. Thomas P. Fitzgerald, 1914; Rev. Antonio Audet, 1957
Sept. 11 — Rev. J. A. Langlois, 1872; Rev. Hyacinth Rueberg, 1913
Sept. 12 — Rev. Vincent Skiba, 1984
Sept. 14 — Rev. Russell Charles O'Neil, 1951
Sept. 15 — Rev. George Lessard, O.M.I., 1978; Rev. Joseph V. Rossitto, 2004

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terri-ann Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terriannyanulavich@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.

Passing on the faith by teaching in the home

By Jessica Hargrave
Contributing Writer



School is back in session both virtually and in-person.

Some parents are finding challenges adjusting to the new learning environment facing schools as health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

Many parents are choosing to homeschool their children, which includes teaching religion lessons that would primarily be taught by a catechist in a classroom or parish.

Joe Paprocki, National Consultant for Faith Formation at Loyola Press and a catechist for over 40 years, offered tips to

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.

Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters from readers of the North Country Catholic.

- Due to space limitations, we ask that the number of words be limited to 500.
- We cannot accept letters which support ideas which are contrary to the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Send letters to North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY, 13669 or e-mail to news@northcountrycatholic.org
- Join the conversation!

you share to enhance the learning?

"The more you share personally, the more your child will know your faith is important to you," said Paprocki.

To start, take a few moments to tell them what the focus of their lesson will be and ask them if they know anything about that topic already.

Tell them why that topic is important to know and understand. At the end, be sure your child understands the main point of the lesson by reviewing what they've learned.

Remember that you are not alone, and your parish is just a phone call away if you have questions about a topic you don't know about or understand.

Right now, parishes within the Diocese of Ogdensburg are crafting plans to resume in-person faith formation programs.

Sister Shirley Anne Brown, SSJ, catechetical leader for Our Lady of Grace Church in Morristown, tells parents choosing to do at-home catechesis creates special memories that will stick with their children as they grow older.

"Children hopefully will remember the content of the lesson as they grow into their own faith life, but they will never forget their parents' stories of faith and their praying with their parents."

To watch the full video of Joe Paprocki's tips and for faith formation resources, go to: <https://catechistsjourney.loyolapress.com>.

parents teaching religion at home so the experience can truly be an encounter with Christ. Paprocki reassures parents that they can do this, since their children learn from them every day, from walking, speaking to tying their shoes.

"When doing faith formation for your child, strive to make it a priority," said Paprocki. "While your child has many lessons to keep up on at home, make sure that faith formation doesn't feel like just another lesson, but instead a very special time together as a family."

To do this, Paprocki suggests setting aside a separate time and space from other school lessons.

Also, parents can add a sense of the sacred by placing a Bible, crucifix or a lit candle on a table. If lighting a candle, ask what or who your child would like to pray for, along with what they are thankful for, then take a moment to pray together.

Before starting the faith formation lesson, Paprocki suggests parents first become familiar with the concepts of the lesson before presenting it to their child. What do the concepts mean to you personally? How do they affect your day-to-day life? What stories or insights from your life can

Creating a culture of vocation

By Catherine Russell
Coordinator, Vocations Office

The diocesan Vocation Office has always promoted vocations to ordained ministry and consecrated life. However, the mission of the office was expanded a few years ago when, under Bishop Terry R. LaValley's leadership, three diocesan priorities were established. In the introduction to the WE ARE CALLED diocesan vocation plan, Bishop writes, "The first vocation each of us acquires by virtue of baptism is to become a saint, to be holy... We will build a culture where such awareness of our baptismal call is nurtured and where church vocations are encouraged and celebrated."

Many of us grew up thinking only sisters and priests were called to be holy, to be saints. By virtue of Baptism, each of us receives the gift of a vocation to love, to be holy, to be saints and a mission for the Kingdom! To that end, the Vocation Office works with parish vocation ministry teams throughout the diocese providing support and resources so that all may realize this call. Vocations to priesthood and consecrated life will surface once we all realize our own vocation to be a true disciple of Jesus and pray for more workers in the vineyard.

The Vocation Office, with support from the Bishop's Fund, accompanies men discerning priesthood and diaconate. Currently, we have three deacons and eleven seminarians studying for priesthood. In addition, the office sponsors discernment



PHOTO BY SEMERAROPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

Seminarians of the Diocese of Ogdensburg recently gathered this summer at Wadhams Hall for their annual workshop. Pictured are, from left, Dennis Ombongi, Deacon Fernando Solomon, Venes Laine, Father Jude Nnadibuagha, Lukas Gruber, Father Severinus Torwoe, Aaron Akey, Thomas Middleton, Nicholas Olley, Vocations Director Father Christopher Carrara, Youmarcks Jacques, Deacon Matthew Conger, Tuan "Joseph" Vuong, Carter Pierce, Deacon John Ojuok, Leagon Carlin, Tyler Fitzgerald and Douglas Schirmer.

groups and retreats, Operation Andrew and Miriam gatherings, young minister recognition and other events for those who are exploring ordained and consecrated life.

The office assists parishes with promoting vocations. Free lesson plans are available to schools and parish programs. Print material and promotional items are also available. If a parish wants a speaker or a

panel on vocational options, the office will assist with providing speakers.

Without the support of the generous donors to the Bishop's Fund, these activities and others like them could not happen. Let's continue to pray that a culture of vocation will flourish in our diocese.

The Vocations Office & Seminarians 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.



