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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 76 Number 22

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

OCTOBER 6, 2021

NEW DEACONS ORDAINED



DARCY FARGO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, Bishop LaValley ordained to the Order of Deacon Randy Besio, Gerald Bouchard, Brent Davison, Daniel LeRoy, Michael Lieber Jr., Kenneth Lushia, Roderic Roca, Lee Trudeau, Robert Uttendorfsky, Noel Voos, Mark Webster and Peter Woolschlager on October 2 at St. Mary's Cathedral. On October 9, Bishop LaValley will ordain two more men, James Carlin and Leagon Carlin, as deacons. See stories on pages 7 and 15. Additional coverage of the ordinations will be in next week's edition.

HONORING THOSE WHO SERVE



On September 26, representatives of local law enforcement agencies, fire and EMS departments, and dispatching agencies gathered at Notre Dame Church in Malone as Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated the Blue Mass. In addition to providing a Color Guard, emergency responders served as lectors and participated in a wreath-laying and tolling bells in memory of those lost in the line of duty.

FULL STORY, PAGE 8-9

Sisters celebrate jubilees

On October 3, Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated the Marriage & Religious Jubilee Mass, honoring those who have reached anniversaries in married and consecrated religious life.

Consecrated religious celebrating jubilees this year are:

- Sister Diane Marie Ulsamer, SSJ – 50 years
- Sister Shirley Anne Brown, SSJ – 60 years
- Sister Mary Juliana Raymond, SSJ - 60 years
- Sister Judy Adams, SSJ - 60 years
- Sister Carol Louise Kraeger, SSJ - 60 years
- Sister Cecilia Marie Hermann, SSJ – 60 Years
- Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ – 60 Years
- Sister Mary Gregory Munger, SSJ – 60 Years
- Sister Mary Denise Wilke, RSM – 70 years

See biographies of the sisters celebrating jubilees starting on Page 4. Additional coverage of the Marriage & Religious Jubilee Mass will be in next week's edition of the *North Country Catholic*.

Pope: Focus on living as missionaries in October

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – All Christians are called to be missionaries, which at its most basic level involves living in such a way that other people ask what motivates their love and concern, Pope Francis said.

"Jesus asks us all, and you as well, to be missionary disciples. Are you ready?" the pope asked in a video marking the beginning of the church's annual celebration of October as Mission Month. World Mission Sunday is Oct. 24.

The pope's prayer inten-

tion for the month of October is: "We pray that every baptized person may be engaged in evangelization, available to the mission, by being witnesses of a life that has the flavor of the Gospel."

The intention and the pope's video commenting on it are distributed by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, formerly known as the Apostleship of Prayer.

To be a missionary, the pope said in the video, "it's enough to be available to answer his call and to

live united to the Lord in the most common daily things – work, meeting other people, our daily duties, the chance events of each day – allowing ourselves to be guided always by the Holy Spirit."

The way a Christian lives should provoke admiration in others, he said. Then they will ask, "How is it possible for this person to be this way?" or "What is the source of the love with which this person treats everyone – the kindness and good humor?"

NORTH
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I've been called by a new name

It's part of living in small towns, I think.

As I travel around the North Country, it's not uncommon for me to be identified by my family associations. I regularly hear comments like:

"You're Curt's daughter, right?"

"Aren't you Charlie Smith's granddaughter?"

"Hey! You're Jake's mom!"

And that's before I even consider all the times I'm called my twin sister's name or called "one of the Smith twins."

But it's only been within the last 3.5 years – since I started this job – that I've been called by a new moniker: "(Sister

John Mary's niece."

Sister Mary Ellen Brett, a Sister of St. Joseph who is celebrating her 60th jubilee this year, uses that description when she talks to me. In



**Darcy L.
Fargo**

fact, Sister has called me "John Mary's niece" so many times, I wasn't sure she remembered my real name for a while (now, I'm pretty confident she does; I've heard her use it a couple times).

When I was a teenager and young adult, being referred to by family associations bothered me. I felt like I didn't have my own identity. Now, those associations make me smile, especially that newest one.

Sister John Mary Brockway

was my grandmother's sister, my great-aunt. And she was great. What I remember most about Sister John Mary (we called her "Sissy") was her joy. She was always smiling, cracking jokes and finding good in life.

I couldn't help but think of "Sissy" as I read the biographies of the sisters celebrating jubilees this year (see the stories starting on page 4). As I interact with Sister Mary Ellen Brett and the other sisters with whom I'm privileged to come into contact, I frequently see that joy I saw in Sister John Mary growing up.

I know for a fact that the joy doesn't come from perfect lives. Sisters have struggled, too (Sister John Mary was an elementary principal; I can't imagine that is an easy

job for anyone). I'm pretty sure their joy stems from their willingness to say "yes" to God's call and live their lives for Him. I'm pretty sure their joy comes from knowing they've served and, with God's help, made a difference in the lives of others. I'm pretty sure their joy comes from the Lord.

And these sisters have shared that joy – the joy of the Lord – with all of us, as they serve in our parishes, schools, diocesan roles and communities. In the case of our jubilarians this year, they've been doing that sharing for 50, 60 or 70 years.

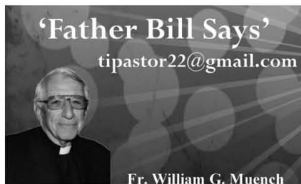
We thank the for their service. We congratulate them on their milestones. We keep them in our prayers.

We're glad to be associated with them.

Remembering Jim's story

Recently, I was invited to be involved in this year's Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) program in this parish. I am sure you remember this program that prepares a person to a deeper understanding of the teachings of our Catholic Church and the teachings of the Lord Jesus. This program often involves some who are not Catholic but are interested in the Catholic Church. Many find this an opportunity to prepare to enter the Catholic Church. I have always enjoyed being a part of RCIA in each of the parishes that I have served. I have found my involvement as personally enriching.

My favorite RCIA memory is Jim's story. I still remember the Saturday morning a rather long time ago when the rectory doorbell rang. Saturday is usually rather quiet, so I was surprised. Jim was at the door. I had met him before, and I knew that he was not a Catholic. He said to me, "I would like to



join up." Of course, I replied, "Join what!" He said, "I want to be a Catholic."

So, we sat down to talk. I was certainly pleased to meet someone who would want to be a Catholic. Jim was ready to join right then and there. So, I had to convince him that we would want him to take his time. The Church wanted him to hear the whole message of the Catholic Church. I wanted him to realize that it would be better if he learned and recognized all that it means to be Catholic. I wanted him to experience our RCIA program.

RCIA is more than an educational program. This program hopes to lead a person to realize that being involved in the Catholic Church would

mean a definite change in life. This is about making a decision – a decision for Jesus. This is finding a faith that would radically change a person's whole life. This is about a decision that means a powerful change in life.

Back to Jim. I was curious why he was so definite about his decision. Jim explained to me that he works at the plant in town next to a fellow who is Catholic, and he wants what this fellow has got. Jim has noticed this fellow's faith in so many little things and even big things. I knew who he was talking about, and I knew that this fellow would be rather surprised that he had led someone to become a Catholic. I didn't really talk with him, but I know he would have told me that he was just an ordinary Catholic trying to live a good life. This is something for each of us to consider. Can you imagine that you might lead someone to seek entrance into the Catholic Church as you live

your Catholic faith each day?

Many have been invited to enter the RCIA program by a friend or a relative. You may have had a conversation with someone about the Catholic Church and the teachings of Jesus. You may have met someone with questions – someone who has demonstrated an interest in Catholicism. I want to urge you not to hesitate to invite them to the RCIA program in your parish so that they may get a few answers. Even better, promise to accompany them to the program on this challenging path to a deeper understanding of our Church.

Jim became a Catholic, a rather active Catholic. He truly found happiness in being a Catholic. Jim died a few years ago and one of the pall bearers at his funeral Mass was that fellow that influenced him to investigate the Catholic Church. I must admit that each time I go to be part of an RCIA meeting, I think of Jim.

FOLLOW ME:

'Go out to the world and teach all the nations'

Editor's Note: The following is Bishop Terry R. LaValley's homily from the ordination Mass held Oct. 2 at St. Mary's Cathedral. At that Mass, 12 deacons were ordained.

The diaconate is not just one among many ministries, but rather, as Pope St. Paul VI said, this ministry should truly be a "moving force" for the service of the Church. As I've mentioned before, I see the Permanent Deacons in our Diocese as a moving force in meeting our diocesan priorities and enhancing the vibrancy and vitality of our parish families in our beloved North Country. Soon, with the laying on of hands, as I ask Almighty God to draw near, you will hear me pray: "...in your eternal providence, you make provision for every age." My sisters and brothers, today's celebration is a treasured provision the Lord is making for the present and future Church of Ogdensburg. The Lord always provides. The Gospel is always Good News!

Today, the Psalmist issues the charge: "Go out to the world and teach all nations!" How does one do that? During today's rite, you'll hear me express how: "Do the will of God from the heart: serve the people in love and joy as you would the Lord." Pretty tall order, isn't it? I certainly agree with your Director of Formation when he wrote me about your readiness for ordination. In referring to this class, Deacon Drollette said, "They have the heart of a deacon."

It's been evident, particularly during these troubled times in which the

Lord has been preparing you for ordination, the likes of which we have never seen before. For instance, brothers, you have given Christ-like care and support and then mourned the death of your fellow deacon candidate, Patrick Jank. We keep Mary and their children in our prayers as they mourn the loss of her husband, their father and our friend. Yes, you continue to do the will of God from the heart. It's been evident in your generous care and heartfelt concern for your classmates and their families who have suffered extraordinary personal health and family difficulties these last few years. Thank you for giving remarkable witness to such compassion and concern for others. The Church is blessed!

