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JANUARY 6, 2021

Follow Me: Words of gratitude

Bishop Terry R. LaValley reflects on the end of 2020 and the start of 2021 with gratitude.

One of the many lessons that the pandemic of 2020 has taught me which I hope to take with me as I greet 2021 is to never take people for granted. Undoubtedly, these anxious months have given me a renewed sense of gratitude for my neighbor, the one I know and the one I have never met. So many individuals have sacrificed much and continue to give of themselves during this public health crisis. The charitable spirit of the many who lend a hand to help those in need has been truly inspiring.

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A GROUP EFFORT



Parishioners from Parish of the Visitation in Norfolk, including members of the Stepping Stones youth group, volunteered their time to decorate the church for Christmas. Pictured are volunteers (front row) Margaret Wagstaff, Jessika Bullock, Christina Wagstaff, Bernadette Bullock, (middle row) Hayden Bullock, Stephen Wagstaff, Gil Gonthier, (back row) Ted Ashley, Kathie Ashley, Father Andrew Amyot, Kathy Wolfe, Duane Carson, Carol Gonthier.

'SURPRISE AND AMAZEMENT'



Father Deepak Baru, a priest with the Heralds of Good News currently serving in Watertown, recounts his vocation and formation story and reflects upon his time and experiences here in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. "I'm still learning the language and culture of the North Country and sometimes I'm astounded to experience different ways of living," he said. "All the more, I could say for me everything's full of surprise and amazement."

FULL STORY, PAGE 7

Gratitude leads to hope, joy, pope says

The gratitude that comes from encountering Christ's love and mercy is enough to bring joy and hope to a troubled world, Pope Francis said.

"If we are bearers of gratitude, the world itself will become better, even if only a little bit, but that is enough to transmit a bit of hope," the pope said Dec. 30 during his weekly general audience.

"The world is in need of hope, and with gratitude – with this attitude of

thanksgiving – we can transmit a bit of hope," he said.

At the audience, which was livestreamed from the library of the Apostolic Palace, the pope continued his series of talks on prayer, reflecting on prayers of thanksgiving as exemplified in the Gospel story of the 10 lepers healed by Jesus.

After the lepers cry out for mercy, Jesus healed them and sent them to the high priests to verify their

healing. However, the pope noted, only one returned "to thank Jesus and to praise God for the grace received."

"This narrative divides the world in two," the pope said. There are "those who do not give thanks and those who do; those who take everything as if it were owed them and those who welcome everything as a gift, as grace."

Prayers of thanksgiving, he continued, begin with

the recognition that "grace precedes us" and the knowledge that "we were loved before we learned how to love."

"If we view life like this, then 'thank you' becomes the driving force of our day," the pope said. "And many times, we forget to say, 'thank you.'"

Christians also experience gratitude when participating in the Eucharist and blessing God "for the gift of life," he added.

"To live is above all to

have received," he said. "All of us are born because someone wanted us to have life. And this is only the first of a long series of debts that we incur by living; debts of gratitude."

Continuing his reflection on the story of the lepers, the pope said that while all of them experienced joy after being healed, the one who returned to give thanks received an "additional joy" that only comes from an encounter with Jesus.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

'But it was a good one'

It wasn't an easy life, but it was a good one.

I tend to be nostalgic this time of year. I fondly remember holidays spent with family, including some family members who are no longer with us. This time of year also coincides with my grandfather's birthday and the ice storm of 1998, the momentous weather event that collapsed our family barn and ended our time in dairy farming.

My father and grandfather ran a dairy farm on my grandparents' property. It was a small farm, but it brought with it more than its fair share of difficulties. There were a couple silo fires over the years. There

were a lot of equipment failures. There were injuries. There was hard work, often in either extreme heat or extreme cold, and often in wet and/or dirty environments.

Only grandma was exempt from barn work (at least in my lifetime; I'm guessing there was a time she helped in the barn, too). Kids/teens did hard work. Adults did even harder work. My father was blessed/cursed with only daughters. Our gender did not free us from farm duty. We'd feed and water calves and heifers, clean stalls, prepare cows for milking, toss hay bales down from the overhead hay

mow...

Despite the difficulties, growing up on a dairy farm was a blessing.

My sisters and I spent our free time riding horses, picking berries, throwing hickory nuts or crab apples at each other, sledding down a ridiculously rocky hill or learning sewing, crafting, canning/preserving, gardening... We were always surrounded by family. We learned to work hard and appreciate the fruits of our labor. And my grandparents were largely responsible for my foundation of faith.

It wasn't an easy life, but it was a good one.

I'll be honest: I love when things are easy. I love quiet, easy days at work. I love the easy days of parenting, days when there's no discipline re-

quired. I love the days my husband and I decide to get takeout instead of cooking.

I have a saying. It's something like, "life was a lot easier when I wasn't practicing my faith."

It was easier. There was no objective moral standard. I could live however I wanted. On top of all that, I could sleep in later on Sundays.

Trying to live for and with Christ isn't an easy life, but it's definitely a good one. There are challenges as we try to grow our relationships with the Lord and try to conform our wills and our lives to His ways, but there are so many blessings and graces as we navigate those challenges.

And we have a chance at an eternal life in heaven, and isn't that the best life?

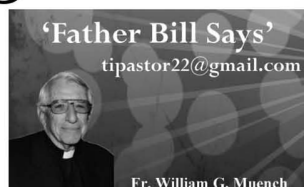


Darcy L. Fargo

Reflecting on the first week of January

The first week of January. I looked forward to the first week of January with real anticipation each year. The first week of January each year was when I joined several priests of my diocese on a ski trip to Mont Tremblant, north of Montreal, Canada. I loved that trip, and I always loved being able to ski at Mont Tremblant. It was a very special trip.

The first year I joined that group, it numbered around 40. I remember that the trip was also such a great time for building a friendship with the others, especially the older priests. During the first years I was ordained – let me see if I remember a few – there was Monsignor Bob Giroux, Monsignor Tony Milia, Monsignor Floyd Brown, Monsignor Joe Bailey, Father Peter Riani, Father Dick Sturtz – and so many more. I just noticed there were lots of Monsignors in those days. This trip became an important time each year for me. I never missed it.



I do remember the whole schedule. After the Sunday Masses, we would all head for the mountain. I remember I joined with various groups to travel, depending on where I was assigned. In those first years, our group stayed in the small cabins on the South Side. Each morning, we walked down to the little parish church nearby to celebrate Mass together. The morning Mass was a wonderful and important part of the ski week. I can still remember that church and its interior and many of the paintings in the sanctuary.

Then, after breakfast, it was off to skiing. The first couple of years, I remember taking lessons. I wanted to learn enough to catch up with the others. After a few years, I

could enjoy spending the whole day skiing with this or that group. I truly remember the interesting conversations while riding up the lift or catching up with the news and the various programs or projects that others were involved in. We such a great group.

After the skiing, we changed our clothes and got together for a happy hour. That was a time for such good discussions! Then, we'd go down to the main lodge for supper. I must add that I also remember that we were expected to wear a suit coat to supper in the early days – a rather high class atmosphere. I do have a memory of meeting other guests who were there skiing.

