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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 76 Number 5

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MAY 12, 2021

Bishop releases new COVID protocols

Bishop Terry R. LaValley released new COVID-19 guidelines on May 7.

"Thanks be to God, a good percentage of us have been vaccinated and the number of COVID cases has declined. This has allowed us to return to some degree of normalcy. It has become apparent that we can safely participate in Mass when we follow simple precautionary measures. Today I am releasing revised guidelines for parish life in the context of COVID-19. While keeping the general dispensation from the obligation of attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, we are able to modify our protocols in some important ways."

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

CONFIRMED IN THE SPIRIT



Confirmation was held on April 13 at St. Cecilia's and Queen of Heaven parishes in Adams. Pictured are Deacon Larry Ambeau, Father Robert Decker, Gianna Muglia, Caitlin Hobbs, Madelyn Barney, Bishop Terry R. LaValley, Zachary Blevins, Ethan Elliot and Jack Buckingham. Missing from the photo is Owen Newton.

NEW PRIEST ASSIGNMENTS



Father Joseph W. Giroux completes his Canon Law degree at St. Paul's University and will become pastor of The Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary in Potsdam and St. Patrick's Church in Colton. Father Joseph Giroux will also serve the Tribunal and Office of Canonical Affairs. The appointment, one of a number announced this week, will take effect June 16.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

Pope: Welcoming migrants is opportunity for growth

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – As countries become more culturally and ethnically diverse, their Catholic communities become more "catholic" and their societies can increasingly reflect the fact that all people are brothers and sisters, Pope Francis said.

"In encountering the diversity of foreigners, migrants and refugees, and in the intercultural dialogue that can emerge from this encounter, we have an opportunity to grow as church and to en-

rich one another," the pope wrote in his message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, which will be marked Sept. 26 in most countries.

"All the baptized, wherever they find themselves, are by right members of both their local ecclesial community and the one church, dwellers in one home and part of one family," the pope wrote in the message, which was released May 6 at the Vatican.

The message called on

all Catholics to build up the church by welcoming and getting to know Catholic migrants and refugees and reaching out with a witness of charity to members of other religions, and it called on all people to enrich the diversity of their countries by accepting newcomers and ensuring they are not left languishing in poverty.

Cardinal Michael Czerny, undersecretary of the Vatican's Migrants and Refugees Section, was asked about people who

fear, for example, that continuing migration will bring more Muslims to Europe, contributing to a further decline of Christianity on the continent.

"It is a real problem if one feels insecure or threatened or vulnerable in one's faith life because of others," he said. "We need to get beyond the 'wall,' beyond the barrier," and a first step could be to ask, "Have I ever spoken with or even listened to someone from that other faith? Do I know what I am

talking about or am I relying on images and slogans and hearsay?"

A Christian has an obligation to seek the truth, the cardinal said, "and not rely on these fear-mongering cliches which are not only baseless but are, in fact, serving other motives."

The theme the pope chose for the day is "Toward an ever wider 'we,'" and it builds on the teaching in his encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship."

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I wasn't sure I liked him at first

I had been attending my parish, St. Mary's in Brushton, for only a few months when our pastor, Father Christopher J. Looby, was re-assigned to a different parish.

It's not an understatement to say I was sad and a bit upset when I heard he was being re-assigned. It's hard not to like Father Chris, and I was just getting to know him when the move was announced.

A few weeks after the announcement was made, our new pastor, Father Raymond J. Moreau, arrived at our parish.

At first, I wasn't sure if I liked Father Ray. He's older

than Father Chris. His homilies are MUCH longer than Father Chris'.

Looking back on it, though, the Holy Spirit was definitely at work with this move.



**Darcy L.
Fargo**

Father Ray doesn't gravitate toward technology in the same way as Father Chris, who is known for his use of social media, websites, podcasts and other digital media and technology.

Because digital media and technology isn't Father Ray's forte, I became involved in designing and administering the parish website as well as the parish social media (along with another volunteer).

Being involved in those volunteer opportunities – I refer to them as “digital ministry” – helped me become engaged in the parish in a way I hadn't been before. It made me more aware of parish ministries and offerings. It put me in a position in which I needed to work with Father Ray fairly regularly.

While I'm confident Father Chris would've had ideas for ways to involve me, then new to the parish, in parish life, Father Ray needed my particular skillset. He needed someone with experience with web design and social media administration. He needed someone who enjoys playing with text and graphics. Because Father Ray needed my skills, I became more engaged

in the parish and more ownership of it. I also learned to adore Father Ray.

Now, I'm blessed to have both Father Ray and Father Chris in my life.

It can be sad when a beloved pastor or parochial vicar is moved to another parish. Sometimes, it's hard to see God's plan in such a loss.

But God has a plan. While it may be hard, if not impossible, for us to understand that plan, there's purpose in that plan.

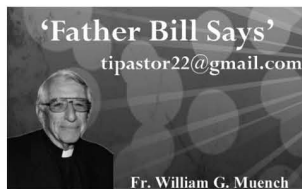
Please join me in praying for our priests, especially those who are about to transition to new assignments or their new lives in retirement. Also, please pray that their parishioners see the Holy Spirit at work in these moves.

God transforms my days, my life

I am forever surprised how God sends little things, simple experiences that bring joy and peace to a day, transforming so much and making the day brighter and more meaningful. I am constantly grateful to God for sending such experiences each day to me.

Here is such an experience that happened to me yesterday: On Mondays here in this parish, there is an hour of confessions scheduled here in the afternoon. Yesterday, the last person to come in was a woman, who was obviously pregnant. She told me this was to be the week for the birth.

I immediately told her that we just had to have a special blessing. So, after confession, we located her husband and moved to the front of the Church. I found a great blessing in the book – a blessing for a woman about to give birth. I must admit, I was so pleased to be able to offer this couple the Church's blessing as they were preparing for the birth of their child. I did not know



them personally, but on that day, I became a part of their family.

By the way, I was reminded again when I was invited by Susan and Paul to accompany them to the birth of their second child, Will, now 22 years ago. That continues to be the most exciting day of my life.

My priesthood has been filled, almost day by day, with the Lord sending me wonderful and meaningful experiences – often simple and surprising, but always powerful. I think of this because I was ordained in the month of May. These days I have been celebrating my anniversary of my ordination as a priest, a time for remembrance.

I must admit that right from the start, my priesthood was filled with sur-

prises. I grew up in the city of Syracuse, but for various reasons, I decided to study for the Diocese of Ogdensburg. So, I entered Wadhams Hall and began to study for the priesthood and began to meet many lifelong friends and discover North Country places that I did not know existed as a kid.

Each anniversary, I recall each of the assignments I have been privileged to serve. I continue to thank God for those assignments. They were all great. And I must say again, they were all surprises and filled with constant surprises.

As a priest I have served many excellent bishops, and they have all become friends. I am so pleased that in recent years that our present bishop is one of our own priests, Bishop Terry LaValley. This past year in retirement, I have moved to Syracuse. Talk about a surprise! The new Bishop of Syracuse was chosen from the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Bishop Douglas Lucia. Ogdensburg stays in my life.

Recently, I had an opportunity to spend some time in the North Country. Monsignor John Murphy asked me to cover the weekend Masses at his parish, St. Bartholomew's Parish in Old Forge. I also had the opportunity to drive through some of the parishes of my diocese in that area. I also had the opportunity to visit my classmate and friend, Father Phil Allen.

I always found such a close and friendly spirit in the Diocese of Ogdensburg – true communities in each of the parishes where I was assigned or visited. So, on another anniversary, I thank God for connecting me to the Diocese of Ogdensburg, the North Country Catholic.

I must finish these memories with gratitude to God for connecting me to the *North Country Catholic*. I have worked with many terrific and talented editors over the years. The Diocese of Ogdensburg has been blessed to have the North Country Catholic. And I have been blessed to be part of its staff.

FOLLOW ME

Bishop LaValley releases new COVID protocols

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

As we welcome the good news about the decline in the number of COVID-19 cases and the relaxation of some restrictions by our State government, many questions have arisen about the manner in which we are celebrating Mass and general parish life. I want to update you on our protocols for safely participating in Mass and parish life.

Last March, because of the uncertainties of COVID-19 and to protect the most vulnerable among us, I suspended the celebration of public Masses and granted a general dispensation to all in the Diocese of Ogdensburg from the obligation of attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. We resumed the celebration of public Masses last May, with limited capacities and strict protocols for social distancing, sanitizing, and wearing masks.

Thanks be to God, a good percentage of us have been vaccinated and the number of COVID cases has declined. This has allowed us to return to some degree of normalcy. It has become apparent that we can safely participate in Mass when we follow simple precautionary measures. Today I am releasing revised guidelines for parish life in the context of COVID-19. While keeping the general dispensation from the obligation of attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days, we are able to modify our protocols in some important ways. You will note that we are encouraging servers, lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, ushers, greeters, and other volunteers to resume their service to their parish, while

adhering to some precautions. We are encouraging a return to in-person parish group activities and outreach to the homebound, hospitalized and those in nursing facilities. We are changing many of the protocols for celebrating Mass, although the requirement for wearing face masks, social distancing and sanitizing remain in place. I thank all of you for your cooperation and patience with our COVID-19 mitigation practices to date, and I ask for your continued cooperation.

We will continue to monitor our circumstance and adjust our protocols as much as possible. I am hopeful that we will soon be able to lift the general dispensation from the obligation of attending Mass on Sunday and Holy Days of Obligation, but that time has not yet come. Although the State is eliminating the limitations on capacity for our churches, the requirement of maintaining a six-foot social distance from others who are not part of our family causes a *de facto* capacity limit that makes it imprudent to do away with the general dispensation at this time.

