

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Bishop LaValley explains status of former priest | PAGE 5

Sharing Our Stories; Sharing Our Faith | PAGE 5

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 75, Number 36

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

JANUARY 27, 2021

It's urgent that we not ignore evil

OGDENSBURG – On Sunday, January 24, Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated a Mass for Life in St. Mary's Cathedral.

The following is text from the homily Bishop LaValley delivered at that Mass.

"This year, due to the pandemic, there are no buses filled with youth from the North Country making a pilgrimage to Washington, DC to participate in the annual National March for Life. Therefore, I thought it important that we celebrate our own diocesan Mass for Life here at our Cathedral. Given, the current veritable tsunami of secularism and anti-religion sentiment that boasts no respect for the dignity of all human life, it is urgent that we do not ignore the evil that is increasingly infesting our society."

FULL STORY, PAGE 3



JESSE SOVIE/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Bishop Terry R. LaValley delivers his homily during the Mass for Life, held January 24 in St. Mary's Cathedral.

PRIEST ASSIGNMENTS



Father Scott A. Belina, currently parochial vicar at St. Peter's Parish in Massena, will become administrator at St. Peter's in Lowville, St. Mary's in Glenfield and St. Hedwig's in Houseville effective March 3. Father Belina is one of three priests who will start new assignments on that date.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

Learn stories of trafficking victims, pope urges

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis encouraged people to put themselves in the shoes of victims of human trafficking.

Once a person learns about these victims' experiences, "it will be impossible to remain indifferent when we hear talk about boats adrift, ignored and even driven back from our shores," he wrote in the preface to a new book.

The pope's remarks appear in the book, "I Am Joy: A Cry of Freedom

from the Slavery of Trafficking." The book, written in Italian, was to be released Jan. 27 by the Italian publishing house of the Society of St. Paul. The International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking is celebrated annually Feb. 8, the feast day of St. Josephine Bakhita. Publishers released the text of the pope's preface Jan. 21.

Written by Mariapia Bonanate, the book offers a first-person narrative of a

woman from Benin City named Joy. Trusting the advice of a friend, Joy left for a promised job opportunity in Italy, hopeful she would be able to work, study and send money home to her family.

Only a few hours into her trip, the then-23-year-old realized she had been duped, as she was forced to cross a desert, experience violence and deprivation in Libyan detention camps and then risk capsizing on an overcrowded

boat across the Mediterranean.

Once on Italy's shore, Joy was forced into prostitution, extorted with a debt of 35,000 euros (US\$42,500) and coerced and threatened by her "madam" with voodoo rituals. However, she never lost her faith in God, whom she felt was always in her heart and by her side, and she eventually found help at a safe house in Caserta for trafficking victims.

In the book's preface, the pope said that Joy's "Way of the Cross" is just one tile embedded in a vast mosaic of other tiles – other lives of so many vulnerable women and men – that are invisible to others.

Anonymous and unseen, these victims are exploited by "unscrupulous traffickers who grow rich off the misfortune of others, taking advantage of people's desperation, subjecting them to their authority," he wrote.

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COUNTRY
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Publish 45 issues per year: Weekly except skipping every other week beginning July through Aug. and skipping one week in Dec. by the Diocese of Ogdensburg, 622 Washington Street, Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

Editorial Office:

622 Washington Street,
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

Telephone:

(315) 608-7556

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catholic.org

Entered at the

Post Office:

Ogdensburg, NY
13669 and
additional mailing offices as
Periodical Postage.

Subscription:

For one year:
In-Diocese Rate: \$27
Outside of Diocese Rate: \$30Matters for publication
should be
addressed toPO Box 326
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
and should be received byThursday prior to
publication.

Paper is printed each

Monday;
dateline is Wednesday.
Member, Catholic Press
Association.

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to
North Country Catholic,
PO Box 326
Ogdensburg, NY
13669-0326

EDITOR'S NOTE

It melts a hardened heart

He melts my hardened heart. the restroom.

Last week was not the best week for my 13-year-old son, Jake. While he had a couple different problems, the big one was a broken bone in his ankle.

After a trip to the Emergency Room and a visit to an orthopedic specialist, we learned his ankle was too swollen to cast, and he was ordered to spend a week in bed with his leg elevated. The specialist told him the only time his leg should be down was to use

I expected we'd have a rough week. I kept thinking about how much I struggled emotionally and mentally when my hip injury relegated me to bed for an extended period. I expected he'd experience some of the same.

Darcy L.
Fargo

In typical Jake fashion, he exceeded my expectations.

While he struggled with pain a few times in the early days, he was pleasant, joyful and as funny as ever. He focused on the positives of the situation

(he may have uttered the phrase, "Ha! I don't have to wash dishes again for at least six weeks").

But what melted my hardened heart was his gratitude.

"You guys are doing so much for me," Jake told me as I brought him a beverage and batteries for a video game controller. "Thank you so much! I know it's a lot of work. You guys are awesome!"

My husband and I didn't need Jake's gratitude. We would happily help him and serve him through his recovery time with or without it. But it melted my heart that he recognized and appreci-

ated being served. It melted my heart that he recognized the blessings in being served.

Reflecting on it further, I realized its similar with our expressions of thanks and gratitude to God.

God doesn't need our gratitude. He's complete. Our thanks add nothing to His being.

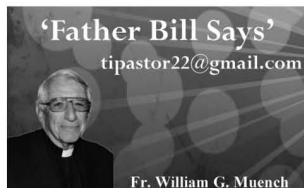
Instead, our gratitude to God helps us. It helps us acknowledge and focus on God's generosity and the blessings he bestows on us. It reminds us we are loved by our Lord.

And that melts a hardened heart.

Jesus called the twelve and calls us

Tomorrow, I have been assigned to celebrate the morning Mass. I just noticed that the Gospel reading for Mass is the story of Jesus choosing his twelve apostles from St. Mark's Gospel. I want to tell you that I have found the writings of several excellent authors who have written about this event in the Gospels. I will certainly be using some of their ideas, as well as my own.

I suspect I have told you that I believe that most Gospel readings are about us. So, I believe that just as Jesus called those original twelve apostles, Jesus continues to call people like you and me to be his disciples now. We call this vocation. I believe that Jesus is calling out to us now. So, the questions for ourselves now: Are you that one that Jesus would have noticed as a good apostle as he walked on the face of this earth? Are you the one that Jesus continues to choose today as a good apostle today? Can



you recognize the Lord challenge you to do something good now just as he did for that original Twelve?

For some reason, Jesus noticed something wise that he found in that twelve for the task of preaching the Kingdom of God and for healing the sick in the power of that Kingdom. I am absolutely certain that today there are many opportunities for dedicated people to accomplish the same things Peter, Andrew, James and John – and all those others – were able to accomplish. However, do we hear the Lord choosing us today? In so many ways we are called to realize that being an apostle is a wonderful vocation. What we must understand that we are all called to be an apostle of the Lord. A priest and

a bishop must be a good apostle. A dedicated lay person must be a good apostle.

It is important to notice that Jesus chose very ordinary people – non-professionals, with no wealth or position. They were chosen from the common people – people who did ordinary things. They had no special education. Today some of the best apostles, some of the individuals who truly bring the message of the Lord to others, are rather ordinary, common people.

Jesus wanted ordinary people who could take an assignment and do it extraordinarily well. He chose these men not for what they were but for what they would be capable of becoming under his direction and power.

We are called to be apostles of the Lord. Jesus calls us to serve, and we must not refuse because we think that we have little or nothing to offer. The Lord is so wise. The Lord can take what ordinary people, like us, can

offer and uses it for the Kingdom.

