

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

51 priests beneficiaries of retirement fund benefits | PAGE 11

Did I make the right choice as dad was dying | PAGE 13

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 77 Number xx

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

DECEMBER 21, 2022

No North Country Catholic next week

To allow *North Country Catholic* staff and contributors an opportunity to celebrate Christmas, there will be no *North Country Catholic* the week of December 28.

The next edition will publish the week of January 4.

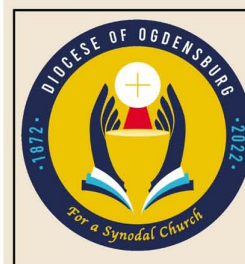
The *North Country Catholic* – staff, reporters, columnists and photographers – wishes you a merry and blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.



PHOTO BY DEACON JAMES CROWLEY

The nativity at St. Mary's Cathedral is ready to welcome the child Jesus as it did in this 2021 photo.

A SYNODAL CHURCH



Bishop Terry R. LaValley invites the Church of the North Country to read the Diocese of Ogdensburg's synod report. Praying to the Holy Spirit for guidance, consider the themes that emerged from the conversations, as well as the Committee Observations. Do they strike a chord as we journey together as the Body of Christ?

FULL STORY STARTING ON PAGE 4

Follow Me: The Christmas story is our love story

Read Bishop Terry R. LaValley's Christmas letter:

What is this sign that the angel in St. Luke's Gospel proclaims?

God is born among us. What a wondrous sign of God's love for you and me!

St. John of the Cross once wrote to a friend: "Think nothing else but that God ordains all, and where there is no love, put love, and you will draw out love."

SEE STORY ON PAGE 3

Pope to kids: Put down phone, look to God and look at others

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Pope Francis encouraged youngsters to put down their phones to spend time praying and looking at other people to see their needs.

"The Lord does not want us to spend our days being closed in on ourselves. And this is a great risk for boys and girls today: to spend the day staring at the screen of a cellphone," he wrote in a prepared speech.

"Our eyes are made to look into other people's eyes," he said. "They are not made to look down on a virtual world we hold in our hands, but to look up to heaven, to God, and to look into the eyes

of those who live near us."

The pope's written remarks were distributed to members of the boys' and girls' section of Italian Catholic Action, a parish-based program of faith building and social outreach, during an audience at the Vatican Dec. 15.

"Some might think that being a good Christian requires, most of all, reflection, meditation," the pope's text said. "Instead, Jesus says: Go! It is a decisive verb, because it transforms the disciple into an apostle, makes him or her a missionary."

"You, too, dear friends, are called to go, because God does

not like it when we get lazy on the couch; he wants us on the move, on the road, ready and willing to get involved," he wrote.

Setting off may be a little scary, he said, but it is worth it.

"It is beautiful to follow Jesus," he wrote. "It is beautiful to discover the great love that he has for each of us; it is beautiful to venture into the project of happiness that he has in mind for me, for you, for everyone; it is beautiful to discover the gifts that he gives us with great generosity, the surprises that fill our lives with wonder and hope, that make us grow free and happy."

NORTH
COUNTRY
CATHOLICBox 326
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669
USPS 0039-3400**BISHOP TERRY**
R. LAVALLEY
President**REV. JOSEPH A. MORGAN**

Vice President

JAMES D. CROWLEY

Secretary-Treasurer

DARCY L. FARGO

Editor &

Communications Director



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

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

(315) 608-7556

E-mail:news@northcountry
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 326Ogdensburg, NY 13669
and should be received byThursday prior to
publication.

Paper is printed each

Monday;

dateline is Wednesday.

Member, Catholic Press
Association.**POSTMASTER:**

Send address changes to

North Country Catholic,

PO Box 326

Ogdensburg, NY

13669-0326

I can't answer that question

I don't have an answer to the question.

You know the one. It comes up this time of year with family and close friends.

"What do you want for Christmas?"

I can't think of a single thing I want or need.

As I racked my brain on countless occasions trying to come up with stuff to add to my list, it occurred to me that the difficulty of the task proved something I already knew: I have gifts all around me, all the gifts a person could ever need!

I have the love of my amazing family and

friends, including my two awesome men (my husband and son). I have a warm

home. I have food in my refrigerator and pantry. I have a closet full of clothes. I have lots and lots of stuff.

As they say in the multitude of infomercials and product promotions we see this tie of year, "but wait! There's more!"

I have a career I love and find fulfilling. Because of and through that career, I've been given even more gifts.

It's a gift to work with Christine Ward, the NCC's longtime editorial assistant.

In addition to working hard for the paper and the diocese, Christine adds joy and positivity to everything she does.

It's a gift to work with the North Country Catholic's reporters, columnists and photographers and the diocesan staff. These are people who love the Lord and love sharing Him and His works with others. They've shared the Lord with me.

But wait! There's more!

It's a gift to work with the faithful of the North Country. I'm blessed that you share your faith, your kind words and even your constructive criticism with me.

It's a gift to work for Bishop Terry R. LaValley

and to help him share the Good News – both the Gospel and how we're living it out here in the North Country.

But wait! There's more.

It's a gift to know that our God loves us so much, He sent his Son to live among us and to save us from sin and death. In fact, that's the biggest and best gift of all. It's the real reason we celebrate. It's the reason I don't have the answer to that question: I have been given everything I need.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at the North Country Catholic. You, the NCC's readers and supporters, remain in my prayers this season.

**Darcy L. Fargo**

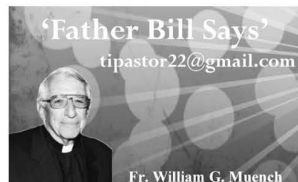
My favorite Christmas story

I would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas – you and your families will be remembered in my Christmas Masses. Also, I want to send my blessing to you all for a Happy New Year.