COVID 19 continues to be a most unwelcome intruder during your formation, hasn't it? Yet, you have taken the initiative of using social media for Tuesday evening prayer each week, continuing to this day. You know how essential fraternal support and daily prayer are.

Your patience and flexibility have been tested as classes needed to be changed, even canceled, thanks to the pandemic. You rose to the occasion. You did great assisting me at Confirmations throughout our diocese, some of you, more than once, traveling a considerable distance from your home to be there. Although, truth be told, for some of you, at one Confirmation, your care and

concern for the physical well-being of your bishop was in doubt. At that solemn Mass, you know that the keeper of the censer left the chain dangling over the hot coals and when your bishop went to grab the chain, an odor of burnt skin filled the sanctuary. But you redeemed yourself. You provided me with proper personal protection equipment: these customized gloves, to use when certain deacons are assisting me at confirmations in the future. Especially these days, a sense of humor is so important in ministry.

As you know, with the sacrament of Orders, the deacon receives a special "configuration to Christ" through the laying on of hands of the bishop and the prayer of consecration. The deacon is ordained specifically for the exercise of a ministry proper to him that requires a spiritual availability of complete dedication. The Diaconate is not a profession, but a mission! As I mentioned earlier –you are a moving force in our local church – men on a mission.

Deacon candidates, like the Apostles, you too must feel impelled to proclaim by word and deed the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus. That's your charge! You, like the early disciples, must experience the need to do good, to give of yourselves to others in the Name of the Crucified and Risen Jesus –to bring God's word into the lives of His holy people. The integrity of your ordained ministry, your

ability to communicate the Gospel effectively, will depend on your adherence to the faith of the Apostles and your disciplined prayer life.

When discussing Holy Orders as one of the sacraments "at the service of communion," the *Catechism* teaches that the two sacraments, Orders and Marriage, "are directed towards the salvation of others; if they contribute as well to personal salvation, it is through service to others that they do so." My and your holiness is either strengthened or found wanting to the degree that we are engaged in the works of mercy. Our personal holiness depends on and is nourished by our service to others, particularly the most vulnerable among us.

My brothers in Christ, in your diaconal ministry, your wives and the responsibilities that arise from the sacrament of Holy Matrimony do not play second fiddle. The sacred bond that your wife and you established on your wedding day is to be strengthened, not neglected as you fulfill your diaconal responsibilities. Dear wives, with the Church, I want to express my immense gratitude for the gift of your husbands to the Church's sacred orders.

Since deacons are ministers of the Word, the Church urges you to constant reading and diligent study of the Sacred Scriptures. As deacons you are called to hear, guard and do the Word of God, in order to proclaim it worthily and effectively. The vocation of the deacon calls you as a child of God, to take the Gospel

into your most inmost being and find it worth suffering for. Today you express your willingness to stake everything –on the Gospel. Make your life witness a real YES to the Gospel.

Daily pray the Liturgy of the Hours. This prayer should inform your whole prayer life since deacons, as ministers, intercede for the entire Church. Participate at Mass frequently, even daily, if possible, and spend time in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Purify your souls frequently through the Sacrament of Penance having prepared for it worthily through a daily examination of conscience.

Possess a deep, filial love and veneration for the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. As you strive to be the servant of the servants of God, turn to Mary, as she continues to proclaim: "I am the handmaid of the Lord." (Lk 1:38) In the example of her servanthood, see the perfect model of our own call to the discipleship of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the service of His Church.

With great pride and gratitude, I join the Church of Ogdensburg confidently believing that your ministry of Word and Charity will bear much fruit. Serve the Church with an ardent love. Go out to all the world and teach all nations. Sing to the Lord a new song; Sing to the Lord; bless His Name!



**Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley**

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Sisters celebrate years of faithful service

OGDENSBURG – Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated the Marriage & Religious Jubilee Mass on Oct. 3. At that Mass, married couples from around the diocese celebrating anniversaries and consecrated religious celebrating milestone jubilees were honored. Photos of the Mass will be featured in the next edition of the *North Country Catholic*.

The following sisters marked jubilees in 2020 or 2021 and were honored at the Mass and share their vocation stories:

Sister Diane Marie Ulsamer, SSJ - 50 years

Prior to entering religious life, I was fortunate to have grown up in a traditional German Catholic family. My parents, Robert and Audrey Ulsamer, taught me and my three siblings the value and richness of living the practices and traditions of our faith. Family prayer and worshipping at Saint Boniface Church were integral aspects of our daily life.

In addition, I was privileged to receive a Catholic education from the Sisters of Christian Charity who taught at our parish school. I share this with you because I believe that my vocation was nurtured during this time of my development. It was through family, parish, and the sisters that I began to know and develop a relationship with God.

During junior high school, I began thinking about becoming a sister. I visited the Sisters of Christian Charity often and worked in their hospital as a nurse's aide my junior and senior year of high school.

Our parish priest encouraged me to look at a variety of other communities. In October of 1968, I came to Watertown to take a look at the Sisters of St. Joseph, mainly because the Sisters were, at that time, involved



Sister Diane Marie Ulsamer, a Sister of St. Joseph, celebrated her Golden Jubilee – 50 years as a sister – with family.

in ministering to children whose parents were unable to care for them. This ministry intrigued me because most communities I visited were teachers.

I knew nothing about the Sisters of St. Joseph, but on that first visit I knew that this was the community that God was calling me to join. The sisters were spirit-filled, authentically happy, eager to serve the Lord, and very hospitable. That visit was the beginning of my 52-year journey in religious life.

In September of 1969, I enter the community at Mater Dei College in Ogdensburg. I began the formation program for religious life and college courses. After two years, I received my associates degree.

On June 13, 1971, I received the habit and entered the canonical year of study in the community. Religious formation continued for the next six years. During those years as a junior professed sister, I continued my studies and received my bachelor's degree in education at D'Youville and master's degree in Early Childhood Education at Nazareth in Rochester. In August of 1978, I made perpetual profession in the chapel at our Motherhouse

in Watertown.

For 29 years, my ministry was in Catholic Education. I taught kindergarten through fourth grade, was a music teacher and served three years as principal. Traveling around the diocese, I taught in the following schools: Holy Family in Watertown, St. Mary's in Ticonderoga, Augustinian Academy in Carthage, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Watertown, St. Joseph's in Malone, Holy Name in AuSable Forks, and Trinity Catholic in Massena. In each school, I was blessed with new opportunities and challenges. Meeting the families around the diocese has truly enriched my life.

In 2001, I left the teaching ministry to serve as the motherhouse superior. At the completion of my term as superior, God directed me toward a new ministry. I became the program coordinator for the Religious Education Program for people with disabilities and the part-time pastoral associate and Religious Education coordinator for Sacred Heart Parish in Watertown. Both ministries offered new challenges and wonderful opportunities to share faith with the elderly, the children of the parish, and my special friends with disabili-

ties. Serving with every individual has been amazing and a journey which has drawn me into a deeper relationship with the lord.

Today, I continue to work with people with disabilities here in Watertown. We have over 100 people sharing faith with one another in our Religious Education Program.

Throughout the past 50 years, Isaiah 12:2 "The lord is my strength and my song," has been a verse that has inspired me. I have been given many challenges, new adventures, and joyful opportunities to live the charism and mission of the Sisters of Saint Joseph. As I moved from one mission to another, there were times when I knew only God's grace would help me through the day. I have learned that nothing is impossible to accomplish when God is at the center of my day. He has taught me to trust Him, and that sacrifice and suffering are truly a part of the journey. After 50 years as a Sister of St. Joseph, I can proclaim with great confidence and a grateful heart that, "My joy lies in being close to my God."

Sister Shirley Anne Brown, SSJ – 60 Years

"Blessing" and "gift" are the dominant words for the celebration of my 60th jubilee.

The original blessing was my family of origin. Born as the middle child of Catherine and Richard Brown in Fort Covington, I grew up in a family of 10 siblings. This domestic church family was the source of my introduction to God through prayer and sound family life values. It was family that taught me to pray, brought me to the sacraments of youth at St. Mary's Church, to catechism classes with the Sisters of St. Joseph in the parish and later to boarding school at Immaculate Heart Acad-

emy. I graduated from IHA in 1961.

My vocation was born in and nurtured by my family. Blessings continued as I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in Watertown. It was here that the opportunities for a deepening spirituality were provided along with an appreciation of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph. This time provided me with the foundation for the many ways that this charism could and would be lived out in my life in the Church in the years that followed as a vowed member of the community.

I was also blessed and gifted by the sisters with an excellent academic education, with opportunities to study and earn degrees at Potsdam and Plattsburgh State Universities, as well as at Boston College.

Blessings and gifts continue to flow during 50 years of engaging in Catholic education in the dioceses of Ogdensburg and Syracuse. Through the years as teacher, principal and assistant superintendent, I have journeyed with countless students, parents and colleagues.

During the last seven years, I have been blessed by ministry as a pastoral associate and to have the opportunity to enrich the spiritual life of parishioners as they have in turn enriched mine.

For all of the many people who have walked with me on this journey of life, I give thanks for giving me a glimpse into the multifaceted beauty of God in our midst.

Sister Mary Juliana Raymond, SSJ - 60 years

The first daughter of Frederick and Shirley Lynch Raymond, I was born in Ticonderoga and lived in Tahawus, a small mining town in the heart of the Adirondacks.

My family, friends,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Sisters celebrate jubilees

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

church and community nourished my vocation. I am grateful!

