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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 76, Number 1

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

APRIL 7, 2021

State Bishops on passage of recreational marijuana

The New York State Legislature has passed, and Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has signed into law a bill legalizing the sale and use of marijuana for recreational purposes.

The passage of the bill by the legislature prompted a statement from Dennis Poust, interim executive director of the New York State Catholic Confer-

ence:

(The legislation) "is terrible policy that sends a message to children that marijuana is harmless fun endorsed by the state. The reality is quite different."

"The impact of today's ultra-potent marijuana on developing brains is unclear. What is clear is that marijuana is a gateway drug that will have detrimental ef-

fects on untold numbers of young people and compound the current health crises of teen vaping and drug use," Poust said.

The statement also raised concerns about increased motor vehicle accidents and respiratory distress caused by inhalation.

New York State estimates an increase in revenue of \$350 mil-

lion in sales and user taxes from the sale of marijuana. "The lure of money should never overcome what is best for society, especially children," Poust said. "Sadly, today that is what has occurred in Albany."

The Catholic Conference represents the Bishops of New York State in public policy matters.

Professional development continues during pandemic

Student success and well-being continue to be the top priority for the diocesan Department of Education, even in this pandemic driven world. "The Catholic Schools of the diocese have been responsive, resourceful, and empathetic to the needs of our school community," said Karen Donahue, Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the diocese.

The staff had to rethink how to function under new parameters of social distancing and other protocols. The curriculum committee began meeting virtually in February 2020. Committee members agreed there was an immediate need for quality virtual resources and skills training.

FULL STORY, PAGE 9

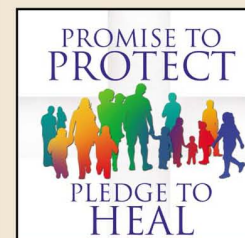
BLESSING OF THE OILS



PHOTO BY JESSE SOVIE

The three oils (pictured above) blessed by the bishop during the Chrism Mass play such an important role in the life of the Church. Bishop Terry R. LaValley presided at the annual Chrism Mass March 30 at St. Mary's Cathedral. In his homily he says "The Church moves forward one soul at a time, as each person catches the fire of belief from another and is grafted into the body of Christ." Read the full homily on pages 3 & 4.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH



This month is "Child Abuse Prevention" month. Each week for the month of April the NCC will be printing an article about how you can help prevent abuse. One way caring adults can help thwart any potential grooming is to ensure that they, themselves, are never in an unsupervised situation with children within a ministry (or other) context, and that they do not allow other adults to be in isolated environments with children, either.

FULL STORY, PAGE 5

Please note there will not be an NCC next week. Our next edition will be dated April 21.

NORTH
COUNTRY
CATHOLIC

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

Editorial Office:
622 Washington Street,
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

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catholic.org

**Entered at the
Post Office:**
Ogdensburg, NY
13669 and
additional mailing offices as
Periodical Postage.

Subscription:
For one year:
In-Diocese Rate: \$27
Outside of Diocese Rate: \$30

Matters for publication
should be
addressed to
PO Box 326
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
and should be received by
Thursday prior to
publication.
Paper is printed each
Monday;
dateline is Wednesday.
Member, Catholic Press
Association.

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

Pope: The cross of Christ is a sign for hope

Vatican - As he prepared to celebrate the Easter Triduum, Pope Francis, during his Wednesday General Audience focused on these central days of the Liturgical year, celebrating the mystery of the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection.

A new commandment of love

Looking ahead to Holy Thursday and the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the Pope recalled Christ's washing the disciples' feet, His new commandment of love, and His institution of the Eucharist as the abiding memorial of the sacrifice of His body and blood for the salvation of all.

Adoration of the Cross

Turning his attention to Good Friday, Pope Francis said, in the intensity of the rite of Liturgical action, we

will be presented with the Crucifix to adore. By adoring the Cross, we will relive the journey of the innocent Lamb sacrificed for our salvation."

On that day, he continued, "We will carry in our minds and hearts the sufferings of the sick, the poor, the rejected of this world; we will remember the "sacrificed lambs", innocent victims of wars, dictatorships, daily violence, abortions."

"Before the image of the crucified God," the Pope underlined, "we will bring in prayer the many, the too many who are crucified in our time, who can only receive from Him the comfort and the meaning of their suffering."

Pope Francis went on to say that by Christ's wounds we have been healed, and by

his death we have all been regenerated. Thanks to him, abandoned on the cross, "no one will ever again be alone in the darkness of death," he said.

Mother of believers

Dwelling on Holy Saturday, Pope Francis described it as "the day of silence, experienced in weeping and bewilderment by the first disciples, shocked by Jesus' ignominious death." He noted that, this Saturday is also "Mary's day," as she too lives it in tears, "but her heart is full of faith, full of hope, full of love."

The Mother of God, said the Pope, remained at the foot of the cross, with her soul pierced. But when everything seemed to be over, "she kept vigil, she kept her hope in the promise of God who raises the dead."

Pope Francis explained that by doing this "in the darkest hour of the world, she became Mother of believers, Mother of the Church and a sign of hope. Her witness and intercession sustain us when the weight of the cross becomes too heavy for us."

Beacon of hope

Concluding his catechesis, Pope Francis noted that again this year the faithful will be celebrating Easter in the context of the pandemic. But he stressed that despite the many situations of suffering, "the Cross of Christ is like a beacon that indicates the port to ships that are still afloat on stormy seas. "It is the sign of hope", he said, "that does not let us down; and it tells us that not even one tear, not one cry is lost in God's plan of salvation."

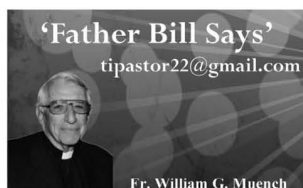
A walk on our road to Emmaus

The Emmaus story is my favorite Easter story. I am certain that you remember it. This is the story about two of Jesus' disciples who encounter Jesus on that first Easter Sunday on the road to Emmaus. I like to think that they were a married couple.

The Emmaus story is about us - like so many Gospel stories. As we recognize that we often meet Jesus just as that couple did on the road to Emmaus, we will discover the new life that Jesus won for us each Easter. Today, I want to go with you along the road to Emmaus.

The Gospel story tells us that on the same day that the apostles discovered the empty tomb, two of his disciples were walking home to Emmaus from Jerusalem. We are told that they were discussing all that happened to Jesus during those last few days - his suffering and crucifixion. They indicated they had also heard that some others had found the tomb

of Jesus empty.



Fr. William G. Muench

As they walked along, Jesus drew near to them. They did not recognize that it was truly Jesus. Jesus strikes up a conversation with them. The couple speaks of their sadness at the sufferings and crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus, who they still did not recognize, reminds them, saying, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

Then Jesus interprets for them what the Scriptures say about him, going all the way back to Moses. Can you imagine this, being in a Scripture class led by Jesus Himself? How I would have

been thrilled to have been there.

When they come to the village, the couple encourages Jesus to stay with them. They still don't recognize him. Then, while Jesus was with them at table, he took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them. At that moment, they recognized that this was truly Jesus. I believe that each time we participate in Mass, each time we receive Holy Communion, we should recognize the presence of Jesus.

The Emmaus story calls to mind all that we experience each time we gather to celebrate Mass. The first part of the story is a Liturgy of the Word - we listen to the Word of the Lord - the Sacred Scriptures. Jesus truly speaks to us and teaches us, just as he did on that road to Emmaus with his two disciples.

Then at the altar during Mass we celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist, just as this couple joined with

Jesus at table. In faith, we celebrate the Blessed Eucharist, recalling the life, death and resurrection of Our Lord, Jesus. We believe that our Lord, the Risen Savior, is truly present with us each and every time we pray the Mass.

The Emmaus story is our story. I believe that all too often our Lord Jesus comes along and catches up with me as I walk through life. Jesus truly wants to be part of my life. I believe he wants to walk with me. I believe he wants to guide me. I believe that he has a message for me. I believe that he has a challenge for me to make my life better, to make my world a better place. I pray that I will truly recognize Jesus when he comes walking along to have a conversation with me. I pray that you will recognize Jesus when he enters your life today. I pray that you will often walk along that road to Emmaus.

FOLLOW ME

The eucharist will transform you and me



PHOTO BY JESSE SOVIE

Priests and deacons from across the diocese gathered socially distant on March 30 for the annual Chrism Mass.

Editor's note: the following is Bishop's homily at the Chrism Mass that was celebrated on March 30, 2021.

You will soon hear me say: "Let us pray that God our almighty Father will bless this oil so that all who are anointed with it may be inwardly transformed and come to share in eternal salvation." We must all be inwardly transformed, converted anew daily. We have the sacred duty of helping others to be converted. To do that, we must tend to our own lives. Being converted means returning to the very grace of our vocation. It means meditating upon the infinite goodness and love of Christ, who has addressed each of us and calling us by name, has said: "Follow me."