So, the challenge for us is whether we are ready to make our lives an offering to the Lord and allow him to use us as he sees fit. The Spirituality of the Priest is spoken of in the Catholic Catechism for Adults. "Priests should be taught to seek Christ." It has a specific application in the context of the calling of the Apostles. When John tells the story of the way the first two disciples followed Christ, he highlights this "search." It is Jesus himself who asks the question: "What do you seek?" And the two reply, "Rabbi, where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day." In a certain sense, the spiritual life of the person who is preparing for priesthood is dominated by this search. This seeking will have to continue throughout the priest's life and ministry.

FOLLOW ME

It's urgent that we not ignore evil

Editor's note: The Following is Bishop Terry R. LaValley's homily from the diocesan Mass for Life, held Jan. 24 at St. Mary's Cathedral.

This year, due to the pandemic, there are no buses filled with youth from the North Country making a pilgrimage to Washington, DC to participate in the annual National March for Life. Therefore, I thought it important that we celebrate our own diocesan Mass for Life here at our Cathedral. Given, the current veritable tsunami of secularism and anti-religion sentiment that boasts no respect for the dignity of all human life, it is urgent that we do not ignore the evil that is increasingly infesting our society. It is crucial that we rely on God's grace and rededicate ourselves to building a Culture of and for Life.

This local Church with faith-filled sisters and brothers from the Champlain Valley to the St. Lawrence Valley, from the Canadian border to the southern Adirondacks join our prayers at Eucharist this day pleading to the Lord that the evil disregard for God's laws cease. Today, the governments of the United States and the State of New York, led by Roman Catholics, tenaciously support the killing of human life, at all stages of development, even the killing of the baby in the process of being born. And now, with strong efforts to push physician assisted suicide into public policy, there is clearly no limit to the evil deeds contemplated and demanded by

many, including our Catholic leaders. I do not use the word "evil" lightly. Such callous disregard for human life and the discarding of God's word is having dire ramifications in our world today and will certainly have eternal consequences. Where will it end?

Every year, January 22 is set aside as a day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life in the United States. It is also a day of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion. On January 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that abortions should be legal throughout our nation. Since then, more than 60 million human lives have been taken. Tragically, such statistics cause more of a yawn than an uproar. Abortion rejects God's gift of life, destroys the life of a child who was lovingly knit together in his or her mother's womb.

At this Mass, we also recommit ourselves to supporting all expectant mothers and all those moms who find themselves afraid, vulnerable, abandoned, and in need. I want to commend and thank all those in our parishes who are extending helping hands in support of life. I'm reminded of those who minister in the Gabriel Project, Project Rachel, Elizabeth Ministries and all those organizations such as Catholic Daughters, the Knights of Columbus, Legion of Mary, Birthright, our own diocesan Respect Life office, to name just a few, who support life at all stages.



Bishop Terry R. LaValley

Diocesan Mass for Life
January 24, 2021 at St. Mary's Cathedral

READINGS
 First Reading: Jonah 3:1-5, 10
 Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 139
 Second Reading: 2 Timothy 4:1-5
 Gospel: Mark 1:14-20

Today, is Word of God Sunday. The Holy Father reminds us that we need to develop a closer relationship with Sacred Scripture. Otherwise, our hearts will remain cold and our eyes shut. So many today have cold hearts and suffer blindness as they urge upon us a culture of death. So many have rejected the authority of Scripture, are deaf to the Word of God and blind to the dire consequences that such deafness is causing.

"The Word of God nourishes and inwardly strengthens Christians, enabling them to offer an authentic witness to the Gospel in daily life," the Holy Father writes. When it comes to life matters and our faith, I cannot have it both ways. It is difficult to understand how one can claim to be a faith-filled Catholic Christian and, at the same time, have no problem with abortions either personally or if someone else chooses to abort.

Such is the tragic case of one who suffers from schizophrenia. The Church, from its very beginning, has taught, in no uncertain terms, that all human life, made in God's image and likeness, is sacred, from the moment of conception to natural death.

Let us listen again, to Paul's second letter to Timothy: *"I charge you in the presence of God...preach the word; be persistent in season and out of season; convince, rebuke, encourage through all patience and teaching. For the time will come when people will not tolerate sound doctrine but, having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths."* St. Paul urges Timothy: *"As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry."* And so we shall.

If the great City of Nineveh could repent and believe the Lord, why can't we? They repented of their evil ways. So must we. There may be the naysayers, the Jonah's who write us off, but as Cardinal O'Connor told us years ago, in Malone, "We will not go away. We simply cannot go away." Like Peter and Andrew, James and John in our Gospel, we must stop clinging to whatever keeps us from following Jesus and make the courageous life-giving move.

"You formed my inmost being; you knit me in my mother's womb. I praise you, because I am wonderfully made; wonderful are your works... Your eyes saw me unformed; in your book all are written down; my days were shaped, before one came to be." How can such beautiful words of the Psalmist telling of the intimate relationship between the child, the mother and our God, not warm cold hearts and cause us to see that every human life is of God and matters, born and pre-born?

Mary, Mother of God, Pray for Us. St. Joseph, Pillar of Families, Pray for us.

May God be praised... forever may God be praised!



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Three priests to begin new assignments

The North Country Catholic

After prayerful consideration and consultation with the Priest Personnel Board, Bishop Terry R. LaValley has announced several new priest assignments. The assignments are effective March 3.

Father Shane M. Lynch, currently pastor of St. James Church in Gouverneur, Sacred Heart Church in Edwards and St. Hubert's in Star Lake, will become pastor of St. Paul's Church in Black River and St. Mary's Church in Evans Mills.

Father Lynch will fill the vacancy created by the passing of Father Vicente F. Jazmines, who died of complications related to COVID-19 on Jan. 7.

Father James W. "Jay" Seymour, currently pastor of St. Peter's Church in Lowville, St. Mary's Church in Glenfield and St. Hedwig's Church in Houseville, will become pastor in Gouverneur, Edwards and Star Lake.

Father Scott A. Belina, currently pastoral associate at St. Peter's Parish in Massena, will become administrator in Lowville, Glenfield and Houseville.

Father Shane Lynch

Father Lynch, 49, is a native of Watertown and a 1990 graduate of Immaculate Heart Central School.

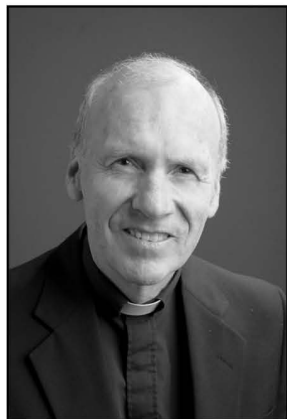
He completed his studies for the priesthood at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg and St. John's Seminary School of Theology in Boston. He also completed a spirituality year program sponsored by St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Father Lynch was ordained by Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito on May 12, 2001.

Prior to serving as pastor in Gouverneur, Star Lake and Edwards, Father Lynch



Father Shane M. Lynch



Father James W. Seymour



Father Scott A. Belina

served as pastor in Old Forge, Inlet and Raquette Lake from 2011-16. Previously, he was pastor in Wells and Lake Pleasant from 2007, first as administrator and then, in 2008, as pastor.

Father Lynch has served as parochial vicar in Saranac Lake and Lake Clear, at Notre Dame in Malone, at the Malone Catholic Parishes and at Holy Family in Watertown. He was also a temporary administrator in Croghan.

Father James W. Seymour

A native of Ogdensburg, Father Seymour, 67, earned a bachelor's degree from Plattsburgh State and worked as a teacher before beginning seminary studies. He completed a year of pre-theologate studies at Wadhams Hall before entering Christ the King Seminary, where he earned a master's in divinity degree.