Today's column will be my Christmas card to you. I want to thank you for being part of my family of readers. I am grateful for you all. I do want you to know that I think of you each week as I prepare to write for the paper. You are always in my prayers.

Today I want to share with you again my Advent and Christmas story. It was the most exciting day in my life and comes to mind for me every year at this Christmas time. I know you have heard the story before. I repeat it often. Please forgive me, but here we go again.

It was 25 years ago this year. Susan, my nephew Paul's wife, had invited me to the birth of their second child as the time of the birth was approaching. At that time, I was pastor at St. Mary's Parish in Ticonderoga. It was going to be a

**Fr. William G. Muench**

bit of a drive to get there, but I was ready.

I do remember the day. As I returned from a call to the house, my secretary, Diane, met me at the door and said, "You better get moving! Something is happening in Syracuse!" So, I did get moving. I was not going to miss this. I did arrive in plenty of time. They had not left for the hospital yet.

I learned a great deal that night. I was so thrilled with the wonder of God's creation. I also realized that the mother is the one who is always in charge. So, after a while, Susan announced it was time, and we headed to St. Joseph's Hospital. I remembered as they were checking in, I overheard one of the nurses saying, "My God, they have brought their priest." I did let them know that I was a relative.

Then, as I remember, we took a walk down the hall, then Susan said, it was time. The nurses began to get things organized and the doctor arrived. I remember that one of the nurses came over to stand with me. She said she was there to explain everything to me. I think that she was there to make certain that I didn't do anything out of order.

I do remember I was nervous. I am often asked what prayers I said during the birth. I must confess to you that I didn't say any prayers at all. I was too absorbed with all that was happening. I did offer a prayer of gratitude after, and when I was allowed to hold this newborn infant, his name is Will, I offered a prayer of blessing.

I must tell you that one of the things I discovered was the pain of childbirth. I had certainly heard about it, but that night I realized what is meant by the pain of childbirth. Susan had to exert and work; there was truly pain. I must tell you that I was so impressed in that moment. I

realized that my own mother had to suffer for me. My prayer is a prayer of gratitude. My mother loved me so much that she accepted that pain to bring me into this world.

I also want you to know how impressed I was with the love that was in that room – the love of a mother and the love of a father as he supported his wife as well as he could. The love that I could recognize in the care of that doctor and the nurses.

Then the baby was taken care of, and Susan was settled in a room. So, Paul and I headed on home. We did stop on the way for a cup of coffee in a diner. I do remember the conversation. It was filled with hopes and dreams and talk of how the family would change with a new addition.

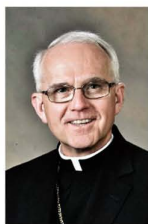
So, that is my story. I have only told it a thousand times. I continue to thank God for that day and that experience. It was truly the most exciting day of my life. I remember well being so close to God, the Creator.

FOLLOW ME

'The Christmas story is our love story'

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

What is this sign that the angel in St. Luke's Gospel proclaims? God is born among us. What a wondrous sign of God's love for you and me! St. John of the Cross once wrote to a friend: "Think nothing else but that God ordains all, and where there is no love, put love, and you will draw out love."



**Bishop
Terry R.
LaValley**

When God the Father didn't find love in the human race, He put love in the human race through the Incarnation of His Son. Then, He found Love, in His Son Jesus and in all who had become a part of His Body. Each of us is called to go and do likewise. When we don't find love in a situation, we can put love there and then we'll find it! We can make a difference.

A current example can be found in the tens of thousands of Polish families opening their living rooms to Ukrainians fleeing their homeland. Polish monasteries, convents, rectories and homes are among some of the places where Ukrainian refugees are encountering the living Lord in their neighbors.

We must embrace the same kind of faith in the overriding providence of God in all the events of our lives – even in a world that, at times, seems so

loveless, so Godless. The angel insists: Do not be afraid, I've got some great news to share with you. God has been born among us and, through His Spirit, He remains ever present.

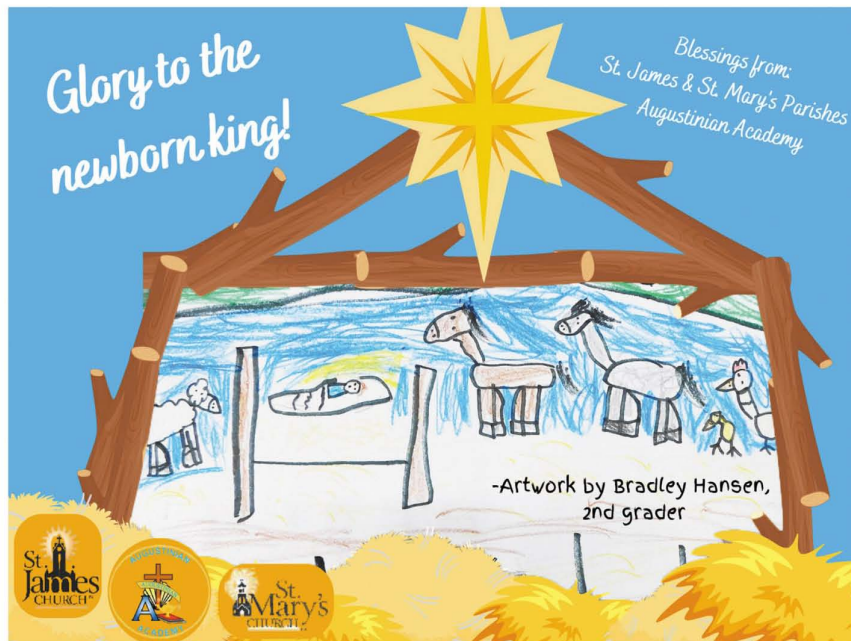
Fear can be a crippling emotion that often raises our defenses and restricts our outreach to others. However, such a divine intervention as God's birth on earth, prepares you and me to open ourselves to the gift of God's presence. When we accept such an invitation in humility and with patience, we can grow in holiness. Fear subsides because we know we are in the presence of Jesus.