Being converted means giving an account before the Lord of our service, our zeal and our fidelity, for we are Christ's ser-

vants, stewards entrusted with the mysteries of God. Being converted also means giving an account of our negligence and sins, of our timidity, of our lack of faith and hope. Transformation happens as I pray continually, never losing heart. Prayer helps us to believe, to hope. Conversion is not for the lazy or faint-hearted.

Conversion is about movement. I thought that I might speak about this at this Chrism Mass, the Mass of the Holy Oils because oil facilitates ease in movement. Oil also is a great source of energy, fuel. We do not want to get stuck in our relationship with Jesus, possessing a "running in place" prayer life, parish ministry on autopilot where I am comfortable in my relationship with Jesus and see no need for



Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley

growth or any spiritual movement. I might think, "I have no need to be creative with my prayer. I've done all the stretching I'm going to do with my prayer life." No matter my age, an attitude of self-satisfaction, of being set in my ways, stifles my spiritual growth and, consequently, hinders the spiritual growth of my parishioners. As you know, St. Paul used the image of an athlete when it comes to the spiritual life. We are to run the race and I cannot participate in the contest with a sedentary spirituality. Run so as to win! Personally speaking I know, it's so easy to get stuck in our comfort zones. We cannot let that happen. No—we must reclaim the spiritual energy gifted through our anointing.

Take our liturgies--The

way we celebrate the sacraments can become so routine that the beauty of the divine encounter is jeopardized. We can be so regimented, in robotic form, or so casual, that the richness of the words and the symbolism of the ritual are compromised. Does my celebration of the sacraments reflect a zeal for every soul or am I stuck in the rut of routine? Do I thoughtlessly go through the motions and expect the Spirit to pick up the slack?

We don't want to get stuck in our relationships with others. Sometimes we have a bad experience with a parishioner, a fellow priest or a friend. We come away with a bad taste in our mouths and the relationship is never the same again. On the day of our priestly ordinations, our hands were anointed with Sacred Chrism. The oil symbolizes strength; the balm heals, soothes, energizes. It is good to remember as

a parish leader that the oil that was poured on my hands at ordination was a lubricant that softens hearts not an irritant that chafes the weak.

Because the Eucharist has the power to continually form and transform you and me, I thought it important that, at this particular time in our local Church, we re-focus our attention on the Holy Eucharist as a Mystery to be believed, a Mystery to be celebrated, a Mystery to be lived. Given the COVID-19 crisis, we must retrieve a robust Eucharistic mindset in the faithful. You know that there is a strong need for catechesis, renewed devotion, increase of missionary spirit and a rejuvenated understanding of ecclesial communion that can only occur through a deepened understanding and a reinvigorated belief in the Eucharist.

It is my hope that the introductory stage of this

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

AT THE CHRISM MASS



PHOTOS BY JESSE SOVIE

Above Father Bryan D. Stitt watches as Bishop Terry R. LaValley mixes the oils of Holy Chrism.

Below Deacon Fernando Solomon presents the Gospel of the Lord.



What is the Chrism Mass?

"The Chrism Mass is a public celebration and display of the unity of the bishop to the priests of his diocese and the entire church community as members of the Body of Christ to Jesus Christ who is the Head of the Church. It is one of the most holy and solemn Masses celebrated all year because, in addition to the priests renewing their promises to the bishop, the three oils blessed by the bishop during the Mass play such an important role in the life of the Church."

The oil of catechumens is used in the Sacrament of Baptism. The oil of the sick is used in the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. The holy chrism is used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders for the ordination of priests and bishops.

After the Chrism Mass, the holy oils are distributed to the parishes of the diocese where they are used to anoint the faithful throughout the year.

Chrism Mass

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

diocesan project, the presentations offered by Christopher Carsten to all our clergy, gets this diocesan effort of Eucharistic renewal off to a good start. The Eucharist is too great a gift to tolerate any indifference or absence. This pandemic provides the launching pad from which we set out to revive our Eucharistic faith.

Wherever apostolic zeal is expended, the results are impressive. Mountains can be moved. God's Spirit has that kind of power. Conversions in faith can be experienced. To the degree that we continue with business as usual, we can expect to watch an ever-increasing number of Catholics go elsewhere or nowhere. We need to renew the Church by becoming intensely Eucharist-centered, recalling the necessity of worship, and reconnecting to the fact that the Eucharist is

who we are and what we do as Catholics. This renews a strong revival of how the sacrament of the Eucharist is celebrated, prayed, understood, revered, and how we are transformed by it.

You know that there are many Catholics currently in the Church who have sentimental ties to the way in which they were raised. But sentimentality will not sustain a way of discipleship that will challenge us at every level of our being, nor will it sustain our faith when it brings us into conflict. The Church moves forward one soul at a time, as each person catches the fire of belief from another and is grafted into the body of Christ. The apostles understood that the importance is not found in numbers but in the intensity of the flame.

The great task of our time is to gain a genuine conversion of mind and

vision. The Holy Oils with which we have been anointed brings us the Spirit's powerful love to transform us when we allow it to flow. Next year this local Church will celebrate the 150th anniversary of our founding. Is there a better way for us to celebrate than by recapturing what it is that identifies who we are? In the humble signs of bread and wine, changed into His Body and Blood, Christ walks beside us as our strength and our food for the journey, and He enables us to become, for everyone, witnesses of hope. We need to be heralds of hope today. With the prophet Isaiah, all in the North Country and beyond will look to our family of faith and declare: "All who see them shall acknowledge them as a race the Lord has blessed." May God be praised...forever may God be praised!

APRIL IS CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Bishop LaValley writes of healing and mercy

Dear Friends in Christ:

The month of April has been designated as Child Abuse Prevention Month. This provides us with an opportunity to highlight our awareness of child sexual abuse and to call attention to our ongoing responsibility to provide safe, healthy environments for our children and young people. It also affords me the opportunity to assure you that our diocese is continuing our strong efforts to create and maintain a climate of safety and of joy for all the youth entrusted to our pastoral care. It is also a time to express deep sorrow and regret to all those who have suffered sexual abuse by



Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley

Church leaders.

I am very grateful to Mr. John Morrison, Diocesan Safe Environment Director and Charter Compliance Coordinator. He directs our efforts to ensure that the national and diocesan policies established to provide safe environments for our children are implemented fully. Since 2003,

independent audits have been conducted in the Diocese of Ogdensburg to determine how well we comply with national and our own diocesan policies. We have been found to be compliant every year. The strong support and cooperation of our pastors and their

pastoral staffs enable our Church to be a safe place in which we can all grow in love of God and neighbor.

On Sunday, April 11th, a Mass of Healing will take place at St. Mary's Cathedral at 11:00am. This Eucharist, held on Divine Mercy Sunday, is a fitting means to acknowledge the pain caused by some pastoral leaders or workers in the Church; seeking forgiveness for the wounds inflicted; and praying for the grace to be instruments of healing and reconciliation for those who suffer so deeply.

You are invited to join our family of faith in prayerful support and in humble supplication for forgiveness. We know that Jesus, the Good Shepherd, so tenderly

loves and accompanies all those who are hurt in His Church. We are a Church of the hurting, indeed, as Pope Francis says, a field hospital that seeks to bring healing and wholeness through the grace of God. We remain vigilant in providing a safe environment for all within the Church and sorrowful when we have failed our sisters and brothers and caused such hurt and suffering.

With a Shepherd's care
and concern,

Most Reverend
Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

The many stages of grooming

Editors Note: This is the first article in a series this month explaining how you can help prevent abuse from happening.

An essential goal of the Protecting God's Children® Program for adults is to identify potentially inappropriate behavior by adults that could be grooming. The grooming process defines the way an offender gains control over a child and the persons surrounding the child, to obtain the type of relationship or sexual molestation the molester seeks.

Those who have completed VIRTUS training recall that grooming can affect not just the targeted victim, but all the persons in the victim's life and community. It can happen in-person, or online. For those who are charged with advocating for youth and protecting them, it is important to first understand the distinctions between the different types of abusers.

Preferential abusers would prefer to be with a child within the context of a relationship. The preferential offender may fixate on a specific characteristic of their victims (gender, age, physical characteristics), and will always have a premeditated plan. They will seek, or make, opportunities to have ample access to their preferred type of child. Preferential offenders comprise a smaller percentage of abusers but have a large ratio of victims to each abuser.

Conversely, the **situational abuser** does not necessarily prefer a relationship with a child over a relationship with another adult. But they may offend under a certain set of circumstances, such as an extreme difficult time in his or her life, with a higher likelihood of offense while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, severe depression or anxiety. The behavior is not as planned as the preferential abuser's, and they



typically have one or two victims versus the larger cohort of the preferential abusers.