I attended Newcomb Central School. For grades kindergarten through three, school was in Tahawus, and grades four through 12 were in Newcomb. Classes were small, and great emphasis was placed on local high peaks history, the source of the Hudson River and our Adirondack environment.

My immediate family consisted of my parents, three sisters and a brother. I had grandparents, aunt, uncles and cousins nearby. I was baptized in St. Joseph's Church, Olmstedville. St. Therese's Church, built in Tahawus and moved to Newcomb when the mines closed, was home for worship and sacraments.

After high school graduation, I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph and Mater Dei College on September 8, 1960. From there, my education continued at SUNY Potsdam, where I earned a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in Early Childhood. Advanced studies included summer courses from the Gesell Institute of Child Development in New Haven, Connecticut.

In the Diocese of Ogdensburg Catholic Schools, I taught first grade for 36 years. For the past nine years, I have served in diocesan Campus Ministry as College Chaplain at Jefferson Community College in Watertown, where I also serve as an instructor in Early Childhood Development.

In addition to teaching at the elementary and college levels, I have been a member of the diocesan Ecumenical Commission; summer faculty at Mater Dei College; elementary school principal; volunteer prison chaplain's assistant weekly for three years dur-



Sister Mary Gregory Munger, pictured here giving a musical presentation about vocations to students, celebrates 60 years as a Sister of St. Joseph.

ing the tenure of the late Father William Connor, MSC; and have participated in many committees in schools, towns and the community.

My early introduction to our earth as gift has been the inspiration for countless nature workshops, as well as gardening, bread making, creative sewing, craft classes and, in recent years, sharing my rich Adirondack heritage by teaching others how to make traditional Adirondack packbaskets.

My family, friends, Church and community nourished my vocation. I am grateful!

Sister Judy Adams, SSJ – 60 years

Sister Judy Adams is a member of the Watertown Sisters of St. Joseph. An Ogdensburg native, she is the daughter of the late John and Jean Adams. Sister Judy attended Bishop Conroy Grade School, St. Mary's Academy and Mater Dei College all in Ogdensburg. She received her bachelor's degree from SUNY Potsdam and a master's degree from Manhattan College.

Sister Judy has taught in many of our Catholic Schools throughout the diocese, and served as principal of Sacred Heart School in Watertown, as well as St.

Peter's School in Lowville.

In the past, she was elected to the General Administration Council of the Sisters of St. Joseph.

Sister Judy served in Massena at Trinity Catholic School for many years, as the science and technology coordinator.

Presently, Sister Judy is involved in Prayer Ministry at the Motherhouse in Watertown.

Sister Carol Louise Kraeger, SSJ – 60 years

I was born on a dairy farm in Port Leyden, the third oldest of ten children. I went to public school, but both parents instilled in us the importance of religion and caring for others.

At 17, I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph. I was in the first group to enter the community at Mater Dei College in Ogdensburg. Along with 14 others, I received the habit on June 24, 1961.

I traveled throughout the diocese teaching in the elementary grades. Then in 2004, I was hired as the parish minister (associate) at St. John's Parish in Lake Clear. I was very happy working with the people of that community, which included 40 to 50 people attending Sunday Mass. In 2017 we had the sad experience of closing the doors

of St. John's Church. The church property was sold. The pastor, Father Martin Cline was able to offer a special memorial Mass for the last time at St. John's Church.

In the fall of 2020, I moved from my two-floor, seven-room house – once St. John's rectory – to a studio apartment just three houses down the road from the rectory. Someone once told me, "Don't be sad that it's over, be happy that it happened."

I am very happy and, thankfully, I am still ministering to the people of Lake Clear and Saranac Lake. I visit the homebound, the sick in the hospital and those in nursing homes. I take them Communion and ensure they are cared for spiritually and physically. I am happy to help Father Cline in whatever he may need.

As I get older, I can see how Jesus has been my faithful spouse throughout these years. I feel that He has saved the best 'til last. I have never been happier than now, when I am here serving the people of the mountains in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Sister Cecilia Marie Hermann, SSJ – 60 Years

I received the habit of the Sisters of St. Joseph 60 years ago. God has been very good to me. He blessed me with a wonderful parents, Adolf and Anna Hermann, five brothers – two of them are deceased – and four sisters (one died in infancy). I have many nieces and nephews that have added a great deal of joy to my life.

My parents provided me with 12 years of Catholic education at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School and Immaculate Heart Academy. I am grateful to my mother and father, to the Sisters of St. Joseph who taught me, and to the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart who were a major in-

fluence in my early years.

I am also grateful to the diocesan priests, and the lay teachers with whom I have worked. It has been a blessing for me to live with the Sisters of St. Joseph for 60 years.

My ministry has been Catholic school education. I am happy to pass on to our young people what was given to me. As I said, God has been so good to me! On the occasion of my jubilee, I thank God for His many graces and blessings, and I pray for all the people who have been a part of my life.

Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ – 60 Years

I was born in Watertown, the oldest of four children to Mary (Tooley) and Kenneth W. Brett. My siblings are John (deceased), Kenneth Jr. and Jane B. Scott.

As a family, we were members of Holy Family Parish. I graduated from Holy Family School and Immaculate Heart Academy.

I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph for a six month trial. In my 60th year as a Sister of St. Joseph, I'm grateful that the Lord captured my heart.

I received my bachelor's and master's degrees in Education from Potsdam State University. I enjoyed my years of teaching in the Catholic Schools in St. James, Gouverneur, St. Agnes, Lake Placid, St. Augustine's, Peru, St. Joseph's, Dannemora and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Watertown. I always looked forward to

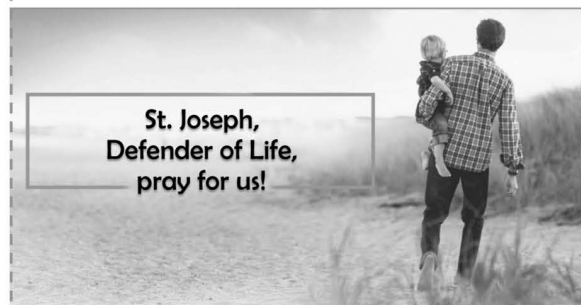
teaching in the Religious Education programs in those respective parishes.

Further education through the Institute for Pastoral Life in Kansas City, Missouri, and the Paulist National Catholic Evangelization (PNCEA) in Washington, D.C., enabled me to minister through the diocesan Offices of Formation for Ministry and Evangelization.

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Celebrating 60, 70 years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

A highlight of my life was my visit to St. Martin de Porres Parish, Molendo, Peru at the invitation of Father George Maroun, then director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. The Peru experience showed me that the happiest people don't necessarily have the best of everything; Peruvians just made the best of everything. This reminder has been a blessing in my current Mission Office ministry.

Several years of my life have happily found me residing at the Motherhouse, ministering to our infirmed sisters.

I'm very grateful to be working with St. Mary's, Copenhagen parishioners and community responding to the Lord's surprises that daily come into my life. Everyday is a gift: Just imagine the gifts in 60 years.

Sister Mary Gregory Munger, SSJ – 60 Years

My journey to become a Sister of St. Joseph began in Newark, New Jersey, where I was born and received my early education from the Sisters of St.

Joseph of Chestnut Hill, Pennsylvania.

I was the oldest of three children. Following my family's move to Alexandria Bay, I attended Saint Mary's Elementary School in Clayton and Immaculate Heart Academy in Watertown.

I entered the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1960, receiving my early college education at Mater Dei College.

In subsequent years, I earned a bachelor's degree in Science from SUNY Potsdam, a master's degree in music from Catholic University of America and a master's degree in Administration/Supervision from Boston College.

My teaching ministry spans over 50 years. During that time, I taught science, math and music at the junior and senior high levels in Catholic schools throughout the diocese. I taught college level courses in computer related fields at both Boston College and SUNY Potsdam, and GED courses at the Cape Vincent Correctional Facility.

I served as principal at St. James School in Gouverneur, St. Patrick's School in Watertown and Most Holy Rosary School in Syracuse.

I have served on a number of committees, including the diocesan Liturgical Committee, an Interdiocesan Music Curriculum Committee, numerous Middle States Evaluation teams and currently am a member of the National Religious Vocation Conference. Presently I am Vocation Director for the Sisters of St. Joseph.

I am most grateful for God's call to the Sisters of St. Joseph and to those who have supported and nurtured my vocation especially my family, the members of my community and friends.

Sister Mary Denise Wilke, RSM – 70 years

I was born and raised in Manhattan, NYC. My life in those years was centered in our parish, Good Shepherd nearby and the Paulist Fathers.

I entered the Sisters of Mercy right after I completed high school on September 9, 1957. My parents were accepting, even though it was hard, as I was an only

child. My father was not Catholic, but both of them was supportive.

I went to Marymount in Tarrytown for my bachelor's degree and then to Fordham University

for my master's degree in Social Work. My first assignment was at St. Michael's Home on Staten Island. It was at home for 280 children, ages 3 to 18. I loved the children and missed them when I was reassigned to the North Country. I spent five and a half years at Uihlein Mercy Center a new Nursing Home, where I was the first social worker. Following this, I was director of Social Work in our hospital (St. Francis) in Port Jervis, and remained there for 22-1/2 years. At

that time, I was elected to leadership in my community, and for four years, I was in charge of senior sisters who were living on the top of Sacred Heart High School in Yonkers.

Following this, I had a wonderful sabbatical which included a trip to Ireland and our Foundation House in Dublin. I also went to Rome and had the privilege of Mass in Pope John II Chapel. Such A blessing!

I then returned to the North Country to Uihlein Nursing Home. This time in Pastoral Care. I am in my 19th year.