Father Seymour was ordained Oct. 10, 1987, by Bishop Stanislaus J. Brzana. His first assignment was as a parochial vicar at St. John's in Plattsburgh.

He later served as a parochial vicar at Holy Family in Watertown before spending eight years as a missionary in the Ogdensburg Peruvian Apostolate's mission in

Mollendo, Peru, beginning in 1990. There he served as pastor of St. Martin de Porras Church.

Upon his return in 1998, he was named parochial vicar in Carthage, Deforiet and Natural Bridge.

In 2000, Father Seymour spent a sabbatical year at St. Paul's University in Ottawa while providing pastoral services as a parochial vicar at St. John's in Plattsburgh during the summer.

He also served as an administrator in Hogansburg and then in AuSable Forks and Black Brook before being named pastor in Champlain in 2001.

He has also served pastor of St. Raphael's Church in Heuvelton, pastor/priest moderator of Sts. Philip & James Church in Lisbon, and part-time chaplain at Riverview Correctional Facility.

Prior to serving in

Lowville, he was pastor for the Roman Catholic Community of Morristown, Hammond and Rossie. He also served as Episcopal Vicar for Clergy.

Father Scott A. Belina

Father Belina, 35, was born in Landstuhl, Germany and was raised in Watertown. He's a graduate

of Immaculate Heart Central in 2003 and from Clarkson University with a degree in biomolecular science in 2007.

He then began studies for the priesthood, attending St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Pennsylvania, where he earned a master's degree in Divinity and a master's degree in theology.

He was ordained by Bishop LaValley on May 25, 2013 at St. Mary's Cathedral.

Prior to serving at St. Peter's Parish in Massena, he served as parochial vicar at St. André Bessette Parish in Malone from 2015-18.

His first assignment after ordination was as parochial vicar at St. Mary's Cathedral with additional responsibilities in the Chancery Office, assisting Bishop LaValley.

REQUEST FOR PRIESTS


WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

— PRAYER SUGGESTION —

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name a priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own dispositions and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul; take over his entire personality and life.


Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always. O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (...)

Amen.



FEBRUARY
The Passion of our Lord

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CHEVROLET

Bishop explains status of laicized former priest

On January 21, Bishop Terry R. LaValley issued a letter to clergy of the diocese explaining the status of Thomas Higman.

Tom Higman, a laicized former priest of the diocese, announced on social media and in area press this week that he is now serving "as an Associate Priest at Trinity Episcopal Church in Plattsburgh."

The following is text from that letter.

Dear Brothers in Christ:

I share with you my great concern over recent developments in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. It is with a heavy heart that I must clarify for you the canon-

ical status of Thomas Higman. It is important that you be aware of this in your ministry so as to prevent any possible confusion among the faithful.

In September of 2020, the Diocese of Ogdensburg became aware of Tom's intention to function as an Episcopalian cleric. Out of fraternal concern for him and for the faithful, I wrote to Tom and urged him not to follow through on this intention. I invited Tom to meet and discuss this matter with me. I wrote of the implications of such a decision and urged him not to move ahead with these plans. I did not receive a response to my appeal to

him.

Tom, of his own free will, had requested from Pope Francis the favor of laicization, that is, being returned to the lay state and dispensed from the obligations of priestly ordination, including the promise of celibacy. On September 18, 2019, Pope Francis personally granted Tom's request. In accepting this dispensation, Tom freely and knowingly agreed to the conditions for this dispensation from the Holy Father. Principal among these conditions was his wholehearted agreement "not to exercise Holy Orders and to give good example, thereby

showing himself a devoted son of the Church."

In announcing, a few days ago, his service "as Associate Priest at Trinity Episcopal Church in Plattsburgh," Thomas Higman has formally broken communion with the Roman Catholic Church and is, thereby, in schism. By his own action and choice, Thomas Higman is excommunicated from the Catholic Church.

All Roman Catholics are cautioned to neither seek nor request any of the sacraments from Thomas Higman. It may be helpful for some pastors whose parishioners have an association with Tom to clarify

his canonical status by sharing this information with them.

How lamentable it is that during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, a rupture of unity within our own local Church should occur. Let us work and pray for unity within the Church and among all Christians. We keep Tom in our prayers.

Fraternally yours
in Christ,



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

'It's always been the central point'

By Jonathan Monfiletto
Contributing Writer

PERU – One of the hardest things Pam Ballantine has ever had to do was tell her husband, Dan, who was stationed in Belgium with the military at the time, not to come home for a two-week break.

At the time, the Ballantines – who live in Peru and attend St. Augustine's Church – had two children, a 4-year-old and a 2-year-old. Dan was often sent off on remote tours, and their 4-year-old son was having a rough time adjusting to his father being gone. Four months into the tour, Pam had just gotten the boy to the point where he was handling the situation better and sleeping in his own bed again.

"Dan wanted to come home for two weeks and then go back," Pam said. "I had to tell Dan not to come home for those two weeks because it just would've gone back over



Dan & Pam Ballantine

again. That was very, very hard to do, telling him, 'I love you dearly, but please don't come home because we just got this little guy all squared away.' ... That was very hard, just pray-

ing what to do, what is the right thing to do."

As a result of not taking the break, though, Dan got to return to the United States a month earlier than he would have had



he come home in the middle of his tour.

And he came home with a surprise for Pam and their family.

While Pam grew up in a strong Catholic family that always went to church, Dan said it wasn't until after he and Pam got married and he was stationed in Belgium without

his family that he began to explore the Catholic faith and became a Catholic.

"It's brought me so much closer to everything," he said.

In fact, Dan purposely made his newfound faith a surprise to his family, having his sister help him gather the necessary

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Environmental Stewardship

What is God saying?

Recently we heard in our Sunday Scripture reading God's call to young Samuel in his sleep. Eli instructed him to respond, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening." In pondering this Scripture, we, like Samuel, need to follow Eli's instruction. God is still speaking to us at this moment in time, and we, too, are called to listen.

Today we often hear people speak of a "culture of death" developing within our country. This culture is one that seems to have lost a sense of the sacredness of all life. It is witnessed in a culture that is often blinded to the unique reflection of God in every child even the unborn; a culture that often prizes profit over human lives as evident in sex and labor trafficking; one that sees God's earth as simply an object to fulfill one's personal needs without appreciating its own need to be respected as a unique reflection of God's beauty.

In his World Day of Peace message to international governmental leaders on January 1, 2021, Pope Francis proposed developing a "culture of caring." He noted how the COVID-19 crisis has cut across boundaries, aggravating deeply interrelated crises like those of the climate, food, the economy and migration. These and other events have taught us how important it is to care for one another and for creation in our efforts to build a more fraternal society.

This interconnectedness helps us realize more fully that our simple actions that express care for God's creation also have far reaching effects on one another who depend on it for physical, mental and spiritual wellness. Developing a "culture of care" to replace the "culture of death" will require a pause to listen to God's voice in the Scriptures and in the social teaching of our Catholic Church. It requires us to seek the wisdom of the Spirit to direct our actions in light of Jesus' Beatitudes.

Spend some time to consider what practices you know would benefit the health of the earth and others, but you just don't do them. Remember: "Better to light one little candle than curse the dark!"