The Christmas story is our love story. It's the story of our encounter with the living God and sharing the fruits of that encounter with others. It's no wonder that this is a season of great hope, joy and peace. May the Christ Child bring you and your loved ones the Gift of Love, the Blessing of Hope and the Promise of Peace. A blessed Christmas and joy-filled New Year!

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Terry R. LaValley

Most Reverend
Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg



*May the blessings of that first Christmas
be yours this season and always.*



From the Staff of the Development Office

Scott Lalone, Valerie Mathews & Lorraine Carney

Patricia Dorothy Brady

August 17, 1929 - December 6, 2022



A Funeral Mass for Patricia Dorothy Brady, age 93, of 516 Hamilton Street, Ogdensburg, was held on Saturday, December 10, 2022, at 1 p.m. at St. Mary's Cathedral with Rev. Joseph Morgan officiating. Visitation was held from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 10, 2022, at St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg. Burial will be in St. Mary's Cemetery in the Spring. Mrs. Brady passed away on Tuesday evening, December 6, 2022, at the home of her daughter in Brasher Falls.

Patricia is survived by her two sons, Thomas H. Brady of Ogdensburg and Mark J. Brady and his wife, Mary Rose, of Waddington; two daughters, Karen Reynolds and her husband, Edward "Chip", of Plattsburgh and Martha Mainville and her husband, Daniel, of Brasher Falls, NY; her brother, Thomas Bergeron of High Ridge, MO; eight grandchildren, Hayley (Mike) Henry, James Brady, Megan Rose (Ivy) Brady, Marnie Reynolds, Brady (Aaron) Noel, Kaycee, Jacob (MacKenzie Dumas), and Rylie Mainville (Kevin Carey); eight great-grandchildren; and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. She is predeceased by three sisters, Barbara Decarr, Ruth Langley, Mary Elizabeth "Betty" Marek and three brothers, John "Jack" Bergeron, Francis Bergeron, and Joseph Bergeron.

Pat was born on August 17, 1929, in Ogdensburg, NY, the daughter of the late Henry and Elizabeth (Gillespie) Bergeron. She attended and later graduated from St. Mary's Academy in 1947. Patricia married James Harold Brady on July 23, 1955, at St. Mary's Cathedral with the Rev. James Ruddy officiating. He predeceased her on March 27, 2000. Patricia worked for a short time at Newberry's Department Store after graduating high school. She then worked at the St. Lawrence State Hospital as an attendant for 36 years, retiring in 1984.

She was an avid cleaner, game show watcher and Sudoku player. She enjoyed playing cards with her friends, many of whom were her St. Mary's Academy classmates- Class of '47!

She was a lifetime parishioner of St. Mary's Cathedral where she sang in the choir, was an extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to the sick, and coordinator of Nocturnal Adoration. She had a special devotion to our Blessed Mother and was a member of the Blue Army. She volunteered at St. Vincent DePaul and worked on the St. Mary's Cemetery Restoration Project.

She enjoyed attending daily Mass and was devoted to her prayer life. In the words of her nephew, Ron Langley, "If Aunt Pat was praying for you, you were as close to God as you were ever going to be."

Donations may be made in Patricia's memory to Ogdensburg Boys' and Girls' Club, 610 Paterson St., Ogdensburg, NY, and Hospice of St. Lawrence Valley, 6805 US Hwy 11, Potsdam, NY 13676.

Online condolences may be made at www.fraryfuneralhome.com.

Diocesan synod report

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

A synodal Church is one that walks together. We are pilgrims on a journey but not as isolated, solitary travelers. United as the Body of Christ, we walk together, supporting, encouraging, sharing and discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit.

Pope Francis asked the Church to pray together, to hold conversations, to listen to one another and the Holy Spirit. In the Diocese of Ogdensburg, pastors attended regional gatherings with parish delegates to pray and share their answers to meaningful questions. Pastors and delegates were asked to bring the same process to their parishes, and then report the nature and content of those conversations.

In that same synodal process, the submitted reports and surveys were synthesized in our 10-page diocesan report. Our report was then included in a similar state-wide effort, resulting in a regional document. The regional reports from around the country were used to create the national

synod report. Our national report and those from around the world will be used by Church leadership during the formal Synod meetings planned for 2023 and 2024.

In the meantime, I pray our local conversations continue to bear fruit. I hope we apply our synodal synthesis to our diocesan goals. We are working to apply what we learned in these discussions to our diocesan mission, ministry and offices.

I invite you to read the report and pray to the Holy Spirit for guidance. Consider the themes that emerged from the conversations, as well as the Committee Observations. Do they strike a chord as we journey together as the Body of Christ? Do they highlight areas where you and your parish radiate

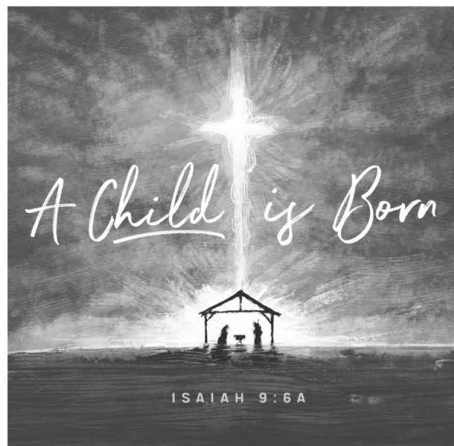
the love of Christ or areas for improvement?