Those 70 years were filled with many graces and blessings and much happiness. I thank God.



Fr. Jay Seymour

We appreciate
you and
your service!

Knights of
Columbus of
Star Lake
St. Hubert's

Meet the newly ordained deacons

OGDENSBURG— On October 2, through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, Bishop LaValley ordained to the Order of Deacon Randy Besio, Gerald Bouchard, Brent Davison, Daniel

LeRoy, Michael Lieber Jr., Kenneth Lushia, Roderic Roca, Lee Trudeau, Robert Uttendorfsky, Noel Voos, Mark Webster and Peter Wooschlager.

This weekend, on Saturday, Oct. 9, Bishop LaVal-

ley will ordain James P. Carlin and Leagon J. Carlin to the Order of the Deacon at 10 a.m. at St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh, New York.

James Carlin will serve as a permanent deacon,

while his son, Leagon, is a seminarian for the Diocese of Ogdensburg and will be a transitional deacon.

That Mass will also be livestreamed at rctdony.org/ordination.

Below, meet some of the men who were ordained to the diaconate.

Full coverage of the ordination will be in the next edition of the *North Country Catholic*.



Deacon Gerry Bouchard

Family: Married to Michelle Bouchard; two step-daughters, one son, seven grandchildren
Parish: Immaculate Conception in Brownville & St. Andrew's in Sackets Harbor

How have you changed through your participation in the formation process?

Through the formation process I think I have become a better man, more compassionate, hopefully more patient, and have developed spiritually in a lot of ways.

How will you serve your parish as a deacon?

As a Deacon I will do what my pastor and Bishop ask of me. I am sure I will help out in faith formation in some capacity and assist at Mass, and am prepared for assisting at baptisms, funerals and weddings when needed. Deacons are ministers of charity as well, but exactly what that will entail still remains to be seen.

What are you looking forward to about your new ministry? I am looking forward to getting better acquainted with parishioners that I will be serving at both parishes.



Deacon Dan LeRoy

Family: Wife, Angie LeRoy; daughters, Soleil, Tamara and Joann; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren

Parish: St. Paul's in Black River

Background: Retired after 31 years with the California Department of Corrections as a Correctional Administrator

How have you changed through your participation in the formation process?

During my time in formation I have learned to wait on the Lord, to be attentive to his voice, and to rest when commands that I do, not just running ahead trying to fulfill his calling before his timing.

How will you serve your parish as a deacon?

Being a small parish I will have the opportunity to serve in many different ways from Communion for the home bound to Baptism's to assisting my Pastor in whatever way he feels is appropriate so he can be freed up to carry out his calling.

What are you looking forward to about your new ministry? I'm looking forward to serving God through his people. There is nothing in this world more satisfying than to carry out the Lord's command to Love one another by taking care of each other, no matter who they are.



Deacon Kenneth (Ken) Lushia

Family: My wife, Sandy, and I were married for over 36 years until she died in an automobile accident on March 31, 2009. We have two sons and four grandchildren.

Parish: St. Joseph's in West Chazy

Background: I retired in 2007 from The Civil Service Employees Association as a Labor Relations Specialist.

How have you changed through your participation in the formation process?

This has been a very rewarding experience for me and I have grown to appreciate the Great Love that God has for all of us, and I want to help others to find this love.

How will you serve your parish as a deacon?

I have had and continue to have a great desire to reach out to and work with the sick and dying (as a hospice volunteer); people in the hospital, nursing homes, home bond, or long term care facilities (as a volunteer Ombudsman); strong supported for the dignity of life, from conception to natural death.

What are you looking forward to about your new ministry? I am looking forward to serving the Diocese of Ogdensburg, through the directions of Bishop Terry LaValley and Father Ted Crosby. Father Ted Crosby sponsored and supported me during these years of study for which I shall forever be grateful.



Deacon Noel Voos

Family: Married to Cathy; three sons, Adam, Matthew and Nathaniel; recently learned Nathan and his wife, Shanley, are expecting twin sons in February 2022!

Parish: St. Mary's in Evans Mills

Background: Baccalaureate in Law enforcement Admin; 21 yrs active duty Army; 18 yrs as a Criminal Investigator, retired as Commander of the Criminal Investigation Detachment at Fort Drum in 2006, followed by 12 yrs of Federal Civil Service with the Department of Defense; fully retired in December 2020.

How have you changed through your participation in the formation process? The significant change I think was spiritually, learning to trust & relying fully on prayer to seek God's guiding hand through 4 years of discernment and formation. I found comfort in the prayer of St. Padre Pio - "My past, O Lord, to Your mercy; my present, to Your love; my future to Your providence." I still do.

How will you serve your parish as a deacon? Continue to serve as the Religious Education Coordinator; facilitate faith formation/scripture studies; support my brother Knights of Columbus, and at the same time be available to continue to love and support my family.

What are you looking forward to about your new ministry? Hopefully to become involved in outreach to shut-ins or those confined to home or health support facilities; to find former parishioners who, for whatever reason(s), no longer attend Mass; to be available to other priests in the area to assist at Mass, particularly daily masses. Generally just eager to spread the Gospel to the faithful and to help others gain a better understanding not only of what we profess, but why we profess it.

THE BLUE MASS

Honoring those who serve

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

MALONE – The rain didn't dampen the spirit inside Notre Dame Church, as area law enforcement, corrections, fire, medical and dispatch personnel gathered with Bishop Terry R. LaValley and faithful from around the diocese to celebrate the Blue Mass on Sept. 26.

In addition to a color guard of law enforcement joining the processional, the Mass included the laying of a wreath in honor of those who lost their lives serving others, as well as a ceremonial bell tolling. Franklin County Sheriff Kevin Mulverhill and Brushton Volunteer Fire Department Assistant Chief Dominic Barse served as lectors for the Mass.

In his homily, Bishop Terry R. LaValley pointed to the readings of the day, in which Joshua "didn't want to believe that God could work through Eldad and Medad, those two Israelites who were left behind in the camp," and Jesus' disciples "didn't want to believe that God could work through someone who hadn't re-

ceived their own seal of approval."

"Both Joshua and the disciples of Jesus were guilty of throwing roadblocks in the path of God as God made the divine glory known among His people," Bishop LaValley said. "We are guilty of doing the same when we insist that God can act only in ways that God has revealed to us, when we think that we have a monopoly on God's grace or an exclusive recipe for how people should be. We make others stumble over our roadblocks when we say to them in our words and actions, 'If you will jump through my particular hoop or sign on my particular dotted line, then and only then will I certify you as worthy of my acceptance.' What violence and just plain meanness we have seen in our streets because of this rugged independence. The women and men we honor today place themselves in harm's way because we refuse to get along."

Bishop LaValley noted that we are different, but still loved by God.

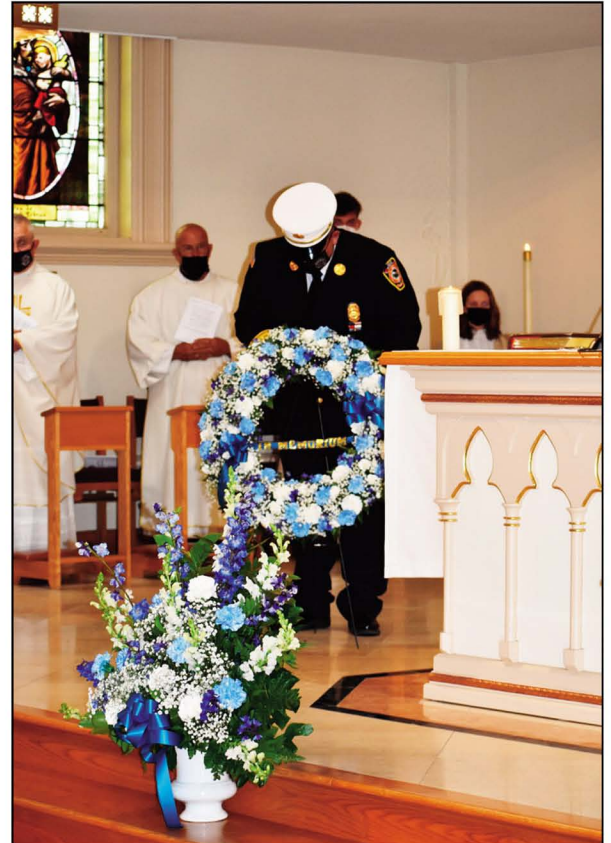
"You see, the way that God chooses to work in me

may be very different from the way that God works in you, and that's ok, because we think, speak, act and pray differently," he said. "God made us to be different, but still accomplishing His good purposes in all of us. And that means that each of us gives glory to God as God works in us."

Blue Mass Chairperson and Sheriff's Office Chaplain Father Christopher C. Carrara thanked the involved agencies, volunteers and Bishop LaValley for their participation.

"It's my privilege to acknowledge and thank all the individuals and groups that assisted in making our 2021 Blue Mass a success," he said. "In particular though, I would like to thank Bishop LaValley for his ongoing support of our first responders particularly in establishing and maintaining the Blue Mass, the members of the Blue Mass Committee..., and the success of the celebration certainly is attributed to a great extent to local support we receive – members of local planning committee who are extremely generous in logistical support, enthusiasm and support of the Mass."