Bishop's Public Schedule

Jan. 27 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Jan. 28 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 1 – 9:30 a.m. – Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, Inc. Virtual Meeting

Rest in Peace

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

Jan. 27 – Rev. Emile H. Mission, O.S.A., 1973; Rev. Mr. Adam S. Crowe, 2009

Jan. 28 – Rev. James A. McKenna, 1895; Deacon Richard E. Winter, 2004

Jan. 29 – Msgr. James T. Lyng, 1965; Deacon John White, 2019

Jan. 30 – Rev. John T. Sullivan, 1884; Rev. Eusebius Schlingmann, O.F.M., 1937

Jan. 31 – Rev. James McGowan, 1910; Rev. B. J. O'Connell, O.S.A., 1925; Rev. Timothy M. Ladden, 2003

Feb. 1 – Rev. John B. Doonan, 1949; Msgr. George T. Donnelly, 1968; Rev. Edward M. Delaney, 1977; Rev. Robert L. Cotter, 2015

Feb. 2 – Rev. William Bennett, O.M.I., 1887; Rev. Amadeus Viger, O.S.A., 1915; Rev. George E. Racette, 1961; Rev. Gilbert O. Boisvert, 2017

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

'Central point'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

paperwork to make his conversion official. Then, he called Pam on Easter Sunday.

"He kept saying, 'Oh, I've got a big surprise for you for Easter, and I'm thinking, 'if he runs up that Mastercard, I'm going to kill him,'" Pam said. "He called and said, 'I'm a full-fledged Catholic.' That was a big surprise."

From that point on, the Ballantines shared their faith each other and with their children.

"It was just something that we did with our kids," Pam said. "It wasn't trying to fit Mass into our schedule. It was Mass, and we fit our schedule into that... If we traveled, we had to make sure we knew where there was a church to attend. The kids just knew that's just what we did. They were altar servers and went to Catholic school. It's just part of our lives."

Pam herself worked for the church for more than 30 years, spending 21 years serving in one parish as the director of religious education and the pastoral associate and later retiring from service in the diocese.

It was her work as a pastoral associate that tested Pam's faith, as she assisted with funerals and wakes. Some of those services involved teenagers and children from the church, including one who drowned and

another who died of cancer.

"One of the hardest things is, being in one parish so long, I get to know these kids when they're little up to their teen years," she said. "I call them all my kids. That was the hard part, where I really leaned on my Jesus to get me through these tough times."

Coming from a Catholic family, Pam said she made her faith her own once she got through college, "when you really have to take responsibility for your own faith," and found strength in her own faith by surrounding herself with fellow believers.

"I hung out with people who had a faith in God, but also it seems God puts people in your life at a certain time when you need it the most," she said.

With her Catholic friends and roommates, Pam was part of a folk music group during her college years and became involved in Church that way. Later, she and Dan met a priest – a newly ordained deacon at the time – who married them and baptized their children and became lifelong friends with the couple.

"We've just been friends forever," Pam said. "He's been a part of our family and not only he himself but also his family. He's always been a big part of our lives."

It is important to be a part of a faith community, the Ballantines said, and this is something they have practiced as they have shared their faith with the people around them.

Among their various volunteer work – Dan is active in the Knights of

Columbus while Pam is active in the Catholic Daughters, and both assist around their church – Dan helps another man take Communion to people at two senior citizen homes in the area, typically every Thursday morning.

"We'd give Communion and go through a small service with them there," he said. "I looked forward to those Thursdays, but right now with COVID, all of that has stopped. I can't wait for it to get over so that we can go back there to the people. It meant so much to them, and it meant almost as much to me."

When it comes to their prayer life, both said they enjoying making nature a part of their practice.

"I like the Rosary. There's just something about it," Dan said. "I can go outside and sit on our bench and say the Rosary and do the whole thing, and when I walk away I feel content."

"It's just getting grounded again," Pam said, adding that she enjoys music and reading Scripture. "If you look at creation or the sunset, sometimes these sunsets are just so gorgeous. It just grabs you. It just kind of reminds you that there's always something much greater than yourself or our earth today."

For the Ballantines, their faith is what keeps them centered as individuals and as a couple.

"It's always been the central point," Pam said. "It's always there. But especially during times like what's going on now, I think that's the calm part. It's the kind of thing that calms me down and tries to refocus me because sometimes you can jump to one side or the other."

A CENTURY OF LOVE, A CENTURY OF SERVICE, WE THANK YOU

Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart mark 100 years

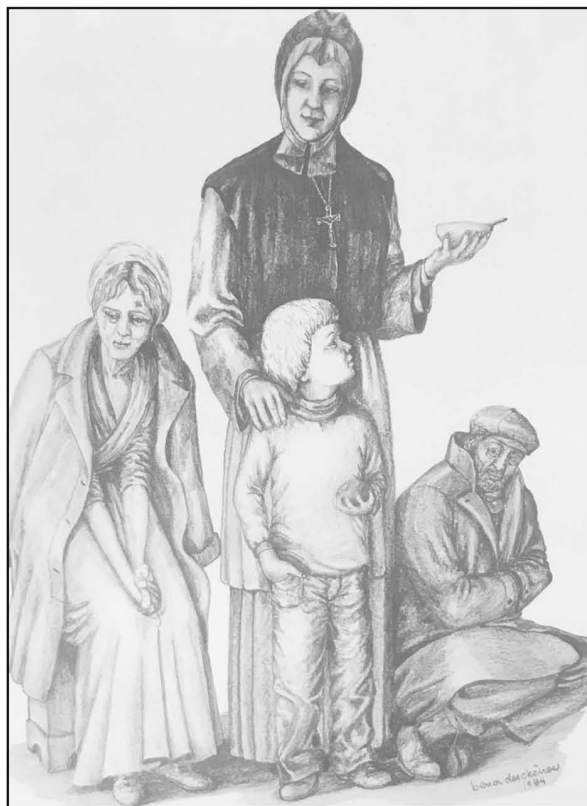
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart

In 1921, in Buffalo, New York, the first American congregation of Grey Nuns, the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart, was born and began a century-long mission of love and service. The new congregation was born to address ministry and vocation needs in the United States and to carry on the work of the Canadian Grey Nuns who preceded them.

The Grey Nuns of the Cross arrived in Buffalo in 1857, accepting an invitation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, priests from the newly established Holy Angels Parish. These sisters established a school in the parish and shared in the ministry of service to the poor. Over time, they founded Holy Angels Parochial School, Holy Angels Academy and D'Youville College, all the while caring for the poor.

When the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart branched off from the Grey Nuns of the Cross, they were invited by Cardinal Dougherty to establish their Motherhouse in the Philadelphia area. That move from Buffalo began in 1922, although many sisters continued in ministry in Buffalo.

In Ogdensburg, New



St. Marguerite d'Youville, Mother of Universal Charity

York, a town nestled on the southern shore of the Lawrence River, the new American congregation of Grey Nuns continued ministry they had been engaged in as Grey Nuns of the Cross, who had been ministering in Ogdensburg

and Plattsburg since the 1800s.

In their years in Ogdensburg, Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart educated the town's Catholic youth at Bishop Conroy elementary school and St. Mary's Academy High School, educa-

tional institutions of St. Mary's Cathedral Parish. Later they taught at Ogdensburg Catholic Central School, which was eventually renamed Marguerite d'Youville Academy.

Grey Nuns also served at A. Barton Hepburn Hospital (later Claxton-Hepburn Hospital) as nurses, physicians' assistants, medical technicians, educators and administrators. In addition, the sisters mothered orphans and cherished the elderly at St. Joseph's Home.

Grey Nuns cared for the poor through service in Catholic Charities and for the homebound through pastoral ministry. The paths of their mission journey led them to St. Mary's Parish School in Potsdam, to the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility, to pastoral ministry in Malone Catholic parishes, to counseling practice in Watertown and to the Wadhams Hall Seminary Library.