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Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg

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- Education of Seminarians
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- Natural Family Planning Office
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- Bishop's Good Samaritan Fund
- Formation for Ministry Program
- Office of the New Evangelization
- Continuing Education and Formation of Priests
- Priests' Graduate Studies
- Vocation Office
- Permanent Deacons
- Deacon Formation
- Tuition Assistance Program
- Campus Ministry Program
- Matching Gifts to Catholic Schools
- Department of Faith Formation
- Diocesan Center of Youth Ministry
- Young Adult Ministry
- Guggenheim Center
- Department of Worship

Ways to Give

Gifts of Cash: Checks should be made payable to the "Bishop's Fund Appeal."

Pledge: A gift to the Bishop's Fund Appeal may be paid in four payments - at the time of the pledge, December, February and April.

Online Giving: The Bishop's Fund Appeal offers the opportunity to make your gift and pledge payments online using a credit card. To donate online, please visit rcdony.org/bfa.html#donate. If making a pledge, enter your first payment in the "amount" box and in the comments section indicate the total amount you wish to pledge.

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Bequests: When considering gifts to a charity in your Will, please remember the Bishop's Fund Appeal. Gifts can be made in the following manner through your Will: Specific dollar amount; a percentage of your estate or a particular asset such as real estate or other valuables.

Mailing Your Gift: Please feel free to mail your donation to: The Bishop's Fund Appeal, PO Box 150, Ogdensburg, NY 13669



'I have a place to belong'

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

After being away from the Church for more than 20 years, Dr. Rose Alma "Dolly" McDonald said it was the loss of a friend and a personal invitation that brought her back to the Catholic faith that had once been a large part of her life.

"I was born into a very religious family," said McDonald, a parishioner of the St. Regis Mission Church on the St. Regis Mohawk Reservation. "My grandfather married the sister of Msgr. (P. Joseph) Bourget, who was pastor here for 40 years."

McDonald said that family connection to the local church was part of why her childhood family was very active in their home parish.

"My family had a very close connection with the church because of Msgr. Bourget," she said. "When I was born, that connection was all I knew. My mother sang in the choir. My father was the president of the St. John the Baptist Society. They were very active in the Church. I was the baby of a family of seven. Everywhere the family went, including church, I was with them. I was raised in a very strict and active Catholic family. That was kind of my beginning."

McDonald noted that her family included an aunt who was a Poor Clare sister, and the family's faith was evident in their lifestyle.

"We were raised in a very Catholic way," she said. "There were prayers before meals, choir practices, and my mother was always helping at church dinners, and I was always helping, too. It was sort of jammed down my throat."

McDonald said it was likely because of the strictness of her upbringing that she rebelled from the



Church for more than 20 years. She returned to her faith around five years ago after the death of a dear friend.

"A friend of mine died. She was an elder in our community," McDonald said. "Her family called me to let me know. They knew we were good friends. They asked me to do her eulogy. I was kind of like, 'What? I'm not even family! Why me?' They told me she would want me to do this for her. She was very religious. I did the eulogy. After the funeral, the priest at the parish, Father Jerome Pastores, asked me who I was and where I had been. He started talking to me about coming back to church. I started coming back little by little, and I eventually started to become very active."

McDonald soon became a greeter at the St. Regis Mission Church. Then, she volunteered to serve during funerals. Eventually, she enrolled in the Formation for Ministry program and started working for the parish.

"I had reasons for being away from the Church, but things were different this time," she said. "I was able

to come back with full force. I was way more involved than I ever had been before. I guess you could say I came back with a vengeance. Before, you couldn't drag me to church. Now, I practically live there. The community really embraced me. My family is well known in our community for our faith. People were so happy, happy, happy I was working in the Church."

McDonald said working for her parish both challenged her and helped her grow her faith.

"Father Jerome (Pastores) has been very patiently mentoring me," she said. "Sometimes, I get frustrated, especially working in the Church. I felt like working for the Church, everyone would be holy and get along. But that's not the case. There's still politics and personalities. That challenged my faith. But Father Jerome got me involved, and that's helped me grow."

McDonald said volunteering at funerals has been particularly meaningful to her.

"When I was a kid, I would run the other way when there was a funeral.

You couldn't drag to one kicking or screaming," she said. "I was afraid of death and all the things that it means. Now, especially being a funeral altar server, I understand better that transition from life to death and to heaven, as well as the beauty of a funeral. I've truly learned that we're not just a body; we're a soul in a body, and our souls live on."

Her work volunteering to administer the parish Facebook page has also helped her grow her faith, especially during the ongoing pandemic.

"We started the Facebook page for parishioners, but it turned out it helped me, too," she said. "My faith keeps getting stronger because I see the power of God's word when I share it there. We get around 2,000 hits per week, and our little parish is only around 500 people. I put something on the page recently asking Archangel Michael to pray for us. A whole bunch of people typed 'Amen,' or 'I needed this prayer today.' I'm happy to help the parishioners stay connected to the parish, but it's also helping me."

McDonald said she also grew in her faith after being exposed to the El Shaddai charismatic movement.

"We had the El Shaddai charismatic group – it's a Filipino group based out of Ottawa and Montreal – here a couple times," she said. "What an experience! They had a band, singing, dancing and prayer, and it was still centered around the Eucharist. I really connected with that form of worship."

Because charismatic worship isn't regularly available at the St. Regis Mission Church, and after discovering another local church who offered such worship through her participation in an Ecumenical

Circle in her community as a representative of her parish, McDonald said she now participates in both the Catholic Mass and a charismatic Christian service at another church in her community.

"I attend the Catholic Mass at my parish, and I attend the charismatic worship at New Life Christian," she said. "It sounds like a crazy thing, but I'm interested in charismatic worship, and I want the Eucharist. The people at New Life Christian haven't tried to convert me. They embrace me as their link to the Catholic Church here."