In most cases, for both preferential and situational offenders, you will see the grooming behaviors outlined below performed on the child and on the community. For the offender, it can take concentration, time and commitment to groom a child to the extent that abuse is possible. For caring adults, it is not always easy to identify the intentions of adults in the environment who are interacting with our children. For example, are the adult's actions predatory or simply inappropriate?

Are they ignoring the rules or did they even know about them in the first place? Are they themselves aware that their behavior is contrary to the code of conduct? Did they even read the code of conduct? Did you read the code of conduct to know what was acceptable and unacceptable? Do you know what is actually safe and unsafe behavior for your organization?

Stage 1: Picking out or targeting a potential victim. All types of offenders look for children who are emotionally "needy" or those who are isolated in some way. They also watch out for children with lower self-confidence or self-esteem. In group settings, predators become familiar with everyone and watch for vulnerabilities amongst everyone within the group before they single out the victim with whom they feel they will have the ability to abuse and also not get caught.

Stage 2: Establishing and building trust. Many problematic behaviors are intended to establish or build trust between the child and the potential predator. Predators start by watching children, getting acquainted, and finding out what they like and what they need. This is also the time when molesters start to groom the families and other responsible adults in the child's life. They work very hard to inspire trust and to create an appearance of being safe. This is why it is essential that people are observing safe environments and willing to step in to halt the grooming process, because victims and families are often being groomed to the extent that they may not be able to identify problematic behavior as objectively.

Stage 3: Meeting the needs of children and caregivers. Once the molester is ingratiated into the lives of the children,

Environmental Stewardship

How did they know?

In these early days of spring, have you noticed the tulips poking their leaves above the ground?

In her poem Sister Joyce Rupp writes...

"How did they now it was time to push up through the long-wintered soil?"

How did they know it was the moment to resurrect while thick layers of stubborn ice still pressed the bleak ground flat?

But the tulips knew. They came, rising strongly, a day after the ice died.

Like the dormant tulips my heart stirs, and hope comes dancing forth."

We mark the early days of Easter dawn bursting with hope and new beginnings for us after the long 'winter' of COVID and for the earth after the long 'winter' of devastating forest fires and tornados. Those events have destroyed a lot of vegetation.

One initiative to help the earth heal is to consider planting a tree(s), not only for their beauty and their usefulness to us but also for the wildlife that depends upon them. Trees clean the air of carbon emissions and other pollutants. At present we are creating more air pollution than nature can purify; thus the need to plant trees is even more critical today.

The time to consider where and when to plant a tree is now. It may be a good time to survey your property to see where you might plant a tree or even a line of trees to provide a wind-breaker from the north winds. Is there any place on church property that might be available for a tree planting youth and/or family activity? Are there community groups with projects already underway that are looking for volunteers? If actually planting a tree is not feasible, there are many organizations that will plant a tree(s) in developing countries in your name or in memory of someone. There the tree(s) will provide food and/or income for a family. (Ex. Food for the Poor, Heifer International.) The Arbor Day Foundation has many suggestions for ways to celebrate Arbor Day on April 30.

Take time to observe the new life surging in the trees around you, be in awe and praise God!

Bishop's Public Schedule

April 7 – 1 p.m. - In Person and/or Virtual Listening Sessions with the Priests at St. Alexander's Jubilee Hall in Morrisonville

April 8 – 1 p.m. - In Person and/or Virtual Listening Session with the Priests at St. Mary's Parish Hall in Clayton

April 9 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
1 p.m. - In Person and/or Virtual Listening Sessions with the Deacons at St. Mary's Cathedral (Brzana Hall)
7 p.m. - Deacon Candidates Class at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

April 10 – 1 p.m. - In Person and/or Virtual Listening Sessions with the Deacons at St. Mary's Parish Hall in Clayton
4 p.m. - Mass at St. Mary's Church in Clayton

April 11 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
11 a.m. - Healing Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

April 12 – 1 p.m. - In Person and/or Virtual Listening Session with the Deacons at St. Peter's Emmanuel Hall in Plattsburgh

April 13 – 9:45 a.m. - Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence
7 p.m. - Confirmation at St. Cecilia's Church in Adams with the Queen of Heaven Church in Henderson

April 14 – 10:30 a.m. - Priests Personnel Board Meeting at Bishop's Residence

April 15 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

April 16 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

April 17 – 1:30 p.m. - Virtual Diocesan Youth Rally

April 18 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

April 19 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

April 21 – 9:30 a.m. - Diocesan Department Head Meeting at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

Grooming

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

their parents and caregivers, then gifts, extra attention and affection appear in the relationships. Pay attention to any adult who has secured a prominent place in the child's life or seems to now be the child's hero. Remember that all adults who become important to children are not all also child molesters. Before assuming that child abuse is occurring, look at the relationship in the context of these stages and the other elements necessary to create safe environments.

Rest in Peace

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

April 7 – Rev. Francois Cing-mars, 1902; Rev. James E. Duffy, 1934

April 8 – Rev. Patrick Carr, O.S.A., 1901

April 10 – Rev. Maurice Morin, M.S.C., 1976

April 11 – Rev. John P. Whalen, O.S.A., 1947

April 13 – Rev. Emil Kranciewicz, O.F.M.Conv., 1974; Deacon Richard Warner Sr., 2018

April 14 – Msgr. Richard F. Pierce, 1935; Rev. Alfred Valiquette, O.S.A., 1949

April 15 – Msgr. Peter O. LaRose, 1918; Rev. Alfred J. Chevalier, 1996

April 16 – Deacon Vernon J. Chamberlain, 1993

April 17 – Rev. Peter J. Devlin, 1915; Rev. Vernon L. Doe, 1975; Rev. C. Albert Richardson, 1988; Msgr. Joseph G. Bailey, 2000

April 19 – Rev. William S. Kelly, 1908; Rev. Edward C. Laramee, 1932; Rev. William P. Fraser, 1961

April 20 – Rev. James Igo, 2007

Stage 4: Secluding the child. The molester begins to create times and situations where the adult and the child are alone together--as unsupervised as possible. Babysitting, one-on-one coaching or mentoring, picking up the youth from school, private music lessons, tutoring and special trips are among the ways that molesters create these opportunities without raising suspicion with parents or caring adults. One way caring adults can help thwart any potential grooming (intentional or not) is to ensure that they, themselves, are never in an unsupervised situation with children within a ministry (or other) context and that they do not allow other adults to be in isolated environments with children, either.

Stage 5: Engaging in sexual activity. When the child is emotionally dependent on the predator and seemingly has full trust with the person, the predator begins to desensitize the child's natural resistance to sexual contact. This can happen through showing pornography, sexually graphic jokes or inviting children to participate in inappropriate activities such as

To Report Abuse

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

skinny dipping in the pond or pool after dark. Predators also exploit children's natural sexual curiosity. The predator creates an environment and relationship that seems to the child to be a trap that is inescapable.

Stage 6: Maintaining over time. Blame, secrecy, and threats are the most common tools in this part of the process. Approximately 42% of all adults who admitted to being molested as children had never told anyone about the abuse. These findings clearly show us that the manipulative actions predators take do keep the children from speaking up and getting help.

We always want to notice the inappropriate behaviors adults are exhibiting and interrupt them if they do not seem safe or appropriate. Interrupting warning signs of inappropriate behavior that an adult is exhibiting can mean speaking immediately to that person about what has been observed -- even if it means speaking to them more than once about it or speaking to that person's supervisor if you feel nothing has been done. Reading the code of conduct for your organizations along with examining the stages of the grooming process can help us navigate these waters and better identify what is and is not grooming - and therefore help us to communicate concerns when issues crop up.

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.

Parish nurses promote health and healing

By Jessica Hargrave
Contributing Writer

A parish nurse training program is being offered to registered nurses and other health care workers of the North Country willing to volunteer their time to their parish community. Parish Nurses, often referred to as Faith Community Nurses, do not provide hands-on nursing but instead combine their nursing knowledge and faith.

Mercy Care for the Adirondacks in Lake Placid was established in 2007 with a mission of ensuring elderly community members live their life to its fullest. Envisioning a parish nursing program from the beginning, the Faith Community Nurse Foundations Course was up and running one year later headed by Sister Catherine Cummings, RSM. Thanks to a grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, another round of trainings is set to start this April.

The course is designed for registered nurses, however other health care providers such as licensed practical nurses and certified nurse assistants are welcome to register. Registered nurses who complete the course are designated as a Parish Nurse while a non-RNs will be Parish Health Ministers.

"Parish nurses are needed to provide emotional and spiritual support to parishioners and their families in times of illness, crisis, death and bereavement. They do not take the place of the pastor and other parish ministers but complement what they offer," said Sister Catherine.

Parish nurses also promote health and healing

through health education, health counseling, assist in the understanding of treatment, connect them to community resources, as well as praying and sharing their faith.