Although no Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart are present in Ogdensburg today, its people and places hold a special place in our history and in the memories and hearts of our sisters who served there. It was our privilege to serve the people of Ogdensburg.

In this year of the 100th anniversary of our founding, we, the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart, want to thank the people of Ogdensburg for inviting us into your city, your schools, your homes and your hearts. Many of you shared with us your daughters, siblings, aunts and friends who became Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart. Your invitation, your trust, your support and your love allowed us to grow in love and in purpose and to fulfill our mission as women religious, daughters of our foundress, Saint Marguerite d'Youville and messengers of the Good News of the Gospels.

At this time of our lives and our mission journey, most of us are unable to serve in active ministry. From our retirement homes, we continue a ministry of prayer for many and advocacy efforts for social justice. We are humbled and grateful to be able to continue ministry in this way when we, like so many, are able to experience the gracious love of God.

Thank you and God bless you! We are deeply grateful for your companionship on our 100-year journey.

Please visit us at www.greynun.org

DEVOTION TO THE SEVEN SORROWS AND SEVEN JOYS OF ST. JOSEPH

The Devotion to the Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys of St. Joseph is observed on the seven Sundays preceding the March 19 feast of St. Joseph (starting Jan. 31).

Seven Sorrows

1. The doubt of St. Joseph. (Matt. 1:19)
2. The poverty of Jesus' birth. (Luke 2:7)
3. The Circumcision. (Luke 2:21)
4. The prophecy of Simeon. (Luke 2:34)
5. The flight into Egypt. (Matt. 2:14)

6. The return from Egypt. (Matt. 2:22)
7. The loss of the Child Jesus. (Luke 2:45)

Seven Joys

1. The message of the Angel. (Matt. 1:20)
2. The birth of the Savior. (Luke 2:10-11)
3. The Holy Name of Jesus. (Matt. 1:25)
4. The effects of the Redemption. (Luke 2:38)
5. The overthrow of the idols of

Egypt. (Is. 19:1)

6. Life with Jesus and Mary at Nazareth. (Luke 2:39)

7. The finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple. (Luke 2:46)

January 31, 2021

Saint Joseph was filled with sorrow when, in a state of uncertainty, he was inclined to quietly divorce Mary. For all people with anxieties and doubts that they may find peace and comfort as they put their worries into God's care, we pray...

Saint Joseph was filled with joy

when the angel told him to take Mary as His wife. That we may always be attentive to the messages that God sends us each day, we pray...

Our Father..., Hail Mary..., Glory be..., Act of Consecration to St. Joseph

Act of Consecration to St. Joseph

O dearest St. Joseph, we your faithful of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, consecrate ourselves to your honor and give ourselves to you, that you may always be our father, our protector, and our guide in the way of salvation.

Obtain for each one of us a greater purity of heart and fervent love of neighbor. After your example, may we do all our actions for the greater glory of God, in union with the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

O Blessed St. Joseph, pray for this Church of the North Country. O Blessed St. Joseph, pray for our families that we may all grow in faith, hope and love so that we may faithfully serve Jesus, Christ our Lord, all the days of our lives. AMEN

Speakers: 'Absence of love' causes many crises

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (CNS) – Over 40 top professionals from multiple fields came together for a virtual conference in mid-January to discuss how to live together in unity and promote the common good.

The Jan. 12-14 conference hosted at the University of Notre Dame had been planned for months, but its theme – “We Belong to Each Other,” based on the words of St. Teresa of Kolkata – became even more timely after the Jan. 6 violence at the U.S. Capitol.

The virtual gathering took the place of a fall conference sponsored annually by the university's de Nicola Center for Ethics and Culture but was postponed last fall by the pandemic.

While many of the speakers bemoaned the inability to meet in person, the fact they could participate from their homes or offices likely enabled conference organizers to attract so many top experts in their fields of religion, philosophy, political science, education, medicine, economics, sociology and the arts.

Keynoting the conference was Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.

He set the tone by observing that loving our neighbor is the answer to most of the difficulties in the world. However, the “aggressively secular society” has lost the traditional Christian-Judeo principle of a loving God who creates persons in his own image and calls them to love one another as he loves them, he observed.

“Without belief in a Creator who establishes values, we have no authority

higher than our own politics and procedures,” Archbishop Gomez explained. “We are left with no solid foundation for our commitments to human dignity, freedom, equality and fraternity.”

Other speakers echoed this diagnosis, even those from secular institutions, such as author and New York Times columnist Ross Douthat, and Yuval Levin, author, journalist and political analyst at the American Enterprise Institute. Both men concluded the culture's best chance of recovery is a resurgence in religious practice.

The current social and political crises in this country, Levin added, are due to the growing loss of trust in institutions, prompted by the realization that many of the people within those entities are untrustworthy themselves.

He said the solution is for the people working inside institutions to be reformed to realize they are not there for power or self-promotion; rather, their role is to focus on the duties of their positions and their obligations to their neighbors.

This love for one's neighbor has the long been modeled by Catholic health care, which was discussed by three physicians in a segment on “Visit the Sick.”

Dr. Kristin Collier, director of the health, spirituality and religion program at the University of Michigan Medical School, said that “relationship-centered care is best.” Thus, medical workers must be lovers of humanity who need to see their work as a gift from God that transforms the love of Christ into love for patients.

Dr. Lauris Kaldjian, director of programs in

bioethics and humanities in the University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine, observed: “As Christian health care professionals, we see why health care is such a great place to be in the sense that we have this remarkable privilege and opportunity to be used by God to be a true blessing to those who are in this moment of crisis.”

Dr. Aaron Kheriaty, director of the medical ethics program at the University of California at Irvine School of Medicine, related that all of society has suffered during the pandemic, not just from contracting the virus, but from the lockdown that has resulted in increased suicide, depression, and alcohol and drug abuse.

While doctors can help in many ways, he stressed that even ordinary people have the ability to bring healing to suffering people by finding ways to be in solidarity with one another.

Addressing that solidarity was a conference session on mothers and children. Dr. Monique Chireau Wubbenhorst, an obstetrician/gynecologist with the U.S. Agency for International Development observed that right now, huge amounts of money are spent on contraception, and that is not working. Further, abortion is not health care.

The best way to help women and children, she said, is to encourage women to get into prenatal care as soon as possible, and then to give them access to good child care. She also cited incentives such as tax breaks for marriage and childbirth as a way to rebuild a society that promotes the common good and cares for the vulnerable.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Former Vatican bank president sentenced for embezzlement

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – A former president of the Vatican bank and his lawyer were found guilty of money laundering and embezzling millions of euros from property sales. According to a statement released by the Vatican Jan. 21, Angelo Caloia, who served as president of the Institute for the Works of Religion from 1999 to 2009, and his lawyer, Gabriele Liuzzo, were sentenced to 8 years and 11 months for skimming profits from the sale of Vatican properties. Giuseppe Pignatone, president of the Vatican tribunal, handed down the sentence and ordered Caloia and Liuzzo to pay a fine of 12,500 euros (US\$15,200) each as well as return to the Vatican bank millions of euros frozen in their accounts at the beginning of the investigation. Lamberto Liuzzo, Gabriele's son, was also found guilty for his involvement and was sentenced to five years and two months in prison. He was also ordered to pay a fine of 8,000 euros (US\$9,730). All three defendants received a lifetime ban from serving in public office. However, they also have the right to appeal the sentence.