And McDonald noted her parish at St. Regis Mission Church, which incorporates her Mohawk culture, will always be her spiritual home.

"I'm Mohawk," she said. "We live in a bicultural world as indigenous people. That's what I like about our church. Our culture is integrated. We have a Mohawk choir. At least before the pandemic, they would sing hymns in Mohawk. We sing the Our Father in Mohawk. I think that makes it easier for me to embrace the faith. It's our church. It's the Mohawk church."

McDonald also serves on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) subcommittee on Native American Affairs.

"Last year, we had a listening session," she said. "I was invited – along with Native American leaders from around the country – to talk about Native American issues within the context of the Catholic Church. We talked about residential schools, language and culture. We talked about family care and outreach. We're developing a pastoral plan for the USCCB on indigenous issues. It means a lot to me to know we have an indigenous Church, and I have a place to belong."

Father Chapin featured in *Maryknoll Magazine*

A familiar face is included in the pages of this quarter's edition of *Maryknoll Magazine*. The September/October release includes a multi-page feature about Father Daniel L. Chapin, a priest of the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Father Chapin, 73, is currently serving with Maryknoll in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

In the feature story, written by Giovana Soria, a reporter with *Maryknoll Magazine*, Father Chapin recounts the story of his vocation to the priesthood, his history working as a missionary priest, how he became affiliated with Maryknoll and what it's been like to serve in Bolivia, especially during the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic.

The article also includes quotes from parishioners of Our Lady of La Salette Parish, the parish where Father Chapin currently serves.

One parishioner recounted turning to Father Chapin when he was feeling discouraged after dealing with cases of domestic violence, sexual abuse and suicide attempts as a psychology intern.

"He encouraged me to pray because it gives us strength," Ronald Alvarez told *Maryknoll Magazine*. "Young people always need someone to talk to and it helped me to release the pain I was carrying from others and to continue my studies."

To read the full story, visit maryknollmagazine.org/ and click "Download current issue."



Father Daniel L. Chapin, a priest of the Diocese of Ogdensburg currently serving with Maryknoll in Bolivia, was featured in the September/October edition of *Maryknoll Magazine*.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

CLINTON

TAKE-OUT HARVEST DINNER

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

Date: Sept. 27

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

Cost: All meals are \$12

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

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.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

VIRTUAL FALL RETREAT

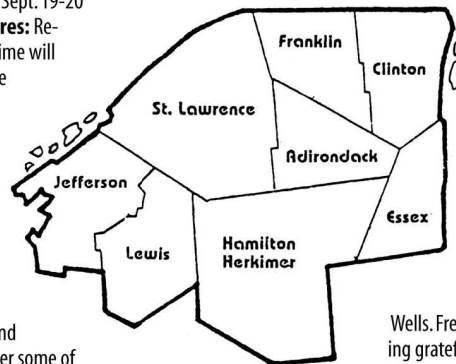
Join in a Fall virtual retreat with the theme of Putting Forgiveness and Love

into Practice.

Date: Sept. 19-20

Features: Retreat time will explore Scriptures on for-

give-ness and consider some of



and Jane Wells. Free will offering gratefully accepted.

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.

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,

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

The NCC wants to publicize your event!

If your parish has an upcoming event, please submit it to rcdony.org/enotes and check the box to submit it to the North Country Catholic. You can also email news@northcountrycatholic.org or mail items to North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY 13669.

If you previously had a standing event on our calendar, please resubmit it for inclusion in future editions. Due to the ongoing pandemic, we will not assume any event is being held until we are given confirmation.

to join Father Howard Venette & guests for 60-minute virtual discernment sessions.

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

Time: 3 p.m.

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

VIRTUAL FAMILY LIFE CONFERENCE

Watch the "Iron Sharpens Iron" project from the virtual Family Life Conference at <https://www.rcdony.org/vflc>
Description: see the videos from the

Virtual Family Life Conference or to submit a video of your family doing something fun.

LIFECHAIN

Stand up for LIFE at this year's LIFECHAIN! Join in the 33rd annual peaceful, prayerful, public, pro-life witness to the sanctity of life. Rain or shine. All faiths welcome! Signs are provided. LIFECHAIN practices social distancing. Please stand 25 feet apart.
Date: Oct. 4

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

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Visiting Lebanon, Cardinal emphasizes 'You are not alone'

BEIRUT (CNS) – Bringing a message of hope to Lebanon, a month after a double blast struck Beirut, Pope Francis' closest collaborator assured the Lebanese: "You are not alone. The whole world supports you." Cardinal Pietro Parolin's Sept. 3-4 visit to the suffering country on behalf of Pope Francis coincides with the papal call for believers around the world to observe "a universal day of prayer and fasting for Lebanon" Sept. 4. Lebanon's population, already exhausted by a collapsing economy that has plunged even the middle class into poverty, has been traumatized by the disaster, blamed on 2,750 metric tons of ammonium nitrate stored for years in a port warehouse. At least 190 people died, more than 6,500 were injured and more than 300,000 people remain homeless. "I come to your historic city to express the nearness of the Catholic Church throughout the world. His Holiness Pope Francis has asked me to come and meet you after he launched his appeal for prayer, fasting and solidarity with Beirut and with Lebanon. The response to the pope's appeal has been immediate, arriving from so many different countries, from all the continents," said Cardinal Parolin, who serves as the Vatican's secretary of state.