This report is the culmination of many, many hours of planning, prayer, discussion and reporting. My gratitude goes to all who participated. Whether at a Pastoral Council meeting or a catechesis discussion or around the dining room table, I pray we continue drawing closer to one another and to God, praying together, speaking about our faith, encouraging one another and building up our local Church by being Christ-led, Christ-fed and hope-filled.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Terry R. LaValley

Most Reverend
Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg



*Like Mary,
"by virtue of baptism, every Christian is a
"Christopher", a bearer of Christ, to his/her
brothers and sisters."
~Pope Francis*

The Vocations Office wishes you the gift of faith, the blessing of hope and the peace and joy of God's love found in the Christ Child this Christmas.

Rev. Christopher Carrara, Vocation Director
Rev. Matthew Conger, Assistant Director
Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ,
Vocation Coordinator

For a Synodal Church: Introduction

INTRODUCTION

Background

In 2014, priorities and goals for the Diocese of Ogdensburg were prayerfully developed and announced after an extensive envisioning process facilitated by the Catholic Leadership Institute. The process included eleven listening sessions held around the Diocese by Bishop Terry R. LaValley. The priorities and goals developed continue to guide the diocesan mission and are intended to be living, continuously revisited and refreshed. Bishop LaValley views the Synod journey as an opportunity to discuss anew the diocesan goals and priorities while engaging in the wider synodal discussions and journey at the parish level, diocesan level and for the universal Church. The Synod also coincides with the Diocese of Ogdensburg's 150th anniversary and is part of the celebration.

Rather than repeating the diocesan-level process used in 2014, Synodal conversations were held largely at the parish level. To that end, each pastor was asked to appoint a delegate for his parish or parish group. Pastors and delegates participated in one of three regional delegate training sessions, which were designed to explain and model synodal conversations. A three-phase approach was suggested. The three phases include reaching out to:

1. Existing ministry groups
2. "People in the pews"
3. Those outside or on the margins of the Church

Pastors and delegates were provided packets with resources to aid them in facilitating Synodal conversations. Dele-



DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG

For a Synodal Church



WHAT IS A SYNOD? Synod literally means "journeying together" or "together on the way." Synod is also a general term for an assembly of bishops and Church officials for discussions and decisions on matters important to the faith. The title of this synod is *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission*. We are asked to consider how we journey together and how we are co-responsible for the mission of the Church. Pope Francis put it this way: "What the Lord is asking of us is already in some sense present in the very word 'Synod.' Journeying together – laity, pastors, the Bishop of Rome – is an easy concept to put into words, but not so easy to put into practice."

gate packets and additional resources were also distributed via email and on the diocesan website. Delegates were further supported with weekly online discussions that enabled them to share and discuss ideas and challenges.

Response

We received feedback from approximately half of the parishes, see Figure 1. The majority of feedback came from the first two phases referenced above, ministry groups and people in the pews.

Delegates found limited success reaching out beyond the parish or to those on the margins of the Church. Recognizing there were parishes with little participation and a lack of response from the margins, the diocesan Synod Committee created and published an online survey with a paper option to collect individual responses and linked to them from our Anniversary page <https://150.rc-dony.org>.

During our compilation

of this report, the committee closely reviewed the My2Cents statistical reports. Reaching out through in this manner did not reach phase 3 people – those outside the Church or in the margins. In fact, 114 of 119 responses (96%) listed themselves as Catholic. Of the 113 responses to "How often do you attend Mass?", 104 responded daily or weekly. The My2Cents survey succeeded in providing a platform for those unable to participate in synodal discussions for health or security reasons. However, it failed to reach those outside the Church.

Difficulties arose from the timing of the start of the Synodal process. Delays occurred due to the busy Advent season and parishioners leaving for warmer climates. COVID also hampered the gathering for synodal conversations. For those who were able to participate, delegate reports indicated many participants were surprised by how much they enjoyed the

in-depth discussions about how we journey together as Church. The Diocesan Synod Committee and Bishop LaValley reviewed all feedback received from the parish conversations as well as individual responses such as from the My2Cents survey. Areas of consensus in the feedback received from the parish conversations are reflected in this report. The My2Cents feedback was used to supplement the synthesis, providing

support or counter-voice in communion with the Holy Spirit.

Writing the Synthesis

This synthesis was composed in a synodal fashion. The diocesan Synod Committee reviewed the feedback as a group, asking, "how are we journeying together, what do we hear, what is the consensus, and where is consensus lacking?" The synthesis is intended to reflect what was shared without clarification or conclusions.

*And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us.*



Merry Christmas from the Respect Life Office
(Image used with permission from The Saints Project)

BARSTOW

AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION BUICK PONTIAC GMC SUBARU
WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE

"Family owned dealership serving the
North Country for over 56 years!"

For more information, visit our Website
at: www.barstowmotors.com

MARKET ST., POTSDAM, NY • (315) 265-8800

For a Synodal Church: Synthesis

CONSENSUS

Two major themes emerged from the responses: "Who are the people of God?" and "How are we journeying together?"

Who are the people of God?

The universal Church allows and encourages diversity including expressions of spirituality. Rather than divide us, our diversity should be a source of strength. A variety of discussions reflected the idea that input from diverse voices should be sought by Church leadership at all levels. Anxiety exists regarding the institutional Church and her leadership's perceived lack of connection to the modern world.

There is strong consensus that people are hungry for relationship with each other and with their priests, especially

BACKGROUND

- Bishop LaValley views the synod as an opportunity to renew the diocesan goals & priorities
- Pastors appointed delegates; pastors and/or delegates participated in one of three regional diocesan training sessions and five optional online gatherings.
- 53 feedback reports from synodal discussions were submitted by delegates and diocesan staff. This represents 57% of the parish groupings and 63% of diocesan families.
- 119 "My2Cents" online surveys were submitted by individuals.
- Delegates found limited success reaching out beyond the parish or to those on the margins.
- The report was composed in a synodal fashion by the diocesan Synod Committee with Bishop LaValley.

sacramentally. The pastor's attitude and presence set the tone for the parish and school.