Let us seek the intercession of St. Joseph, asking him to protect us and guide our efforts to live out our faith. We remember in prayer those who are no longer with us and those who continue in their recovery. Asking God to bless you abundantly, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,



Most Reverend
Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

REVISED GUIDELINES FOR PARISH LIFE IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

Guidelines for the celebration of Mass

The general dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation will remain in effect at this time. Although the State has eliminated limitations on capacity for our churches, the requirement of six-foot physical distancing constitutes a *de facto* limit on capacity that makes it imprudent to lift the dispensation at this time.

Wearing a mask during Mass is still required, as is maintaining a social distance of six feet between persons who are not from the same household or bubble. All are asked to wear their masks throughout Mass, especially when entering or leaving Mass or when they are moving about. However, it is possible for parishioners to lower their masks while they are seated in their pews, provided they observe physical distancing.

The building capacity limit of 50% is eliminated, and the number of participants at Mass is limited only by the need to physically distance six feet from those who are not from the same household or bubble.

It is no longer necessary to block off every other row of pews. Parishioners may be seated in a staggered fashion while respecting six feet of distance.

No distinction should be made according to one's vaccination status or COVID test results.

Deacons, lectors, servers, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may resume their duties in the celebration of Mass. In the case of servers, this may not necessarily include all their former responsibilities, but parishes are strongly encouraged to bring servers back.

A cantor is permitted, and small choirs may resume. Mask should be worn by choir members and by parishioners when singing.

Weekday Masses should continue in the main church, rather than

in a chapel.

Ministers of hospitality (greeters) and ushers may resume their duties but should not make physical contact with parishioners.

Priests, deacons, lectors, servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, ushers and sacristans are to continue to follow prescribed hand-washing and sanitizing practices.

Offertory collections with baskets may be resumed by ushers, provided they do not make physical contact with parishioners.

It continues to be necessary to avoid physical contact during the Sign of Peace. The Sign of Peace is optional and there should be no hand holding during the Lord's Prayer.

Communion should be distributed in the traditional manner and at the normal time, with parishioners being responsible for maintaining social distancing from those not in their household or bubble during the procession. Communion, no matter how received, should be administered at the regular time and not at the conclusion of Mass.

At this time, the Precious Blood should not be distributed to the faithful.

Guidelines for the church building and liturgical objects

Because it has been demonstrated that the danger of contracting COVID from surfaces is less than previously thought, parishes should focus on sanitizing bathrooms and other high traffic or high touch areas (e.g. light switches and door knobs) rather than trying to sanitize the entire church after each Mass. Each church should be sanitized and cleaned daily.

All Communion vessels should be properly cleansed after Mass with hot, soapy water after being purified according to the rubrics.

Hand sanitizer should be available at all church entrances and in the Sanctuary where it can easily be used by celebrants, Extraordinary

Ministers of Holy Communion, and others serving or attending Mass.

Holy Water fonts (stoups) should remain empty at this time. Baptismal fonts should remain empty when not celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism.

Parishes may use worship aids (e.g. missalettes), provided all participants sanitize their hands as they enter the church.

Bulletins may be distributed at Mass and may also be distributed electronically.

Sacramental and parish life

Weddings and funerals should be held.

Baptism should continue. Clean water must be used for each individual Baptism.

Parishes should hold regular Confessions. If confessionals have insufficient space or ventilation, another location in the Church may be used, respecting both privacy and social distancing requirements.

Anointing of the Sick should be done with utmost care, following the protocols specified on the Thomistic Institute website.

Visits to the homebound for Communion should resume with proper caution. Further, visits to parishioners and nursing homes should resume, respecting the protocols in place in those institutions.

Churches should be open for visitation, and Eucharistic Adoration may resume, using appropriate precautions and observing social distancing.

Parish group activities may resume, including Bible studies, prayer groups, pastoral council meetings, finance council meetings, following appropriate protocols.

Faith Formation classes should continue following the established protocols.

Volunteers are encouraged to resume serving in parishes.

All parish offices should continue to follow the protocols in place and resume normal business hours.

Bishop LaValley announces priest assignments

After prayerful consideration and consultation with the Priests' Personnel Board, Bishop Terry R. LaValley has announced the following appointments, effective June 16 unless otherwise noted:

- Father Deepak Baru, HGN, parochial vicar at the Church of the Holy Family, St. Anthony's, and St. Patrick's Church in Watertown, is appointed parochial vicar at the Catholic Community of St. Peter and St. Mary and St. Hedwig in Lowville.

- Father Scott A. Belina, administrator of the Catholic Community of St. Peter and St. Mary and St. Hedwig in Lowville is appointed pastor of those parishes.

- Deacon Matthew Conger upon his priestly ordination, will serve as parochial vicar at Church of the Holy Family, St. Anthony's, and St. Patrick's Church in Watertown.

- Msgr. Dennis J. Duprey, administrator of St. Augustine's in Peru, will retire. Monsignor will remain the Dean of Clinton Deanery and will remain in residence in his retirement.

- Father J. Michael Gaffney, pastor of The Roman Catholic Community of Brownville and Dexter and St. Andrew's Church in Sackets Harbor will retire.

- Father Joseph W. Giroux completes his Canon Law degree at St. Paul's University and is appointed pastor of The Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary in Potsdam and St. Patrick's Church in Colton. Father Joseph Giroux will also serve the Tribunal and Office of Canonical Affairs.

- Father Michael J. Jablonski, parochial vicar at St. André Bessette Roman Catholic Parish in Malone, is appointed pas-



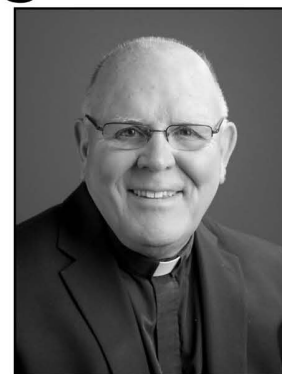
Father Deepak Baru, HGN



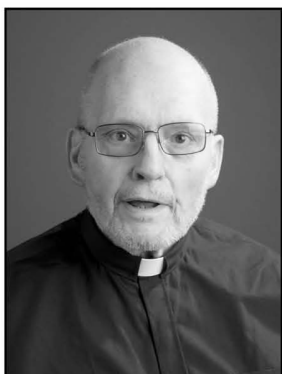
Father Scott A. Belina



Deacon Matthew Conger



Msgr. Dennis J. Duprey



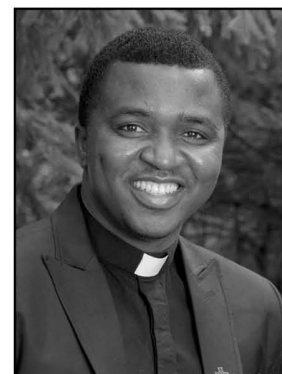
Father J. Michael Gaffney



Father Joseph W. Giroux



Father Michael J. Jablonski



Father Jude Nnadibuagha

tor of St. Joseph's Church in Dannemora and Church of the Assumption in Redford.

- Father Dominic Duc Nguyen, parochial vicar at St. Mary's Church in Champlain and St. Patrick's Church in Rouses Point, completes his time in the Diocese of Ogdensburg and returns to the Diocese of Kansas City-St. Joseph.

- Father Jude Nnadibuagha, parochial vicar at the Catholic Community of St. Peter and St. Mary and St. Hedwig in Lowville is appointed parochial vicar at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

- Deacon John Ojuok upon his priestly ordination will serve as parochial vicar at Holy Cross Parish in Plattsburgh.

- Father Herman Pongantung, MSC, parochial

vicar at Church of the Holy Family, St. Anthony's Church and St. Patrick's Church in Watertown, completes his time in the Diocese of Ogdensburg and will join the Missionary of the Sacred Heart Community in Center Valley, Pennsylvania in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Allentown.

- Father Donald A. Robinson, pastor of St. James Minor Church in Carthage and St. Mary's Church in Copenhagen is appointed pastor of The Roman Catholic Community of Brownville and Dexter and St. Andrew's Church in Sackets Harbor.

- Father Stephen Rocker, pastor of The Roman Catholic Church of St. Mary in Potsdam and St. Patrick's Church in Colton, is appointed administrator of St. Bernard's and St. Edmund's Parish in Ellen-

burg Center.

- Father Scott Seymour, pastor of the Roman Catholic Community of St. Alexander and St. Joseph in Morrisonville and St. James Church in Cadyville is also appointed pastor of St. Augustine's Church in Peru.

- Deacon Fernando Solomon upon his priestly ordination will serve as parochial vicar at St. André Bessette Roman Catholic Parish in Malone.

- Father Todd E. Thibault, pastor of St. Bernard's and St. Edmund's Parish in Ellenburg Center, is appointed pastor of St. James Minor Church in Carthage and St. Mary's Church in Copenhagen.

- Father Justin Thomas, HGN, parochial vicar at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg, is appointed pastor of St. Elizabeth's

Church in Elizabethtown, St. Philip Neri Church in Westport and The Catholic Community of St. Philip of Jesus and St. Joseph in Willsboro.

- Father Howard J. Venette, pastor of St. Elizabeth's Church in Elizabethtown, St. Philip Neri Church in Westport and The Catholic Community of St. Philip of Jesus and St. Joseph in Willsboro, awaits notification on his appointment as Chaplain of Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora. (effective TBA). Father Venette will reside in the rectory in Dannemora.