Cardinal: Mission work will be needed when churches reopen

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Many Catholics in Europe will not return to Mass or parish activities once the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, which demonstrates the urgency of a new evangelization based on Catholics actually living their faith, said Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich. In countries where Christianity has been preached for centuries and even millennia, the first stage of a new evangelization must be for Christians to embrace biblical simplicity and help those who are poorest and most defenseless, said the cardinal, who is archbishop of Luxembourg and president of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union. Too often when Christians preach, "people tell us, 'We've heard these words, but they say nothing to us because you do not live what you proclaim,'" Cardinal Hollerich told *L'Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper. European culture continues to have "remains" of the Christianity that formed it, he said. That can be seen in democracy, the defense of human rights, public policies of aid to poor countries, social safety nets and the embrace of concern for the environment, including real appreciation for Pope Francis' encyclical "*Laudato Si'*."

Hurricane destroys Louisiana churches, closes schools

LAKE CHARLES, La. (CNS) – Hurricane Laura destroyed six churches in the Diocese of Lake Charles, left a dozen others "highly compromised" and did heavy damage to chancery offices. The diocese, in a report posted on its website, said that only one of six Catholic schools reopened Aug. 31, while the others needed at least some repairs before classes could resume. The storm, which slammed southern Louisiana with winds of up to 150 mph in the early hours of Aug. 27, also left a diocesan rectory housing 20 priests, a third of them in active ministry, uninhabitable. Some of the priests were able to relocate to rectories that sustained little or no damage, while others moved into Vianney House, a diocesan residence for people discerning a vocation, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in central Lake Charles and private homes. Utilities, including power and water, in much of the region remained out Aug. 31. Donations for relief effort are being accepted online at www.catholiccharitiesswla.com and www.catholiccharitiesusa.org.

Pope: Jubilee for the Earth a time for restoring bond with God, creation

By Junno Arocho Esteves
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The exploitation and plundering of the Earth's resources at the expense of the poor and vulnerable cry out for justice and the forgiveness of debts, Pope Francis said.

In his message for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation Sept. 1 and the Season of Creation, which runs through Oct. 4, the pope said the observance is a time to renew, repair and restore humanity's broken relationship with God and his creation.

"It is a time for restorative justice. In this context, I repeat my call for the cancellation of the debt of the most vulnerable countries, in recognition of the severe impacts of the medical, social and economic crises they face as a result of COVID-19," he wrote.

Since 2020 included the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, the ecumenical team organizing the Season of Creation chose "Jubilee for the Earth" as this year's theme.

In the Bible, the pope noted, a jubilee was a "sacred time to remember, return, rest, restore, and rejoice."

As a time of remembrance, he said, the day of prayer and the Season of Creation should call to mind "creation's original vocation to exist and flourish as a community of love."

"We exist only in relationships: with God the

creator, with our brothers and sisters as members of a common family and with all of God's creatures within our common home," the pope wrote.

The call for a jubilee for the Earth, he said, is a call for repentance and for restoring harmony with God by taking care "our fellow human beings, especially the poor and the most vulnerable."

"We have broken the bonds of our relationship with the Creator, with our fellow human beings, and with the rest of creation," the pope wrote in his message.

He also said it was time to "heal the damaged relationships that are essential to supporting us and the entire fabric of life."

"A jubilee is a time for setting free the oppressed and all those shackled in the fetters of various forms of modern slavery, including trafficking in persons and child labor," he said.

Creation itself, he added, admonishes humankind "to return to our rightful place" as members and not masters of "this interconnected web of life."

"The disintegration of biodiversity, spiraling climate disasters and unjust impact of the current pandemic on the poor and vulnerable: all these are a wake-up call in the face of our rampant greed and consumption," the pope said.

Humanity, he said, must stop excessively consuming the Earth's re-

sources and "pushing the planet beyond its limits."

"Our constant demand for growth and an endless cycle of production and consumption are exhausting the natural world," the pope said. "Forests are leached, topsoil erodes, fields fail, deserts advance, seas acidify and storms intensify. Creation is groaning!"

The coronavirus pandemic, he added, "has given us a chance to develop new ways of living" and "has led us to rediscover simpler and sustainable lifestyles."

Citing St. John Paul II's assertion that corporate misconduct is a "new version of colonialism," Pope Francis called for the protection of indigenous communities from business practices which "shamefully exploit poorer countries and communities desperately seeking economic development."

"We must use this decisive moment to end our superfluous and destructive goals and activities, and to cultivate values, connections and activities that are life-giving," the pope said.

The chairmen of two U.S. bishops' committees said the bishops were united in prayer with Pope Francis and invited "every Catholic and all people of goodwill who care for our common home in the United States to increase efforts toward ecological conversion during this Season of Creation."

Eviction moratorium seen as short-term fix

By Bill Miller
Catholic News Service

WINDSOR TERRACE, N.Y. (CNS) — A moratorium on evictions in the U.S., announced Sept. 1 by President Donald Trump, will keep thousands of Americans in their homes through the end of the year, but it does not cancel rents owed.

Critics say the moratorium only delays a housing catastrophe for a few months. Some favor using federal dollars to help people pay rent and, by extension, help landlords pay mortgages.

Meanwhile, people like Catalina Rojas, 45, a mother of two in Queens, can't think beyond how to pay next month's rent, now that her husband's income is gone.

"My husband died due to COVID," she told The Tablet, diocesan newspaper of Brooklyn. "Losing the head of the household has hurt emotionally and economically."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced the temporary eviction moratorium to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. Under the

order, landlords and property owners are prohibited from evicting certain tenants impacted by COVID-19, or could face high fines.

The order says that halting evictions allows people to stay put, which, in turn, helps "state and local authorities to more easily implement stay-at-home and social distancing directives."

In addition, people displaced by evictions face more risks of exposure to coronavirus if they retreat to crowded "congregate settings, such as homeless shelters," according to the order.