I must tell you that after several years, we decided to stay at another lodge in the area. It was across the lake from the ski area. Our schedule changed a bit, but we still gathered for Mass each day, though it was after the skiing all day and before supper.

The discussions were still great, the skiing was still such great fun, and the friendships were still strong. Unfortunately, the group grew smaller over the years.

I do remember some of the events that made a particular year rather memorable. There was the year of the ice storm that stranded us for an extra weekend. I remember how each of us scrambled to find someone back home to take care of the Sunday Masses. And there were the accidents – the injuries – that changed plans some years. Even today, we share various stories from the past trips.

I bring this up today because opportunities like the ski trip were important for us priests and helped us to make our diocesan presbyterate such a strong community, a real family that carried over to our ministry. It helped our efforts to work together with the power of the Holy Spirit. So, the first week of January is an anniversary of such a happy time in my life.

FOLLOW ME

Words of gratitude as we approach a new year

One of the many lessons that the pandemic of 2020 has taught me which I hope to take with me as I greet 2021 is to never take people for granted. Undoubtedly, these anxious months have given me a renewed sense of gratitude for my neighbor, the one I know and the one I have never met. So many individuals have sacrificed much and continue to give of themselves during this public health crisis. The charitable spirit of the many who lend a hand to help those in need has been truly inspiring.

Words of gratitude go out to all our health care workers and first responders whose tender care and loving hearts continue to assist us. Those who work behind the scenes, such as in the labs, those who test for the virus and those who meticulously searched for an effective vaccine to combat COVID-19, deserve

our thanks.

School administrators, teachers and staff have extended themselves tirelessly so that our students' education might not suffer during the pandemic. We appreciate the understanding and flexibility of our parents whose support and cooperation have been crucial in providing safe classroom environments for their children. We are gratified by the cooperative spirit of our students and for the creative ways in which we have honored those who graduated this past year and saw their school's graduation traditions severely limited.

I thank God for a wonderful diocesan staff, for our priests, deacons, consecrated religious and parishioners who have extended

themselves in seeking ways to creatively tend to the spiritual and material needs of our parish families. Parish pastoral outreach continues to meet the needs of many whose current circumstances give us an opportunity to lend them a helping hand. Our pastors and their staffs have been most creative and supportive as they have implemented extraordinary health protocols in our parishes during this crisis. Their pastoral sensitivity for all their parishioners reflects the hearts of good shepherds. We express gratitude to the catechetical staff who continue to provide for the faith formation of our young.

I am grateful to the many parishioners who sanitize and clean pews and sur-

faces after parish liturgies so that parishioners can arrive for the next liturgy with a sense of assurance that the sacred space meets health protocols. I thank God for all our parishioners who wear facial coverings as we take to heart St. Paul's words to the Philippians (2:4): "let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others."

We remember all those who have suffered the death of a loved one this past year. I am grateful to grieving family members who have understood and followed the special funeral protocols that, in some cases, have limited our ability for extended family and friends to attend Funeral Masses.

Clearly, 2020 brought us much anxiety and suffering that continue in this New Year. The seas have been rough and sometimes we felt that we were

taking on water. As our attentiveness to all health protocols continues, I pray that more of the faithful will return to our parish churches for Mass. Having been nourished with the Eucharist, the food so necessary for our journey here on earth, we can be a source of confident hope and joy for our struggling neighbor.

Yes, the waters have been turbulent, exposing our weaknesses and vulnerabilities. The scene in Mark's Gospel (4:35-41), reminds us that in the storm, even the wind and the sea obey the One born among us. In this time of trial and testing, we ask the Mother of Jesus to teach all of us to love one another and to be patient and kind that we may bring the peace and healing Presence of Jesus to our land and to our hearts. Good St. Joseph pray for us. Blessed New Year to you and your loved ones!



**Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley**

THANK YOU FOR SHARING IN THE CARING

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Parishes, pastors learn from pandemic

By **Mary Beth Bracy**
Contributing Writer

"There's that old expression 'necessity is the mother of invention.' We found ourselves inventing new things or picking up on things that we wouldn't have otherwise," said Father Mark R. Reilly, pastor of St. Peter's in Massena.

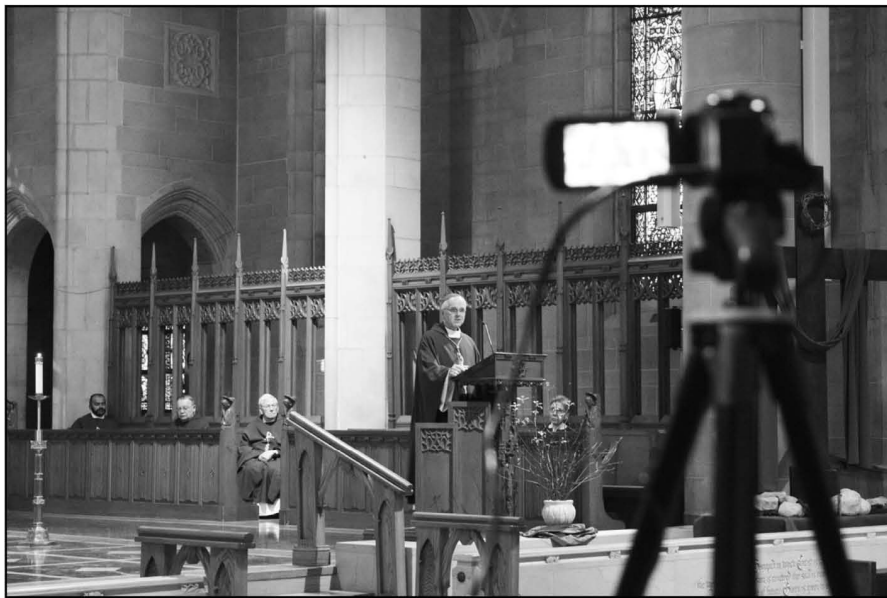
Pastors and parishes have had to adapt to unprecedented circumstances during the pandemic. Clearly, COVID-19 has revolutionized parish life.

St. Mary's Cathedral and Notre Dame in Ogdensburg

"For years, the Sunday Mass has been aired on one of the local radio stations, which we still do, but now with it livestreams too, going to many parts of the diocese," said Father Joseph A. Morgan, Vicar General and pastor of St. Mary's Cathedral and Notre Dame in Ogdensburg. "People have commented on it from all parts of the country and even from other countries."

Bishop Terry R. LaValley has also created video messaging about COVID, and how we can connect with the Church, support each other and continue to grow in faith during this time.

"He's got some great messages, not only during seasonal times, but a weekly kind of Fireside



DEACON JAMES CROWLEY/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Bishop Terry R. LaValley is recorded while celebrating Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral. Mass at the cathedral has been livestreamed since the start of the pandemic.

chat that's been wonderful," Father Morgan said. "That's one thing that's changed for us and we plan on continuing that afterwards."

Deacon James Crowley and others are now helping with livestreaming.

"It's a great assistance and a great evangelization tool," Father Morgan said. "We don't know who and where people are that find us and tune in, you just never know, the grace of God at work."

Sister Bernadette Marie Collins, a Sister of St. Joseph, and catechists organized the "Family, Faith and Fun on the Run," con-

tinued Father Morgan. "It's really gone well. Sister arranges with other catechists for people to drive in and pick up religious and formation material at St. Marguerite d'Youville Academy. Last month, families helped with a food pantry."