- Father Eduardo Pesigan, parochial vicar at Holy Cross Parish in Plattsburgh, completes his time in the Diocese of Ogdensburg and returns to the Archdiocese of Caceres in the Philippines.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Priest assignments

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

This is effective June 7.

Father Deepak Baru

Father Baru, born in Orisa, located in Northeast India, is a priest with the Heralds of Good News. He was ordained April 29, 2011 and served as a parochial vicar in a number of communities near his hometown. He arrived in the Diocese of Ogdensburg on May 1, 2109, and he has been serving as parochial vicar at Holy Family, St. Anthony's, and St. Patrick's Church in Watertown since that time.

Father Scott A. Belina

Father Belina, 36, has been serving as administrator of the Catholic Community of St. Peter and St. Mary and St. Hedwig since March. Prior to that assignment, he was parochial vicar at St. Peter's Parish in Massena, St. André Bessette Parish in Malone, and St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

Father Belina was raised in Watertown. He was ordained May 25, 2013.

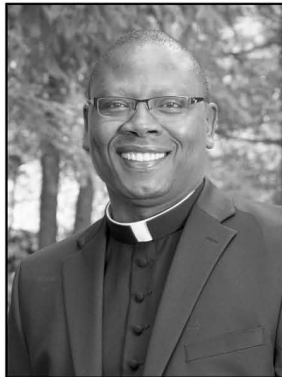
Deacon Matthew Conger

Deacon Matthew Conger is a life-long resident of Ogdensburg. He is now completing his last year of theology at Christ The King Seminary in Buffalo, and he is scheduled to be ordained by Bishop Terry R. LaValley on May 29.

Msgr. Dennis J. Duprey

Msgr. Duprey has served as administrator of St. Augustine's in Peru since July 8, 2020. Prior to that assignment, he served as pastor and later special parochial vicar at St. Peter's, St. John the Baptist and Our Lady of Victory churches in Plattsburgh, as well as the St. John XXIII Newman Center; and as pastor at Malone Catholic Parishes, now St. André Bessette Parish.

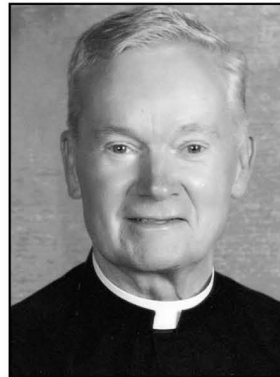
He has served as assistant pastor in Malone and



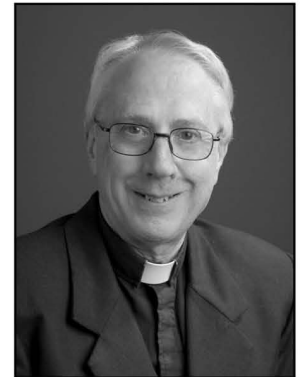
Deacon John Ojuok



Father Herman Pongantung, MSC



Father Donald A. Robinson



Father Stephen T. Rocker



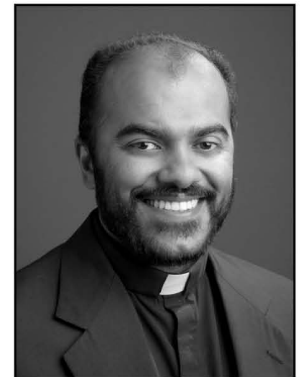
Father Scott R. Seymour



Deacon Fernando Solomon



Father Todd E. Thibault



Father Justin Thomas, HGN

Ogdensburg and as administrator in Hammond and Rossie.

Msgr. Duprey has served in various diocesan roles, including director of Religious Education, director of Priest Personnel and co-vicar for Religious. He also served as a prison chaplain in Ogdensburg and Malone and became an advocate around criminal justice issues.

Father J. Michael Gaffney

Father Gaffney has been pastor in Brownville, Dexter and Sackets Harbor since 2013. Prior to that assignment, he served as pastor in Massena, Lake Placid and Chaumont. He served as an assistant pastor at St. Alphonsus in Tupper Lake, St. Peter's in Lowville, Notre Dame in Malone, and St. Anthony's in Watertown.

Originally from Water-

town, Father Gaffney, 73, was ordained May 5, 1973 by Bishop Stanislaus J. Brzana.

Father Joseph W. Giroux

Prior to enrolling at St. Paul's University, Father Giroux was pastor of Malone Catholic Parishes, now St. André Bessette Parish. He previously served as administrator and later pastor of St. Bartholomew's Church in Old Forge and St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Inlet and Raquette Lake. Before becoming a pastor, he served as parochial vicar at Notre Dame Church, Malone; St. Bernard's, Saranac Lake; St. Peter's, Lowville; Sacred Heart, Massena; and St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. While in Ogdensburg, he also served as part-time chaplain at the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility.

Originally from Plattsburgh, Father Giroux, 46, was ordained Aug. 12, 2000.

Father Michael J. Jablonski

Father Jablonski has been serving as parochial vicar at St. André Bessette Parish in Malone since September of 2018. Prior to that assignment, he served as parochial vicar at St. Peter's Parish in Massena.

Originally from Johnsville, New York in Monroe County, Father Jablonski, 40, was ordained May 27, 2017 by Bishop LaValley.

Father Dominic Duc Nguyen

Father Nguyen, 52, a priest from the Diocese of Kansas City-Saint Joseph served for a year as parochial vicar of St. Patrick's in Rouses Point and St. Mary's in Cham-

plain.

Born in Saigon, Vietnam, he immigrated to the United States in 1983 and was ordained May 30, 2009 in the Diocese of Kansas City-Saint Joseph.

Father Jude Nnadibuagha

Father Nnadibuagha, 37, was born in Imo State, Nigeria. He was ordained Aug. 1, 2020 by Bishop LaValley. Since his ordination, he has served as parochial vicar in Lowville, Glenfield and Houseville. He also served that community as a deacon after being ordained to that role in October of 2019.

Deacon John Ojuok

Deacon Ojuok has been in the diocese since 2016. He has spent time in St. Bartholomew's in Old Forge and St. Alexander's in Morrisonville. His home

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Priest assignments

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

base is St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. He is now completing his last year of theology at Christ The King Seminary in Buffalo and is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood on May 29.

Father Herman Pongantung, MSC

Father Pongantung arrived in the United States from Indonesia in October 2018, when he began serving in Watertown.

He professed first vows on Jan. 9, 1986 and was ordained on Jan. 9, 1993.

Father Donald A. Robinson

Father Robinson has served in Carthage and Copenhagen since 2015. Previously, he was pastor at St. Anthony's and St. Patrick's in Watertown, and St. Mary's in Champlain.

Father Robinson served as an associate pastor at St. Peter's in Lowville, Notre Dame in Malone and St. Anthony's in Watertown. He was also a teacher at Immaculate Heart Central School in Watertown, a member of the Wadhams Hall Seminary faculty and later vice-president of the seminary college, diocesan director of seminarians and vocations director.



Father Dominic Duc Nguyen

Father Robinson, 70, was ordained May 3, 1980.

Father Stephen T. Rocker

Father Rocker has served in Potsdam and Colton since 2016. He previously served as a pastor in Gouverneur and Edwards, and in Hogansburg, Bombay and Fort Covington.

He served as an administrator in Newcomb and Long Lake for a short time in 2003. He also served in that role in Hammond and Rossie. He served as assistant pastor in Watertown and Clayton. Father Rocker also served as a missionary with the Ogdensburg Peruvian Apostolate.

Father Rocker also served as the chair of the Philosophy Department



Father Howard J. Venette

at Wadhams Hall Seminary College. He has also served as a prison chaplain in Ogdensburg.

Father Rocker, 67, was ordained Sept. 1, 1979 at his home parish of St. Martin's in Port Leyden.

Father Scott R. Seymour

Father Seymour has served as pastor in Morrisonville and Treadwells Mill since 2010 and took on additional responsibilities as pastor in Cadyville in 2017. He has previously served as pastor in Willsboro and Essex and as parochial vicar in Ogdensburg and Malone.

Originally from West Chazy, Father Seymour, 50, was ordained May 29, 1999. An accomplished musician, Father Seymour has directed choirs for major diocese events in-



Father Eduardo C. Pesigan III

cluding the INSPIRE vocation summit held in Lake Placid in September.

Deacon Fernando Solomon

Deacon Fernando Solomon was recently incardinated into the Diocese of Ogdensburg after completing a pastoral year at the Catholic Communities of Crown Point, Moriah and Port Henry.

Deacon Solomon earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy and master's degree in divinity in the Philippines. For a period of time, he worked in ministry to the deaf and in prison ministry. He is fluent in several languages including English, Tagalog, Spanish and American Sign Language.

He is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood on May 29.

Father Todd E. Thibault

Father Thibault has been pastor in Ellenburg Center and Lyon Mountain since 2019, and he served as administrator of the community start-

ing in 2017.

Prior to those assignments, he served as parochial vicar at St. Mary's in Canton.

Father Thibault was ordained Oct. 8, 2016.

Father Justin Thomas, HGN

Father Thomas has been serving at the Cathedral Parish since 2015. Prior to that time, he served as parochial vicar at St. André Bessette Parish in Malone. He came to the United States in 2014.

Father Howard J. Venette

Father Venette has served in his current assignment since 2020. Previously, he served as pastor in Schroon Lake and Ticonderoga, Old Forge, Raquette Lake and Inlet, Potsdam and Colton, and Harrisville; as administrator in Waddington, Constable, Westville and Trout River, and in Brushton; and as parochial vicar in Massena, Potsdam, Plattsburgh and Malone.