To get the relief, tenants must not earn more than \$99,000 a year, or \$198,000 for couples filing a joint tax return. They also must provide a written declaration to landlords stating they've used best efforts to get "all available government assistance," to pay rent; that they have lost substantial household income; and eviction would make them homeless.

But the CDC order expressly does not cancel all rent owed during the pandemic -- the cornerstone of the grassroots #CancelRent

movement, which protested on Sept. 1 outside the Housing Court for Brooklyn.

Instead, according to the order, tenants must make some payment each month, however small.

The CDC's action results from an executive order President Trump made on Aug. 8. In it, he claimed Congress failed to extend a temporary evictions moratorium that was part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. That moratorium expired July 31.

The president promised to "take all lawful measures to prevent residential evictions and foreclosures resulting from financial hardships caused by COVID-19."

Subsequently, the White House staff announced Sept. 1 that the CDC would administer the moratorium.

"I want to make it unmistakably clear that I'm protecting people from evictions," Trump said.

Affordable housing advocates said the moratorium is long overdue.

The president of a national landlord advocacy

group said the moratorium would only forestall the problem, which will likely worsen with the piling up of unpaid rents.

"An eviction moratorium will ultimately harm the very people it aims to help," said Doug Bibby, president of the National Multifamily Housing Council, based in Washington.

"A protracted eviction moratorium does nothing to address the financial pressures and obligations of rental property owners," he added in the press release. "Without mortgage forbearance protections and protections from other property-level financial obligations such as property taxes, insurance payments, and utility service, the stability of the entire rental housing sector is thrown into question."

Bibby said a better solution would be "dedicated, long-term funding for rental and unemployment assistance," and he urged the federal government to act accordingly.

Political analyst Brian Browne said the moratorium is a "temporary half measure" that "delays but does not put a stop to evic-

tions."

Browne, an adjunct professor at St. John's University in Queens, is also executive director for university relations and assistant vice president for government relations at the school.

"What is needed," he added, "is a bipartisan deal to provide meaningful rental assistance in the form of rental vouchers or direct payments to landlords. The unemployment crisis, especially in metropolitan areas, is what is driving the housing insecurity crisis."

Browne said the moratorium likely wouldn't win many votes for Trump in November's election. "The reality is if you are facing an eviction, you have more urgent matters to worry about," he said.

Meanwhile, Catalina Rojas continues with her struggle. She said her teenage son endures a heavy burden because he feels responsible for replacing his father's income while mourning his loss.

"With tears in his eyes, he prays to God for strength and help, as he tries to help his mom," Catalina said.

Jesuit: Debate gives insight into pope's style

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — The debate at the Synod of Bishops for the Amazon over married priests is an example of how Pope Francis' style of church governance relies on prayerful discernment and not simply majority support for change, Jesuit Father Antonio Spadaro wrote in the journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*.

Pope Francis does not have a project for reforming the Vatican or the Catholic Church, but he has launched a process to encourage individual con-

version in a way that could and should cause such a reform, Father Spadaro wrote in the Sept. 5 edition of the journal, which was published online Sept. 3.

"Working for conversion is not an ineffective pious spiritual reference but an act of radical governance," the Jesuit wrote in the journal, which is reviewed in the Vatican Secretariat of State before publication.

In the article, Father Spadaro said some people have questioned whether Pope Francis' reform agenda is still going full

steam after seven years in office. But those who believe he has a blueprint or road map for structural changes in the church misunderstand what he is doing and even who he is, the Jesuit argued.

"Francis is a Jesuit, and his idea of the reform of the church corresponds to the Ignatian vision," he wrote. That vision focuses on encouraging individuals to conform themselves more and more closely to Christ, detaching themselves from ideologies or pet projects and prayerfully watching what is

going on around them and within them to discern signs of the working of the Holy Spirit.

Without that spiritual discernment, Father Spadaro said, "reform would be an ideology with a vaguely zealot character. And, like all ideologies, it would have to fear a lack of supporters."

But, he said, "the reform Francis has in mind functions if it empties itself of that mundane logic. It is the opposite of the ideology of change. The thrust of the pontificate is not the ability to do things or

institutionalize change always and everywhere, but to discern times and moments for an emptying out so that the mission lets Christ shine through better."

"The pope does not have prepackaged ideas to apply to reality, nor an ideological plan of ready-made reform, but he moves forward on the basis of a spiritual and prayerful experience that includes, step by step, dialogue, consultation and concrete responses to the vulnerable human situation," he wrote.

MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

Myths, replies related to COVID-19 vaccines

Several popular myths about COVID-19 vaccines have been gaining traction on social media in recent months, particularly in regard to messenger RNA (mRNA) vaccines being developed by Moderna, Sanofi, Pfizer and a handful of other companies. I would like to consider five of these myths.

Myth 1: For vaccines that rely on injecting patients with mRNA, the possible incorporation of these genes into our genetic makeup will fundamentally alter who we are as humans, moving us into a project of Transhumanism, the production of a "Human 2.0," etc.

Reply: Any incorporation of new genes into our chromosomes from a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine would be an exceedingly rare occurrence, if it were to occur at all.

It is actually very difficult to get the genetic information of mRNA to integrate into our chromosomes, partly because this would mean a reverse directional flow of the so-called Central Dogma of Molecular Biology: our DNA or chromosomes are read ("transcribed") to produce mRNA, which is then read ("translated") to make proteins.

Even if the accidental and unintentional incorporation of an mRNA message into our chromosomes were somehow to occur following vaccination, this would not mean that we were creating "Human 2.0," since those genetic changes would not be expected to affect our sex cells, and therefore would not be transmitted to the next generation.

Vaccinating people with an mRNA vaccine for COVID-19, therefore, does not imply that we are "re-

making man" or heading down the path of Transhumanism.