Verify before sharing 'news,' pope says

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – In the age of instant communications and fake news, journalists – like everyone else – need to recover the practice of going out and verifying information before they share it, Pope Francis said. “Come and see” is the simplest method to get to know a situation. It is the most honest test of every message, because, in order to know, we need to encounter, to let the person in front of me speak, to let his or her testimony reach me,” the pope wrote in his message for the Catholic Church's celebration of World Communications Day. The message was released Jan. 23, the eve of the feast of St. Francis de Sales, patron saint of journalists. At the Vatican and in most countries, World Communications Day will be celebrated May 16. The pope paid homage to journalists who have risked their lives going into the field to cover, verify and share stories the world needed to know, especially “about the hardships endured by persecuted minorities in various parts of the world, numerous cases of oppression and injustice inflicted on the poor and on the environment, and many wars that otherwise would be overlooked.” But he also railed against those who report or share information that has not been verified and that has no basis in fact.

Mideast church leaders urge Biden to lift Syrian sanctions

BEIRUT (CNS) – In a joint letter, a group of church leaders and international figures appealed to U.S. President Joe Biden to lift economic sanctions imposed on the Syrian people and “to help Syrians alleviate a humanitarian crisis that threatens to trigger a new wave of instability in the Middle East. We wish to lose no time approaching you for an urgent response to the severe humanitarian crisis in Syria,” they wrote Jan. 21, after first congratulating Biden on his inauguration. Michel Abs, secretary-general of the Middle East Council of Churches, sent the letter, signed by nearly 100 political, social and religious officials from the region and the world. The signatories included Syriac Catholic Patriarch Ignace Joseph III Younan; Melkite Catholic Patriarch Joseph Absi; and Syriac Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Aphrem II. They pointed out that in December, Alena Douhan, U.N. special rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures, asked the United States to lift the sanctions. Their letter cited what was stated by Douhan, that the U.S. sanctions “violate the human rights of the Syrian people” and “exacerbate the already dire humanitarian situation in Syria.”

CALLED TO SERVE

Women invited to new roles in liturgy

Seems like yesterday my daughter, Ticia, and her best friend ever, Carrie Kennedy, became the first female altar servers in our parish. It was for Girl Scout Sunday as I recall. That was quite a few years ago. These days, a lot of girls join the boys interested in serving. There is nothing unusual today about lay men or lay women serving as extraordinary ministers of Communion or readers at Mass either. It has become normal for women and men to serve in ministry at Mass. That is what made Pope Francis' announcement January 10 of this year a little confusing.

In a Motu Proprio, a personal edict, Pope Francis changed the wording in Canon 230 paragraph 1 of the Code of Canon Law to allow lay persons (men and women) to become lectors and acolytes. The Canon, until January 10, 2021, only allowed laymen. For folks who watch for signs of change in the Catholic Church this might have been huge.

But since women can already distribute communion and read at Mass, what's the big deal? That is what was confusing to some. A few interpreted the change to mean men and women could be ordained. The latter is definitely not true. The former will give our bishops something new to ponder for a few years.

Men on the journey to ordination as a permanent or transitional dea-

con are instituted in the separate ministries of lector and acolyte. From time-to-time you may have noticed a picture or an article in the North Country Catholic congratulating one or more deacon candidates or seminarians for their institution as lector or acolyte. Now, the pope says, lay persons may also be instituted in these ministries. Once instituted, a lector or acolyte should exercise his or her ministry whenever present at a liturgy. It is only when an instituted minister is not present that a lay person should fill-in.

It should also be mentioned that the proclamation of the Gospel is not part of this discussion. Only the deacon, or in the absence of a deacon, a priest, should proclaim the Gospel at Mass.

Pope Francis did not pull this idea out of the sky. In the Apostolic Letter Pope Francis wrote, "a number of Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops" have raised the issue of a greater role for women in liturgy. The pope wrote women instituted as lectors and acolytes recognizes the "common condition of being baptized and the royal priest-

hood (we all) received in the Sacrament of Baptism."

So, some day we might see women instituted as lectors and acolytes. Law has changed but the details are yet to be worked out. The baton has been handed to the various episcopal conferences, like the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops, to decide things like qualifications, preparation, formation, duration and so forth before women and those men who do not feel called to ordination can begin their studies. It will take a while. The urgency for some ministerial relief might be greater in other countries than it is in the United States, but Pope Francis recognized some local churches are crying for help when he cited the "needs of the times" in announcing Spiritus Domini, the Apostolic Letter on the ministries of lector and acolyte. For now, canon law has been changed to permit an instituted ministerial role for women. It will take some time, I think, before we actually see this law become practice.

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




Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

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AROUND THE DIOCESE

TAKE-OUT ROAST PORK DINNER

Brushton – A roast pork take-out dinner will be held.

Date: Feb. 6; pre-order on Feb. 5.

Time: 3 to 6:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center, 769 County Route 7 (Gale Road), Brushton.

Features: Menu of roast pork, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing, squash, apple-sauce, roll and dessert.

Cost: \$10 per dinner

Contact: Pre-order by calling 518-529-6580 between 8 a.m. and noon on Feb. 5 or from 9 a.m. until all meals are sold on Feb. 6. Pre-ordering is preferred, but not required.

DISCERNMENT TO THE PRIESTHOOD

God spoke to Joseph in a dream and the just man brought Christ to the world. Do you dream of doing what he did as a Catholic Priest?

Date: Jan. 31

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: Join the organizational ZOOM meeting.

Features: High School Junior Men & older are invited for information on the Spring Priesthood Discernment program.

Contact: Father Howard Venette (hvenette@gmail.com) for more information. To access the ZOOM meeting please enter Mtg. ID: 762 7621 3515 Passcode: K15pz6

VIRTUAL VOCATION RETREAT

The Dominican Sisters of Mary, Mother of the Eucharist invite you to join them on their 2nd Virtual Vocational Retreat!

Date: Feb. 13-14

Features: This online retreat will include talks given by the Sisters and Father David Meconi, S.J. on prayer, Dominican spirituality, the spirituality of DSMME, Eucharistic and Marian Devotion, and much more.

Contact: Register now at www.sistersofmary.org/news-events/events/

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.

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SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

'I should like you to be free of anxieties'

The first reading today from Deuteronomy gives us an amazing insight into God's tolerance. The setting is the desert, where the Israelites are stalled on their journey toward the promised land. Why are they stalled? Because of their parents' lack of faith. Now the young people beg Moses not to subject them anymore to God's fire and thunder. "Moses," they cry, "you are flesh and blood like us. You be God's voice, please." And God agrees! "I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their kin." But God gives a warning. Any prophet He chooses had better take the job seriously. So, Moses was the



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

first of a whole line of prophets for Israel who would set the agenda for the future Messiah. They would describe what the character of his ministry would be like.

In the Gospel, Mark narrates the scene of Jesus announcing that the kingdom of God has arrived. He proceeds to amaze the people by driving out a demon from a man who confronts him in the synagogue. He does it with an authority unlike that of their religious leaders.

Place yourself in that scene in the synagogue. Looking around, you might see one or two who might look enviously at Jesus. Would you be envious, too,

January 31

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

1st Corinthians 7:32-35

Mark 1:21-28

knowing that you yourself might have a demon or two? What demon would you like driven out? The demon of stress might be one. In the second reading, St. Paul tells the Corinthians, "I should like you to be free of anxieties." Does that ring a bell?

Stress has been pictured as an old man with head bowed down carrying a load of feathers which he thinks to be lead. Or a man trying to cross a bridge, and he hasn't even gotten to it yet.

Stress comes from trying to control everything, espe-

cially things that are beyond our control. Stress comes from trying to be perfect in everything, all the time. No one is perfect except Jesus Christ.