Environmental Stewardship

What's next

During this past week, we completed our celebration of the Season of Creation on the Feast of St. Francis. In August the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), an intergovernmental body of the United Nations responsible for advancing knowledge on human-induced climate change, released its report on the state of health of the planet.*

As we know, many people from different faith traditions are already doing much to protect and care for our Common Home. However, from the daily news, this recent scientific report and our faith, we know we need to do more and do it more quickly. The call to ecological conversion is at the heart of Laudato Si and our call to environmental stewardship. Unlike the word "environment" that pertains to the natural world, the word "ecology" recognizes our connectedness with all life on our planet. It challenges us to examine our daily choices that impact both earth and its inhabitants.

A few weeks ago we looked at the response of our Church to our current global environmental situation; namely, the Laudato Si Action Platform (LSAP) that is provided to us by the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. This Plan calls us individually and collectively to develop a seven year sustainability plan that will ensure a healthy place to live for generations to come.

This week we will look at the first of the seven markers given to us in the Laudato Si Action Platform that help us determine how we are putting Laudato Si goals into practice and offer us some creative ideas for action steps. Here is how the Dicastery describes it:

1. Response to the Cry of the Earth: greater use of clean renewable energy and reduction of fossil fuels in order to achieve carbon neutrality efforts to protect and promote biodiversity guaranteeing access to clean water for all...

As we look around the North Country we see several initiatives for renewable energy sources, i.e. solar farms, wind farms, hydro-plants. Have you signed on with a local renewable energy company as your source of energy? Has your parish explored these possibilities in your area?

Bishop's Public Schedule

Oct. 6 – 9:30 a.m. – Diocesan Department Head Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

Oct. 7 – Noon – Mass at Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg

Oct. 8 – 10:30 a.m. – Prayer Service with the students at St. Bernard's School in Saranac Lake followed by classroom visits

1:30 p.m. – Prayer Service with the students at St. Agnes School in Lake Placid followed by classroom visits

Oct. 9 – 10 a.m. – Ordination to the Diaconate of Mr. James P. Carlin and Mr. Leagon J. Carlin at St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh

Oct. 10 – 4 p.m. – Installation of Reverend Scott R. Seymour as Pastor of St. Augustine's Church along with The Roman Catholic Community of St. Alexander and St. Joseph in Morrisonville and St. James Church in Cadyville at Evening Prayer

Oct. 12 – 11 a.m. – The Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg 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

Oct. 7 – Rev. Jean N. Laverlocher, O.M.I., 1884

Oct. 8 – Rev. Edward Letourneau, 1898

Oct. 9 – Rev. William Joseph Normandeau, 1892; Rev. Francis Xavier Chagnon, 1911; Most Rev. Leo R. Smith, 1963

Oct. 10 – Rev. Robert Duford, 1949; Rev. J. A. Sirois, O.M.I., 1950

Oct. 11 – Rev. William Burns, 1837

Oct. 12 – Rev. Francis Xavier Pelletier, 1881; Rev. P. Joseph Mullins, O.S.A, 1960

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.

New York Bishops express opposition to abortion bill

Following is the text of a letter sent from Timothy Cardinal Dolan and the Diocesan Bishops of New York State to U.S. Senators Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand regarding the so-called "Women's Health Protection Act."

Dear Senator,

As the Bishops of the eight Catholic dioceses of the State of New York, we write to express our unified and staunch opposition to S1975/HR3755, the "Women's Health Protection Act," a piece of legislation that would impose upon the entire nation a policy of unrestricted abortion on demand, for any reason, at any point in pregnancy, going well beyond the parameters of Roe v. Wade and subsequent Supreme Court decisions.

We are under no illusions. We know that on the matter of abortion policy, our views are radically disparate from yours. Nevertheless, we believe we have an obligation to speak out as a voice for the unborn,

To Report Abuse

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

as well as for pregnant mothers who deserve so much more than this bill offers them. This legislation sends a message to women that abortion is their only option and their best hope, that it is something to be promoted and celebrated.

The truth is that abortion is something to be mourned, and it is often the most agonizing decision a woman will ever make. We believe our government should be offering pregnant women all of their options and the support services they need to empower them to choose to carry their babies to term, raise their families with dignity, or offer their child to a home which can appropriately and lovingly care for that child. Our public policies should reflect these priorities.

Here in New York State, our state legislature enacted the "Reproductive Health Act" in 2019, enshrining in state statute a policy of unlimited abortion on demand throughout nine months of pregnancy. We expressed our profound opposition at the time, and we continue to grieve for the mothers and infants harmed by this law.

But a majority of states in this great country have enacted laws to the contrary: policies to allow parents to be notified when their minor daughter is considering abortion; to provide informed consent to pregnant women; to prohibit state taxpayer funding of abortion; to require health and safety regulations in clinics; to require licensure and certification of abortion providers. All of these policies are allowable under Roe and subsequent cases. Yet all such policies would be invalidated in one

fell swoop by Congressional passage of S1975. This authoritarian federal overreach undermines the will of the people through their elected state representatives, and does not bode well for our democracy.

Moreover, S1975 may very well nullify New York's strong Civil Rights Law protection for health care professionals who do not wish to be involved in abortion, a law which so many rely upon to exercise their moral values and religious freedom. Is this how we want to repay our heroic health care workers who have served so valiantly throughout the ongoing pandemic?

In closing, we strongly urge you to reject this legislation and work to protect and strengthen the fundamental human rights of mothers and children.

Very Truly Yours,

Timothy Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York

Most Rev. Edward B. Scharfenberger
Bishop of Albany

Most Rev. Nicholas DiMarzio
Bishop of Brooklyn

Most Rev. Michael W. Fisher
Bishop of Buffalo

Most Rev. Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

Most Rev. Salvatore R. Matano
Bishop of Rochester

Most Rev. John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre

Most Rev. Douglas J. Lucia
Bishop of Syracuse

ESSEX

LATIN MASS

Port Henry – Extraordinary Form Latin Mass to be held each Sunday.

Schedule: 1 p.m. on Sundays

Place: St. Patrick's Church

Features: The traditional Latin Mass celebrated according to the 1962 Missal of St. John the XXIII.

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

Evans Mills – The Indian Knights of Columbus council 7471 to have a Spaghetti and Meatball dinner.

Date: Oct. 9

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$9; Senior Citizens, \$8; Children under 12, \$5; under 5, Free; Sauce per quart, \$5

Contact: For more information call 315-629-4678

ROSARY RALLY

Turin – Annual Lewis County Rosary Rally to be held.

Date: Oct. 9

Time: Noon

Place: Fatima Garden of Spirit Walk located on West Main Street

Features: Enjoy the grounds: Station of the Cross walkway and Chapel of Peace. Bring a lawn chair. Dress appropriately - event held rain, snow or shine. CDC guidelines will be followed.

Contact: Any questions call (315) 272-6168.

BASKET RAFFLE

Houseville – St. Hedwig's Church to have their Annual Basket Raffle.

Date: Oct. 10, 17, 24 and 31

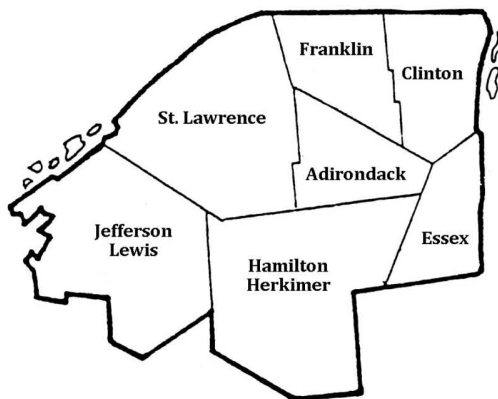
Time: Noon to 1 p.m.

Features: The Raffle baskets will be on display and tickets will be available for sale after the celebration of the 11 a.m. Mass. No tickets will be sold during Mass. Tickets are \$1 each, or \$5 for 6 tickets. One silent auction item will be available - a hand-crafted Shaker-style cherry coffee table by Ed Knapp. On Oct. 31, we will have the drawings for the baskets at 1 pm

Contact: If you wish to donate a theme basket, baked goods or make a monetary donation to St. Hedwig's Society contact: Elaine 315-486-5532, Lydia 315-348-7006, or Mary Ann 315-348-6260.

EXPLORING THE SOJOURN WITH CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST

Watertown – The Commissioned Lay



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

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

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

Ministers Association of the Jefferson-Lewis Deanery is excited to announce the fall event, Exploring a Sojourn with Christ in the Eucharist.

Date: Oct. 14

Time: 5:15 p.m. Mass following a dinner and presentation by Deacon Tom Yousey

Place: St. Anthony's Church

Cost: Dinner \$13 per person

Contact: Register at www.rcdony.org/clm-event. The deadline to register is Oct. 7.

ST. LAWRENCE

PRAYER AND ADORATION

Massena – Commissioned Lay Ministers are invited to gather for Adoration and Rosary.

Date: Every third Wednesday of the month (Oct. 20)

Time: 6:30 to 7 p.m.

Place: Sacred Heart Church

DIOCESAN EVENTS

DEACON ORDINATION

Plattsburgh – Deacon Ordination Mass of James Carlin and Leagon Carlin to be held.

Date: Oct. 9

Time: 10 a.m.

Place: St. Peter's Church

Features: The Ordination Mass will also be livestreamed at www.rcdony.org/ordination.

VIRTUAL LEAD EVENT

Catechetical Leaders and Catechists, Update your Parish Faith Formation Program, with information from the New Directory of Catechesis. Keep cur-

rent in today's social environment.

Date: Oct. 23

Time: 9:45 a.m. to Noon

Contact: Register on-line at www.rcdony.org/lead. Questions, contact Anita Soltero asoltero@rcdony.org

DIOCESAN YOUTH COUNCIL

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Diocesan Youth Council (DYC) is a group comprised of members in grades 10-12 who live in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Each member serves on DYC for a one-year term (up to three total terms).