Jennifer Lucia, LaFargeville, is a retired RN who says she still feels called to nursing even after 45 years. In the 1990s, she served as a parish nurse visiting the homebound and parishioners after hospitalization. Lucia said between working fulltime and some weekends, she was not able to be as involved then as she can now in St. Mary's Church in Clayton and St. John's Church in LaFargeville parishes which currently do not have a parish nurse program. Lucia hopes to learn more by taking a formal course so she can then start making connections to gather resources for her parish community.

"I hope to meet others and to network so I can connect and use my nursing experience and vocation as a ministry to those who need it. I believe there is a great need for wellness education and spiritual support," said Lucia.

Lucia believes her openness to share prayer and deep faith in God along with her compassion for those struggling with illness will allow her to minister to fellow parishioners in a holistic



Pictured is Parish Nurse P. Beneshan and Nancy Conner of Upper Jay at a parish nurse blood pressure clinic in 2009.

manner whether at the parish or in the home.

The training course begins April 9 and will be held at St. Marguerite D'Youville Academy in Ogdensburg. The classroom being used is large enough to provide for social distancing. There are six training days in total through the month of April and attendance at all six is mandatory to complete the course. The cost is free but pre-registration is required. Registration is open to nurses of all faiths. If you believe God is calling you to this ministry at this time, contact Holly Huber to register at hhuber@adkmercy.org or call (518) 523-5583.

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Diocesan schools improve math teaching

By Jessica Hargrave
Contributing Writer

The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Ogdensburg launched a new program during the 2018-19 school year designed to sharpen the professional expertise of the elementary school faculty in the area of math instruction. Over the past three years math coaches have worked side by side with their colleagues offering

cutting edge resources and best practices that make teaching math both successful and fun for their students. Thanks to a grant awarded by New York State, each school has established a successful math coaching program designed to assist elementary teachers in becoming expert math instructors.

“As a math coach, I research materials and practices that can help the

classroom teachers in getting every student to their highest level of understanding of math,” said teacher Jessica Deeb, math coach at Saint Agnes School in Lake Placid.

Each elementary school named one teacher from their faculty to serve as coach for two years. The program was extended to a second two-year term in 2020. Each coach is committed to enhancing their knowledge of math in-

struction and best practices. From the beginning, the network of math coaches has met on a regular basis to participate in training presented by a national education expert in math instruction, to sharpen their skills in next generation math instruction, and to build their skills as an instructional coach. They continue to meet on a regular basis to develop coaching practices, discuss challenges, and identify resources. The math coaches take what they have learned back to their schools to support fellow educators. Those chosen from their respective schools continue to participate in math coach training, team building skill development, and math coach meetings throughout the year. Even though Deeb is a music teacher at Saint Agnes, she said the school deemed her the right fit for the position, given her certification in mathematics and her experience of 34 years working in the public school system.

One of the many resources Deeb brought back from the training sessions to Saint Agnes teachers is the concept of “Number Talks”. During a Numbers Talk, students are presented a math problem and discuss the best mathematical strategies they could use to find a solution relying on mental math strategies (paper

and pencils are usually not used during this process).











Deeb said teachers are incorporating these techniques into their classroom routines which has made the math program more successful; she spends an hour a week consulting in each class. Teachers also come to her for lesson ideas on certain topics and to ask that she assist them by working with students who need extra help.

“We are always looking to improve math achievement and this year in particular with all the added challenges, we have found that the efforts of the team have seen better outcomes than we could have hoped for,” said Deeb.

Throughout the school year, webinars and Professional Development days give math coaches the opportunity to consult with teachers who may have concerns or are interested in improving math instruction. Student performance and areas of growth are also reviewed by the math coach and their principle. Deeb believes the program benefits both teachers and students for the journey ahead.

“We, as educators, need to prepare our students for the future by creating problem solvers and alternative thinkers. This program leads them on this path.”

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Professional development in a COVID world

(Ogdensburg) - Student success and well-being continue to be the top priority for the diocesan Department of Education, even in this pandemic driven world. "The Catholic Schools of the diocese have been responsive, resourceful, and empathetic to the needs of our school community," said Karen Donahue, Assistant Superintendent of Schools for the diocese.

"One of the hallmarks of our community," Donahue said, "is providing quality professional development opportunities and resources to our faculty and staff members throughout the year. We have met the challenges with creativity and converted those into opportunities for everyone. The Department of Education staff provides leadership and guidance to our schools through an active Curriculum Committee."

Sister Ellen Rose (Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, SSJ, Director of Catholic Education for the Diocese and Superintendent of the schools) provides the leadership for the department and is quite involved in the planning and decision-making aspects of our offerings. Anita Soltero, the Eastern Regional Center Director for the Diocesan Faith Formation office is also involved in the effort and is responsible for the faith instruction components.

The Education Department staff explores new techniques and strategies that support student learning and perfect the teacher's professional craft.

The Assistant Superintendent gave us some examples of how COVID-19 altered the department's past practices and opened up new opportunities.

Typically, there is diocesan

wide training three times a year for the instructional staff - Opening School Professional Development Day in late August; Superintendent's Conference Day in October and Professional Development Day in March. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the March 2020 program was postponed.

The staff had to rethink how to function under new parameters of social distancing and other protocols. The curriculum committee began meeting virtually in February 2020. Committee members agreed there was an immediate need for quality virtual resources and skills training. A Virtual Resource Lab (VRL) was created to establish a safe way to inventory and archive virtual applications (apps) and other resources teachers had discovered were especially effective during this period of distance learning.

Individuals can "visit" the lab at any time to look over posted virtual resources, read reviews by colleagues, learn some tips on using specific apps, and/or suggestions for use.

To kick off the VRL, the department sponsored a virtual contest in which anyone could send an "entry" to the lab. Once submitted the resource/app was reviewed and posted. Individuals were invited to produce and submit video clips about how to use a particular app or resource, sort of a how-to or dos and don'ts information video.

To start school year 2020-2021 the diocese hosted virtual professional development days for the teaching staff in late August 2020. "Life is Uncertain, Eat Dessert

First!" was held via ZOOM. Participants attended two two-hour sessions that featured training on:

- Transitioning Back: Building relationships and creating community
- Encouraging Independence and Student Voice
- Maximizing Classroom Discussion
- Increasing Accountability and Engagement
- Strategies to Support Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), Classroom Management and Engagement in an Online Environment

A number of programs were redesigned such as the Kindergarten to Grade 12 Digital Citizenship Training Program.

Staff professional development was conducted at the school level by a 3-person team that received in-depth training and resources to share with staff. They also supported their colleagues in presenting the lessons that are designed to be taught in the classroom or virtually.

This format proved to be quite successful, and the department decided to use it for the Spring 2021 professional development program. Differentiation of Instruction and Small Group Instruction designed to meet the needs of all students is a six-hour training program with optional follow up sessions known as Professional Learning Communi-

ties (PLCs).

Each school established a two-person team to facilitate the 6-module training over the spring semester. They also serve as resident experts in their school.

New Teacher Orientation was also redesigned to go virtual. This allowed participants to log on from anywhere for one-hour presentations offered through the first month of school for a total of eight one-hour segments.

"We have learned that our staff is resilient, resourceful, and positive under some difficult circumstances," Donahue said. "We learned that some professional development is most successful when offered in a virtual format that reduces travel time and allows the participant to receive informa-

tion in smaller bites over time. We also have been able to connect virtually with nationally known experts to receive training and resources. Webinars, interactive Zoom sessions, virtual resources, chat room discussions, google classroom apps, parent portals have all become valuable tools for teachers, students, and parents."

Karen Donahue said the Catholic School staffs are looking forward to a pre-COVID world in which students enjoy a less regulated learning environment. "The advantage for students and teachers," she said, "is that they will have the best resources and practices the virtual world has to offer in addition to traditional proven practices."

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Plattsburgh city parishes retreat for “a Lent unlike we’ve ever experienced before”

By Mary Mary Beth Bracy
Contributing Writer

Throughout the pandemic, Churches have employed innovative ways to reach the faithful. During Lent, Plattsburgh City Parishes offered a Zoom retreat on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Fr. Kevin D. McEwan, pastor of the parishes, said that “With COVID, we wanted to still bring something spiritual to people and keep them engaged.”

On February 22, Fr. McEwan provided a welcome and overview of the retreat—while driving down Broad Street in his car! He explained that this was to illustrate how “A few months ago, I was driving down the road thinking to myself that with all of the craziness of the pandemic and election, people aren’t able to have good conversations. This is a Lent unlike we’ve ever experienced before. It needs to be deeper . . . where people are at. It needs to be a lived reality. We need to find Christ at the center.”

“So many people were feeling isolated or alone,” Fr. McEwan continued, “How does the Church help people overcome it? How do we let them know they aren’t alone and we need each other?”