He previously served as the associate director and later director of deacon formation.

Father Venette, 63, was ordained July 21, 1984.

Father Eduardo C. Pesigan III

Father Pesigan has been serving in the Diocese of Ogdensburg since 2016. Born in Naga City, Philippines, he is a diocesan priest with the Archdiocese of Caceres. He has served in Plattsburgh since arriving in the United States.



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Catholic Charities battles homelessness

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

OGDENSBURG – With the assistance of a grant recently announced by the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg is ready to help individuals suffering from housing-related issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The \$750,000 awarded locally was announced by the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation as part of \$20 million in COVID-19 emergency grants awarded around the state. The \$20 million is in addition to two previous rounds of emergency grants. The two previous rounds included \$50 million in funding statewide.

"When COVID-19 was picking up steam back in March of 2020, we were invited to propose strategies to the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation on how they could work with Catholic Charities to provide a community-wide response to what was emerging as the COVID-19 pandemic," said Deacon Patrick J. Donahue, CEO and executive director of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. "We saw two problems in the beginning: our agency, like many in the North Country, just isn't big enough to immediately respond to the needs in every community across the North Country. We're a little better positioned than most organizations, since we have offices in four major hubs, Watertown, Plattsburgh, Malone and Ogdensburg, but our offices are all small operations with maybe a couple employees. We

proposed a cooperation with United Way in both sides of the diocese. They were able to use their network to purchase food and clothing and address shelter needs in the beginning. Early on, we were also buying a lot of (Personal Protective Equipment) and addressing supply chain issues. Those were huge needs."

With the most recent round of funding, however, Catholic Charities is focusing on what it sees as a looming housing crisis.

"We're seeing more housing-related issues on the horizon than what we had a year ago when the eviction moratoriums were brand new," Deacon Donahue said. "Those moratoriums are starting to crumble. The CDC was overturned by a federal judge, and the moratorium on evictions was not upheld. New York State has extended the deadline until September, but, in some ways, that's just kicking the can down the road. We fear we're eventually going to face a huge problem with people being homeless."

Catholic Charities is using the Cabrini Foundation grant to bolster a four-level approach to helping stem the tide of housing insecurity.

"The first level is direct housing," Deacon Donahue said. "Catholic Char-

ities has a limited number of housing units in Lewis and Jefferson counties, and we're soon to have housing in St. Lawrence County. It's small scale, but we provide that direct housing."

The second level of Catholic Charities' strategy is providing connections and advocacy with local agencies providing housing assistance.

"There are state funds available through local Departments of Social Services to help pay back rent," Deacon Donahue said. "That program provides up to \$4,000 to \$5,000. Catholic Charities can serve as a referral agency, linking people with appropriate agencies, and advocate as people work to access that assistance."

Deacon Donahue said the third level of Catholic Charities' strategy continues its link with United Way.

"United Way has Alice programs at each end of the diocese that help with food, clothing, shelter and critical needs funding," he said. "One-third of the grant goes to United Way partners for that type of assistance. Sometimes, it can also be help with vehicle repairs so someone can continue working. They might also help a family get reliable internet for kids can be schooled from home."

Catholic Charities' four-level strategy concludes with efforts to avoid homelessness and displacement of tenants all together through cooperative efforts with landlords.

"In some cases, we may be able to negotiate with landlords and see what they will agree to receive in settlement of back rent to avoid eviction all together," Deacon Donahue said. "There are situations in which a tenant was able to pay rent for a while, but then their circumstances changes, and they became two- to three-months behind on rent. The landlord may not want to evict, but they need the back rent. We may be able to work with that landlord to come up with a budget plan to get the rent current in a period of time."

The Catholic Charities project will require "a lot of cooperation from a lot of people," Deacon Donahue noted.

"That's really our role – trying to bring people together to solve a problem rather than just giving people money as assistance," he said. "If we just give people money, we'll run out of money pretty quickly. In a lot of cases, landlords know the pandemic will affect them; they know they might not get every nickel. They also don't want to pro-

vide people apartments rent free. There has to be some compromise."

The Catholic Charities housing program is being run out of the agency's Watertown office. For more information or to access assistance, call that office at 315-788-4330.

"We're really grateful to the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation," Deacon Donahue said. "They're really looking at the housing crisis, and they're looking to help."

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation originated from the 2018 sale of Fidelis Care, a non-profit health insurer, inspired by the bishops of the Catholic diocese to increase healthcare access for New York's poor. According to its website, the foundation's mission is to "improve the health and well-being of the vulnerable New Yorkers, bolster the health outcomes of targeted communities, eliminate barriers to care, and bridge gaps in health services. Named in memory of a tireless advocate for immigrants, children, and the poor, the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation provides flexible support for new and innovative approaches that enhance health and wellness across New York State."

For more information, visit cabrinihealth.org.

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Environmental Stewardship

An invitation to celebrate

We are invited to celebrate Laudato Si' Week during the week of May 16-22 with Catholics around the globe. Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*, completed on May 24, 2015, has helped the world's 1.3 billion Catholics better understand that "everything is connected." It places Catholic teaching in the context of today's ecological crisis and climate emergency.

In March 2020, a weeklong event was planned to mark the fifth anniversary of the encyclical and help Catholics rejoice in the progress they had made in bringing Laudato Si' to life and caring for creation. The pandemic made it all too clear how "everything is connected." This is one of the encyclical's most transformational messages and was the theme of Laudato Si' Week 2020.

The message of this encyclical is just as prophetic today as it was in 2015. It can indeed provide the moral and spiritual compass for the journey to create a more caring, fraternal, peaceful and sustainable world. We have, in fact, a unique opportunity to transform the present groaning and travail into the birth pangs of a new way of living together, bonded together in love, compassion and solidarity, and a more harmonious relationship with the natural world, our common home. As we begin to envision a post-COVID world, we need above all an integral approach as "everything is closely interrelated and today's problems call for a vision capable of taking into account every aspect of the global crisis." (LS, 137)

Laudato Si' Week 2021, May 16-22 will celebrate the great progress the whole Church has made on its journey to ecological conversion. As Pope Francis reminds us, "All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents." (LS, 14)

What can I do to be an "instrument of God" to care for our small but beautiful piece of creation? Suggestion: Take a moment to look again at the unfolding of springtime, be amazed, and pray for grace to do one thing concrete to express your gratitude.

Three-day event focuses on awareness as global citizens, inspiring change

By Ed Judge
Diocese of Syracuse

On May 25, 26, and 27 from 7 to 9 p.m. each evening, the Dioceses of Syracuse and Ogdensburg will hold a virtual Convening on caring for God's creation inspired by Pope Francis's recent book *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*. The goals

are to increase awareness of our role as Catholics and global citizens and to inspire us to all to make lifestyle changes and take concrete actions to better care for our common home and work toward a brighter future. All who care about God's Creation are invited and encouraged to attend via Zoom. Persons are encouraged to attend all three evenings, but attendance on one or two of the three evenings is workable. Each evening will feature prayer, reflections, presentations, and small

group discussions regarding our environment, our climate, and our future, to include the following:

Evening 1: A Time to See – May 25

- Prayer, music, and readings from scripture and Let Us Dream.

- An introductory reflection, "Our Unfolding Stories with God's Creation"

- A talk by Dominic Wilkins on "Catholic Creation Care Before Pope Francis" (teachings of Popes John Paul and Benedict and US Catholic bishops)

- A short video: Faye Martin's "Spring"

- Summary Messages: We are interconnected with God and Creation, and our actions matter.

- A presentation on A Time to See by Dr. Gerry Gacioch, Catholic Climate Ambassador

- Small group discussions on What do we see now about God's Earth? and "How is our vision changing?"

Evening 2: A Time to Choose – May 26

- Bishop Lucia from the Diocese of Syracuse will lead us in Prayer

- A song by Lori True, "Let This Be the Time"

- A guided meditation led by Syracuse Diocesan seminarians Joe Ryan and James Buttner: Ecological Examen

- Summary Messages: How human behavior affects climate change and our lifestyles impact future generations

- Presentation on A Time to Choose by Dr. Curt Stager, Paul Smith's College in the Adirondacks

- Small group discussions on "What are our hearts and minds telling

us?" and "How do we move forward?"

Evening 3: A Time to Act – May 27

- Bishop LaValley from the Diocese of Ogdensburg will lead us in prayer
- A short video: "3 Seconds"

- A story will be shared on how God and people working to restore Onondaga Lake.

- A presentation on A Time to Act by Ms. Gina Fiorile emphasizing impacts on young people and actions

- Summary Messages: Climate Solutions 101, Vatican 7-year Plan, challenges, and visions for a better future

- Short talk by Jose Aguto of Catholic Climate Covenant on environmental advocacy, followed by Q&A.

- Small group breakout sessions on energy conversion, food conversion, gardening and habitat, parish creation care teams, and practical household solutions

- Small and/or large group discussions on takeaways, toolboxes, follow-up, and actions going forward.

Although this Diocesan Convening centers on Catholic Creation Care teachings, persons of all backgrounds and beliefs are welcome and encouraged to attend and participate in at least one, and hopefully all three of these Convening sessions. To get more information and a Zoom link, please contact Marika Donders, director of New Evangelization for the Diocese of Ogdensburg, at mdonders@rcdony.org or 315-393-2920. To register, go to rcdony.org/dream.