Features:

1. Members will grow in spiritual development and leadership skills so they may take a more active role in their local parishes, particularly in youth ministry efforts on the local level.

2. Members will help plan and facilitate diocesan-sponsored events (youth rally, Lenten retreat days) and help promote diocesan-sponsored events (youth rallies, Camp Guggenheim, March for Life, regional events, Catholic Heart Work Camp, etc.)

Diocesan Youth Council is an opportunity to grow in leadership, build friendships, and have fun. It is also a significant responsibility, requiring maturity and commitment. Applying to DYC should be taken seriously and with prayerful consideration.

Contact: Thomas Semeraro at tsemmeraro@rcdony.org or 315-393-2920 for full requirements to join.

OBITUARIES

Brownville – Mary Sue (Martin) Bence, 78; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 1, 2021 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Brownville – Barbara T. (Stumpf) Weber, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 1, 2021 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in Dexter Cemetery.

Brownville – Dorothy M. (Boyle) Wilson, 96; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 29, 2021 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Cape Vincent – Verna Margaret (Constance) Mason, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 30, 2021 at St. Vincent of Paul Church; burial in St. Vincent of Paul Cemetery.

Ellenburg – Donna (Bolia) LaBombard, 76; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 1, 2021 at St. Edmund's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Evans Mills – Tyler R. Christman, 14; Memorial Services Sept. 25, 2021 at Evans Mills Speedway.

Lake Placid – Tina M. Wilson Leonard, 63; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 1, 2021 at St. Agnes Church; burial in North Elba Cemetery.

Massena – Naomi M. (Jacobs) Lazore, 61; Funeral Services Sept. 29, 2021 at Donaldson Funeral Home; burial in St. Lawrence Cemetery.

Massena – Judy May (Murray) O'Brien, 68; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 30, 2021 at Sacred Heart Church; burial Calvary Cemetery.

Morrisonville – Kevin S. Linsley, 64; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 29, 2021 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in Town of Plattsburgh Community Mausoleum.

Morristown – John S. Kelly, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 30, 2021 at St. John the Evangelist Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

North Bangor – Ronald L. Maness, 72; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 8, 2021 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in St. Augustine's Cemetery.

North Lawrence – Rosemary Elizabeth (McGivney) Dow, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 28, 2021 at St. Lawrence Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Patricia A. (Hudson) Cichino, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 28, 2021 at Notre Dame Church;

burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Victoria Lee Hurteau, 52; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 28, 2021 at Notre Dame Church.

Ogdensburg – John G. Joly, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 1, 2021 at Notre Dame Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Pauline (Lalonde) Phelps, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 1, 2021 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Foxwood Memorial Park.

Peru – Peter F. Duso, Sr., 72; Funeral Services Oct. 1, 2021 at the Hamilton Funeral Home.

Plattsburgh – Helen F. (LaBombard) Etl, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 1, 2021 at St. Peter's Church.

Plattsburgh – Charlotte Mae (Johnson) Johnson, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 29, 2021 at St. John's Church; burial in St. Helen's Cemetery, Chasm Falls.

Plattsburgh – Margaret F. (Oros) LeFevre, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 2, 2021 at St. John the Baptist Church; burial in St. Alexander's Cemetery, Morrisonville.

Saranac Lake – James Joseph Gailus Jr., 79; Funeral Services Sept. 30, 2021 at the Keough Funeral Home.

Schroon Lake – Henry W. Roth, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 4, 2021 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church; burial in Long Island National Cemetery, Farmingdale, NY.

Ticonderoga – William Francis Scripper, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 6, 2021 at St. Mary's Church.

Tupper Lake – Therese M. Pauze, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 29, 2021 at St. Alphonsus Church; burial in St. Alphonsus Cemetery.

Watertown – Janet E. (Neals) Butler, 82; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 4, 2021 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Augustine "Augie" Capone, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 29, 2021 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Stephen D. Laverty, 63; Mass of Christian Burial Sept. 30, 2021 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Pew report: Social hostility toward religion down

WASHINGTON (CNS)—Social hostilities against religious believers and churches dipped in 2019, according to a Pew Research Center report issued Sept. 30.

Government hostilities toward religion, though, remained at their highest level since Pew started conducting this research a dozen years ago.

In 2019, 43 countries had either "high" or "very high" levels of social hostilities, down from 53 countries in 2018, and down from a peak of 65 countries in 2012, the report said.

On the government side, 180 countries had at least one instance, at some level, of government harassment against religious groups, compared with 175 countries in 2018. But 75 countries had either high or very high levels of overall restrictions on religion in 2019, down from 80 in 2018.

"We do see more fluctuations over the years with ups and downs," said

Samirah Majumdar, a Pew research associate and the primary researcher for the study. "Social hostilities are based more on incidents, while government hostilities are based on broad politics that don't tend to change as much over time."

Government interference in worship ranges from withholding permission for religious activities or prohibiting particular religious practices at any level of government, such as worship activities, wearing religious attire, adhering to grooming customs such as maintaining a beard, conscientious objection to military service, the use of certain substances in worship and following ritual burial practices.

One example cited in the report: "In Slovenia, where animal slaughter without prior stunning is prohibited, Muslims and Jews are not allowed to slaughter animals according to halal and kosher dietary guide-

lines."

In 2019, 49 countries experienced at least some form of religion-related terrorism, "a record low for the study," Pew said. That compares to 64 countries in 2018, and a record high of 82 in 2014, when the Islamic State was wreaking havoc in the Middle East and Boko Haram was plaguing Nigeria and neighboring nations.

Pew, for the first time, started tracking the use of technology to harass religious practices, "as well as the governmental use of new or advanced technologies such as surveillance cameras, facial recognition technology or biometric data to restrict or surveil religious groups," it said.

In China, Pew said, "the state installed surveillance equipment in churches, mosques, a synagogue and other houses of worship; the government also used facial recognition technology to monitor and collect biometric data on Uighur Muslims and other groups deemed to be potential threats. Authorities in Xinjiang also required Uighurs to install software on their phones to monitor their calls and messages."

Majumdar said the 2022 report would include more detail on online harassment, as it will be able to compare 2020's figures – the focus of next year's study – with those of 2019.

Pew looks at 196 countries, and does not exclude the United States, using U.S. hate crime statistics and Justice Department publications on freedom of religion and belief cases, but also at internationally-based sources, Majumdar said.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Pope to begin synodal process with Mass at St. Peter's Basilica

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The Vatican announced that Pope Francis will formally launch the process of the Synod of Bishops with a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. The Oct. 10 Mass, which officially opens the synodal process, will be preceded by a day of reflection in the synodal hall, the Vatican said in a statement published Oct. 1. The Oct. 9 day of reflection, the statement said, will include "representatives of the people God, including delegates of the bishops' conferences and related bodies, members of the Roman Curia, fraternal delegates, delegates of consecrated life and ecclesial lay movements, the youth council, etc." According to the schedule released by the Vatican, the day of reflection will begin with a meditation followed by an address by Pope Francis. It will also feature testimonies by people present at the synodal hall, including a young woman from South Africa, a bishop from South Korea, and the head of a religious community from France.

Group sues over canceled rally planned for bishops' assembly

BALTIMORE (CNS) – A Catholic advocacy group known for its critical comments about Catholic leaders said Baltimore city officials violated their religious rights in denying approval for a rally it planned near the hotel where the U.S. bishops will meet in November. Michigan-based St. Michael's Media, also known as Church Militant, has challenged the city's ruling in federal court, saying its First Amendment rights are being denied. U.S. District Judge Ellen Hollander heard arguments in the case Sept. 30 and Oct. 1. Among those testifying were survivors of clergy sexual abuse who want to speak at the "prayer rally" that the conservative media outlet planned for Nov. 16 at a city-owned waterfront pavilion adjacent to the hotel where the bishops will meet. The bishops' fall general assembly is scheduled for Nov. 15-18. Church Militant promoted that Steve Bannon, former strategist for Donald Trump, and far-right polemicist Milo Yiannopoulos would speak at the event.

Knights' documentary 'Enduring Faith' now available to all

NEW HAVEN, Conn. (CNS) – After a successful run on ABC affiliates throughout the U.S., "Enduring Faith," a Knights of Columbus documentary on the legacy of the Catholic faith among Indigenous communities in North America, is now available to all. "As Catholics we're called to build bridges, listen and love – firstly based on our relationship with Jesus," said a news release announcing the film's wide availability. "In all of these areas, Indigenous Catholics have an important lesson and message to share with the world." "Enduring Faith: The Story of Native American Catholicism," it said, "offers a missing piece to the greater story of Catholicism in North America and a beautiful example of how Christ reveals himself through the uniqueness of every culture." The film is available to view at www.kofc.org/enduringfaith. The site also has a "Facts & Discussion Guide" to facilitate discussion or reflection by families, parish groups and community groups on topics touched upon in the documentary. DVDs of the film can be purchased at Knightsgear.com. "This film will inspire in viewers a deeper appreciation for the spiritual and cultural gifts of Native American Catholics, a greater awareness of the wrongs inflicted upon them by the unjust policies of the British and American governments, and a sense of hope at how Native American Catholics continue to live out their faith in fully enculturated ways today," the news release said.