Social injustice is prevalent, Fr. McEwan added, as well as inequality and disrespect “on both sides of the spectrum, toward individuals or police.” The parish team wanted to offer a retreat “about what the Church has been teaching or saying and how it can help guide us.” The team met and “started

thinking about how, if we look at (these issues) through the prism of the corporal or spiritual works of mercy, that would be the basis of this mission.” Fr. McEwan referred to Ecclesia in America, a 1999 Apostolic Exhortation where St. John Paul II talks about how it is “a social sin’ when we allow those things (such as, racism and violence) to happen and don’t see the image of God in the person that stands before us. We have to seek reconciliation and forgiveness . . . how we can come through and overcome long trending problems within our society.”

On March 1, Starr Burke and Jeremy Eppler, Confirmation teachers at the Plattsburgh City Parishes, spoke on “Seeing and Being Hope in Darkness.” They said, “It can be easy to feel overcome by struggle, anxiety and loss, especially today. We and those around us are facing new challenges, change, and some form of loss.” Their presentation included a montage of images reflecting situations of hopelessness followed by reminders of God’s mercy and compassion in our lives. Incorporating the Scriptures, Catechism, and quotes from Pope Francis, they shared how “embracing and living in faith maintains our hope, so that we may share hope with others.”

On March 8, Mary Skillan, Director of Campus Ministry for the parishes, spoke about “Fraternity and Social Friendship, the Children of God are called to be United.” Ms. Skillan noted that “While our country has made strides

in regard to diversity, equity and inclusion, it is evident that individuals are still mistreated based upon the color of their skin, religious beliefs and other personal characteristics. Our Catholic faith teaches us that all individuals are made in the image and likeness of God and are beloved in his eyes.”

Skillan continued, “Since 1958 the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops has written several letters addressing inequality and racism. The strongest statement yet was made in the 2018 letter Open Wide our Hearts. The letter calls for us to open our minds and hearts to Christ’s love for all people and to the experiences of those who have been harmed by the evil of racism.”

“Pope Francis also addresses this in his latest encyclical Fratelli Tutti (All Brothers),” Ms. Skillan said. “Pope Francis gives an analysis of today’s world and what it means to be a good neighbor. He then gives us a vision of a new world and calls us to action to help make it happen. Pope Francis unequivocally states that as Catholics we do not do enough to combat inequality and racism.” Ms. Skillan’s presentation, along with those of other speakers, drew from how we can view social justice through the Works of Mercy.

On March 15, Deacon

Mark Bennett and James Carlin (a deacon candidate) gave a presentation on the “Preferential Option for the Poor.” Deacon Bennett shared that it is “one of the foundation blocks of Catholic Social Teaching. While it is called an ‘option,’ it is much more an imperative. We demonstrated how our attitude towards the poor is supported by both Old and New Testament Scripture. The Social Justice directive must be applied both locally and globally. How do we perceive the need in our own parishes and in our world? The Corporal Works of Mercy and Catholic Social Teachings are both formulas for love. The central message of our faith is profoundly social. We cannot be called truly ‘Catholic’ unless we hear and heed the church’s call to serve those in need and work for justice and peace.”

On March 22, Fr. Eduardo C. Pesigan III and Fr. Tojo Chacko spoke about “Staying Spiritually Connected during COVID.” Fr. Pesigan talked about the Church before and after the pandemic. The beginning of his session featured video footage of the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Penafrancia in the Philippines, where Fr. Pesigan is from. For 300 years, this feast drew millions of people in a procession with the image of Our Blessed Mother. “For the first time because of pandemic, it will not be

happening this year,” Fr. Pesigan conveyed. “We are shocked. Our devotion and procession didn’t materialize this time.”

However, Fr. Pesigan said, “How strong the devotion and prayers are” and “discussed the love of Christ which is greater than any suffering.” “The fruit is that the Father’s will is to give us His only begotten Son,” emphasized Fr. Pesigan,

Fr. Chacko examined the Doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church. He commented that “As we go through these challenging times it is good to look upon this particular doctrine. We, the Church, are the Body of Christ. We draw our strength from Jesus Christ who is the Head.” The basis of Fr. Chacko’s reflections is Pope Pius XII’s, *Mystici Corporis Christi*: “For We intend to speak of the riches stored up in this Church which Christ purchased with His own Blood, and whose members glory in a thorn-crowned Head. The fact that they thus glory is a striking proof that the greatest joy and exaltation are born only of suffering, and hence that we should rejoice if we partake of the sufferings of Christ, that when His glory shall be revealed we may also be glad with exceeding joy.”



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Patrick Hackett dies.

Long time Ogdensburg businessman

Patrick E. Hackett, Sr. died March 26, 2021 at home. A private Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. John's Church, in Morristown, New York. Arrangements have been entrusted to Island View Funeral Services, www.islandviewfs.com

Pat was born in Ogdensburg, New York on February 16, 1931, the firstborn son of the late Emmet P. and Emma E. Bateman. Pat grew up in Ogdensburg and spent his summers at the Bateman family camp on the St. Lawrence River. He had fond memories of fun and mischief with his family and particularly with his older close cousin, Spike Bateman, who is credited with "showing him the ropes." Pat graduated from Ogdensburg Free Academy in 1948. He was an active student, participating in school activities and sports. He especially loved playing football and was named an All-Northern football player. After high school, Pat enlisted in the Navy and spent four years in the service during the Korean War.

Patrick and Mary Katherine Ward were married at

St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg, New York on May 8, 1954.

After his honorable discharge from the Navy, Pat became involved with the family business that would eventually bear his name, Hackett. Pat served on national advisory boards of the True Value Company and was called "Mayor of the Market" at their semi-annual shows because he showed such enthusiasm for the business and such willingness to encourage new and existing business owners like himself and his brother. Pat equally enjoyed working with vendors and sealing the deal on great opportunities to supply great products at great prices to Hackett customers. Pat had the highest level of honesty and integrity and passed this on to his four children in the business, who all worked at the store one time or another.

Pat was active in his community and served on many boards in many capacities. He was a proud 60-year member of the Ogdensburg Lions Club, Past-President of the Ogdensburg Chamber of

Commerce, Vice-Chairman of the Ogdensburg Bridge and Port Authority, Past President of the St. Joseph's Foundation, St. Mary's Cathedral and St. John's Church Parish Councils, just to name a few. He and Mary Katherine were honored to receive the Caritas Award given by the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg. After retirement, he became a "trained" hospice volunteer and a religious education instructor, ministries he took very seriously. He was a member of Weight Watchers for many years, mastering the art of weighing in initially with heavy clothes and shoes and cleverly wearing lighter items each week.

Following his retirement, Pat and Mary K settled in Morristown. They loved the river and their home. They both were active in their parish, St. John's Church, which was highlighted with the building of a new church, under the direction of Msgr. Harry Snow, who became a close family friend.

Mary Catherine died in 2015. Pat was a devoted

father of four children, all of whom survive him: Jane H. (Mark) Backus, Mexico, NY; Juliann H. (Lee) Cliff and Patrick E. (Lori) Hackett, Jr., both of Ogdensburg, NY; and Eileen H. (Roy III) Simmons, Fayetteville, NY. He is survived by six grandchildren: Michael C. (Andrea) Backus of Mexico, NY; Robert P. (Michelle) Backus of Maryland; Jacob P. Hackett and Chelsea M. Hackett of Ogdensburg; Roy D. Simmons IV of Syracuse, NY and Ryan P. Simmons of California; additionally, Pat loved his two great-grandchildren, Madelynne K. and Joseph A. Backus of Mexico. Patrick is also survived by a brother, Edward (Ned) B. Hackett and sister, Mary A. Hackett Sperzel, as well as several very special cousins and several nieces and nephews in the Bateman, Hackett and Ward families.

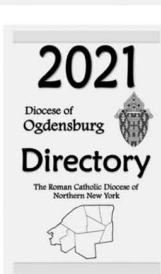
Because of his busy life, Pat never really developed any hobbies. But, if there is such a thing, Pat's hobbies were his faith and friendships. His faith was the center of his life and he held his Catholic faith with the highest regard

and wished for his family the same. He loved people and people loved him. Everywhere he went, he made friends along the way. He always looked for the best in everyone and had special relationships with so many.

Memorial Donations may be made to: St. John's Church, P.O. Box 216 Morristown, New York 13664; St. Joseph's Foundation, 950 Linden Street, Ogdensburg, New York 13669; Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, 6686 St Highway 37, Ogdensburg, New York 13669; Morristown Fire and Rescue Department, 200 Morris Street, Morristown, New York 13664; St. Lawrence Valley Society for the Prevention of Animals (SPCA), 618 St Highway 68, Ogdensburg, New York 13669; Frederic Remington Art Museum Foundation, 311 Washington Street, Ogdensburg, New York 13669, or to a charity of one's choice.