Joined or merged parishes need to see themselves as real, singular faith communities, journeying together and sharing resources. As

parishes come together, mission and vision must override the tendency to compete.

There is a call to recognize the giftedness of the laity and encourage collaboration and co-responsibility for the mission of the Church. We

SYNTHESIS - WHO ARE THE PEOPLE OF GOD?

- Rather than divide us, diversity should be a source of strength.
- People are hungry for relationship with each other and with their priests, especially sacramentally.
- Joined or merged parishes need to see themselves as real, singular faith communities journeying together.
- There is a call to recognize the giftedness of the laity and encourage collaboration and co-responsibility for the mission of the Church.
- The Church is seen as judgmental and rulebound. We need to reach out and journey with people on the margins, including lapsed Catholics, transient, poor, those struggling with moral teachings, elderly, homebound, prisoners, women, divorced/separated, young, LGBTQ, those preferring the Extraordinary Form, liberals, non-whites, special needs and broken families.

promote collegiality by identifying and promoting the talents of others.

The Church is seen as judgmental and rule-bound; we need to reach out and journey with people on the margins. Those coming to church out of obligation, visitors and parishioners not involved in ministry may not feel welcome. Some of the marginalized were identified as lapsed Catholics, transient, poor, those struggling with moral teachings, elderly, homebound, prisoners, women, divorced/separated, young, LGBTQ, those preferring the Extraordinary Form of the Mass, liberals, non-whites, special needs and broken families. Due to the abuse scandal, some rejected the Church, creating a new group on the margins.

There is a desire to

better understand Church teaching regarding marginalized groups, especially LGBTQ. Many of the responses also indicated a desire to understand how to apply and live applicable Church teachings.

At the diocesan Youth Rally, "In HIS House", on April 2, 2022, the Evangelization Office offered youth ages 12 to 18 a fifteen-question survey that breaks down into five categories. Students were asked to rank a statement's validity on a scale of 1 (Not true at all) to 5 (Very true). A link to the survey used at the Youth Rally is available in the Appendix. The highest scoring category is Celebrating, where youth were asked about participating in religious celebrations and the meaning those celebra-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

We wish you and your family a

Blessed Christmas



From the Office of Youth Ministry

Visit our website

www.northcountrycatholic.org

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



Find us on Facebook!



For a Synodal Church: Journeying together

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

tions have in their lives.

How are we journeying together?

The diocese and parishes need to clarify their mission and vision statements. Many of those participating in the discussions recognize a lack of understanding of worship and sacramental life and would like to hear homilies that connect the Gospel and Church teaching to their lives.

Formation

In a number of discussions, the faithful expressed that many of their fellow parishioners have not encountered Christ in the Eucharist. There is concern some see Him or the Eucharist as unimportant, irrelevant and not present in their lives.

On the other side of the coin, conversations indicate the importance of articulating the tenets of the faith in a way that is accessible and understandable to the inadequately catechized.

There is strong consensus that parental involvement in catechesis is necessary and lacking. Some discussions also pointed out a need to

SYNTHESIS - HOW ARE WE JOURNEYING TOGETHER?

- Community was the most common theme in submitted comments. Consensus recognizes that community is created within parishes through shared experiences (outreach and service, events and intentional small groups).
- There is a longing for opportunities to be heard and for safe, non-judgmental dialogue.
- The diocese and parishes need to clarify their mission and vision statements.
- Discussion participants desire additional faith formation, especially as it relates to the importance of the Eucharist, how to pray and how to apply Church teachings to lived experiences.
- Respondents said the Church must go forth and convert the world and affect the culture rather than building a fortress to protect herself.
- Outlier responses (submitted by one or two parishes/individuals) included comments calling for a greater role for women and recognition of same-sex unions.

balance catechesis with experiences of faith and a relationship with Christ.

The need for catechesis is not limited to children. Adults seek opportunities to learn the teachings of the Church, the rationale behind those teachings and how to apply Church teachings in their daily lives. People want to be taught to pray; they want their churches open and available for both personal and communal prayer. There is also a genuine

desire for opportunities to participate in devotions.

There is strong consensus that the breakdown of the family has made passing on the faith more difficult and hinders all aspects of formation and vocational awareness. Participants in the Synod discussion broadly desire to engage youth and accompany them on their faith journey.

We need to promote church vocations.

Community

The theme of community appeared in the majority of comments. Community is described in many forms in the varied discussions.

There is consensus that community is created within parishes through shared experiences. Examples of shared experiences include outreach and service, events and intentional small groups meant to promote deeper sharing and opportunities to be vulnerable. Hospitality and fellowship are viewed as means to strengthen and support community. Invitation is critical to improving our sense of community, engaging the marginalized and sharing the Gospel. Invitations should be personal, joyful and enthusiastic. They need to be expressed through widely varied channels such as individual contact, phone calls, preaching, bulletins, social media, mailings and other means. The value of good greeters is mentioned often.

Participation and discussion

Discussions reveal a longing for opportunities to be heard and for

safe, non-judgmental dialogue. Participants indicate they do not engage in conversations related to faith or Church decision-making. This is attributed to fear or a lack of deep knowledge, as well as the perception that people do not listen unless it fits their viewpoint. Polarization, created by unexamined biases in modern culture, makes listening to each other very difficult.

At the Youth Rally, the second lowest score was given to the statement "I feel heard when I have participated in some activity of event at the parish, in parish groups, etc." Of the five categories of questioning, the categories of Listening and Discern and Decide tied for the second lowest average scores. The category Participation and Responsibility scored second best.

A sense of disconnection between the Church hierarchy and the people is described in a number of comments. It is asked, "Does the Catholic bureaucracy inhibit sharing?"