Myth 2: The rapid pace of clinical trials means that vaccines will be unsafe and/or ineffective.

Reply: This could be a legitimate concern, if proper testing were to be curtailed, or approval for public vaccination campaigns were to be granted ahead of conclusive safety and efficacy testing.

Such approval, however, appears highly unlikely when it comes to any of the major national regulatory agencies like the US Food and Drug Administration, the European Medicines Agency, or Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (with the possible exception of regulatory agencies in China and/or Russia).

Myth 3: Luciferase is the name of the bioluminescent enzyme contained in the vaccine, which seems connected to the "forces of evil."

Reply: Luciferase, an enzyme involved in firefly illumination, is being used in various testing and development stages ahead of the production of a COVID-19 vaccine, but is not itself part of the injected material included in human vaccinations.

Luciferase is a commonly used biomedical research tool, and has been used, for example, in lab animals to study the most effective way to deliver mRNA vaccines, whether by an injection into the skin, muscle or a vein.

Myth 4: Vaccine manufacturers have no legal repercussions for any bad effects from their vaccines.

Reply: Dr. John Graben-

stein, retired Global Executive Director of Medical Affairs for Merck Vaccines, offers the following corrective: "Manufacturers are indemnified for unforeseeable adverse events. They are not indemnified for negligence. This is standard practice."

With pharmaceutical companies getting ready to immunize hundreds of millions of people, the question of who will cover claims for damages in case of unanticipated future side effects is quite important. Ruud Dobber, a member of the senior executive team at the pharmaceutical giant

AstraZeneca, recently argued: "This is a unique situation where we as a company simply cannot take the risk if in ... four years the vaccine is showing side effects... In the contracts we have in place, we are asking for indemnification. For most countries it is acceptable to take that risk on their shoulders because it is in their national interest."

In the USA, for example, a 2005 law, known as the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness, or PREP Act, provides immunity from liability, apart from any willful misconduct, for products like vaccines that are developed to address a public-health emergency.

Myth 5: Using hydrogel nanotechnology to deliver an mRNA vaccine means there will be "big brother" monitoring and the introduction of microchips into the human body.

Reply: No microchips are present in vaccines. Hydrogel nanotechnology refers

to the "lipid nanoparticles" which encase the mRNA. This is a glorified way of saying "very small oil droplet." Lipids are what our cell membranes are composed of, so when the mRNA vaccine is injected, the lipid of the vaccine particle merges with the lipid of the cell (like two oil droplets merging) and the piece of mRNA is delivered to the inside of the cell ("transfection").

These "lipid nanoparticles" could theoretically be misused to deliver other controversial substances into the body like microchips, but this does not mean they should not be used for valid purposes, like delivering life-saving

mRNA vaccines during a pandemic.

Debunking these various myths does not mean that there aren't still questions and concerns about proposed COVID-19 vaccines. But we shouldn't argue against vaccines in ways that make neither ethical nor scientific sense.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org and www.fathertad.com.



Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk Ph.D.



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SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Forgiving others the way God forgives us

I took out my Bible and looked up the 27th chapter of Sirach, verse 30, the verse that begins the first Reading for next Sunday. What a great first line! Just like a fearful child will hang on to an old piece of blanket, so will the “sinner” (that’s me!), hang on to a grudge. It’s mine! I’ll feel foolish if I let it go. And so we hug it to ourselves. Isn’t it something how slow we are to let old hurts heal? Of course, it won’t heal until we get rid of that dirty old bandage and let



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

God clean it.

There’s more really good stuff in today’s passage from Sirach. He asks how we can possibly expect healing from the Lord unless we let go our unforgiveness. Now that’s a thought to ponder. There’s a real connection between God’s forgiving me and my forgiving my neighbor. It’s so right that there should be a connection, but we don’t like it that way. Like spoiled children we want everything our way.

September 13

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS

Sirach 27:30-28:9

Romans 14:7-9

Matthew 18:21-35

That’s what the steward in Sunday’s Gospel thought. He probably thought his master was kind of foolish and soft to forgive him the millions of dollars he owed, even though he gladly accepted the favor. But he evidently didn’t see any reason why he himself should act in the same way toward his fellow servant. And that servant owed a bare frac-

tion of the debt his master had forgiven him.

What a huge debt we owe God for His great mercy toward us. Forgiving others is the way we pay that debt to God. And the funny thing is that we don’t really lose anything at all by forgiving. It’s not money out of our pocket, nor is it hurting our health. In fact, it’s just the opposite. Holding grudges is what hurts our health, while forgiving others is actually beneficial. To forgive means to let go, and letting go helps our blood pressure, slows down our heart rate, and soothes our nerves. How often we complain about

being “stressed out?” Forgiving others opens our heart to God’s forgiveness, lowers our stress considerably, and helps us to pray better. Now, doesn’t that sound attractive. It’s a win-win situation.

We still remember the recent devastating hurricane in Louisiana and Texas and how many people are suffering loss of homes and livelihood. We realize how our problems are so petty in comparison. Let’s bring ourselves to pray for a change of heart. Let’s work on greater compassion and forgiveness. It’s the best way to show gratitude to God for all his blessings.

CALLED TO SERVE

‘There are no stupid questions’

Let me say at the outset, “there are no stupid questions.” A reporter friend of mine once asked a volunteer fireman what caused foam to form in a large water retention pond constructed by firemen at the scene of a rural house fire. The fireman blew the reporter off. The fireman then sent me a letter. I was the reporter’s boss. The fireman berated the reporter for asking a “stupid question. Everyone knows the foam is caused by the fire retardant we add to the water,” he wrote.