Due to COVID restrictions, services may be attended virtually on April 10, 2021 at 11 am on the parish YouTube channel- Our Lady of Grace, Morristown, N.Y.

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

Time: 1 p.m.

Place: St. Patrick's Church

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

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

ST. JOSEPH AS OUR SPIRITUAL GUIDE

Watertown - Please join us for this special presentation by Sr. Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ - Reflecting on St. Joseph as Our Spiritual Guide.

Date: April 28

Time: 6 p.m., Mass followed by presentation

Features: This event is presented by the CLM Assoc. of Jefferson & Lewis Deaneries

Contact: Register online at rcdony.org/clm-event or contact Jeanne Grizzuto for more information - jgrizzuto@rcdony.org

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PARISH NURSE PREPARATION

Ogdensburg - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks will offer preparation for the role of Parish Nurse.

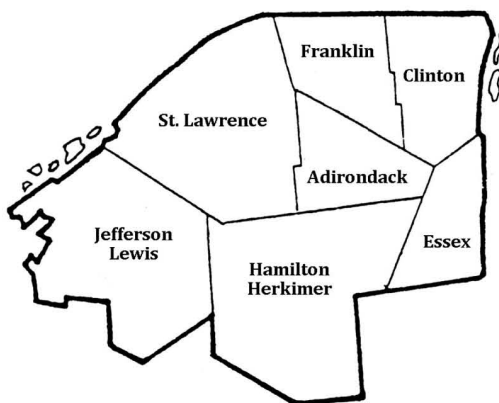
Date: April 9, 10, 16, 17, 30 and May 1 (All six session is required)

Time: Fridays 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Place: St. Marguerite D'Youville Academy

Features: This course is open to registered nurses and others who are interested in health ministry in their parishes. Parish Nurses (Faith Community Nurses) assist the members of their faith community to maintain or regain wholeness in body, mind and spirit. They promote wellness by health screening, health education, advocating for clients, connecting them to services in their community, listening and providing support. Course is free.

Contact: Please contact Sister Catherine Cummings, RSM at ccummings@adkmrcy.org or 518-523-5582.



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.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

HEALING MASS

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. Bishop LaValley will hold a special Healing Mass.

Date: April 11

Time: 11 a.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral and Livestreamed

Features: Please plan to attend and pray for all victims/survivors of child abuse.

Contact: For more information contact Safe Environment Office at 315-393-2920

VIRTUAL YOUTH RALLY

The Diocesan Youth Office is excited to offer the 2021 Youth Rally virtually. The theme will be: Courage to Rise - Answering the call to love one another.

Date: April 17

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 3:30

Features: Young people in grades 7 to 12 are welcome to "zoom" into a fun, enriching, and engaging virtual rally. Key note speaker will be Doug Tooke is a dynamic and energetic speaker with more than 20 years in Ministry. Bishop Terry R. LaValley will round out the event with a Q&A/Discussion, and Blessing. Your host for the event will be Thomas Semeraro, the Diocesan Director for the Office of Youth Ministry.

Contact: Although there is no fee to attend this virtual event, registration is required. Register at <https://www.rcdony.org/80-youth19/2147-youth-rally.html>

PRIESTHOOD DISCERNMENT

High School Junior men and older are invited to join Fr. Marty Cline & Fr. Howard Venette as they livestream from St. Bernard's, Saranac Lake, to discuss vocation discernment and the Priesthood with you!

Date: April 18

Time: 3 p.m. to 4

Place: YouTube Channel "Ogdensburg Fishers Club"

Features: Participants can be "almost" live by forwarding comments and questions to ogdiscern@gmail.com during the broadcast.

CAMP GUGGENHEIM REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

We are excited and hopeful to be able to offer the opportunity for our youth to attend summer camp in 2021. Although it may look a bit different be-

cause of the anticipated COVID protocols, we feel that it will still be a wonderful experience for all.

Contact: Tom Semeraro, Director for the Office of Youth Ministry with questions or inquiries. 315-393-2920 ext. 1415 www.rcdony.org/youth/camp

FORMATION FOR MINISTRY

Is God calling you to do more for the church? The Formation for Ministry Program is a two-year program that prepares men and women to serve in their parish. Enrollment is open for the 2021-2023 cycle.

Schedule: Virtual informational sessions to be held on Zoom on: April 10 at 1 p.m.; April 28 at 6:30 p.m.

Contact: Register at www.rcdony.org/infosos or contact Cathy Russell at crussell@rcdony.org

LET US DREAM

Virtual presentations to address and discuss our responsibilities to SEE + CHOOSE + ACT for a better future on God's Earth.

Date: May 25, 26 and 27

Time: 7 p.m. to 9

Place: Via Zoom

Features: This is a joint project of the Laudato Si Committees of the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Ogdensburg and Syracuse. More information to come.

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

Parishes across the Diocese of Ogdensburg will observe the Feast of Divine Mercy April 11, the first Sunday after Easter.

Christ revealed his message of divine mercy to the mystic St. Faustina Kowalska. She recorded these revelations in her diary, known today as "Divine Mercy in My Soul."

Below are details about some of the services being offered in the diocese.

LOWVILLE

St. Peter's Church (Please note the change in venue this year)

Schedule: 2 p.m. to 3 - Reconciliation

3 p.m. - The Divine Mercy Sunday Celebration will include: the veneration and blessing of the Divine Mercy Image, and the blessing of holy cards and petitions, followed by Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, Adoration, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Homily and Benediction.

Features: Rev. Scott A. Belina and Rev. Jude Nnadibuagha will be the celebrants and Rev. Scott A. Belina will be the Homilist. All are welcome to come and receive special graces on this Feast Day. Sign in, masks and social distancing will be required.

Contact: For more information please call 315-348-6260

MALONE

St. André's Parish

Schedule: 11 a.m. - Mass at Notre Dame Church

Noon to 3 p.m. - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

1 p.m. to 2:50 p.m. - Confessions will be heard.

3 p.m. - The Chaplet of the Divine Mercy will be prayed and there will be Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

Contact: For additional information please call the St. André's Parish Office, 518-483-1300.

WATERTOWN

St. Anthony's Church (This is a city wide event for all four Watertown Parishes)

Time: 3 p.m.

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CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Church membership continues downward trend in 21st century

CLEVELAND (CNS) - While fewer than half of American adults responding to a recent poll said they are members of a church, synagogue or mosque, the findings do not necessarily mean that people have lost faith in God, a pair of church observers said. Church membership in 2020 dropped to 47% of the more than 6,100 respondents to a Gallup Poll. It is the first time since the polling firm started measuring church membership in 1937 that a minority of adults said they belonged to a formal religious institution. Back then, in the midst of the Great Depression, 73% of adults said they belonged to a church. Over the next six decades, membership levels remained steady at about 70% before a measured decline began. The number of nonchurch members continues a downward trend that began at the turn of the 21st century. "The poll doesn't note that fewer than 50% of American's don't believe in God. It's important to note that across society institutional belonging is not high right now," said Timothy O'Malley, director of education at the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame. "It's becoming quite clear that at least church membership is not the way most Americans are practicing religiosity," he said.

Poll: Most Americans know Biden's religion, but some question his faith

WASHINGTON (CNS) - That President Joe Biden is the second Catholic U.S. president is less in dispute among Americans than the practice of his faith, according to a poll released March 30 by the Pew Research Center. Among Catholic Democrats, 89% say Biden is at least somewhat religious, with 51% saying he is "very" religious. But 63% of Catholic Republicans say Biden is either "not too religious" or "not at all religious." In the poll, "insulting comments" about Biden as a "fake Catholic" or a "Catholic in name only" were uttered by "a handful of Republicans," Pew said in the third paragraph of its report, "Most Democrats and Republicans Know Biden Is Catholic, but They Differ Sharply About How Religious He Is." Moreover, 55% of Catholic Republicans said "Biden's views about abortion should disqualify him from receiving Communion in the Catholic Church," the poll found.

Catholic groups, bishops pray for end to anti-Asian hate crimes

WASHINGTON (CNS) - Asian and Pacific Islander Catholic groups and a number of Catholic bishops have joined their voices with others in calling for an end to violence and hate crimes against Americans of Asian and Pacific Island heritage. "We call on communities to engage in peaceful dialogue at the local and national levels to address prejudice and anti-Asian bias. We stand for the peaceful co-existence of all peoples, we pray for compassion and love, and work toward healing and unity," said the leaders of 16 groups representing Asian Catholics. "The rise in violence against Asian people across the country is alarming and horrific to all people of right reason," San Francisco Archbishop Salvatore J. Cordileone said in a March 30 statement, announcing an April 10 service to pray for an end to these attacks.