Rest in Peace

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

May 13 – Rev. Ladislaus J. Stasz, 1971; Rev. Edward E. Papp, 2016

May 14 – Deacon Vincent E. Irvin Jr., 2003

May 15 – Rev. William Rossiter, 1908; Msgr. James R. McClure, 1960; Deacon William G. Schmidt, 2016

May 16 – Rev. Moses Legualt, 1908; Rev. John M. McIntyre, 1944; Msgr. Peter R. Riani, 2019

May 18 – Rev. John B. A. Legrand, 1891; Rev. Richard J. Cotter, 1928; Rev. Augustus J. Dumont, 1949

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-
anneyanulavich@yahoo.com](mailto:terri-
anneyanulavich@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.

Bishop's Public Schedule

May 13 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

May 14 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

May 15 – 4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

May 16 – 10:30 a.m. – Confirmation at The Roman Catholic Community of St. Alexander and St. Joseph (at St. Alexander's Church) in Morrisonville with St. James Church in Cadyville, St. Joseph's Church in Dannemora and the Church of the Assumption in Redford

May 17 – Noon – Mass at Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg

May 18 – 11 a.m. – Memorial Mass for Reverend Vicente Jazmines at St. Augustine's Church in Peru

May 19 – 11 a.m. – Pontifical Mission Society Board Meeting at Bishop's Residence

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.



JESSICA HARGRAVE/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

(Left) Sister Catherine Cummings, RSM, Judy Elsbury, Mary Blackburn, Bishop Terry R. LaValley, Mary Kleinhans and Cathleen Bell at the Faith Community Nurse Commissioning on May 1. (Above) Mary Blackburn, Cathleen Bell, Judy Elsbury, and Mary Kleinhans stand to make their commitment as Faith Community Nurses before being commissioned.

Faith Community Nurses commissioned

By Jessica Hargrave
Contributing Writer

OGDENSBURG—“You are using the gifts that the Lord has given you to be Christ’s hands because your heart beats with His love.”

Bishop Terry R. LaValley expressed the importance of Faith Community Nurses in parishes at a commissioning ceremony for four nurses on Saturday, May 1 at St. Marguerite D’Youville Academy in Ogdensburg. The ceremony marked the completion of a Faith Community Nurses Course offered during the month of April to registered nurses and other

health care providers by Mercy Care for the Adirondacks. Several topics are covered during the course, including the history and philosophy of parish nursing, advocacy, care coordination, and transitional care, and health, healing and whole-person health which is the idea the parish nurse program is built upon.

“They use their scientific and health knowledge with their deep faith and it’s the spiritual healing that goes with the medical healing,” said Donna Beal, executive director at Mercy Care for the Adirondacks.

Once commissioned, faith community nurses, or parish nurses, promote health and healing to parishioners through health education and health counseling; assist in the understanding of treatment; connect others to community resources; as well as pray and share their faith.

Examples of Jesus healing those who are hurting can be found throughout Scripture, and examples were used as readings during the commissioning ceremony. “When Jesus saw her, he called her to him and said, ‘Woman, you are free of your infirmity.’ He laid his hand on her and immediately she stood up straight and began thanking God.”

The nurses then stood and voiced their commit-

ment to their health ministry before program director, Sister Catherine Cummings, a Sister of Mercy, who commissioned them as Faith Community Nurses. One by one, each nurse lit a candle and was presented with a pin and certificate.

Judy Elsbury will be a Faith Community Nurse for Church of the Holy Family in Watertown. She is excited to bring her extensive health care experience to her community and join the two other community nurses at the parish.

“I think it’s an opportunity to pull together your clinical skillset and your faith because your faith never leaves you when you’re doing nursing,” said Elsbury.

Elsbury said she has several ideas for her parish, one would be to start rosary walks which combine movement and prayer. She would also like to explore different ways to assist parishioners with grieving.

“It helps to have people of faith who understand. Miscarriages, loss of a spouse, loss of a pet... people have different losses for different things,”

she adds.

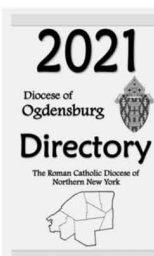
The three other nurses who took part in Saturday’s ceremony were Cathleen Bell of Our Lady of Grace Parish in Morris-town, Mary Blackburn of St. Mary’s Cathedral in Ogdensburg, and Mary Kleinhans of The Catholic Community of Alexandria Bay. Two nurses will be commissioned upon completion of the course: Jennifer Lucia of The Catholic Community of Alexandria Bay and Linda Scagel of St. Raphael’s Parish in Heuvelton.

Bishop LaValley closed his remarks by offering his immense gratitude for the selflessness by the parish nurses to this health ministry.

“Thank you for your sacrifice of love,” he said. “Thank you for allowing others to see the Christ within you. Thank you for making yourself vulnerable so that none of the vulnerable among us feels forgotten or unnoticed.”

For more information on when the next Faith Community Nurse Course will be offered, contact Sister Catherine Cummings, RSM at ccummings@adkmercy.org.

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After COVID hiatus, Rosary Crusade continues

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

CARTHAGE – Though the long-time organizer of the event moved out of state, the Family Rosary Crusade will return to St. James Church for the 19th time on May 21.

“Bob Renaud did an awesome job organizing the Rosary Crusade for 18 years,” said Kathi Buskey, a St. James parishioner who is helping to coordinate the event with her husband, David, and their family. “Even though Bob moved out of the area, we wanted the Rosary Crusade to continue.”

Renaud was a local artist who created a painting for anyone who stayed at the Rosary Crusade for three or more hours of prayer. In absence of this offering, organizers hope to have

an alternate gift to show appreciation for attendants.

The event is typically held close to the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, which falls on May 13.

“May 21 was the closest date we could make work,” Buskey said. “We start at 5:15 on the evening of May 21. The rosary starts at 6 and goes until 1 o’clock in the morning.”

The event has become an annual tradition at St. James.

“The Rosary Crusade didn’t happen last year because of COVID,” Buskey said. “But it was held for 18 straight years before that. After 18 years, it would’ve been terrible to let it fall by the wayside.”

The event begins with Mass celebrated by Father Donald A. Robinson, who will also expose the

Blessed Sacrament for adoration throughout the Rosary Crusade.

“I really applaud Father Robinson,” Buskey said. “He oversees two parishes, and he’s a very busy man. But he’s also really invested in making sure both parishes have rich opportunities. He was really very eager to see this continue.”

Then, throughout the Rosary Crusade, volunteer individuals, families and organizations will lead the rosary.

“We’ll pray the original three mysteries – sorrowful, joyful and glorious – every hour, with the Luminous Mysteries intertwined,” Buskey said. “We have a schedule of three families or groups per hour. This takes a lot of volunteers.”

The Rosary Crusade will

have a special emphasis on the sorrow of Mary.

“Every hour, we have a special focus on the sorrow of Mary,” Buskey said. “It includes a brief reflection at the beginning of the hour.”

In addition to area families, Knights of Columbus, a local Women of Grace group, the Ave Maria Circle and other organizations will take turns leading those gathered in praying the rosary.

“People can stop in any time during the Rosary Crusade,” Buskey said. “They can stay as long or as briefly as they want. Ideally, they would join us at the beginning of any hour.”

In addition to the non-stop prayer, musician Dave Heywood will be playing violin throughout the event. Snacks will also

be served in accordance with current COVID guidelines. Masks and social distancing will be required throughout the event.

Whether they join in person or spiritually, Buskey said the entire diocese is invited to participate in the Family Rosary Crusade.

“We pray for peace in families and throughout the whole world,” Buskey said. “With COVID and all the division in the world and anxiety in families, we need prayer more than ever. We invite anyone who can to join us in person on May 21, but we also invite people to join us in spirit and pray with us from anywhere.”

Anyone who would like to volunteer for the Family Rosary Crusade is urged to contact Buskey at 315-783-2230.

GET TO KNOW CURSILLO

Pandemic delays weekends, movement goes on

By Michael Neaton
North Country Cursillo

Hello again, readers! It has been a while, but I want to assure you the North Country Cursillo Movement is alive and well!

I’ll start off with an update. We had been getting regular (almost weekly) articles in the *North Country Catholic* for over three months, with the intent of letting everyone know what this movement is about. We had wonderful contributions from Cursillistas from around our diocese who gave personal reflections and explanations of how Cursillo works. We laid out some of the components such as the Pre-Cursillo process, the

three-day weekend experience and Post-Cursillo, which basically translates into the rest of our lives. Each component is equally important in very unique ways.

The good news is that we plan to continue offering these articles on occasion! I hope you will look forward to reading about the experiences we share during these encounters with Christ and others.

As you know, COVID really has an impact on our lives in most every way. In the Cursillo world, it resulted in delaying our planned three-day weekend events from the Fall of 2020 to the Spring of 2021.

There is an organizational aspect of Cursillo called the Secretariat. It



could be compared to a board of directors in other organizations. At the January meeting of that group, it was decided that we would delay once again, so are now looking at the Spring (April) of 2022 to do our Men’s and Women’s weekends.

As disappointing as this may seem, it doesn’t deter the movement, as the Pre-Cursillo process is still going on! This only

means there is more time for us Cursillistas to make friends in Christ and develop those relationships by involving new friend in some key aspects of Cursillo.

They may be invited to small group meetings or even larger group “Ultreyas,” which are meant to bring together Cursillistas from around different sections of our large diocese.

You have read about some of these experiences and will be hearing more in future writings, but suffice it to say, they lead up toward the three-day weekend, only being more positive momentum for that wonderful experience. Please don’t hesitate to reach out to me or any other Cursillista to inquire further. It may change your life as it has mine!