Families also received materials to make Advent wreaths.

Activities "are creative and fun and people don't have to get out of their cars," Father Morgan said. "A couple of families have talked about how they found that it is good for their whole family to be involved in the religious education with their children. So, that's a good thing and it's going to probably lead us to look at how we can be more effective even after COVID to help families continue to grow in faith."

The catechists continue to check-in with families during the different weeks of formation.

"The confirmation group

meets in person sometimes but, again, it's social distanced, with all of the protocols in place," noted Father Morgan.

Deacon Crowley and Mike Ramsdell, a teacher at Clarkson, coordinate that program.

Charitable works also continue.

"Our Lady's outreach ministry, former St. Vincent de Paul, still have the clothing store going with limited numbers at a time and protocols in place," Father Morgan said.

Volunteers distributed Christmas gifts for people who need food especially during the holidays.

"This year, with COVID, they are going to send a gift card to the families that apply for assistance," Father Morgan said. "It will save the guys from filling boxes and taking them to homes. It will allow families to get whatever they would really prefer for their holiday dinner."

Father Morgan added that some ministries have

been limited by the pandemic.

"One of the difficult things is that we don't really have access to our nursing homes, and we try to call some people that we know who are there," he said. "Other than that, we are only allowed if someone is dying and the family requests it. So, that is a hardship for us. Deacon Tony Pastizzo is on the staff for pastoral care at St. Joseph's (Nursing Home), so he's been able to continue to go in to help those who are there. Msgr. Harry Snow is our resident there, and he continues to say Mass privately. So, we've got lots of prayers going."

Additionally, Father Justin Thomas, HGN, Father Richard S. Sturtz, or Father Morgan visit the interested homebound.

Father Morgan noted that the pandemic also required changes to how the cathedral parish celebrated Christmas.

"Fortunately, we have two very large churches, and each hold about 900 people," he said. "We're adding two Masses to the schedule and just dividing them up."

The parish sent a letter to community members informing them of the Mass protocols and inviting them to attend Christmas liturgies.

"The letter is kind of an evangelization tool because it's going to practicing and non-practicing Catholics," Father Morgan said.

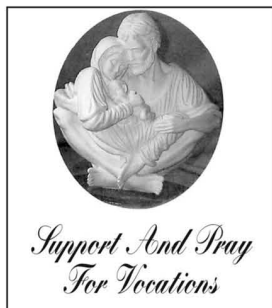
The parish Evangelization committee continues to meet, and they are looking at a new program, "The Search," from Formed.org. They've got the materials and are going through the program first themselves

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, you who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the Divine Gift to forgive the wrong that is done to me and You who are in all instances of my life with me. I in this short dialogue thank you for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from you no matter how great material desire may be. I want to be with you and my loved ones in your perpetual glory. Amen. Thank you for your love toward me and my love ones.

K.M.



Pandemic

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

with plans to present it to others virtually in the future.

Father Morgan also noted that he feels the pandemic left parishioners grateful for the sacraments.

"When we first were able to have people on a very limited basis for Mass it was a very devotional time for people," Father Morgan said. "They hadn't had the Eucharist in two and a half months, so people really expressed their deep joy and how much they missed receiving the sacraments. We certainly appreciate that from our faithful."

St. Peter's Church in Massena

Father Reilly said the pandemic has led St. Peter's Parish to deliver ministry and connect with their community in new ways.

"We've been making ample use of Facebook Live and the parish website," he said. "A number of people in the parish really rely on staying in touch with us. They want to go to Mass, but they are very regularly plugging in on Facebook Live to come to daily Mass livestream."

The parish also increased its use of Flocknote, a program that allows parish ministry leaders to directly text message or email parishioners.

"In the heart of the shutdown when everything was at snail's pace, I made ample use of Flocknote sending out a little mes-

sage daily to everyone on our mailing list, just for outreach," Father Reilly said.

Parish council groups started meeting via Zoom, and youth are preparing for confirmation (and doing interviews) on the web-based meeting platform.

St. Peter's Parish is also using more traditional forms of media.

"We resumed recording and getting one of our Sunday Masses on the local radio station WMSA 1340 in Massena," Father Reilly said. "They were very gracious and have begun doing that again on Sunday evenings."

The parish leadership team has also been gracious with outreach, commented Father Reilly, "calling a good number of people through the pandemic, there are a number of people who are home-bound.

Volunteers have also helped with other ministries.

"On Palm Sunday, a great number of volunteers came to church and picked up palms and devotional books for the Easter season," Father Reilly said. "They hung them on doors or mailboxes. We've been doing that as well with new missalettes and devotion-

als for Advent, making deliveries to people who might not otherwise come out."

St. Peter's Parish has been running Alpha, an evangelization program, in person for the past few years. Due to the pandemic, the parish conducted the program online this year. Alpha "is a program, or course, of inquiry for people who are just seeking to go a little deeper in the big questions of life," Father Reilly said. "It has a lot to offer people who are anywhere in the spectrum in terms of faith.

"During the height of the pandemic we were going to have an Alpha cycle. Then, in the late spring, we transitioned to online. We had a pretty good showing and response. One of the things that we didn't anticipate was the reach. Using Zoom-based Alpha, we had a good number of people from out of the state and even out of the country."

St. Peter's Parish recently held another in-person Alpha but on a much smaller scale, and "it was very different with big tables and people spread out. Last year we had 60 and this time we

had about 20."

In addition to developing new ways to deliver ministry, Father Reilly noted there have been additional challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I never heard the term 'Phenomenon of decision fatigue' before," he said. "In leadership you can have decision paralysis, trying to take in everything before you come to a decision. Every aspect of what you normally do has to be rethought. There are a thousand and one different things with the life of the parish, with public Masses, with activities in the life of the parish that are constantly being scrutinized."

As far as coping with COVID-19, Father Reilly advised that "prayer is a good place to start."

"It can happen no matter where you are," he said. "Obviously, it's a great ache for many who are still holding back from coming back to Mass in person. I would recommend that people take advantage of the myriad of opportunities online, whether it's a daily devotional from Formed, Dynamic Catholic, or Word on Fire. I can't believe how many great resources are

available at our finger tips right now to assist with prayer and reflection and growing in virtue. It's almost like providence that it's available now at this time.

Father Reilly also suggested taking advantage of opportunities to connect with both Jesus and one another.

"If it's not possible because of concern for the pandemic to go to Mass on a weekend, I recommend that people consider going to Mass on a weekday," he said. "Or, even just to go to the empty church and spend time before the Blessed Sacrament. Get out and walk and pray the Rosary while you walk. Check-in with the people that you know and love. Keep that contact even if we're not physically able to."

Father Reilly also noted that the pandemic is not yet over.

"We're still learning and still have lot to learn," he said. "Everyone's nerves are a bit frayed, and everyone has a short fuse. It would be really good if we all recognized that and that, as Christians, we are grounded in prayer. That's where we should be salt and light and leaven."