Whether anything will come of this Synodal process is a source of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



The Word became Flesh

and dwell among us

Christmas Blessings

From the Natural Family Planning Office

The North Country Catholic Makes A Great Gift!

Enter a one year subscription for a member of the family or for a friend as a gift from you. We'll send a special gift card to the recipient.

| Gift Recipient Information | Gift Giver Information |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Name _____ | Name _____ |
| Address _____ | Address _____ |
| City _____ State _____ Zip _____ | City _____ State _____ Zip _____ |

New Subscription
 Renewal
 Inside Diocese \$27 enclosed
 Outside Diocese \$30 enclosed

Clip and Mail Check to:
 North Country Catholic
 PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY

For a Synodal Church: Outliers

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

simism. The Synod was compared to the Diocese of Ogdensburg's 2014-2015 Census which several comments described as a missed opportunity for evangelization due to a lack of follow up in many parishes.

Outreach

Comments indicated the Church must go forth and convert the world and affect the culture rather than building a fortress to protect herself. The faithful are called to service to God and His people. It is through this service we bring others to a joyful encounter and a relationship with Christ. Many outreach ministries were mentioned such as: phone trees, soup kitchens, drivers, and bereavement and prison ministry. Com-

munity outreach can happen in collaboration with other agencies and faiths.

For some Synod participants, COVID created a disconnect from the sacraments, the Church and community. In others, it reinvigorated the longing for community and sacraments. Livestreamed liturgies offered many people a connection to the celebration of the Mass which some recognized as imperfect.

Specifically, outreach to the homebound and additional ministers for that outreach were expressed as needs. Comments emphasized that the homebound remain part of our parish communities. As such, the homebound can participate in ministry through actions such as praying for others.

Responses suggested communication to internal and external audiences needs to increase and improve, especially via digital means. This was supported when "The voice of the Church is heard in our society, denouncing injustice and announcing the message of Jesus" received the lowest average score and poorest distribution of scores on the Youth Rally Survey. The questions in this category, The Church and the World, received the lowest average score.

Outliers

Feedback received from parishes revealed consensus on the themes above, desire for community, hospitality, relationship, adult faith formation and faith sharing opportunities, and concern for youth. Other themes are mentioned in only one or two parishes and corroborated in the My2Cents survey feedback or repeatedly emerge in the My2Cents feedback alone. Most of these themes qualify as being on the extremes of the theological spectrum. These comments are included to ensure the synthesis remains as synodal as possible, supporting a listening environment where individuals have the courage to speak and be heard.

Included in those comments is a call for a greater role for women in the Church, with some calling for women's ordination or diaconate. This is expressed by some as solution to the shortage of priests. In response to the lack of priestly vocations, there is a call for married priests.

Generally, there is a recognition that LGBTQ persons are marginalized. There are comments and questions about how to welcome members of this community while upholding Church teachings. However, there are voices that call for recognition of gay/same-sex marriage or blessings of same sex unions. At the same time, other voices counter that it is vital that the church continues to promote and proclaim difficult teachings such as those related to life issues and homosexuality.

In some conversations and in the survey, especially with young adults, a hunger for the "rejuvenation of the Mass" rises to the top. There is a desire for reverence, quality music and homilies, prayer and a sense of welcoming. For many others, the desire for tradition is a pre-Vatican II mentality that is divisive and polarizing.

Especially in the My2Cents survey, respondents feel as though they marginalized and not part of the community. Many indicate they feel unwelcome in their parishes. Others opine that they are marginalized because they hold opinions on an extreme of the theological spectrum.

Although there were not many conversations with those who left the Church, whether they became non-affiliated or joined another denomination, there is a need to share the few such comments submitted. For some, there is a great sadness. Most speak about their experience of Church being uninformed and consisting

of boring ritual. The Church is seen as judgmental, and participants feel rejected.

On the other hand, many respondents to the survey wrote beautiful stories of their journeys back to the faith or of conversions to the faith. These stories came as responses to a question about their experience of Church or faith.

Although these outlying themes did not rise to a level of diocesan consensus and communion, they speak to the greater theme of how we journey together. They speak to the themes of community, inclusion, and the need to overcome division and polarization. There is a need to be able to speak courageously and a need for all to listen.

Committee observations The process of writing this report attempted to continue in the spirit of the Synod and included prayer, open discussion and seeking a communion of ideas. After hosting and participating in dozens of synod sessions and during the synthesizing of group discussions and responses collected, the Synod Committee developed observations and ideas derived from the Synod discussion but not stated.

The Synod provides a much-needed opportunity for dialogue among the people of the diocese. The overarching area of consensus is the need for community, including such themes as hospitality, inclusion, invitation. Even the theme of marginalization speaks of including and inviting those on the margins back into com-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

— PRAYER SUGGESTION —

Eternal Father,
we lift up to you these
and all the priests of the world.
Sanctify them.
Heal and guide them.
Mold them into the likeness and
holiness of your Son, Jesus,
the Eternal High Priest.
May their lives be pleasing to
you. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen

(With ecclesiastical approval)

Mass
Rosary
Fasting
Day Offering
Eucharistic Adoration
Offering of Sufferings
Divine Mercy Chapel
Or whatever the Lord
inspires you to offer Him