DAY OF REFLECTION – SAVE THE DATE

On Sunday, June 6, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi), North Country Cursillo will host a Day of Reflection at St. Bernard’s Church in Saranac Lake.

The event, which begins at noon, will include reflections centered on the Eucharist, prayer times, adoration, opportunities for confession, a Eucharistic procession and Mass with Bishop Terry R. LaValley.

All COVID-related protocols in effect at the time will be followed. Registration information will be available closer to the event date.

Now is the perfect time to volunteer.

With everything that has happened in our community this year, it is more important than ever for volunteers to stand up and support their friends and neighbors. When joining **RSVP**, not only are you helping your community, but you're joining a family who cares as much as you.



Upcoming opportunities

There are so many ways you can help your community out that you might not even know about! Here are some examples of what you can do!



Be a Friend

Check on friends, share a meal, help around the house, go for a walk or just stop by to catch up.



Give a Ride

Drive your neighbors to their appointments, to pick up prescriptions or to the store.



Help at School

Volunteer at local elementary schools, tutor students, or be a mentor to those in need.



Give a Meal

Support the local food pantry by shopping, organizing, cooking, or anything else.



Meals On Wheels

Donate your time to your local Meals on Wheels program and prepare or deliver meals.

Not only do you get the benefit of feeling amazing after helping someone, RSVP will help pay some of your mileage (.56 cents/mile) and honor your efforts at a yearly recognition event.

Opportunities available in Clinton, Essex, Franklin and Hamilton County

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518-566-0944
kgardner@cathcharities.org

Franklin County: Melissa Howard
mhoward@cathcharities.org

Hamilton County: Hanna Smith
hsmith@cathcharities.org

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Experts: Humility, open mind needed to crack coronavirus

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Much is still unknown about the 2019 novel coronavirus and why it can kill so many people and yet also can infect many more without causing any symptoms, Dr. Anthony Fauci, the United States' top infectious disease expert, told a Vatican conference.

"It is a wily opponent," he said May 6, the first day of a three-day virtual conference featuring more than 100 speakers presenting the latest advancements in medicine and innovative ways to deliver health care as well as discussing their theological, ethical and cultural impacts. Pope Francis was scheduled to close the conference with an online address May 8.

Titled, "Exploring the Mind, Body and Soul – Unite to Prevent and Unite to Cure," it was the fifth health care conference organized jointly by the Pontifical Council for Culture, its Science and Faith (STOQ) Foundation and the New York-based Cura Foundation and Stem for Life Foundation, which seeks to promote stem-cell therapy and research.

Dr. Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, was one of the first speakers, answering questions posed by Dr. Sanjay Gupta, a neurosurgeon and medical correspondent for CNN.

Asked how much was left to learn about the novel coronavirus associated with COVID-19, Dr. Fauci said scientists still must discover more about what the virus can do and how it causes disease.

"I want to find out how could it possibly be that the same virus that's killed 570,000 people in this country is a virus in which more than half the people

don't ever get any symptoms," he said.

That many who are asymptomatic are young and healthy is "not an adequate explanation," he said. "There is something there, something that we don't know about."

"The other thing that we don't know about," he said, is "how extensive is the ability of this virus, if you don't really suppress it completely, to develop new variants."

"Every single week, Sanjay, that goes by, we get hit with another challenge," he said, calling the virus, "a wily opponent."

The coronavirus is a living microorganism that quickly adapts itself in order to survive, he said. "That's the reason why we are seeing the evolution of these variants."

To make progress in understanding the coronavirus, scientists must be "flexible, open-minded and humble to know that even though you have 40 years of experience that when you are dealing with something that is really in the realm of the unknown, you've got to expect the unexpected," he said.

What made the SARS-CoV-2 so unique, Dr. Fauci said, was that all previously known respiratory viruses tended to be transmitted by people who are symptomatic.

"We never would have imagined," he said, "that we were dealing with a virus where one-third to 40% of the people never get any symptoms and 50-60% of the people who will get infected get infected from someone with no symptoms. That was completely unprecedented – totally," he said.

The reason that is important is it impacts health officials' ability to identify

and contact trace those who are infected, and "it impacts the profound need to wear masks," he added.

"When you say, 'Well, I don't worry. If I don't feel sick, why should I wear a mask?' Now we know that you could be spreading the virus," he said.

Highlighting the huge explosion of cases and deaths in India, Dr. Gupta asked how worried countries should be about what is happening in other parts of the world.

"It's a cautionary tale," Dr. Fauci said.

"I've seen this with HIV in a less dramatic way where individual countries say, 'It will never come here. We don't have the conditions for that to happen,'" he said.

He said, "My heart sank" when he saw televised images of thousands of people gathering in mid-April for a religious festival at the Ganges River. "I said, 'Oh my goodness, that is going to turn out to be something not good' and that's exactly what happened."

Asked about overcoming vaccine hesitancy and giving people the evidence and facts that vaccination is "a good thing to do" for protecting themselves and those they come in contact with, Dr. Fauci said, "You've got to connect them with people they trust."

"You've got to match the messenger with the audience, and I think if you do that, you're going to overcome a lot of the hesitancy," he said, adding that if "you have someone who is a deeply religious person who will listen to their clergy, that's different than me with a suit going into an area telling people to do something."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

President, Maine bishop offer reflections for Day of Prayer

WASHINGTON (CNS) – A diverse group of Christians, including the nation's Catholic president and the bishop of the statewide Diocese of Portland, Maine, have offered reflections for the National Day of Prayer, observed on the first Thursday of May each year. "Religious faith and prayer have served as a constant inspiration and a driving force urging us toward freedom and justice since America was still an idea. They continue to guide us through our most difficult moments," said Bishop Robert P. Deeley of Portland in a statement. "That is a truth that has been proven throughout our history. Teaching, ministering, and contributing to the needs of others, and showing mercy to those who need it, are the foundation of our nation and our lives as Christians, putting flesh on our prayers and our faith," he added. President Joe Biden, in a National Day of Prayer proclamation, said: "Today, we remember and celebrate the role that the healing balm of prayer can play in our lives and in the life of our nation."

Move to waive vaccine patents is good step, says Catholic official

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The Biden administration's May 5 announcement that it supports waiving intellectual property protections for COVID-19 vaccines – as a means to expand the vaccine's production and distribution – is a move the Vatican has been suggesting. At a February World Trade Organization meeting, a Vatican representative said this step "would be a strong signal demonstrating real commitment and engagement and thus moving from declaration to action in favor of the entire human family." Prior to the announcement, the United States has not backed the proposal to waive the vaccines' patent rights made by India and South Africa and supported by many congressional Democrats. If the waiver is adopted by the World Trade Organization – which would require months of negotiations and final approval of all members – drug makers around the world would have access to how these vaccines are made. Katherine Tai, the U.S. trade representative who announced the administration's position, said in a statement that the "extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic call for extraordinary measures. The administration believes strongly in intellectual property protections," she said, but in an effort to end the pandemic, it "supports the waiver of those protections for COVID-19 vaccines."

Montreal names ombudswoman to deal with abuse complaints

MONTREAL (CNS) – Determined to "eradicate the scourge" of sexual abuse in his diocese and in the church, Archbishop Christian Lépine of Montreal has appointed an independent ombudswoman on abuse. The archbishop appointed Marie Christine Kirouack, a lawyer with extensive experience in family law and crisis intervention, to the position. Her task will be to receive all complaints of abuse and inappropriate behavior committed by priests, pastoral staff, employees of the archdiocese and volunteers of the Archdiocese of Montreal, he said at a news conference May 5. With her appointment, the archbishop said, the Archdiocese of Montreal has implemented more than half of the 31 recommendations to fight sexual abuse issued in a November 2020 report by former judge Pepita G. Capriolo. Capriolo emphasized that the position of ombudswoman needed to be entrusted to "a layperson, completely independent of the church." Kirouack said she's Jewish, and she'll be working with a team. At the briefing, Capriolo also explained that admissible complaints will not be limited to sexual abuse. "All forms of abuse will be taken seriously," she said, noting that included psychological, physical, spiritual and financial abuse.

ESSEX

LATIN MASS

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

Date: Sundays

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

CHICKEN & BISCUITS

Lyons Falls – Drive-thru Chicken and Biscuit dinner to be held.

Date: May 19

Time: 4:30 p.m.

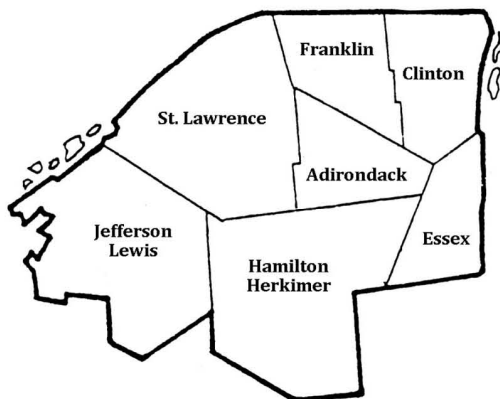
Place: St. John's Church

Cost: Adults, \$10; Children 6-12, \$6

Menu: Chicken and Homemade Biscuits, Gravy with Real Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Cranberry Sauce and dessert.

Features: It was a sold-out dinner last time, so don't delay, order today. Remember deliveries are available. Proceeds to St. John's Church and St. John's Altar and Rosary Society.