Some years ago, Richard Carlson wrote a book called "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff." It was so popular that it became a series of books. He wrote "Make peace with imperfection," "If someone throws you the ball, you don't have to catch it," "Life isn't an emergency," "Give up on the idea that more is better," "Stop blaming others," "Get comfortable not knowing," and "Resist the urge to criticize." St. Paul said it in today's reading: "Don't sweat the small stuff."

Jesus told us very clearly in the Gospels not to let worry get out of hand, not to be afraid, but to trust the power and the plan of His

Heavenly Father. "Call on me," God says, "and I will answer you." Take the load off your shoulders and just give it to the Lord. And pray.

Of course, some stress is legitimate, like the pandemic and whether or not we pray enough every day. Do we calm our spirits and shut out distractions so that we can really *listen* to the Lord? We *should* worry about our lack of trust and our lack of awareness that only one thing is necessary – to give over our worries to the Lord and *believe* that our faith will be rewarded. If we do, the tension will drain from us.

So, we're back in that synagogue. Jesus is coming toward us. Tell him of your demon. Ask him to free you from it. Then, freed from that demon, we can praise Him with joy.

AT THE MOVIES

THE MARKSMAN

NEW YORK (CNS) – Sound basic values and obvious good intentions underlie "The Marksman" (Open Road). But there's a sketchy feel to director and co-writer Robert Lorenz's action drama and it ultimately fails to make much of an impression.

Liam Neeson plays Jim Hanson, the gruff sharpshooter of the title. An ex-Marine who served in Vietnam, Jim has fallen on hard times. Having lost his wife to cancer, he's now facing eviction from his

cattle ranch on the Arizona-Mexico border primarily because of her ruinously expensive medical bills.

Early scenes show us that Jim takes a tough but humane stance in interacting with those who attempt to enter the United States without legal papers. In this, he cooperates with his closest remaining relative, his stepdaughter Sarah (Katheryn Winnick), an immigration officer.

So when Jim comes across mother and son Rosa (Teresa Ruiz) and Miguel (Jacob Perez) who have crossed onto his property, he's inclined to turn them in to the authorities. As viewers already know, however, the duo is being chased by the minions of a drug cartel led by a heavy called Mauricio

(Juan Pablo Raba). Miguel's uncle betrayed the gang, and they're out for vengeance.

Rosa soon perishes in a confrontation with the bad-dies and, as she lay dying, begs Jim to transport pre-teen Miguel to safety with relatives in Chicago, offering him a cache of money purloined from the narcotics dealers as a reward. Recognizing that Miguel will be doomed if left in the custody of the government bureaucracy, Jim reluctantly takes the lad under his wing and sets out for the Windy City.

There's an unspoken appeal for reconciliation in the script, on which Lorenz collaborated with Chris Charles and Danny Kravitz, as semi-deplorable Jim, the embodiment of a down-trodden white guy, finds

the better angels of his nature summoned forth by the plight in which Miguel finds himself. And there's a generally pacific, specifically anti-revenge message to offset the vague vigilantism of Jim's mission.

Catholic imagery puts in an occasional appearance as well as the two travelers bond. Miguel prizes his mom's rosary and yearns to have a funeral Mass for her. Yet when Jim stops at a church long enough to have some semblance of a service held, it's clear that, although the clergyman whose help he enlists is meant to be a priest, the house of worship over which he presides is unmistakably Protestant.

At one point, Jim responds to Miguel's mention of heaven by denying the existence of an afterlife. It's

clear, however, that the audience is meant to agree with Miguel on this subject. A late plot development that sees a character taking his own life, by contrast, is morally murky if analyzed at all closely.

There are certainly worse ways to pass an hour and three-quarters than by watching this largely inoffensive movie. But, if given the choice, viewers should opt for the similarly plotted – and much more effective – "News of the World."

The film contains considerable stylized violence, some gory sights, a suicide, a few uses of profanity, at least one rough term and several crude and crass expressions. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III – adults. The Motion Picture Association rating is PG-13.





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

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

A time of change

By Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ

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

If you have telephoned The Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg (Mission Office) recently, you have noticed that it is no longer Molly Ryan answering the phone. Instead, it's Alexis Michael. For 11 years, Molly has been the secretary/bookkeeper answering the phone ready to assist you.

Though I was hoping the day would never come when Molly would tell me that she was going to accept another position, that day finally came. She is now the Marriage Tribunal office manager. Working with Molly has been a big blessing, as she grew up learning about the missions from her parents and the Holy Childhood Association HCA (now the Missionary Childhood Association (MCA)... Children Helping Children. In the office, she worked with compassion to share the need for appeals/collections to assist people of all ages in developing countries with her background and administrative skills. I know that Molly, with her attention to details, has been a blessing for parishes, the diocese and the national office. Working in a parish, St. Mary's in Copenhagen, New York, I appreciate the ministry of the Marriage Tribunal, so I'm glad that Molly accepted the position.

If you read the job description for Molly's mission job, you know that someone had big shoes to fill. As you can only imagine, I said many prayers to St. Therese of Lisieux, the Little Flower, and Patroness of the Missions for the best person to become the Secretary/Bookkeeper. We welcome you Alexis Michael.

Working with Alexis for a brief time, it is evident that her heart is in the right place with missionary zeal. Likewise, her skill set is well suited for the tasks ahead. Alexis has experienced empowering hope for people in a global area impacted by disaster and poverty. When she joined Sister Debbie Blow, OP, executive director of North Country Mission of Hope, on a trip to Nicaragua.

Gratitude... my favorite gratitude passage from scripture is from St. Paul to the 1Thessalonians 5:18 "In all things give thanks." As I pray with St. Paul, my reflections are on those of the blessings of Molly Ryan for her years of commitment and on those of hope for the commitment of Alexis' to the missionary zeal of the church of Ogdensburg and beyond.

St. Therese of Lisieux pray for us.

Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.
rcdony.org/mission

OBITUARIES

Brownville – Jeffrey Thomas Shannon, 56; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 20, 2021 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in Dexter Cemetery.

DeKalb Junction – James C. Spadacini, 86; graveside services in Spring at Union Cemetery.

Fort Covington – Leta Ruth (Lustbader) Zerella, 86; Mass of Christian Burial May 15, 2021 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Hogansburg – Gerren B. Hart, 31; Services to be held at a later date.

Louisville – Sandra K. (Legault) Dupuis, 61; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 23, 2021 at St. Lawrence Church; burial in St. Lawrence Cemetery.

Lowville – Michael A. Call, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 6, 2021 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Martinsburg Cemetery.

Massena – Kathryn (Normandale) O'Green, 90; Mass of Christian Burial to be held in the summer.

Morrisonville – Edna (Rathbun) Dar-

rah, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 18, 2021 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Jeffrey H. Cline, 65; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 18, 2021 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Jacqueline June (Swan) LaComb, 89; Private Services to be held; burial in Foxwood Memorial Park.

Peru – Dianne B. Martineau, 68; Funeral services Jan. 25, 2021 at the Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in Peasleeville Cemetery.

Port Henry – Thomas Garcia; Private Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 21, 2021 at St. Patrick's Church.

Potsdam – Maria A. (DeMercurio) Goliber, 87; Mass of Christian to be held at a later date; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Redford – Jerry I. Racette, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 20, 2021 at Church of the Assumption; burial in parish cemetery.

Saranac Lake – Kerrie Ann (Green) Daviau, 62; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 24, 2021 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Rose Cemetery, Alder Brook.

St. Regis Falls – Timothy J. Susice, 79; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 23, 2021 at St. Ann's Church.