Prayer to Blessed Virgin
 Oh most beautiful flower of Mt. Carmel, Fruitful Vine, Splendor of God, Immaculate Virgin, assist me in my necessity.
 Oh, Star of the sea, help me and show me you are my Mother.
 Oh, Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven and Earth, I humbly beseech you from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity (make request).
 There are none that can withstand your power.
 Oh, Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee (3 times).
 Holy Mother, I place this prayer in your hands (3 times).
 With grateful thanks, K.M.



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Environmental Stewardship

From a distance?

Several years ago Julie Gold wrote a song entitled "From a Distance." The lyrics to this song are very beautiful as it describes God's presence in every aspect of life. The refrain is "God is watching at a distance." As powerful as this song was for many people, a local pastor stated that he had a real problem with the refrain. When questioned as to why, his response was because God **isn't** at a distance; He is **right here** in our midst!

As we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany this week, we also are reminded that God is not someone at distance but indeed in our midst. The word "epiphany" means "a manifestation of the Divine to someone." For us as Christians, it means the manifestation of Christ to all people represented by the Magi.

The word also means a moment of sudden realization or insight. For a sudden realization to happen, one needs to **look again**. In her book, *Everyday Epiphanies*, Melannie Svoboda reminds us that Jesus invites us to look again as he did. He looked again at the lilies in the field and saw a lesson about simplicity and trust. He looked at an apparent worthless woman and saw instead a lady of immense love. He challenges us to look again at suffering and death and to detect in them joy and new life.

What a challenge this is for us after we have experienced much suffering and death during this past year; suffering from the virus, unemployment, homelessness, hunger, along with unprecedented destruction of the natural world from wildfires, floods, droughts. Where do we find joy and new life as we struggle in these days of darkness?

Recall that the Magi traveled for nearly two years following the star. What did keep them going through tiring days of travel and times of doubt? What keeps you going in times of trial? During those moments, have you experienced God not "watching from a distance" but intimately within and around you? How has an unexpected epiphany of God's presence touched you and changed your way of seeing and being?

Bishop's Public Schedule

Jan. 7 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
Jan. 8 – 7 p.m. – Deacon Candidates Class at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg
Jan. 10 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
 11 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
Jan. 12 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Rest in Peace

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

Jan. 6 – Rev. James Dennis Phalon, 1974; Deacon George W. Carroll, 1994; Rev. Benoit Dostie, M.S.C., 2007; Msgr. Robert J. McCarthy, 2018
Jan. 7 – Rev. Leonidas Geoffrion, 1954
Jan. 8 – Rev. Michael Moris, 1893; Rev. Frederick C. Hatch, 1961; Msgr. Robert John Arquette, 1969; Rev. Leo McCarthy, O.S.A., 1975; Rev. Roland Gaulin, O.M.I., 1984; Rev. Anthony F. Pease, 1997; Msgr. Morris L. Dwyer, 2004
Jan. 9 – Rev. James P. Santoni, O.M.I., 1890; Rev. Joseph Ferdinand Durin, M.S.C., 1897; Rev. Fred Commins, O.S.A., 1924; Rev. Joseph Edward Doyle, 1958; Rev. Jeremiah Albert O'Brien, 1974
Jan. 10 – Rev. Christopher C. Poulin, 1904; Msgr. James O'Driscoll, 1913; Msgr. Frederick P. Diviney, 1961
Jan. 11 – Msgr. John Andrew Cotter, 1964; Msgr. Anthime D. Charbonneau, 1976; Most Rev. Walter P. Kellenberg, 1986
Jan. 12 – Msgr. Francis Joseph Maguire, 1978

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg uses the training, Protecting God's Children for Adults. 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 online training.

GET TO KNOW CURSILLO

What is Cursillo?

By Michael Rabideau
 North Country Cursillo



Cursillo is a Christian movement within the church. Members of Cursillo utilize a method of evangelization with the help of God's grace that enables each person to grasp the essential realities of Christianity that come to life through one's own uniqueness, originality and creativity.

Members of Cursillo become aware of their potential while accepting their limitations. These faithful individuals exercise their freedom and love of God by their conviction, their strength of will and their propagation of friendship in both their personal and community lives.

Cursillo is a joyful proclamation of being a Christian. Participants in this short, intense course in Christianity are forever changed for the better. Cursillo is a method of building lay leadership for Christ and His

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.

Church.

At the conclusion of the Cursillo Weekend, members now have the tools to find, form, sustain and link the participants together forever in an immutable network of Christian love, faith, and fellowship.

The Cursillo Movement proclaims the best news of our best reality: that God, in Christ, loves us. This realization invigorates each person to seek

The weekend experience

By Michael Rabideau
 North Country Cursillo

Participating in a Cursillo Weekend is akin to spending time in a sensory deprivation tank. The feeling of being wrapped in God's love is an experience that we would all like to relive again and again.

While floating in the arms of God, we can purge ourselves of all things negative and distracting, allowing us to bask in the warmth and presence of God while buoyed by His never ending love. The outside forces that distract us from God's love are left outside; our sole focus is on the reasons and motivation for our participation in the weekend – becoming one with God and our fellow cursillistas. While we may have been alone and isolated when we started the Cursillo weekend, we are all in this together when we start our fourth day and the rest of our lives in this Christian fellowship

out his or her fellow Christians and forge a bond with them based on conviction, decision and constancy.

The best in each of us bonds us together, and God's love is the strongest link in this unbreakable chain.

For a New or Used Car

Mort
Backus &
Sons

On Canton-Ogdensburg Rd.
 315-393-5899



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.

Visit our website
www.northcountrycatholic.org

- Read local stories and commentaries
- Search archived papers
- View diocesan events and much more

Find us on Facebook!



'Everything's full of surprise and amazement'

By **Mary Beth Bracy**
Contributing Writer

WATERTOWN – Born into a Catholic family in Orisa, located in Northeast India, Father Deepak Baru of the Heralds of Good News grew up with his parents and older brother.

Oriya is his first language, and he also knows Hindi. Father Baru said he is from a family of poor farmers, who cultivated wheat or paddy (rice). His maternal cousin is a member of St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta's order, the Missionaries of Charity. Growing up, Father Baru was an altar server and had a great devotion to Mother Mary.

"We have received the faith from the Western part of the world, now in India the faith is growing, but here the faith is getting diminished," Father Baru said. "People are not so much interested in prayer or going to Mass or any spiritual activities. There might be some reason behind this, I could say only that people are either fearful or they are not willing to come to the Church for worship.

"Even before COVID hit, people were scared or doubting or something; maybe because of previous incidents, or different experiences in their life, maybe they hate to come to the Church," Father Baru continued. "Really some of them I see though, their faith is really strong and neither COVID nor anything can shake their faith. Their faith is stronger than I have ever seen. They continue to come and have no fear of anything. I really appreciate that. They come to worship. That makes me stronger in my faith."

In high school, Father Baru was "inspired" by the



Father Deepak Baru, HGN

Society of the Divine Word priests. When he finished college in his hometown, one of his cousins invited him to join the Heralds of Good News. Father Baru and his cousin would sit together in the evening and discuss how to enter the seminary.

He began seminary on May 1, 2000.

"After my graduation I had interviews with police, coal mines and railway, but the results of those interviews came when I joined the seminary, and I had passed," noted Father Baru. "Through the help of some of the benefactors here in the USA (in Texas area), I started the seminary and became a priest."