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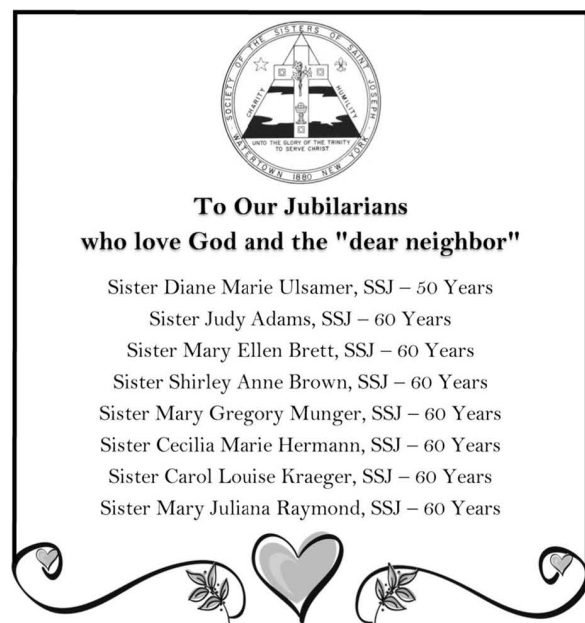
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Sister Carol Louise Kraeger, SSJ – 60 Years

Sister Mary Juliana Raymond, SSJ – 60 Years



NOW PLAYING

THE MANY SAINTS OF NEWARK

NEWYORK (CNS)—Not so much a prequel to "The Sopranos" than a richly textured origin story of Tony Soprano, "The Many Saints of Newark" (Warner Bros.) will be a matter of details to fans of the long-running television drama, and confusing to anyone else.

Teenage and essentially good-hearted Tony (Michael Gandolfini, son of the late James Gandolfini, who created the mobster part on TV) is continuously denied the moral, intellectual and spiritual guidance that might have separated him from a career of crime and murders.

This, in turn created the pensive adult who, in the first episode of the series,

told his therapist that he was convinced his father had an easier life.

This, screenwriters David Chase and Lawrence Konner and director Alan Taylor show us, was just Tony's protective fantasy. Tony's father, Johnny Boy (Jon Bernthal), is mostly absent even when not incarcerated, and the principal male influence in his life is Dickie Moltisanti (Alessandro Nivola), a mobster with frightening lurches into lethal violence. His depressed mother, Livia (Vera Farmigia), is emotionally absent.

The story is set in the late 1960s and early '70s in Newark, New Jersey, beginning with the 1967 ri-

oting that nearly destroyed the city and laid its endemic racism bare.

Some historical facts are now so obscure that the script compels characters to explain how a numbers racket – an illegal and highly lucrative lottery – worked. This was the basis of the mobsters' empire in Newark before state-sponsored lotteries were established.

Fighting for a share of the numbers action is Harold (Leslie Odom Jr.), a payment collector for Dickie who starts his own organization, resulting in a gang war.

Women in this saga exist

only as doomed characters, including Livia and Giuseppina (Michela De Rossi), the naive Italian bride of "Hollywood Dick" Moltisanti (Ray Liotta). This being a "Sopranos" story, there is a steady stream of whackings by gunfire as characters expend their usefulness to the plot.

Tony is mostly left to fend for himself with petty crimes such as hijacking an ice-cream truck and stealing high school tests in advance.

When his high school counselor points out to Livia that Tony is, in fact, considered highly intelli-

gent, Livia sighs, "There is a big difference between a smart person and a smart aleck."

And that's about as introspective as this sad story gets.

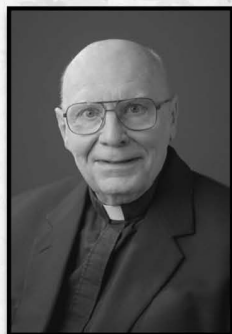
The film contains pervasive gun and physical violence, a scene of torture, fleeting upper female nudity, brief scenes of sexual activity, pervasive racial slurs and pervasive rough language. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III – adults. The Motion Picture Association rating is R – restricted. Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.



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For all you are, all you've done, and all that you continue to do, with much appreciation, St. Francis, St. Patrick's, St. Mary's & Parishes
May God continue to bless and keep you.

Foster Grandparent Program-

The Foster Grandparent Program's Purpose is to provide opportunities for low income persons aged 55 and older (that reside in Franklin, Clinton, Essex, St. Lawrence, and Jefferson Counties), to provide person to person services in health, education and the welfare of children ages 21 and below. Foster Grandparents are placed in a classroom setting with children who need development of basic learning skills, to provide friendship, and unhurried help. You'll also receive a small non-taxable stipend bi-weekly that can not be held against any current benefits you may have. You also get paid mileage for your travel and you receive paid holidays, vacations, sick and personal leave. If this is something that would interest you please call Melissa Howard @ (518) 359-7688.



RSVP

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program of Franklin Counties purpose is to provide meaningful opportunities for older Americans ages 55 and older. RSVP shows you how you can apply the skills and wisdom you've acquired throughout your life to make a positive difference in the lives of others by placing volunteers in home-bound and hard to reach areas, so that we can make a tangible difference in your community. We offer insurance, mileage reimbursement and there's no set hours, just the time you are willing to make for others. If this is something that would interest you please call Melissa Howard @ (518) 359-7688.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

'Why did God make me?'

Many of us still remember the simple catechism question, "Why did God make me?" The answer is fundamental to this Sunday's readings: "God make me to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him in this life, and to be happy forever in the next."

The first reading tells us how in more details. "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a suitable partner for him." What follows is how God did this. We must know how to respond to this. God gave us the tools. What kind of



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

a life is He calling us to! It is most importantly in the spiritual order – to use

our minds and our wills in the way that follows out God's plan for our happiness. We have to know that plan and follow it. We have to learn wisdom in order to love what He loves. We cannot do this without the help of God's grace. A good prayer for us is

"What do you want of me, Lord?" God will answer our prayers. He has given us His law, His commandments. God didn't give them without thinking. In

October 10

28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS

Wisdom 7:7-11

Hebrews 4:12-13

Mark 10:17-30

His wisdom, He knows that they are essential for both natural and supernatural happiness.

Since we're flawed and imperfect, we need to share with others our struggles. As we learn from them, they learn from us. We learn from experience what is right and what is wrong – what is good and what is evil. All in all, it's lifelong journey toward happiness.

Today's Gospel probes the unique qualities of both a man and of woman. In Jesus' teaching on marriage, He knows that physical attraction draws a man and woman together. And He knows that spiritual fatherhood and spiritual motherhood are essential for the kind of marriage that He intended. Both are necessary for the sacrifice needed for mutual growth and support.

A woman has the unique quality of bearing with pain and suffering and sorrow. This is the way God make her. A woman as a woman can love pour out herself in love, give totally without

reserve.

St. Paul tells a husband to love his wife as he loves his own body. "And to two shall be one." This is meant to last during their natural lives.

God intends only this kind of marriage. If it is obvious that the man and woman either did not intend or are not capable of such a marriage, when a marriage doesn't measure up to God's standards, the Church by the authority of God Himself, can grant an annulment.

Why did God make me? He made me to know Him, to love Him, to serve Him in this life, and to be happy with Him forever in the next.

CALLED TO SERVE

There's no such thing as coincidence

The most common vocations questions are, "how did you guys meet?" and "what made you want to become a _____?" Here you fill in the blank. The blank word might be priest, deacon, sister, brother, steamfitter, hairdresser... whatever.

Single people have to put-up with the downright offensive statement/question, "Oh, you never got married, huh?"

Most of us probably cannot recall a moment

that caused us to choose one way of life over another. Few of us have the experience Saul did on the road to Damascus when God mapped out the future St. Paul's journey by getting his attention with a two by four.

Our path in life is often a bunch of little things that pile-up to finally reach the light bulb of our future and turn it on.

The prophet Jeremiah wrote "before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you, a prophet to the nations I appointed you."

Sounds like we were predestined by God. But "sister said" back in my grade school days that we Catholics reject predestination since God blessed man with free will.

We could argue predestination and free will all

day. God knows the answer. That's the point, God knows.

God knew Kathy and I would meet in high school many years ago and still be a couple 58 years later – 51 of them married.

As I write this, the New York Yankees have a two-game lead in the playoff race over the Boston Red Sox. God knows who will get in, but I doubt He is concerned with such matters.

What we do with our individual lives is of more than passing interest to God, I think.

After all, as the psalmist wrote, "It was you who created my being, knit me together in my mother's womb."

I hope God blessed the 12 men who stood before

Bishop LaValley last weekend to profess their obedience to him, to live a life of prayer and to remain celibate, if not currently married, or if they survive their wife. God blessed their families too, we pray.

Two other men will respond to the same promises this coming weekend. But the occasion begs the notion that God had more than a passing interest in this one. Saturday in Plattsburgh, Leagon Carlin will be ordained a deacon of the Church as he continues his preparation to become a priest of the diocese. At the same ceremony, Leagon's father,

James Carlin, will be ordained a permanent deacon of the diocese.

Think about all the stars that had to align perfectly for that to happen. As Jethro Gibbs says on NCIS, "there is no such thing as coincidence."

And think about what is going through Beth's mind. Beth Carlin will watch as her husband and son become deacons of the Church on the same day. It took more than luck to bring those two creations of God together for ordination. What a day.

"God is good, all the time. All the time, God is good."

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



Support And Pray
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The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

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Thanking those who answer God's call

By Alexis Michael
Secretary/Bookkeeper
Mission Office

The Mission Office would like to thank all of those who answered God's call to enter consecrated life. Your selfless "yes" to the Lord has blessed so many lives and will continue to bless many more. Consecrated men and women give both tangible and intangible necessities to the poor of the world. They give food and water, but also love and hope.

I would especially like to thank our director, Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, who is celebrating her 60th anniversary of consecration.

Thank you, Sister, for all your hard work and dedication to the missions and the loving kindness you show every day. The Mission Office would not be what it is without you.