Smugglers, extortion and broken dreams: Migrants' road to U.S. has perils

By David Agren
Catholic News Service

TENOSIQUE, Mexico (CNS) -Franciscan Father Gabriel Romero recalled a machete-wielding mob trying to break down the door to his migrant shelter in the middle of the night early this year. The friar blocked the door with his burly frame and yelled: "Back off!"

"You can kill me, but I'm unarmed and I'm not going to let you enter," Father Romero recalled telling the mob.

"They were paid by 'polleros'" he said, using a word for human traffickers. "We want people here to be safe, that they feel it's a peaceful place. But when people leave, it's ugly out there."

Shelters like La 72, run by the Franciscans near the Guatemala border, offer a respite on a dangerous route for migrants to the U.S. border. Migrants unable to afford the services of smugglers often stay in shelters, but advocates like Father Romero say they end up paying plenty in the form of inflated fees for taxi and vans rides or bribes and extortion payments demanded by crooked public officials.

Smugglers offer to take them to the next town of Palenque for \$250, said Father Romero, and get them through police and immigration checkpoints, which were recently reinforced by the Mexican government as part of an effort to impede the path of migrants.

Many migrants end up walking, especially now that the trains on which they used to steal rides are no longer operating.

"(Migrants) arrive here with their feet all beat up," said Sister Pascuala Medina Chávez, one of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent of Paul running the diocesan shelter in Palenque, some 45 miles from Tenosique.

They also arrive "without

any money," she said. "At each checkpoint, with every taxi or van, they have to pay to pass through."

Migrants making it to Palenque say they paid private individuals and public officials for passage, while taxi drivers and van operators often prey upon them.

"I'm scared being here, but I don't have any other choice," said an 18-year-old staying in Palenque. He described paying a van driver an inflated fare, but was robbed of his money and dropped off far from his promised destination.

"The authorities ask you for money," said Angel David, 25, a Honduran staying in Palenque.

Like many migrants, he left with plans of reaching the United States, saying he left "to build myself a house. I only am coming to work a bit and then return" to Honduras.

Both shelters in Palenque and Tenosique report receiving more migrants than they can host, with many staying in the vicinity and receiving meals.

La 72 has welcomed 3,000 migrants monthly in 2021, Father Romero said. That figure puts it on pace to break its previous record of 15,000 guests served in 2018, unless the exit flows from Central America -- or a recent Mexican government announcement to restrict border travel due to COVID-19 proves effective.

A team of Franciscan sisters from Mexico City arrived recently as reinforcements.

Migrants have streamed out of Central America in large numbers this year, fleeing violence, poverty and the destruction of twin hurricanes. Some migrants cite political problems for their decisions to abandon Central America and risk Mexico.

The attraction of the United States and ability to earn dollars loom large, too. It's proved especially attractive since the inaugu-

ration of President Joe Biden, who promises to overhaul the U.S. immigration and asylum systems -- moves that have been interpreted by some migrants as a signal to head north.

Staff at La 72 warn travelers of the risks and the situation in the United States, where authorities are telling single adult travelers and families they will not be allowed to enter. But it's a tough task, said Father Romero. He said his counterparts in northern Mexico ask him to dissuade migrants from trying to reach the U.S. border, where they often become stranded.

Asked why he hit the road at such a young age, José, 17, quietly said he wanted to get ahead. José, who gave only his first name, left Santa Bárbara in northern Honduras, where his family works as farmhands.

"My goal is to get to the United States," said José, one of 27 unaccompanied minors staying at La 72. "I want to work until I'm able to get ahead and my family is, too," though he left without telling his parents of his plans, he said.

José confessed to not hearing much about U.S. politics back in Honduras. And he said of the new president, "I don't think he'll make a difference" to migrants.

Another young migrant with copper-colored hair, Milton, 15, said he left his parents' small farm in Honduras with similar plans of getting ahead -- but he also figured a new president would provide an opportunity.

"We heard that he's letting in children," said Milton, 15, who had to cut his journey short after calling home and learning of a family emergency. He headed back to Honduras with just 200 pesos (\$9.80) in his pocket.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

The name of God is mercy

Today, the Second Sunday of Easter, we celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday throughout the world. Not only do we celebrate the appearance of the Resurrected Lord to the Apostles in the upper room, but, at a much later time in history, his appearance to a simple Polish nun, Sister Maria Faustina Kowalski, on Feb. 22, 1931. She saw the Lord clothed in white with red and pale rays shining out from his heart. He said to her:

"Paint an image according to the pattern you see, with the signature: Jesus,

I trust in You. I desire that this image be venerated, first in your chapel, and (then) throughout the world.

I promise that the soul that will venerate this image will not perish. I also promise victory over (its) enemies already here on earth, especially at the hour of death. I, myself, will defend it as my own glory".

The name of God is mercy. It is his identity card. Mercy is the core of the Gospel message. Mercy is the face of God in the Old Testament, but much more in God's son, Jesus, who came for sin-

April 11

Divine Mercy Sunday

READINGS

Acts 4:32-35

1st Letter of John 5:1-6

John 20:19-31

ners and those who knew they were sinners. Mercy is the reason for the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession).

What is the connection between the Resurrection event which we continue to celebrate today, and God's mercy? We can look at how mercifully Our Savior treated those who abandoned him, or, like Peter, actually denied him. We can look at those like Thomas who strongly doubted until Jesus

stretched out his wounds for him to see. Jesus' first words to his disciples huddled in fear in the upper room was "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." Instead of condemning them for being so cowardly, he commissioned them to lead His Church. There is God's Mercy!

How about us? We are all sinners who have disappointed the Master. Yet, again and again, Jesus pours his mercy on all of us, forgives us, and sends us to build his Church through forgiveness, love and courageous witness to his truth. Today, we are urged to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet in reparation and atonement for the sins and outrages of

the whole world against God's love.

In today's first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, we see the effects of Jesus' gift of his mercy to his followers. They were then filled with the spirit of reconciliation and peace through their faith in Jesus as their Savior. Their community was likewise filled with mutual respect, love and forgiveness. Because they had received God's mercy, they in turn extended mercy to all their brothers and sisters. Our prayer is for God's mercy on our sinful world. We also pray the same spirit will restore an end to the pandemic and bring the unity and peace to our world we so earnestly desire.



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

CALLED TO SERVE

Every Mass should be planned

Perhaps you would consider my attitude about planning inconsistent. I am a big fan of planning for events and projects but I also get pumped when the unexpected demands unrehearsed thinking and all your plans go out the window.

Charlie Osgood's book, "Nothing Could Be Finer Than A Crisis That Is Minor" was my mantra when I was a morning newsman on the radio. The author worked mornings for CBS Radio when he wrote the book. Osgood contended the routine of collecting news, writing it and delivering it was joyfully altered when there was an earthquake (without injury), or a political gaff or indiscretion or something that in the great scheme of things is just a blip on the calendar

but sure seems important at the moment.

Liturgy, especially the Mass, is much more than a blip but I am afraid it can become routine, especially for ministers. That is too bad. The Mass is the "sum and summit of our Christian life" according to the bishops of the second Vatican Council. Something that important ought to be planned and then executed perfectly, every time.

I watched the Bishop and other ministers at the Chrism Mass last week with the eye of a planner. One particular sequence attracted my attention.

Bishop LaValley prepared to bless the Oil of Catechumens. Father Bryan Stitt, the Master of Ceremonies, removed the lid from the flagon of oil. Then he reached below

the table to remove the lid on the kettle that carried a few more gallons of oil. Father Stitt handed the kettle lid to Deacon Ronny Gingerich, who held it while Bishop said the prayers of blessing. Bishop completed the prayer and was ready to bless the contents of the next container.

Father Stitt replaced the lid on the flagon. Deacon Ronny handed Father Bryan the cover to the first kettle, which he replaced. Next Father Bryan removed the lid on the pitcher holding the Oil of the Sick, put that down, removed the lid on the Oil of the Sick kettle and handed it to the deacon while Bishop prayed and blessed those oils.

The sequence was repeated for the Oil of Chrism. All those moves and prayers executed quietly, properly and with the dignity appropriate to the moment. It all took a few minutes. It was clear each of the ministers knew his part and the ritual had been planned.



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

The blessing of the oils was part of an elaborate, complicated sequence of movements, words and actions that constitute "one single act of worship," The Mass.

Bishop LaValley has recently invited the clergy of the diocese to rediscover the Mass. At the same Chrism Mass, speaking of the diocese's 150th

anniversary next year, Bishop said, "Is there a better way for us to celebrate than by re-capturing what it is that identifies who we are? In the humble signs of bread and wine, changed into His Body and Blood, Christ walks beside us as our strength and our food for the journey, and he enables us to become, for everyone, witnesses of hope."

Every Mass deserves our attention, participation, reverence. All of us at Mass, those in the sanctuary and those in the pews, should plan to be full and active participants. The Mass is not a minor event, not a blip. It is THE event of our lives. It deserves planning.