Father Baru recalled that, when he was in his first year of philosophy in the seminary, "an incident happened in his life and family." In August 2002, his father died when Father Baru's semester exams were beginning. He was not able to take them due to grief. Father Baru's friend, who took him to the seminary, consoled him and said that "as you have chosen the will of God, you are to forego everything."

Father Baru said he "should not look back," referring to Jesus' words about keeping your hands to the plow. Father Baru's

mother and elder brother said, "don't worry about the family, we will take care of everything, you go ahead for what you have gone to do."

Father Baru was ordained April 29, 2011. He was appointed as parochial vicar at three parishes in Orisa.

"In India, the faith is getting stronger and stronger every day, but there are many persecutions and difficulties," he said. "It is very difficult to show the faith to anyone. Whenever we say I am a Catholic or a Christian, sometimes people get annoyed. When we proclaim our faith through our words and deeds, then people torture and persecute."

In 2007, there was a conflict and riot in the Kandhamal district in his state, in which many Christians were burned alive. On Christmas, Hindus "burned the Churches, the people, the grottos, the statues, everything was destroyed and burned," Father Baru said. "We have been suffering until now. Still in many places in India, these things are happening. In my home diocese, the Hindus went and destroyed one or two parishes, the grottos, and statues."

Father Baru was assigned to places in Orissa.

"Sometimes there was no electricity, and most of the time the network was not there," he said.

Out of his love for the Blessed Mother, Father Baru built a small grotto in his own village, one mile from the parish of St. Ignatius Church in Gaibira. The grotto has Mother Mary on the ground level and stairs leading up to Jesus on the top level.

Just before coming to the United States, Father

Baru blessed the grotto. From his parish are three bishops, the Auxiliary Archbishop Rt. Rev. Telephore Bilung of Ranchi, Archbishop Rt. Rev. John Barwa of the Archdiocese of Cuttack-Bhubaneswar, and his Bishop Rt. Rev. Kishore Kumar Kujur of the Diocese Rourkela. There are also many priests and religious at his parish.

On May 1, 2019, Father Baru came to New York.

Due to customs, he was delayed and missed the flight to Syracuse. He prayed a Rosary and was immediately inspired to approach the agents and explain his problem. They helped him to get a ticket to fly to Syracuse the following morning. He is stationed at Holy Family Church in Watertown.

Father Baru assists with the four weekend Masses and the 9 a.m. Mass on weekdays. In Watertown, there are three churches that are joined together.

"It is very exciting for me to go around to all of the churches and celebrate Mass," Father Baru said.

Father Baru said he has been warmly received in Watertown.

The people "are very much aware of me," he said. "I am not very good at speaking English, but I can speak to their understanding and people love me so much now, and I do love them. I feel satisfied so much in what I have here. At least I can speak about something that I know or what I have studied."

Since Father Baru is from an interior village, he grew up without an opportunity to learn English. It was only when he entered seminary that he began learning the language.

In addition, Father Baru hears confessions daily, before and after Masses, when people are in need of the sacrament. He is "always available in the rectory and in the church."

Most of the time, though, Father Baru is in his office and preparing his homilies.

"I think for this purpose only I am chosen," reflected. Father Baru, "Why should I not give my time for people who come for confession, or to consult, or to talk about their problems? I am trying to be available to them."

When he was in India, his primary hobby was playing soccer, a sport he played in the seminary or the village. Father Baru said he continues "learning customs, culture and everything. Slowly I'm learning about USA, Watertown. It may take some more time."

Father Baru said he has also received outstanding support from the other priests serving in Watertown.

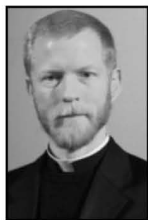
"After coming here to the Watertown Church, I love the priests Msgr. Paul E. Whitmore, Father John M. 'Mickey' Demo, and Father Leo A. Wiley. And they love me," Father Baru said. "I really am very lucky and very happy to be here. I think that this is my home. It's my great pleasure to come over here in the North Country of the USA. I am really very grateful to the bishop of Ogdensburg for accepting me to work in his diocese. God bless him. I'm still learning the language and culture of the North Country and sometimes, I'm astounded to experience different ways of living. All the more, I could say for me everything's full of surprise and amazement."

MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

Considering the COVID-19 vaccine

Must Catholics refuse a vaccine made with a cell line from an abortion?

In the wake of announcements from multiple pharmaceutical companies about safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, many are expressing ethical doubts about whether it is OK to take these vaccines. Do Catholics have a moral duty to decline an inoculation if it was unethically produced using a cell line that came from an abortion?



Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk Ph.D.

The short answer is “no.” This has been discussed and explained in several magisterial church documents in recent years.

In 2008, for example, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith reminded us in the Instruction *Dignitas Personae* that:

“Grave reasons may be morally proportionate to justify the use of such ‘biological material.’ Thus, for example, danger to the health of children could permit parents to use a vaccine which was developed using cell lines of illicit origin, while keeping in mind that everyone has the duty to make known their disagreement and to ask that their healthcare system make other types of vaccines available.”

For a serious reason, therefore, Catholics may receive a COVID-19 vaccine having an association with abortion, and a serious reason could include a threat to one’s health and well being. Those who are elderly or who face comorbidities like diabetes, obesity or other significant health conditions are among the highest risk

groups for adverse outcomes from infection, and would clearly have a serious reason.

Included in the graphic is information comparing some of the COVID-19 vaccine candidates that may become available in the U.S. in terms of their association with abortion-derived cell lines, helpfully collated by the Charlotte Lozier Institute and alphabetically arranged.

Vaccines from Moderna and Pfizer are the first to receive emergency approval in the U.S., and do not rely on cell lines from abortions in the manufacturing process. As such, they appear to be good candidates for Catholics to use. There is a problem that a cell line from a 1972 abortion was used to carry out some ancillary testing of those vaccines, but the fact that zero material derived from any cell line from an abortion is present in these vaccines, that is to say, inside the syringe which actually jabs the patient, is sufficient in the minds of most to assuage any concern over using them, even if problematic laboratory testing may have taken place along the way.

If we end up facing a choice among multiple COVID-19 vaccines of similar or equal safety and efficacy, as appears likely, it will clearly be preferable to choose alternatives with a better ethical profile, i.e. those not associated with, or less associated with, material derived from

| Company/Sponsor | Abortion-Derived Cell Line Used in Vaccine Development/Production? | Abortion-Derived Cell Line Used in Vaccine Lab Testing? | “Ethical Profile” |
|----------------------------------|--|---|-------------------|
| Altimune | Yes | ? | Poor |
| Arcturas Therapeutics | No | Yes | Good |
| AstraZeneca/University of Oxford | Yes | Yes | Very Poor |
| Immunity Bio & NantKwest | Yes | Yes | Very Poor |
| Inovio Pharmaceuticals | No | Yes | Good |
| Janssen Res/Johnson & Johnson | Yes | Yes | Very Poor |
| Merck and IAVI | No | ? | Good |
| Moderna | No | Yes | Good |
| Novavax | No | Yes | Good |
| Pfizer/BioNTech | No | Yes | Good |
| Sanofi & GSK Protein Sciences | No | ? | Good |
| Sanofi Pasteur/Translate Bio | No | Yes | Good |
| Sorrento [“T-viva-19”] | No | No | Very Good |
| Univ. of Pittsburgh | Yes | ? | Poor |
| Vaxart | Yes | ? | Poor |

abortions.