Ticonderoga – Laurence R. Raveche, 71; Mass of Christian Burial to be held in the Spring at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Parish Cemetery.

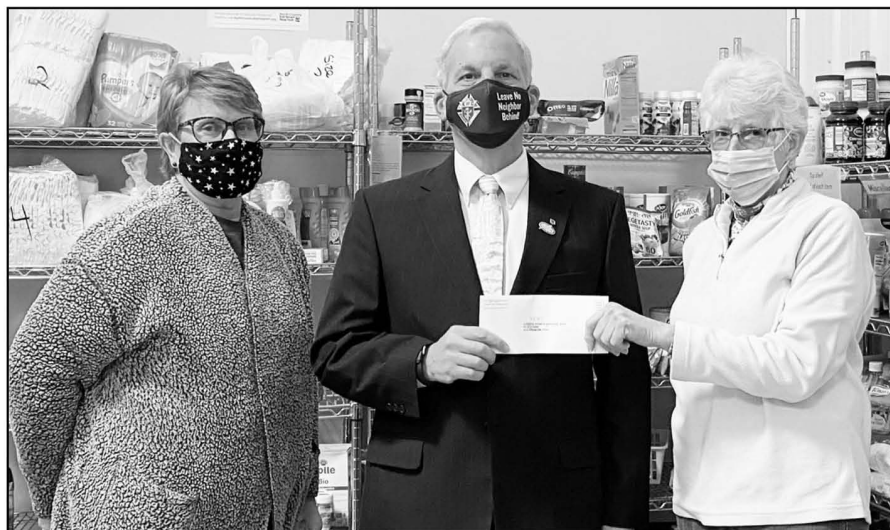
Tupper Lake – Kenneth A. Brunette, 91; Mass of Christian Burial to be held in the Spring; burial in Gale Cemetery.

Watertown – Teresa Anne Burdick, 57; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at St. Anthony's Church.

Watertown – David M. Honan, 71; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 22, 2021 at Holy Family Church; burial in Holy Cross Cemetery, Lackawanna, NY.

West Chazy – Marie (Gagnier) Gonyo, 92; Mass of Christian Burial to be held at a later date at St. Joseph's Church; burial in St. Joseph's cemetery.

KNIGHTS MAKE DONATION



VEM volunteers Nan Waring, left and Anna Clemons, right, accept a \$500 donation from Jim Gratch, Charitable & Benevolent (C&B) chairman of Father John Cosmic Council 291, Knights of Columbus in Carthage. "Our C&B raffle ticket sales and donations were impressive this year. Thanks to the generosity of not only our brother knights and the parishioners of St. James and St. Mary's, but also the patrons of the Carthage Farmer's Market, we were able to double our donations this year." C&B raffle tickets are a program run by the New York State Council and local K of C councils on a yearly basis; the state council keeps half of the money for their charities and the local council keeps half for local charities.

Archbishop: No Catholic can favor abortion

WASHINGTON (CNS)—When they vote, Catholics must weigh many issues of very grave moral consequence "in good conscience," but "no Catholic in good conscience can favor abortion," San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone said Jan. 21.

"Right to choose' is a smokescreen for perpetuating an entire industry that profits from one of the most heinous evils imaginable," he said in a statement. "Our land is soaked with the blood of the innocent, and it must stop."

Archbishop Cordileone's remarks came in response to comments by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-California, during a Jan. 18 episode of a podcast hosted by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the Democrats' 2016 presidential nominee.

Pelosi, a Catholic, accused pro-life voters who supported President Donald Trump in the 2020 election and oppose his recent impeachment by the House of "being willing to sell the whole democracy down the river for that one issue" — abortion.

The 80-year-old lawmaker from San Francisco, who has a 100% rating on the issue from NARAL Pro-Choice America, said the pro-lifers' votes caused her "great grief as a Catholic."

Unlike Pelosi, Archbishop Cordileone said, he "will not presume to know what was in the minds of Catholic voters when they voted for the presidential candidate of their choice, no matter who their preferred candidate was."

"To begin with the obvious: Nancy Pelosi does not speak for the Catholic Church," he said. "She speaks as a high-level important government leader and as a private citizen. And on the question of the equal dignity of human life in the womb, she also speaks in direct contradiction to a fundamental human right that Catholic teaching has consistently championed for 2,000 years."

"Christians have always understood that the commandment, 'Thou shall not kill,' applies to all life, including life in the womb," he said.

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GET TO KNOW CURSILLO Sainthood 101

By George Trejos
North Country Cursillo

I suspect that if I were to ask who might aspire to be a Saint, most Catholics would think this an outlandish aspiration. Sainthood is so often portrayed as such a unique category, that its attainment is deemed not for the faint of heart. God's saints are enthroned as "superheroes" in a league of their own and above our mortal paygrade. We look at images and statues of saints and they seem outsized in comparison to us puny Christians with ordinary lives and even duller achievements.

Take for example St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582). There is an impressive statue by the famous Bernini, portraying her in the throes of mystic ecstasy, with an angelic figure about to pierce her with God's love. Wow! Not your usual quiet prayer experience with God. She was canonized 40 years after her death and in 1970 declared a "Doctor of the Church." Rather impressive or was it?

Yet Teresa was as ordinary as the rest of us despite the deep relationship she had with God toward the latter part of her life. She started off as a headstrong and obstinate young teenager. Her exasperated father put her in a convent as a teen to contain her behavior. Spanish convents in the 1600s were not exactly houses of piety. The nuns at that convent were not the role models her father hoped for. Teresa fit in perfectly! She did try to pray but admitted she did not have any aptitude



Learn more or get involved

To learn more about participating in a Cursillo weekend and the Cursillo movement, visit rcdony.org/cursillo, call Michael Neaton at 315-261-4150 or email ncsec2019@gmail.com.

for prayer or pious thoughts. After becoming ill with malaria, she used her weakened state as reason to not pray at all. But around age 40, her confessor urged her to try prayer again. She did in earnest and the Lord favored her with His presence and grace. Her prayer life reverted to deep mysticism, resulting in scorn by her envious fellow nuns. She journaled her complaint to Jesus about this abuse. Jesus' response was "get over it." She quipped back: "no wonder you have so few friends!" She never lost her sense of humor, writing "may God preserve me from gloomy saints." She went on to found other convents, truly dedicated to serious prayer and poverty. For her reformation of convent religious life, she suffered persecution and was denounced to the Inquisition but acquitted. At her death, she left behind extensive writings about prayer, her personal conversion, and a change in religious practices within convents.

Now, I want to pose the

same earlier question in a different way. Who wants to go to heaven? I suspect that there are many raised hands. (The alternative, hell, is decidedly not as comfortable of a destination.) Heaven is where all saints reside! Canonized "sainthood" is the Church's way to provide us models of how others attained admission to heaven. The usual quest for the rest of us is to try living good lives and have the Lord affirm our admission to heaven.

There have been numerous articles in the North Country Catholic promoting the Cursillo Movement and upcoming retreats for women and men, hopefully in the spring of 2021. The program seeks to make you and I aware of the Lord's presence and deepen the relationship with Him, through prayer, study, and action. It is not a solitary journey but a supported group effort to help one another on the road to heaven. No prerequisite is necessary beyond an openness to grow in love with the Lord. There are apt to be stumbles along the way, but we forge forward with each other.

The example of St. Teresa demonstrates that you begin with baby steps and daily open yourself to the God's grace. Remarkable things start to occur. You find yourself praying like Teresa, having deep conversations with Jesus, and achieving things that you previously subscribed to saints and real holy people exclusively. Heck, they may even dedicate a statue to you some day!

Please consider joining us.