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSI, Director

622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669

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mbrett@rcdony.org

This week the Mission Office would like to share a story of immense courage in the face of great hardship and hope that you can join us in praying for the people of Myanmar. The article is from FIDES missionary news service of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

A Catholic religious woman took to the streets in the city of Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin State in the north of Myanmar and asked the security forces not to shoot young demonstrators who are protesting peacefully.

Sister Ann Nu Thawng of the Congregation of St. Francis Xavier in the diocese of Myitkyina, became the heroine of yesterday, February 28th, which was marked by harsh repression of the Burmese police, who, according to the

United Nations, opened fire killing 18 people and injuring more than 30 nationwide.

"In the Myitkyina area, demonstrations so far have always been peaceful and without incidents. However, yesterday episodes of violence risked precipitating the situation," said Joseph Kung Za Hmung, editor of the Gloria News Journal the first Catholic online newspaper in Myanmar.

"The action of the nun and the response of the police who, upon seeing the nun's plea, stopped, surprised many of us. Sister Ann Nu Thawng is today a role model for Church leaders: bishops and priests are called to step out of their comfort zones and follow her courage as an example."

Many non-Catholics also

praised Sister Thawng's brave efforts. The video of her actions went viral on social media. "More than 100 demonstrators were able to find shelter in her monastery. It saved them from brutal beatings and arrests by the police," says the editor of the Journal.

Cardinal Charles Maung Bo, Archbishop of Yangon, talked about the situation in his homily on the Second Sunday of Lent. "The Gospel of the Transfiguration is so current that it reflects the events of these days," Maung Bo said. "What transfiguration are we looking for in Myanmar today? If we seek it, all the confusion, all the darkness, all the hatred will go away and our country, the famous Land of Gold, will be transfigured into a land of peace and prosperity."

"During the last month,"

the Cardinal continued, "we have implored everyone. Peace is the only way. Peace is possible. Pope Francis has called for the resolution of all conflicts through dialogue. Those who want conflict do not want the good of this nation. Let us all become Elijah who proclaims peace by lighting a lamp of hope in the midst of darkness." Cardinal Bo prayed for the nation that "has seen so much suffering, so much war, so many deaths," and said, "like Abraham we seek a promised land. The promised land comes when we are ready to sacrifice what we consider very dear."

He concluded his message: "Conversion is the central message of Lent. Let's challenge ourselves. Let's see each other in a better light. There is a pos-

sible new world, a possible new Myanmar, a conflict-free nation is possible if that nation is transfigured into the glory it deserves. Let us make peace our destiny, not conflict. Weapons are unnecessary. We must rearm ourselves through reconciliation and dialogue.

Myanmar's Mount Tabor must be climbed with patience, tolerance, if we are to witness this transfiguration. Evil must disappear, but it cannot be destroyed by another evil."

The Burmese army took power on February 1 in a coup, declaring a one-year "state of emergency", after accusing the National League for Democracy, the party of the civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi, under arrest.

OBITUARIES

Canton – Donald W. Cook, 90; Mass of Christian Burial March 29, 2021 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Henry's Cemetery, DeKalb Junction.

Canton – R. Maureen (Smith) Howard, 83; Mass of Christian Burial March 27, 2021 at St. Mary's Church.

Carthage – Benjamin P. Renzi, 88; Mass of Christian Burial March 27, 2021 at St. James Church.

Champlain – Morris "Buster" Edmund Roberts, 87; Mass of Christian Burial March 29, 2021 at St. Mary's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Clayton – Gerald B. Bristol, 93; Mass of Christian Burial April 2, 2021 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Grove Cemetery, LaFargeville.

Harrisville – Floyd J. "Skip" Weeks, 90; Mass of Christian Burial March 31, 2021 at St. Francis Solanus Church; burial in

parish cemetery.

Hogansburg – Gordon G. Ransom "Howdee" Aroniakenra, 81; Funeral Services April 6, 2021 at Donaldson Funeral Home.

Lake Placid – Kathleen Anita "Kay" (Devlin) Crowley, 100; Mass of Christian Burial May 22, 2021 at St. Agnes Church; burial in St. Agnes Cemetery.

Lake Placid – Andrew St. Louis, 37; Mass of Christian Burial April 3, 2021 at St. Agnes Church.

Madrid – David R. Elliott, 83; Private services to be held.

Malone – Phyllis (Ashlaw) Smith, 76; Funeral Services to be held at a later date.

Massena – Richard J. Fitzgerald, 82; Mass of Christian Burial April 6, 2021 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in

B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery.

Massena – Margaret J. (Ferecy) Revier, 92; Private graveside services to be held.

Mooers Forks – Alan Monty, 64; Mass of Christian Burial March 29, 2021 at St. Ann's Church.

Norwood – Shirley M. (Snyder) Jay, 91; Mass of Christian Burial April 1, 2021 at St. Andrew's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Redford – Lillian M. (Sharkey) Hamel-Rizzie, 90; Mass of Christian Burial June 7, 2021 at Church of the Assumption; burial in parish cemetery.

Redford – Charles "Bob" Parker, 91; Mass of Christian Burial March 31, 2021 at Church of the Assumption; burial in Saranac Independence.



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Ticonderoga children “Bond with Books”

St. Mary's School in Ticonderoga celebrated literacy and reading as a Family in March. The school program is called “Bonding with Books”. Each family in the school received a book to read out loud as a group. There are no assignments, no projects. Just reading for fun!

The PreK and Kindergarten families received the book “Five Minute Stories” and “Over 50 Tales and Fables”, a collection of traditional stories that can be read in short periods of time. Grades 1 and 2 received “The World According to Humphrey”, written by Betty G. Birney. Humphrey is a lovable class pet that has many adventures with the students of Room 26 at Longfellow School. The families of grades 3-8 students received the book “Wishtree” by Katherine Applegate. This is a wonderful story of inclusion, acceptance, and hope.

In school the children have been having conversations about their books and creating some artwork in connection with the stories. One day a



hamster like Humphrey came to school to visit with the students! The entire school enjoyed the visit!

The “Bonding With Books” program was funded through a grant from the Family Support Coordinators which is sponsored by the Mother Cabrini Foundation. The students have enjoyed reading these books and when asked what the favorite part is, the response is typically “We love cuddling on the couch with my family and reading a chapter each night!”

IHC service students continue to make a difference

By Patricia Mintner-Powell

Even a year with Covid and its accompanying mandates on social distancing haven't been able to dampen the determination of Immaculate Heart Central School Faith Community Service students to make a concrete difference in the lives of our neighbors. Instead, adapting to a new landscape simply forced us to get creative.

Our service program's first priority was to lessen the feelings of isolation among the most vulnerable of Watertown, NY neighbors. IHC's Cards of Comfort Campaign, launched last spring, drew immediate support from our school's community. Since then, students throughout the IHC system have sent over 1,000 cards of hope and encouragement to residents at local adult homes and continue to mark each major holiday with these colorful reminders that our elderly are not forgotten.

Because many of our traditional indoor opportunities for service were limited, we concentrated our efforts on outdoor events, and students - eager to serve in any capacity - turned out in record numbers to a car wash supporting victims of the devastating wildfires in the Pacific Northwest, to a community tree planting at our local park and to our annual LEAF Relief for the Elderly fall yard care program.

In December, we organized a candy drive to fill the Christmas stockings of local children. In February, cognizant of the increased food insecurity



Abby Bombard shows that sometimes you have to stand up and stand out to make a difference.

right here in our own neighborhoods, we held a food drive and collected almost 2,000 items - including over 1,000 cans of soup donated by the Primary School - to be shared with two of our local food pantries.

Further afield we revisited our commitment to the 117 students at our “adopted” girls' school in Kitenga, Tanzania - recipients of IHC's annual Respect Life Initiative since 2016 - as these girls, too, faced very real issues due to the pandemic. We got creative again, joining a “virtual” 5K 4:Kitenga hosted by our partners, Girls Education Collaborative. The heart-warming response? Over 100 members of our IHC community stepped forward - some walking, others biking, running or hiking - to raise \$2,565, funds that have already helped improve the health and safety of these young women.

An additional fall car wash raised another \$1,700 in donations which

were augmented by a challenge grant and are helping fund a tuition assistance program allowing those girls whose parents could no longer afford school fees to continue their studies.

And the latest from Kitenga? In December, we received the exciting news that the first class of girls - they call themselves “The Pioneers” - all graduated this winter with 75% of the students ranking in the top tier of Tanzanian graduates and the remaining 25% in the second tier. What's even more rewarding is the recent announcement that the Kitenga Girls Secondary School - just four years old - now ranks 1st in the Mara District and 11th in the entire country!

Even in the midst of a global pandemic, Immaculate Heart Central remains committed to its mission of “forming responsible citizens whose Christian values will transform the world”.

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