Suppose, however, that two new vaccines both appeared to be safe during clinical trials. The first vaccine had no association with abortion, but was only 35% effective at protecting from COVID-19, while the second was more than 90% effective, but was manufactured using a cell line derived from an abortion. In such a case, again, we could choose the significantly more effective version for the serious reason of danger to our health.

Relying on cell lines from abortions to manufacture a COVID-19 vaccine provokes strong moral objections and some can and will refuse the vaccines on these grounds. While it is a personal decision of conscience as to whether or not to accept a vaccine, it is important to be clear that the Church, for her part, does not require us to decline it on such grounds in the face of serious reasons, as in the situation of an elderly person or someone with multiple health issues who

faces significant risks if they were to contract COVID-19. This fact, of course, in no way absolves or diminishes the serious wrongdoing of those who used cell lines from abortions to make vaccines in the first place.

Any time we decide to receive an unethically produced vaccine, moreover, we should push back. We need to do our part in applying pressure on the manufacturer, perhaps by sending an e-mail indicating our objection to the fact that their vaccine was produced using ethically controversial cell sources, and requesting that they reformulate it using alternative, non-abortion-related cell sources. Alternatively, we might write a letter to the editor of our local paper pointing out the injustice of being morally coerced to rely on these cell sources, or take other steps to educate and inform others.

Such efforts help expand public awareness of the problem and apply real pressure for change. Such efforts can be more effective (and require more au-

thentic determination on our part) than merely “digging in our heels” or “taking a stand” and refusing to get vaccinated, which has the negative effect of subjecting us, and others around us, to heightened risk from various diseases.

While it is too early to know which COVID-19 vaccines will end up becoming available in the U.S., the pandemic is certain to elevate the profile of abortion-related ethical concerns among the public to a degree not previously seen, offering a unique opportunity to push for the elimination of these cell lines from future biomedical research and pharmaceutical development projects.

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.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Following the guidance of the Almighty

An “epiphany” means a sudden burst of understanding, a showing forth of light and truth. Isaiah had foretold that “all the ends of the earth will behold the salvation of our God.” And the Gospel for that Mass had promised that all people would eventually be the chosen ones: “...to those who did accept Him, he gave power to become children of God.” And now, on the Epiphany, the light from the skies is intensified a thousand-fold, and the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that “nations shall walk by your light, and kings by your shin-



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

ing radiance.” To the wonder of all in Palestine, there came foreign camels bearing foreign scholars. Ever since King Cyrus of Persia had been God’s instrument in freeing Israel from slavery, there had been warm relations between the Jewish people and Persia. Many believe that Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar, were really Persian astrologers. What courage and perseverance those strangers have shown, to brave the dangers of travel, skepticism, and political intrigue! But they found what they were looking

January 3

Feast of the Epiphany

READINGS

Isaiah 60:1-6

Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6

Matthew 2:1-12

for. That star gave trustworthy guidance and now triumphantly shines as guard over the lowly dwelling wherein rests the child who possesses all meaning. They fall to their knees in homage, for their learning has made them humble, and their wisdom leads them to recognize the divine in the fragile flesh of a child.

But for all their simple faith, their wisdom was sharp enough to detect the sham delight and

murderous intentions of the wily Herod. And so, they pay their respects, leave their gifts, and modestly depart for their homeland, sorrowfully aware of the terrible price justice must pay for peace.

Their role in history has been accomplished – to teach us all to follow the guidance of the Almighty, to accept our own role as Bearers of the Light, and to follow this Christ into His Mission, to partake of His Passion, and to join the millions through the ages who will preach His Gospel of universal salvation.

The Son of God is the one Judge and Arbiter of Truth and the one Source of Light, but we are all called to be “epiphanies,”

providing glimpses of that Truth, showing the way in our own small spots of time and circumstance to a larger plan and destiny.

In this confused and dangerous world filled with COVID-19, we need to be true hope-filled lights to those in our country and beyond.

Princely Child, make of us all wise men and courageous women, obedient children who will follow wherever you lead us. That means being faithful to meditation on the truth, sharing what we learn with others in whatever ways are possible. This is the way for us to be light bearers, lighting up the darkness and confusion in the world in which we live.

CALLED TO SERVE

It’s a new year, but Christmas continues

Happy New Year. We all pray, I suspect, that this year, *anno Domini nostri Jesu Christi 2021*, will be better for all of us. *Anno Domini nostri Jesu Christi* is translated from Latin as “in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We usually abbreviate it to *Anno Domini* or AD. Those of us who subscribe to the Gregorian calendar, that’s you and me I’ll wager, consider this AD 2021, two thousand twenty-one years since Jesus’ human conception.

We have customs in our house related to calendars. Ticia, our daughter, blesses us each year with a new calendar that includes memorable pictures for each month of the year. The major pic-

tures might signify some family member’s birth month, or an anniversary, or some other memorable occasion, a trip or something. Maybe the 2022 calendar will have a picture of Kathy and me getting our COVID virus vaccine shots. That would be memorable.

January 1, we switched the calendar from the 2020 version to the 2021 version; making sure we save the old calendar. That always leads to another traditional annual event: figuring out where we put the collection of prior year calendars.

Some folks tear down their Christmas decorations as early as St. Stephen’s day, December 26. Trees are unceremo-

niously dumped at the curb and all those doo-dads that were placed prominently on the tree, or the mantle, or the hutch, or the refrigerator get boxed for another year and committed to the cellar or attic.

Not in our house. Liturgically the Christmas season ends this coming Sunday, the Baptism of the Lord. Around our place we might, MIGHT start slowly undecorating in the next couple of weeks. It will all be down before Ash Wednesday, maybe.

It’s just the way we do things. You may have,

probably do have, a different timetable, a different calendar, for undoing the best season of the year. That’s OK, as long as

we all learned a lesson from Christmas. Christmas is about the Incarnation. God took on flesh as a human because God loves us. The Spirit of Christmas is love. The Spirit of Christmas is not a re-

moveable, storable decoration. It is a perpetual way of living. We can’t turn love on and off. We can’t unpack it to put on display for a couple of weeks each year and then crate it up to hibernate for the next 11 months.

Love, God’s love, is why Jesus became man. God sent His Son to become one of us so Jesus could suffer, die and rise again. His resurrection conquered death and so freed all mankind from bondage.

Each Christmas we give thanks to God for his love, for his Son, and what that act of selfless love meant to us. We have been commissioned by God to share his love. That spirit of love is the greatest gift of all at Christmas.

Flip the page to January and the months that will follow, but carry the spirit of God’s love with you and share it with others, throughout AD 2021 and beyond.



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

The seven sorrows and joys of St. Joseph

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

By Sister Helen Hermann
Sister of St. Joseph

As we journey through life, we often experience the roller coaster effect with its ups and downs. Likewise, St. Joseph's life had sorrows and joys intertwined with his day by day happenings.

On the seven Sundays preceding the feast of St. Joseph on March 19, we are encouraged to reflect on the sorrows and joys of St. Joseph. You might ask why.