This week, we would like to highlight the life of Saint Theresa of Calcutta and her call to serve the poor. Saint Theresa was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in 1910 in Skopje, Republic of Macedonia.

She first felt the call to consecrated life at the age of 12 and officially joined the Sisters of Loreto in Dublin and took the name Sister Mary Teresa at 18. She was transferred to India and 9 years later took her Final Profession of Vows.

There she served as a teacher and then principal of a girl's school in Calcutta, India. In 1946, while riding a train to a retreat, Saint Theresa felt another call, this time to serve the poorest of the poor.

It took a year and a half to receive permission for her to leave her convent, and in 1950 Missionaries of Charity were officially recognized as a congregation.

Saint Theresa established multiple clinics and houses to care for those with highly infectious diseases all over the world and earned many recognitions and awards her work.

She died in 1997 at the age of 87 and was canonized 19 years later in 2016.

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

Like father, like son: Carlins to be ordained together

By Mary Beth Bracy
Contributing Writer

PLATTSBURGH – "It will be beautiful to be ordained with my dad," said Leagon Carlin, seminarian for the Diocese of Ogdensburg. "My mother will be crying from beginning to end, constantly."

On October 9, Leagon Carlin will be ordained a transitional deacon and his father, James Carlin, will be ordained as a permanent deacon. The ordination will be celebrated by Bishop Terry R. LaValley at the Carlin's home Church of St. Peter's in Plattsburgh.

At the suggestion of Bishop LaValley, Leagon's ordination was delayed for a few months to allow for this opportunity.

SEEDS OF VOCATION

Leagon shared that his "seeds of priestly vocation were planted very, very early." He was baptized at St. Peter's and, when he was in around second grade, Father Bryan Stitt, then newly ordained, arrived at the parish.

Leagon said he was "struck" by Father Stitt's "youthful energy... Something in the way that Father Bryan celebrated Mass caused me to believe that there was something more than meets the eye."

Leagon's vocation was also nourished by his pastors and regular attendance at Mass, and he experienced significant growth in his faith attending Camp Guggenheim, the diocesan summer camp.

"Guggenheim [was really a] place of flowering," Leagon continued. He first attended the camp when he was around 14. By that point, he'd been looking at the priesthood for some time, although he also had

another career path in mind.

Leagon said camp was "fun, engaging," and he was "around people (he) liked to be with," yet "detached from noise of the world." Leagon said he experienced God's guidance "not in some thundercloud or presence, but in peace of the heart, that the Lord was asking me to give this vocation a try, [to have] an openness and an action to the vocation of the priesthood."

Growing up, Leagon read a lot about the faith, the reality and teachings of the Church. Guggenheim made those teachings and his relationship with the Lord come alive. He said camp helped him to have a "greater knowledge that Christ was not just an idea but an actual person."

"That relationship helped bring me out of legalism and into that relational reality with Christ. Without that, my vocation would have been a burden as opposed to a gift."

"One of the most formative aspects" of his time at Guggenheim, Leagon explained, "was returning to Confession for the first time" since he made his first Confession. "That literally changed my life, the structure and the way that I saw the world. It was the reality of my sins being wiped away and myself being transformed back into the purity that I had as a child. It was a real moment of encounter; it definitely changed my outlook and worldview."

DIFFERENT PATH, SAME DESTINATION

James shared that, while they ended up in "a similar place in accepting Christ and the living person of Christ," his "route to get

there was in the poverty and poor of Nicaragua."

It was the first time he was "ever able to see Christ in someone else, see Christ in myself, and in a relationship to Christ that I needed and wanted and was definitely searching and seeking for throughout my adult life," he said.

James noted that his first and main vocation was as a parent and, as his children got older and their needs were fewer, he began serving in the North Country through the Lions Club, Habitat for Humanity, and as president of the local Red Cross.

While he said he saw his volunteer roles as "great opportunities to serve the public," those roles "never filled the hole that was inside of me. Noise of world doesn't always allow us to focus on that call."

When James had an opportunity to go on a mission trip to Nicaragua, he worked at an orphanage in the mountains with religious sisters. He described having a "startling revelation," while one of the sisters was talking.

"It was as though it was not her looking back at me," he said, adding he believes Christ told him, "this is where I need you to be, where I want you to be, and this is what I want from you."

James said he would have been skeptical of such an experience before, but he then realized that God was calling him to into His service.

Service in Church became more important to James, and he became a commissioned lay minister, and then entered the deacon formation program. Leagon's path went

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

Father, son to be ordained as deacons together

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

from academic to service, James explained, and his went from service to theology and philosophy.

THE ROLE OF FAMILY IN A VOCATION

Leagon recalled that from a very early age his parents, James and Beth, especially his father, instilled in him a “real dedication to service.” Even when it wasn’t overtly religious, and he was “more trouble than help,” they let him “tag along” to volunteer. Whether “going to help Nana or a family member, dad was always working in that way for other people.”

From that example, Leagon said he learned that the “only way to live a fulfilled life is to live it for other people. The Church makes it very clear that we should live a life of sacrifice, service for others.” His experience in Nicaragua – he traveled there with his parents – also helped this to blossom, “rebuilding faith in humanity and in the Church itself . . . [especially the] adorable Nicaraguan kids and their real faith and immense joy even though their situation was so low from our perspective.”

James also noted, though, that Leagon helped to reinvigorate his parents’ life in the Church, by keeping them going to Mass and seeing its point in their lives. Seeing what Leagon has gone through in his discernment and studies helped James in his diaconate studies, the father said.

Leagon highlighted the fact that he and his father are experiencing the approach to their ordinations differently.

“Coming up to the diaconate ordination I am reflecting on the permanence of this choice,” Leagon said. “It’s a little different for



James Carlin and his son, Leagon, serve a Mass together in Port Henry. The two Carlins will be ordained as deacons together on Oct. 9. James will serve as a permanent deacon, while Leagon, a seminarian for the diocese, will continue on in his formation for the priesthood.

dad, who is married and has made a lot of decisions in life that are irreversible; nothing I’ve done up to this point is irreversible. I could go somewhere else, do something else, start an entirely new path. It is the first thing that I have ever done which is permanent. It is terrifying and inspiring, wonderful in the traditional sense of that word.”

Although he and his father “both come from very different paths,” Leagon concluded, they are “coming to this point of permanent decision. The same thing is being asked of us in that moment. This is what we desire and for the Church to accept us as we come. We have the same end: the salvation of souls.”

SAYING ‘YES’ TO GOD

The elder of the two Carlins noted that his initial “yes” to God’s call came with conditions.

“When I told God ‘I don’t want to speak, I just want

to serve as I want to serve,’ [He said] ‘I will take you and I will do with you what I want,’” remembered James. “Slowly He works with us on our vocations on a path where we are going to be walking with Him – if you continue to say yes and walk with an open mind and an open heart. I look back and wonder how I got to where I am now. Hopefully to be able to serve Him. God takes us on a journey.”

James said the Diocese of Ogdensburg faith community also nurtured him. The family’s parish, St. Peter’s, brought “comfort, friendship, and faith, along this journey.”

James said wouldn’t be where he is without their pastors and associate priests.

“They have all given beautiful testimony for a life lived in Christ, the parishioners are a wonderful welcoming group,”

he said. “And [we are blessed with] the witness of our bishop. Seeing Christ and Holy Spirit allows them to do positive things. It’s beautiful.”

James said he is grateful for the diaconate program. His classmates were ordained Oct. 2 in a separate Mass held in St. Mary’s Cathedral.

“Those men and classes have taken time and basically shown us how to live a Christian life,” he said. “Those are my brothers. They strengthen each other through their shared experience and bond together. Without that community of men, I wouldn’t have made it through. I love each and every one. Those men, the quiet times after class, the struggles, them helping you understand things that you didn’t quite grasp, and you helping them understand. We will all be ordained individual deacons, but we are one.”

President of the North Country Mission of Hope, James said he is thankful for his family’s “help throughout this whole process.” His duties require him to be away frequently on weekends, and he said his wife, Beth, “picks up the slack.”

“She made it possible for me to follow this path and vocation,” James said. “She never hesitated and carries the brunt of home life. She never complains and always supports anything that I want or am called to do in pursuit of that vocation (or for Leagon).”

Leagon concurred. “My mother has always been there in her steadfastness in positivity, kindness, and sacrifice,” he said. “She is someone to call and share difficulties with.”

James’ advice to those seeking God’s will is “Al-

ways open yourself to saying yes.” It’s “not easy, never a perfect time. But there’s never a time to say no. Allow yourself to say yes and see where it will take you. At least entertain it and give yourself the opportunity to say yes and to see where Christ is taking you: ‘This is what I want with you and how to pursue service in My name.’ Saying yes to God and working on our relationship with Christ will inform and improve every relationship you have in your life: wife, kids, coworkers, [it will have a] positive impact on you and all of your other relationships in life.”

His preparation for the priesthood has also shown Leagon an enriching “Friendship with men that is fruitful and an actual sharing of life, not gushy, but a sharing of the depth of your heart with other men on the same journey as you. It’s not a friendship that is found in many other areas of society between men.” Leagon said that his relationship with the priests of our diocese is a “real source of consolation, friendship and fraternity . . . [one of the] gifts in my life.”

“Saying yes to God, giving Him the yes that He asks of you will never leave you wanting in reward,” Leagon concluded. “A yes to God’s invitation is always going to make us happier, more fulfilled, more completely ourselves. Don’t be afraid. Human persons are called to relationship with each other. That relationship is a reflection of the relationship we’re called to with God the Father and His Son, Christ incarnate.” Entering into that personal relationship with God will “have only positive benefits.”