My response suggested there are no stupid questions; a question is a sen-

tence posed to elicit information, and it was obvious not “everyone” knew the answer since the reporter asked the question. It might have just been the foaming action of the water under pressure.

Which brings me to another figure of speech I abhor, the generality. Everyone, everybody, the whole world, every American and so on. When we use those words to express an opinion, we are showing our own simplistic view of the world and perhaps our ignorance.

Which brings me to intinction. Stay with me, dear reader.

The Church has rules about celebrating Mass. She calls them General Instructions. That means not everyone is doing everything exactly the same way all the time, but generally this is how we do things. One of those instructions informs us that “The Blood of the Lord” may be received either by drinking from the chalice directly or by “intinction, or by means of a tube or a spoon.” Let’s leave “tube and spoon” for another day. “Intinction” came up in three different conversations lately regarding clergy reception of the Precious Body and Blood during Mass. So, I was compelled to question what intinction was all about. Intinction is the practice of dipping the consecrated host into the

Precious Blood and then receiving the “intincted” host in Holy Communion.

Observing good sanitation and hygiene, how do priests and deacons distribute the Body and



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

Blood among those in the sanctuary? Who purifies the chalice and cups after Communion and who should do what, when? Our conclusions, informed by the General Instruction and by our bishop, are probably of no interest to you, but the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ by you during Mass should be.

We have generally dispensed from distributing the Precious Blood to the congregation during this pandemic. Even if we allowed intinction, the mechanics of that is too

dangerous. The minister dips the host in the consecrated wine and places it on the tongue of the communicant. That’s too many hands, too many vessels and too much potential contact to justify distributing the Lord’s Blood. But the Church is clear about species. “Christ, whole and entire, and the true Sacrament,” is present in one species so we are not deprived of anything if we receive only the Body, only the Blood.


Be thankful for God’s gift of His Son in Eucharist and our opportunity to receive Him. These days, we have to be prepared body and soul to receive him. Aren’t you glad you asked? There are no stupid questions.

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

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Support each other: 'It takes a village'

By Molly Ryan
Mission Office

Writer's note: Six years ago, I wrote this column for the Mission Office. So much has changed for me personally since then, but much has remained the same. Now, in the world of great uncertainty, it is more important than ever, to support each other. I thought a revisit of an old column would be a helpful reminder of that even though we cannot be together, together we can make all the difference.

It occurred to me today, as my two children started back for another school year, just how important the support that I receive in my world is to me. I have the good fortune of a wonderful husband who provides for our family and, despite his career taking him around the world, he is here in spirit showing his love and support for our kids. I have a very supportive neighborhood



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

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that pitches in with all the kids by driving them to places like school or sports, by watching each other's kids while we run to the store or do a quick errand or even by taking care of a pet while someone is away for the day.

It occurs to me how blessed I am to have the support of my parents who, in a pinch, run my son to soccer or my daughter to dance when I am tied up at work.

I am fortunate to have the support of a solid community where my children go to school, play sports, learn catechetical lessons, take dance lessons, play in bands and act in plays. As a mother of two, the phrase "it takes a village"

has never meant so much. I thank God every day for the support that keeps my "village" up and running.

We know that we have support in our lives. So why not apply this is the same principal – support in the village – to the mission world?

But what exactly is the village?

In the mission world, the village is not just the small settlement on a dried-up lake in Africa, a frozen tundra settlement in Mongolia or a ramshackle hut in Southeast Asia, the village is the entire global community of the universal Church.

I have outlined above the things I am grateful for that support me in my

efforts as a working, married, mother. I recognize how blessed I am to have the support I have to help with my family.

Yet I am all too aware that in the global village, not all are getting the support they need each day for simple and basic needs.

There are children hungry, sick who need assistance and homelessness. There are those disenfranchised. There are those who are persecuted, cut off from the world and all it can offer for help and support.

This is where we as Catholics are called to step up and support.

The village needs our help. Whether it is prayers, financial sacrifice or a pitching in to make the world a better place, the support you can send, donate, give or offer is always appreciated and does not go unnoticed.

In fact, the Pontifical Mission Societies have special responsibility in the universal Church.

They are under the direct canonical jurisdiction of the Pope who reminds the faithful of their baptismal call to Missions, to give basic support for more than 1,150 mission dioceses in Asia, Africa, the Pacific Islands and Latin America.

So, support and be grateful. Accept the support and love of your family, friends and neighbors.

Do not forget to return the favor to those who help you but especially do not forget those in the mission lands.

World Mission Sunday is coming in October. Remember this fact "it takes a village" to make this all work out. Thank you and God bless!

Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your will.

www.rcdony.org/mission

OBITUARIES

Adams – Carol A. (Clough) Degon, 79; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 4, 2020 at St. Cecilia's Church.

AuSable Forks – Ann (Bombard) Cordick, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 8, 2020 at Holy Name Church; burial in Holy Name Cemetery.

Cadyville – Barbara Ann (Golden) Arnold, 72; Memorial Services Sept. 4, 2020 at St. James Church.

Chateaugay – Brenda Lee Beebe, 70; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 31, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Chateaugay – Beatrice Sweet "Deed" O'Neill, 91; Graveside services Sept. 1, 2020 at St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Croghan – Ronald F. "Bucky" Buckingham, 71; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 3, 2020 at St. Stephen's Church; burial in St. Stephen's Cemetery.

Deferiet – Peter A. Ginger, Jr., 81; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 4, 2020 at St. Rita's Church; burial in Black River Cemetery.

Heuvelton – Patrick Michael Morrissey, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 4, 2020 at St. Raphael's Church; burial in Hillcrest Cemetery.

Lyons Falls – Varian "Hank" Henry Howell, 95; Private Services to be held.