Contact: To ensure your dinner ahead of time, please call 315-348-8945 or 315-348-8577 to order. Please leave a message with your phone



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, 315-394-0670;
e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

number. Deadline for pre-orders is May 14. That day, you can call the church hall at 315-348-6599 after 10 a.m.

ST. LAWRENCE

PRAYER AND ADORATION

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

Date: Every third Wednesday of the month (May 19)

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 7

Place: Sacred Heart Church

DIOCESAN EVENTS

DEACON CLASS INFORMATION

The Deacon Formation Department will hold information meetings for

men interested in the ministry. The next class will be seated in the fall of this year.

Schedule: St. Anthony's in Watertown, May 11 at 6 p.m.; St. Peter's in Plattsburgh May 18 at 7 p.m. and at St. John's in Morristown May 20 at 6 p.m.

Contact: For further information contact Deacon John Drollette at 518-726-0019 or jdrollette@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.

DAY OF REFLECTION

Virtual presentation about putting forgiveness into practice.

Date: June 19

Time: 9:45 a.m. to Noon

Place: Zoom

Features: We all know from the Scriptures that we are called to forgive

others and ourselves as well. We also know the challenge this call can be in our daily encounters. This reflection day will consider the dynamics of forgiveness, some obstacles often experienced in becoming a forgiving person, and some aids from our Catholic tradition. It includes presentations, time for personal prayer and reflection with opportunities for sharing. The speaker will be Sister Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ.

Contact: Cost is free. To register go to www.rcdony.org/reflection Zoom link will be emailed as date approaches.

SIDEWALK ADVOCATES FOR LIFE

Experience Sidewalk Advocated for Life's new virtual basic training 2.0.

Features: Sidewalk Advocates for Life employs peaceful, prayerful, loving, and law-abiding outreach outside of abortion centers to aid mothers in crisis and connect them with life-affirming resources. By God's grace, this effort has witnessed over 9,000 women turn around at abortion centers and choose life.

Contact: To get started, fill out the application at sidewalkadvocates.org/trainingapp. Upon receipt, we'll be in touch with next steps for accessing the training.

NOW STREAMING

THE MITCHELLS VS. THE MACHINES

NEW YORK (CNS) – Innovative producers Phil Lord and Christopher Miller, the team behind 2018's "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse," unleash nothing less than a robot apocalypse in the animated comedy "The Mitchells vs. the Machines" (Netflix).

Fortunately, the outcome of this monumental crisis is family bonding for those on screen and wholesome entertainment for viewers.

Like many teens, Katie Mitchell (voice of Abbi Jacobson) leads a bit of a mixed-up life. A college-bound aspiring filmmaker, talented Katie is also a dotting sister to little brother Aaron (voice of Michael Rianda, who co-wrote and directed).

At the same time, however, she's a bit awkward,

uncertain of her place in life, addicted to the gadgets she uses to communicate with friends and embarrassed by her parents. In fact, Katie's relationship with her Luddite dad, Rick (voice of Danny McBride), has deteriorated to the point where arguing seems the norm.

Nature-loving Rick can't seem to relate to his tech-obsessed daughter. For her part, Katie can't understand why Rick never seems interested in her or in the movies she loves to make (mostly starring the family pug, Monchi).

Katie's mom, Linda (voice of Maya Rudolph), plays the role of mediator. But she has a preoccupation of her own in her desire to keep up with her version of the Joneses, the Posey fam-

ily.

In addition to parents Hailey and Jim (voiced by real-life spouses John Legend and Chrissy Teigen), this competitive clan-next-door includes young Abby (voice of Charlyne Yi) on whom Aaron has a crush based in part on their shared love of dinosaurs.

Katie's last night at home brings yet another quarrel with Rick during which he accidentally breaks her laptop. In an attempt to make up for this – but in reality, much to Katie's additional dismay – Rick cancels her flight and announces that her journey to campus will now take the form of a cross-country family road trip.

What follows is a visually dazzling adventure with a seemingly ridiculous – yet

absolutely hilarious – storyline that Rianda and his script collaborator, Jeff Rowe, use to present a relevant commentary on society's over-dependence on technology. Call it a comic riff on Stanley Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey."

Olivia Colman voices PAL, a virtual assistant invented by Mark Bowman (voice of Eric Andre). Angry that Mark is about to replace her with a more cutting-edge device, PAL leads a worldwide mechanical rebellion.

"I was the most important thing in your life," PAL angrily observes to her creator, "and you threw me away. That's what all you humans do – you even do it to your real families."

The Mitchells, nonetheless, display remarkable re-

silience in the face of the sudden challenge with which PAL's uprising presents them. They are realistic about their shortcomings. Yet each relative's quirks, it turns out, prove useful as they work to save the world.

The film contains cartoon violence. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II – adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association rating is PG – parental guidance suggested.



SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Last Sunday of Easter focuses on unity

This last Sunday of the Easter season falls between the Ascension of the Lord and Pentecost. Our first reading from the book of Acts records a time of great tension for the apostles. They felt abandoned and uncertain after witnessing Jesus slowly fade from sight into the heavens. With nervous uncertainty, they huddled closely around Jesus' mother Mary in that same Upper Room where the Master had first appeared to them following His Resurrection. Obedient to his instructions, they gathered



**Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore**

there to pray while awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit.

First, however, they felt it necessary to round out their numbers again to 12. We may well wonder why the number 12 was so important. Scholars are generally in agreement that Jesus Himself carefully chose 12 to fulfill the mission of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. In any case, the Holy Spirit chose Matthias. In choosing Matthias, they established a key criterion for an apostle. He must have accompanied the others the

May 16

Seventh Sunday of Easter

READINGS

Acts 1:15-17, 20a, 20c-26

1 John 4:11-16

John 17:11b-19

whole time and have been a witness to the Resurrection. Listeners to the Gospel would be strongly drawn to believe those who, with their own eyes, had seen Jesus alive in His own body. Even Thomas had believed when he saw the wounds of His Lord and Savior.

The Gospel continues from last week the farewell address of Jesus at the Last Supper. "Consecrate them

in the truth," Jesus prays. All successors of the apostles are so consecrated. Truth is the one great divine force which will assure the unity of the infant church. "One faith, one Lord, one Baptism" binds all who would be faithful branches on the Vine which is Christ. We have seen through the ages from the beginning how deviation from Christ's teaching tears asunder the solidarity of one Church. Christian bodies generally separate from this unity on one or another point of doctrine. The physical unity of Christ's church will only be restored when there is a return to consensus on all aspects of the

"deposit of faith."

Today's second reading from the first letter of John provides the key to unity in truth and adherence to authority through the great prayer of Jesus to "remain in my love." Although one-third of the world's population is Christian, there are over 30,000 different ways in which they interpret the truths that Jesus taught! How on earth will there ever be total unity in His Church? It will only come about through a very courageous living out of that command of the Lord to "love one another." This Pentecost, may Christ help all Christians to be consecrated in the unity of love and truth!

CALLED TO SERVE

The road to deacon ordination

The 13 men who hope to be ordained permanent deacons in the fall of this year are in the final sprint to the academic finish line. I have been honored to be part of their formation team for the last three years.

The candidates are wrapping up final assignments for Bishop Terry R. LaValley in canon law, Sister Mary Eamon Lyng in the pastoral letters, Father Bryan D. Stitt in liturgy, Deacon Patrick J. Donahue and Deacon Mark E. Bennett in Catholic social teaching and me in homiletics.

Over these past three years they have also attended classes at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg in liturgical theory and practice, Old Testament, the synoptic Gospels, human development, public speaking and Christian spirituality with Sister Jennifer Votraw.

The men also take a series of courses from Notre Dame University. The Satellite Theological Education Program (STEP) uses digital technology to offer theological education to a variety of pastoral ministers, including deacon candidates in the United States and other countries.

The wives of the deacon candidates have their own program. Karen Donahue has directed that component for all three years. Spouses are not required to attend the monthly sessions, but it is encouraged.

The majority of deacons in our diocese are married. The National Directory on Formation for the Permanent Diaconate says, "A married deacon, with his wife and family, gives witness to the sanctity of marriage... and they strengthen, by their witness, the family life not only of the Church com-

munity but of the whole of society."

At the helm of the formation ship is the director, Deacon John Drollette, and the Vicar of Clergy, Father Christopher C. Carara.

Over the four years, the deacon candidates have come together as one. The first year is to find out if the man really feels called to be a deacon at this time.

The next three years are intense. There is a ton of reading and studying, papers to research and write, quizzes and tests to take all while usually working in a full-time job and being a good husband and father.

The program aims to address four dimensions of the future deacon's life. During formation, the program

addresses his human dimension. The goal is to develop an awareness of self and how the future deacon relates to others. The program helps each candidate develop his spiritual dimension. As a minister configured in Holy Orders to Christ the Servant, "a deacon's spirituality must be grounded in the attitudes of Christ." That means



**Deacon
Kevin Mastellon**

coming to know God through the Eucharist, the Word, prayer and meditation.

The candidates may feel the the whole formation program is aimed at their intellectual dimension. On closer scrutiny they will see that is not the case, but the homework probably belies that.

The formation team also tries to develop the candidate's pastoral dimension.

The directory defines this work best: "The candidates must be taught how to proclaim the Christian message and teach it, how to lead others in communal celebrations of liturgical prayer, and how to witness to the Church in a Christian service marked by charity and justice."