It is related that a ship containing a number of passengers was wrecked off the coast of Holland. Two Franciscan monks, who had clung to a plank for two days, were saved by a dignified man who miraculously brought them to shore. Upon their asking him who he was, he replied, "I am Joseph, and I desire you to honor my seven sorrows and seven joys."

This was the origin of the devotion to the sorrows and joys of St. Joseph. It would be good to conclude each Sunday with the 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

January 31

Sorrow: The doubt of St. Joseph. (Matt. 1:19).

But Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wishing to expose her to reproach, was minded to put her away privately.

Joy: The message of the Angel. (Matt. 1:20).

But while he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Do not be afraid, Joseph, son of David, to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is begotten in her is of the Holy Spirit.

Conclude with an Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be and the Act of Consecration to St. Joseph.

February 7

Sorrow: The poverty of Jesus' birth. (Luke 2:7).

And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Joy: The birth of the Savior. (Luke 2:10-11).

And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all people; for today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you, who is Christ the Lord."

Conclude with an Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be and the Act of Consecration to St. Joseph.

February 14

Sorrow: The Circumcision. (Luke 2:21).

And when eight days were fulfilled for his circumcision, his name was called Jesus, the name given to him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Joy: The Holy Name of Jesus. (Matt. 1:25).

And he did not know her until she brought forth her first born son. And he called his name Jesus.

Conclude with an Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be and the Act of Consecration to St. Joseph.

February 21

Sorrow: The prophecy of Simeon. (Luke 2:34).

And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary his mother, "Behold this child is destined for the fall and the rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted. And your own soul a sword shall pierce.

Joy: The effects of the Redemption. (Luke 2:38).

And coming up at that very hour, she began to give praise to the Lord, and spoke of him to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

Conclude with an Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be and the Act of Consecration to St. Joseph.

February 28

Sorrow: The flight into Egypt. (Matt. 2:14).

So he arose, and took the child and his mother by night, and withdrew into Egypt.

Joy: The overthrow of the idols of Egypt. (Is. 19:1).

The burden of Egypt. Behold the Lord will ascend upon a swift cloud and will enter into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt will be

moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst thereof.

Conclude with an Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be and the Act of Consecration to St. Joseph.

March 7

Sorrow: The return from Egypt. (Matt. 2:22).

But hearing that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there; and being warned in a dream, he withdrew into the region of Galilee.

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

And when they had fulfilled all things prescribed in the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, into their own town of Nazareth.

Conclude with an Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be and the Act of Consecra-

tion to St. Joseph.

Mar. 14

Sorrow: The loss of the Child Jesus. (Luke 2:45).

And not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him

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

And it came to pass after three days, that they found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Conclude with an Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be and the Act of Consecration to St. Joseph.

Action Step: If you have not already done so, please put a picture of statue of St. Joseph in a place of honor in your home. As a family dedicate yourselves to St. Joseph by reciting the Act of Consecration to St. Joseph.

Live-streamed from the
Cathedral at 11am

MASS FOR LIFE

January 24, 2021



MASS CELEBRATED BY BISHOP LAVALLEY

www.rcdony.org/livemass



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

See the New Year in a new light

As people of faith, we see the whole of creation as the handiwork of God. Experiencing the wonder of God in the Diocese of Ogdensburg is an easy task to undertake. We are blessed with the beautiful Adirondacks and the gorgeous Champlain Valley. We have the Thousand Islands in the majestic St. Lawrence River, and the beautiful farmlands and rolling hills in between. We are aware that creation sustains not only our bodies but also our spirits.

Jesus, too, seems to have experienced God in creation. He went out into the wilderness "with the wild beasts" for 40 days before beginning his active ministry, and every time the Gospels describe Jesus in prayer, he is outdoors. Jesus' parables and teachings are full of metaphors drawn from nature: birds, lilies of the field, a mustard seed and cultivation of soil.

Just as "God so loves the world," we are called to love and care for earth and all its creatures. Yet, we are now living in a time of unprecedented ecological crisis, and the entire balance of the intricate web of life that God created is being undermined by human activity.

As people of faith, how should we respond to this unfolding crisis? All of creation can be a revelation of God. The great Christian mystic, Meister Eckhart, wrote that we should, "apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things. Every single creature is full of God and is a book about God. Every creature is a word of God."

In this sense, the earth and all its creatures deserve our love and deep respect. Each time we lose a species or a forest, each time we defile the earth, it is as though we were tearing out a page of sacred scripture and destroying it forever. Of course, we all depend on other creatures for our survival – we must eat food, clothe ourselves, and build shelter. However, in doing so, we must respect the overall integrity of species, ecosystems, and the earth itself.

The destruction of the earth we are witnessing makes it evident that we are not living in a way that respects God's creation. We are called to radically change the way we think, live, and act. We are called to conversion. We must be better stewards of the earth.

In recovering a sense that all life is sacred, that all creation in some way reveals the presence of God, we can find inspiration to act. Our love for creation can motivate us to reduce our consumption, avoid the use of dangerous chemicals, and advocate for policies needed to achieve both justice and ecological harmony. It is time that Christians, together with all people of good will, begin to reorient our actions and practices to reflect the need to right our relationship with the Earth and to establish more just and living human communities.

As we begin a new year, let this be one resolution for the New Year!

OBITUARIES

Brasher Falls – Margaret A. (Thompson) Gauthier, 77; Funeral Services Dec. 30, 2020 at the Hammill Funeral Home, Winthrop.

Brushton – Carmen J. Jock, 74; Funeral Services Dec. 23, 2020 at Flint Funeral Home; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Brushton – Timothy J. McCarthy, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 26, 2020 at St. Mary's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Burke – Donald D. Johnston, 88; Services to be held at a later date.

Canton – Margaret E. (Flynn) Wilkin-son, 90; Private Services to be held; burial in Maine.

Cape Vincent – Joseph M. Docteur, 59; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 29, 2020 at St. Vincent of Paul Church; burial in St. Vincent of Paul Cemetery.

Carthage – Marilyn A. Prince, 89; Mass of Christian Burial May 21, 2021 at St. James Church; burial in St. James Cemetery.

Chazy – Jeremiah Ryan, 97; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 29, 2020 at Sacred Heart Church.

Colton – Josephine (Powrozniak) Swift, 89; Burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery in the Spring.

Copenhagen – Douglas J. Hebert, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 29, 2020 at St. Mary's Church.

Malone – Judy M. (LaBelle) White, 63; Funeral Services Dec. 31, 2020 at the Bruso-Desnoyers Funeral Home; burial in the new St. Mary's Cemetery.

Massena – Elaine (Maxwell) Gagner, 59; Funeral Services Dec. 30, 2020 at the Phillips Memorial Home.

Massena – Reginald Patrick Hunt, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 22, 2020 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Barbara (Kenney) Pepe, 91; Memorial Mass in the Spring at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Palmira M. (Garcia) Puente, 99; Mass of Christian Burial to take place

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

Massena – Helen Wood White, 78; Services to be held in the June 2021.

Moir – Helen A. Dygert, 93; Mass of Christian Burial to be held in the Spring.

Norfolk – Doris E. Clark, 97; Funeral Services Dec. 22, 2020 at Buck Funeral Home burial in Visitation Cemetery.