Moors Forks – Clayton "Jim" Forkey, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 31, 2020 at St. Ann's Church.

Morrisonville – Leonard Reyell, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Aug. 29, 2020 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Norwood – Priscilla (Sulongski) Bond, 74; Funeral Services Sept. 4, 2020 at the Buck Funeral Home; burial in St. Hubert's Cemetery, Star Lake.

Ogdensburg – Carson W. Hunter, 19; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 4, 2020 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Flackville Cemetery.

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

Plattsburgh – Theresa Mongeon Beebie, 94; Graveside Services Sept. 3, 2020 at St. Peter's Cemetery.

Port Henry – Ward S. Hanchett, 71; Private Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 2, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church.

Redford – Marion T. (Farrell) Collins, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 3, 2020 at Church of the Assumption; burial in parish cemetery.

Watertown – Donna Sue (LaClair) Kowalick, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 5, 2020 at Holy Family Church.

Watertown – Jan. S. Slodkowski, 72; Private Mass of Christian Burial to be held at St. Anthony's Church.

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Bishops urge Cuomo to remember the poor

Catholic News Agency

NEW YORK—The bishops of New York have spoken out against proposed cuts in the New York State budget, urging Gov. Andrew Cuomo not to add further burdens to the state's poor and vulnerable in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

"As the governor considers the steps needed to restore our state to fiscal stability, the New York State bishops offer prayers for wisdom, as well as a reminder that the state must never balance its budget on the backs of the poor and vulnerable," said a statement from the New York Catholic Conference re-

leased on Thursday, September 3.

Reports suggest the state is considering cutting 20% of budgets across every department in the state to make up for its budget shortfall.

While these cuts are "understandable," and appears on their face to be giving equal treatment to all departments, the bishops stated, "we must keep in mind that for the hundreds of thousands of vulnerable New Yorkers who depend on state-funded not-for-profit human services providers, social equity already eludes them, and always has."

"We must not turn our back on women fleeing domestic violence, immi-

grants seeking legal resources, people with physical or developmental disabilities, the frail elderly, struggling single mothers and their young children, families who are homeless, those who have lost their jobs and don't have enough food to put on the table, people suffering from addiction or mental illness, survivors of sexual abuse, offenders reintegrating into society, or the many other New Yorkers who most need our support," said the statement.

While Catholic Charities has been able to care for some of the needy in the state, the bishops said that the challenges are "greater than ever" with

increased demand and fewer donations due to an ailing economy and limited parish collections due to coronavirus restrictions.

The state's bishops also noted that the New York State Constitution specifies that "the aid, care and support of the needy are public concerns and shall be provided by the state," and pointed out that, per Gov. Andrew Cuomo's urging, the state added the phrase "E pluribus unum" — or "Out of many, one" to the state flag this past year.

Cuomo, they said, faces an "unenviable reality" when it comes to keeping New York residents safe and dealing with the

budget shortfall, but should "remember this sentiment of unity that includes our most vulnerable brothers and sisters" when deciding where to address budget shortfalls.

New York was among the hardest hit areas in the world during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the pandemic's peak, over a thousand people per day were succumbing to the disease in New York City alone.

Cuomo at one point ordered nursing homes to accept coronavirus patients and state figures have been disputed, with some suggesting that the real death tally in nursing homes may have been obscured.

Cardinal: Science, religion not opposing sides

Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—Although technology has made leaps and bounds over the past decades, the scientific community must not isolate itself in its own advancements and exclude religion from the search for ways to overcome today's challenges, said Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state.

Citing Pope Francis' call

for an "interdisciplinary approach" on issues such as sustainability, Cardinal Parolin told participants at a scientific conference that science and religion must work together for the good of humanity.

An interdisciplinary approach "should not be limited to the exact sciences," the cardinal said Sept. 2 at the EuroScience Open Forum in Trieste, Italy.

"It should also include,

for example, religion -- which cannot be relegated to the sphere of the irrational -- in all those forms of wisdom that humanity has developed over the course of history."

According to its website, the EuroScience Open Forum, also known as ESOF, is a biennial conference that gathers scientists, political leaders, educators and journalists "to discuss current and future breakthroughs in contemporary science."

In his address on the conference's opening day, Cardinal Parolin highlighted the need for dialogue between science and faith in "envisioning and achieving a future of peaceful coexistence among people."

Reflecting on humanity's relationship with the environment, the Italian cardinal echoed the warnings of "an ever-growing number of voices from politicians, scientists and men and women of different religious confessions" that

"humanity has produced a global impact that can no longer be undone."

"Today, we are more and more aware, too, of the cost being paid by our planet, a cost unequally divided among the countries of the world. This profound global impact should challenge us all," he said.

"If we want to survive and if we want life on this planet to survive, then we still have to learn to assume a responsibility for our common home on the global level," he said. "At the same time, science by itself is not enough to resolve this problem."

The Vatican secretary of state also reflected on humanity's relationship with technology. Advancements such as communication and information technology, while "indeed impressive," have drastically changed people's lives and their interactions with others.

"Machines are becoming

more human, even as human beings are becoming more like machines," he said. "The church is deeply concerned about the effect of this exponential digitalization of communication and of society on young people."

Cardinal Parolin also said that "the effects of the media diet to which all of us are exposed" has challenged people's trust in news sources, resulting in "traditional sources of authority" no longer holding sway.

That distrust is particularly evident with the COVID-19 pandemic and "much harm was caused by incorrect scientific information," he said.

"The pandemic seems to have created what may be the most difficult period in decades for scientific communication," the cardinal said. "The issue is no longer just scientific fact and objectivity but -- to use a biblical expression -- 'the heart of man.'"

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