Looking back four years, these candidates could not have guessed how their lives would be changed as they prepare for a life of service as a permanent deacon. Bishop LaValley installed them April 30 as Ministers of the Altar, acolytes. They were previously installed as Ministers of the Word, readers. In October, God willing, they will join about 80 permanent deacons in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

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



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
(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296
mbrett@rcdony.org

Pontifical Mission Society celebrates anniversary

Article from *FIDES* missionary news service of the Pontifical Mission Societies

May 3, 2021 the Society for the Propagation of the Faith celebrated the 199th anniversary of its founding and the 99th anniversary of its recognition as "Pontifical." Despite the challenges with which the mission is also confronted in times of the pandemic, the anniversary is cause for joy with a view to the celebrations for the 200th anniversary of this Society at the service of world mission in 2022. In a message sent to the National Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies, Father Tadeusz J. Nowak, OMI, secretary general of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith, wrote: "Thank you for your generous and valuable service to the mission entrusted to us by the Holy Father, inspired by our beloved foundress, Pauline Marie Jaricot. May the Lord bless us all so that we may continue to respond to the vocation that Pauline courageously accepted in devoting her life to evangelizing the world so that the gospel can take root in every country and culture to the ends of the world." He then invites to offer the following prayer: "Lord, you inspired Pauline-Marie Jaricot to found the Propagation of the Faith and the Living Rosary, as well as her total commitment to the cause of the workers. Hasten the day when the Church will be able to celebrate the sanctity of her life. May her example lead a large number of Christians to dedicate themselves to spreading the Gospel, so that the men and women of our time and all the peoples of the world may discover your infinite love manifested in Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, forever and ever. Amen."

The Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith was founded in Lyon in 1822 with the aim of promoting missionary cooperation in all Christian communities through prayer and material support. Pauline Marie Jaricot, foundress of the then "Association of the Propagation of the Faith" and of the "Living Rosary" was born on July 22, 1799 in Lyon, where she died on January 9, 1862, in poverty. On May 3, 1922, Pope Pius XI elevated the Society for the Propagation of the Faith founded by Jaricot, to "Pontifical," together with the Pontifical Society of Missionary Childhood and the Pontifical Society of St. Peter the Apostle, and moved the headquarters from Lyon to Rome. Pope John XXIII declared Pauline Jaricot venerable on January 25, 1963. On May 26, 2020, Pope Francis confirmed the miracle attributed to her intercession. (SL) (Agenzia Fides, 4/5/2021)

OBITUARIES

Alexandria Bay – Richard H. Hof, 93; Private services to be held.

Brushton – Leona F. (Malette) DeBeer, 78; Mass of Christian Burial May 7, 2021 at St. Mary's Church.

Brushton – Helen A. (Durant) Dygert, 93; Mass of Christian Burial May 8, 2021 at St. Mary's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Cape Vincent – John P. McKendry, 81; Graveside services May 10, 2021 at St. Vincent de Paul Cemetery.

Colton – Timothy F. Hatch, 66; Mass of Christian Burial May 13, 2021 at St. Patrick's Church.

Colton – Mary J. Bronson Wood, 95; Mass of Christian Burial May 8, 2021 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Potsdam.

Fort Covington – Ruth L. (Jock) Allen, 92; Graveside Services to be held May 7, 2021 at St. Mary's Cemetery.

Glenfield – Kathleen A. (Lyng) Brangan, 55; Graveside Services May 5, 2021 at Brantingham Cemetery.

La Fargeville – Marian L. (Fitchette) Vaadi, 91; Private Services held.

Norwood – Mary Florence (Perry) Duprey, 84; Mass of Christian Burial May 6, 2021 at St. Andrew's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Norwood – Noreen F. Hopsicker, 100; Mass of Christian Burial May 5, 2021 at St. Andrew's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Janet L. Kelly, 89; Mass of Christian Burial June 4, 2021 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in Ogdensburg Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Jeffrey P. Measheaw, 57; Funeral Services May 5, 2021 at Frary Funeral Home; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Thomas N. Caron, 68;

Mass of Christian Burial May 4, 2021 at St. Peter's Church.

Saranac Lake – Gabriel T. Willette, 84; Mass of Christian Burial May 5, 2021 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Bernard Cemetery.

Watertown – Richard C. Green, 93; Mass of Christian Burial May 6, 2021 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Sue Ellen "Suzy" Macaluso Lail, 56; Mass of Christian Burial May 6, 2021 at Holy Family Church

Watertown – Terence M. "Terry" "OB" O'Brien, 53; Mass of Christian Burial May 5, 2021 at Holy Family Church.

Watertown – Dr. David M. Stabins, DDS, 93; Funeral Services July 8, 2021 at Cummings Funeral Service, Inc.

Basilica hall to honor Blessed Michael McGivney

WATERBURY, Conn. (CNS) – Jesus performed his first miracle at a wedding feast at Cana, in Galilee, according to the Gospel of John.

When the wine was running low, Jesus requested that the stone jars be filled with water. He prayed over the jars and then offered them to the headwaiter, who realized that the water had been transformed into wine.

Because the wedding feast is "one of the most celebratory events in the Bible," said Father James Sullivan, pastor of the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Waterbury, a mural by artist Paul Armesto depicting the celebration will be the centerpiece of the renovation of the basilica's hall, known as McCarthy Auditorium.

"I wanted the hall to

exude celebration and joy, the core of the Christian life. I want the hall to be life-giving and also extremely welcoming, like the arms of a mother," Father Sullivan told Catholic Transcript, magazine of the Archdiocese of Hartford.

The renovated space will be renamed the Blessed Michael McGivney Parish Center, Maurice McCarthy Auditorium. Father McGivney, an archdiocesan priest who grew up in Waterbury and received the sacraments at the then-Church of the Immaculate Conception, was beatified Oct. 31, 2020. McCarthy was a longtime basilica trustee.

It is likely, Father Sullivan said, that the mural will be the second largest in the world depicting the

feast. It will be 42 feet wide, a few feet narrower than the current largest mural of the feast. That mural by Paola Veronese dates to the 16th century and is in the collection of the Louvre Museum in Paris.

In Veronese's painting, Jesus is seated in the center of the table surrounded by his mother, disciples, clerks, princes and noblemen; the bride and groom are seated at left.

Armesto, who was born in Paris and now resides in the New York borough of Queens, said he took some artistic liberties in his version of the feast to convey the message of Jesus. "All of the composition is directed toward Christ," he said. "All the other elements are to support that."

'Nothing is impossible with the Lord'

By Jonathan Monfiletto
Contributing Writer

MORRISONVILLE – From the time she was in fifth grade to being widowed at 28 years old to her life now, Wanda Haby has always found a sense of community and support through her Catholic faith.

"Being in the community, you can share the teachings and practice service more than if you were doing this on your own," she said, noting one's fellow Catholics can keep one's thoughts and faith focused and concrete through all of the distractions in the world.

And a sense of belonging is what Haby was looking for when she joined a Catholic youth group and a church when she was 11 years old. Though her father was Catholic and her mother was Baptist, her family never went to church. Haby found the youth group when it was advertised at her school.

She got involved with the youth group and then wanted to join the Church; her parents told her she could go as long as she found a ride to get there. From there, she joined the church choir; when she couldn't get a ride, she walked to church.



Wanda Haby

"It was quite a walk sometimes," Haby said, noting it was 2.5 miles from her home to the church. "As a young person back in the day, we could walk and it was not unheard of."

Soon, she took it upon herself to attend classes with the goal of being baptized, and she convinced her sister to do the classes with her. The priest took the girls through the process over several months, and their mother

showed up to church on the day they were baptized.

At age 37, Haby became an oblate for a St. Benedictine order.

Now, Haby said she lives her faith through her actions, "being awake to see the opportunities to help others," she said.

"Every day, we're provided opportunities where someone needs a kind word or they need help, even if it's me as a professor [at SUNY Plattsburgh] with students," she said. "I have a lot of advisees and students that just come to me and talk to me, and they just want a listening ear. Whether it's that or getting them in touch with student services so they can have enough food to eat that week."

Haby said she volunteers to work two shifts per week at the isolation and quarantine dormitory at SUNY Plattsburgh. In that role, she takes students snacks such as hot chocolate, hot tea, or ice cream, delivers meals to



them, and makes sure they are doing OK.

"That's all volunteer. It's not something I have to do, but it's something I guess you could call just a calling to help others," she said. "It's part of servitude and being of service to others. Not only kind deeds but also kind words or a kind tongue so to speak."

Living her through her actions, Haby learned to rely on her faith and God's love when her husband, who was in the military, died when she was 28 and left behind her and their two small children.

"It was very challenging being on my own. Where do I go in life, what direction do I go in, in a strange city in a state that I didn't know," she said. "You go through thoughts of the whole process of the grieving, the anger, what do I do. I had to be there for the kids and find a career and go to school, and I think if it wasn't for strong faith and the powerful thought of love, God's love, then I wouldn't have gotten through all of that. I had to become a dif-

ferent person. That's (faith) what helped guide me through that."

Now Haby – who lives in Plattsburgh finds in her faith, community, and support through her Cur-sillo group that meets virtually every Wednesday for an hour and on Fridays twice a month. She is also part of a Scripture study group with some colleagues that meets virtually on Tuesdays.

Attending Mass and acting as the music director at St. Alexander's Church in Morrisonville, Haby said music is a huge part of her life and her faith.

"Music has always been a part of my life," she said. "That's what drew me into the church when I was young. It started when I was 11 years old singing in a choir, and I've been directing choirs since I was 19 years old."

Haby said prayer is also "very important" to her life and her faith.

"Nothing is impossible with the Lord," she said, referring to prayer as the "living water" that Jesus Christ offers us. "Your prayers can be answered."

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