Norfolk – Janice S. (LaPlante) McIntosh, 78; Funeral Services Dec. 30, 2020 at the Buck Funeral Home; burial in Madrid Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Jack Bruyere, 87; Private Mass of Christian Burial at Notre Dame Church; burial in Foxwood Memorial Park.

Ogdensburg – Rosella P. (Newvine) Liscum, 101; Mass of Christian Burial to be held in the Spring at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Rensselaer Falls Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Audrey S. (Montpetit) McGrath, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 28, 2020 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Foxwood Memorial Park.

Ogdensburg – Joseph G. Montgomery, 93; Private Services held Dec. 30, 2020 at Fox & Murray Funeral Home; burial in Foxwood Memorial Park.

Ogdensburg – Gerald H. Sholette, 83; Services to be held in the Spring; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Jane M. (Adams) Sweeney, 76; mass of Christian Burial Dec. 21, 2020 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Our Lady of Peace Cemetery, Baldwinsville.

Plattsburgh – Donald O. Harris, S.F.O., 89; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 23, 2020 at St. John's Church; burial in Mt. Carmel Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – James E. Keable, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 23, 2020 at St. Peter's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Hugh P. O'Neil, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 31, 2020 at St. John's Church; burial in Mt. Carmel Cemetery.

Rouses Point – Kenneth E. Ryan, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 30, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Saranac Lake – Dennis B. Duprey, 72; Mass of Christian Burial to be held in 2021.

Saranac Lake – Carolyn Ann Miller, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 29, 2020 at St. Bernard's Church burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Star Lake – Richard C. Brickey, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 23, 2020 at St. Hubert's Church; burial in Cranberry Lake Cemetery.

Star Lake – Edgar L. "Lee" Pryce, 88; Mass of Christian Burial to be held in the Spring at St. Hubert's Church.

Ticonderoga – Alberta Florence (Alteri) Sharkey, 86; Private Mass of Christian Burial held at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Parish Cemetery.

Watertown – Lawrence E. Branche, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 31, 2020 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Rachel A. (McDonald) Holland, 91; Services to be held at a later date.

Watertown – Donald M. LaDuke, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 31, 2020 at St. Patrick's Church.

Watertown – Theresa (Demeter) LaPlante, 90; Mass of Christian Burial in 2021 at Holy Family Church.

Watertown – Paula McManaman Turner, 59; Memorial Mass Jan. 5, 2021 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church.

Watertown – Lois E. (Moore) Wilson, 101; Memorial Mass to be held at a later date at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; burial in North Watertown Cemetery.

West Chazy – Valida (Sears) Cote, 89; Memorial Services to be held at a later date.

Willsboro – Joan Alice (Goodroe) Mero; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 22, 2020 at St. Philip of Jesus Christ Church burial in Calvary Cemetery.

AROUND THE DIOCESE

LIVING A SACRAMENTAL WAY OF LIFE STARTING AT BAPTISM

A live Zoom event with Director of the Department of Faith Formation, Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, SSJ TO DISCUSS The sacraments, beginning with Baptism, touch all the stages and all the important moments of the Christian's life. Christ comes to meet using the "outward signs" of the sacraments, giving birth and increase, healing and mission to the Christian's life of faith (Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1113).

Date: Jan. 9

Time: 9:45 a.m. to Noon

Features: Inviting all Catechetical Leaders, RCIA Directors, and Youth Ministers. The cost is free. Contact: To register go to: <https://www.rcdony.org/ffleadreg> Zoom link will be sent after registration.

JANUARY RETREAT DAY

Join a virtual retreat with the theme, "Walking with St. Joseph as Our Guide".

Date: Jan. 16

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Features: Sister Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ will host the meeting. During this year dedicated to St. Joseph, this Retreat Day will consider the mind and heart of Joseph, as reflected in his actions, and reflect on ways that he might be a faithful guide and companion on our own faith journeys. It will also provide opportunities for prayer and sharing.

Cost: There is no cost. To make an offering, mail to: Sisters of St. Joseph, 1425 Washington St., Watertown, NY 13601.

Contact: To register contact srbethssj@gmail.com or 315-212-6592

MASS FOR LIFE

Bishop LaValley will celebrate a Mass for Life. Join in person or virtually to pray for a deeper respect for human life.

Date: Jan. 24, 2021

Time: 11 a.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral or you can view it live at www.rcdony.org/livemass

VIRTUAL FAMILY LIFE CONFERENCE

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

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



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Vatican calls for equitable COVID vaccine distribution

The Vatican's coronavirus commission and the Pontifical Academy for Life issued a joint statement calling for a coordinated international effort to ensure the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines worldwide.

The document highlights the "critical role of vaccines to defeat the pandemic, not just for individual personal health but to protect the health of all," the Vatican said in a statement accompanying the document Dec. 29.

"The Vatican commission and the Pontifical Academy of Life remind world leaders that vaccines must be provided to all fairly and equitably, prioritizing those most in need," the Vatican said.

The pandemic has exacerbated "a triple threat of simultaneous and interconnected health, economic and socio-ecological crises that are disproportionately impacting the poor and the vulnerable," the document said. "As we move toward a just recovery, we must ensure that immediate cures for the crises become stepping-stones to a more just society, with an inclusive and interdependent set of systems."

Pope Francis estab-

lished the COVID-19 commission in April with the goal of expressing "the church's concern and love for the entire human family in the face of the of COVID-19 pandemic."

Led by Cardinal Peter Turkson, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, the commission is tasked with collaborating with other Vatican offices to coordinate its work, including "an analysis and a reflection on the socio-economic and culture challenges of the future and proposed guidelines to address them."

Cardinal Turkson said that while the Vatican is grateful for the scientific community's speedy development of the vaccine, it is "now up to us to ensure that it is available to all, especially the most vulnerable."

"It is a matter of justice," he said. "This is the time to show we are one human family."

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, head of the Pontifical Academy for Life, said his office is working with the commission to address the ethical issues regarding the vaccines' development and distribution.

The joint document reiterated the points made Dec. 21 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith regarding the moral implications of receiving COVID-19 vaccines that were developed or tested using cell lines originating from aborted fetuses.

It also cited the congregation's 2008 instruction, "Dignitas Personae," which states that "grave reasons may be morally proportionate to justify

the use of such biological material."

The Pontifical Academy for Life, the document said, also has addressed the issue of developing vaccines using tissue from aborted fetuses; while it called for a "commitment to ensuring that every vaccine has no connection in its preparation to any material originating from an abortion," it also said that "the moral responsibility to vaccinate is reiterated in order to avoid serious health risks for children and the general population."

The new document issued a set of objectives, particularly around making the vaccines "available and accessible to all."

Part of that process, the document said, would be to consider how to reward those who developed the vaccine and repay "the research costs and risks companies have taken on," while also recognizing the vaccine "as a good to which everyone should have access, without discrimination."

The document quoted Pope Francis, who said in his Christmas message that humanity could not allow "the virus of radical individualism to get the better of us and make us indifferent to the suffering of other brothers and sisters," nor could it allow "the law of the marketplace and patents take precedence over the law of love and the health of humanity."

The dicastery and the academy said an exclusive focus on profit and commerce "is not ethically acceptable in the field of medicine and health care."



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