JANUARY
2023
Holy Name
Of Jesus

| SUNDAY | | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| BISHOP TERRY R. LAVALLEY | REV. DAVID DELUCA MSC | REV. GARVIN J. DEMARAS | REV. RICHARD D. DEMERS | REV. JOHN M. DEMO | MSGR. LAWRENCE M. DENO | REV. RAYMOND DIESBOURG MSC | |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | |
| OUR PASTOR | REV. JOHN L. DOWNS | MSGR. DENNIS J. DUPREY, VF | REV. GUY F. EDWARDS | REV. JOSEPH W. ELLIOTT | REV. ALFRED H. FISH | REV. FRANCIS J. FLYNN | |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | |
| POPE FRANCIS | BENEDICT XVI POPE EMERITUS | REV. J. MICHAEL GAFFNEY | REV. GARRY B. GIROUX | REV. JOSEPH W. GIROUX | REV. L. WILLIAM GORDON | REV. ALBERT J. HAUSER, VF | |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | |
| RETIRED PRIESTS | REV. PETER G. HELFRICH | REV. MICHAEL J. JABLONSKI | REV. JOSEPH KANIMEA, MSC | REV. DANIEL T. KEEFE | REV. PAUL J. KELLY | REV. JOHN P. KENNEHAN | |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | For more copies contact: Diocese of Ogdensburg PO Box 369 Ogdensburg, NY 13669 | | | | |
| DECEASED PRIESTS | REV. THOMAS E. KORNMEYER | REV. STEVE KOVACEVICH | | | | | |

A donation to help support THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS will be appreciated. The Monthly Prayer Request for Priests is graciously underwritten by:  Diocese of Ogdensburg Vocations Society www.myvocation.net

For a Synodal Church: Conclusion

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

munity. The theme of outreach speaks to inclusion of the marginalized, but also speaks to how service and working with others on a common mission builds community and spiritual friendships. There is a deep sense of isolation and loneliness that existed before and became more prevalent with COVID.

Despite the predominance of the community theme, responses almost never make any connection between the Mass, the Eucharist and the community being sought. One quiet comment was, "There is a lack of understanding of worship and the sacramental life." That lack of understanding extends to the teaching and structure of the Church. This misunderstanding appears occasionally in discussion groups and more frequently in private responses. The good news is many desire adult catechesis and formation on how to compassionately live the teaching of the Church. The bad news is many are shopping for a Church where they can pick and choose the personality, spirituality and teachings they value personally. A disconnect exists between an individual's desires and being in communion with the people of their parish.

This consumer mentality is present in remarks about traditional and progressive Catholics. On a positive note, it primarily emerges from discussions that acknowledge a fear of division in the Church community. The consumer mentality

CONCLUSIONS

These discussions and what we learned from them strengthen our resolve to revisit and refresh the Diocesan Priorities:

- Building Parishes with Living Stones – The people of God must be connected. As part of the Body of Christ, all should grow in relationship with Christ and one another through prayer, fellowship, faith sharing, hospitality, dialogue, inclusion and invitation.
- Strengthening Faith Formation in Family Life – The family is the critical transmitter of the faith. Parents should be engaged in catechesis.
- Creating a Culture of Vocations – Called to holiness by baptism, the entire community must support the family and call forth all vocations from our youth and others.

Let us continue this synodal process and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, grow in our abilities to listen to God and one another, speak the truth in love, travel together as pilgrims and invite all to join us on the journey.

questions the validity or desirability of the other side of the spectrum. It limits or extinguishes dialogue, any attempt to appreciate others' perspectives and recognition of the value of other expressions of spirituality. Some of this stems from a lack of understanding of Church and Mass.

Many discussions regarding the lack of youth engagement in the parish disregard the need for parents to lead the family to Church and God. Similarly, many comments about vocations do not recognize that vocations come primarily from family life and a wider understanding of the daily realities of clerical and religious life. Zero comments were received about the lack of men, especially fathers, participating in sacramental life.

The biggest contributor to the health of a parish seems to be its pastor. It is difficult to replace a pastor's presence. The dwindling

number of priests and need for pastors to take on more parishes or worship sites presents enormous challenges. The committee asked repeatedly, "What happens to parishes when struggling or inadequate pastors are left in place?"

There was both surprise and disappointment at how little discussion related directly to current social justice and political issues. The committee speculates some participants self-censored to avoid political and cultural polarizing topics. Polarization is a most effective form of anti-communion.

In several discussions about marginalized groups, it is evident that quality catechesis is needed. For example, statements regarding the marginalization of the LGBTQ community seemed to reflect media assertions rather than Church teaching or practice.

Catholics struggle to understand and apply

Church teaching to many of today's hot button topics like marriage, divorce and annulments, the critical role of family in vocations, evangelization, Eucharist, sexuality and science. Leading the faithful through the quagmire calls for knowledgeable presenters to build a foundation of understanding Church teaching and demonstrate how to live the Christian life. Diocesan staff and other appropriate subject matter experts need to be present in parishes.

In general, there is a strong desire for adult faith formation and small-group faith sharing. The committee sees many Catholics struggle to share their faith because they do not recognize God's grace in their lives and are reluctant to share their stories with others.

Many parishioners do not feel they have the ability or comfort to use language of faith especially with family or friends. Parents are the primary teachers of their children. The practice and transmission of the faith is fundamentally damaged.

Although it was helpful during COVID, people are mainly tired of online events and desire opportunities to gather, share and learn from one another.

CONCLUSIONS

Thanks are given to God for this opportunity to journey together, to the Holy Father for convening this Synod, and to all who participated in the Synod process and conversations. These efforts will help us continue to strive for Our Sacred Purpose: "Christ-led, Christ-fed, and hope-filled, the Diocese of Ogdensburg joyfully invites the people of the North Country to the journey of faith through the proclamation of the Gospel, the celebration of the Eucharist and the Sacraments, and the loving service of neighbor."

Toward that goal, these discussions and what we learned from them strengthen our resolve to revisit and refresh our efforts as they relate to the Diocesan Priorities developed in 2014: Building Parishes with Living Stones, Strengthening Faith Formation in Family Life,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

**"We have come to know and to believe
in the love God has for us...
that the Father sent His son as
SAVIOR of the world"**

(John 4:14-16)



The Roman Catholic
Community of Cape Vincent,
Rosiere & Chaumont

For a Synodal Church: Diocesan priorities

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

and Creating a Culture of Vocations.

Building Parishes with Living Stones

To build strong parishes, the living stones, the people of God, must be connected, supporting and strengthening one another.

An overarching area of consensus in the Synod discussions was the need for community. As part of the Body of Christ, all should grow in relationship with Christ and so with one another through prayer, fellowship, faith sharing, hospitality, dialogue, inclusion, and invitation.

Pastors are ordained to model Christ's love and participate actively in their parish communities, setting the tone for their parishes.

There is need for continued and increased outreach to those on the margins. Continued dialogue within parishes and communities to increase empathy and understanding is a means to overcome polarization and division and marginalization.

Joined or merged parishes, especially, need to prioritize creating opportunities for community and collaboration.

As the Body of Christ, we should recognize and encourage the giftedness of the laity, involve diverse perspectives and voices in leadership and decision making, and encourage collaboration and co-responsibility.

Strengthening Faith Formation in Family Life

The domestic Church, the family, is the critical

transmitter of the faith and is responsible for bringing children to a relationship with Christ and His Church.

Parents should be engaged in catechesis for their children and their own ongoing faith formation.

Additionally, there is a yearning among adult faithful to deepen their knowledge of the truth of the Gospels and Church teachings and how to live those truths in the world. The faithful seek to know Christ through learning to pray and encountering Him the sacraments.

Creating a Culture of Vocations

All are called to holiness by virtue of their baptism. There is a need to ensure youth are taught and shown the importance of discern-

ment and vocational awareness, whether to the dedicated single or married life, priesthood or consecrated life, which is a primary responsibility of the family. The entire Church community, as the living stones, provides support, call and formation for all vocations.

Steps Going Forward

In light of this report, which is a snapshot in time, we, as members of the Body of Christ, need to envision anew our mission, goals and priorities. What steps do we take to actually build community and form leadership so as to build parishes with living stones? How do we encourage our people to engage in formation, continual life-long learning and deep conversa-

tions about their faith so that they can be confident to go out as missionary disciples and become courageous witnesses to the love of Christ in the world? How do we improve our communication, both internally and externally, to show the beauty, truth and goodness of God mediated through the Church so that all will be drawn in, and desire to come and see and experience the joy of following Christ?

May we continue this synodal process, as members of the Body of Christ, re-learn the art of listening to God and one another, and speaking the truth in love, and truly journeying on this pilgrimage together while inviting all to join us on the way.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our contributors. Those whom graciously and generously donate financially, physically and spiritually to those in need.

Your support renews trust, hope, and faith for those in dark times.

Your contributions positively change North Country lives every day ... and every day matters.

A Blessed Christmas and New Year to you all!

Catholic Charities - Diocese of Ogdensburg



51 priests beneficiaries of retirement plan

The 40 retired priests of the diocese who currently receive pensions from the Priests' Retirement Fund will be direct beneficiaries of the generosity of Catholics in the North Country who contribute to their parishes in the Christmas collection. Also, 11 priests age 70 and older who remain active in their ministry in the Diocese of Ogdensburg are receiving partial retirement benefits.

Your gift this year will help support not only priests currently receiving support from the Priests' Retirement Fund but also benefits to be paid to future retirees.

This Christmas, parishes are asked to contribute 75% of the

Christmas collection to the Plan, with the parish keeping the balance. Parishes may also take a second collection solely for its benefit as Christmas is on Sunday in 2022.

While your gift helps pay pensions to retired priests, it will also help the diocese make provisions for pensions for other priests as they retire in the future.

Actuarial studies are performed annually to assure the diocese is preparing for its future obligations to retired priests. The firm of Frank J. Walters and Associates has determined that adequate provisions are being made in 2022-23 to fund the Plan.

On July 1, 2022, an increase of \$30 in the monthly benefit paid to retired priests of the diocese became effective.

It is the diocese's goal to provide a pension increase when able to do so.

Estimated pension payments in this fiscal year amount to one million dollars. One hundred percent of the cost of health insurance for retired priests is also funded through the Plan, the budget in 2022-23 for this benefit is \$270,000.

Retired priests of the diocese receive pensions from the Social Security system. Because priests' income is typically modest, their So-

cial Security pensions are not large and most rely heavily on pensions from the diocese for a good portion of their financial support.

The value of investments of the Priests' Retirement Fund decreased over a one-year period from \$11,356,662 on June 30, 2021 to \$9,259,130 on June 30, 2022. The diocese's Investment Advisory Committee, diocesan administration, and the investment portfolio's investment managers closely monitor monies invested in support of the Plan.

The Priests' Retirement Fund of the diocese is also assisted through extraordinary gifts. Information about

gift opportunities to benefit the Priests' Retirement Fund is available from the Diocese's Executive Director of the Development Office, Scott Lalone. He can be reached in Ogdensburg at (315) 393-2920 or through e-mail to slalone@rcdony.org.

Your personal generosity to the Christmas collection in your parish will support all retired priests of the diocese and benefit longer term the diocesan and religious priests serving you today. Your priests, retired and active, will appreciate your support tremendously!

— Michael J. Tooley
Diocesan Fiscal Officer

Christmas Peace to All

At this time of giving, we are reminded of the greatest gift ever— Jesus Christ.

During this Holy Season, may you experience the priceless gift of love that came with the birth of our Savior.

Wishing you and your families a Blessed Christmas!



Saint Lawrence Society

The Permanent Deacons of the Diocese of Ogdensburg



Environmental Stewardship**St. Francis & Christmas**

When sitting in church this coming weekend, look carefully at the Nativity scene near the altar. Typically, around the manger there is a cow or ox, a donkey, sheep and a few shepherds. Jesus is also depicted as lying on a bed of dried plant matter with His parents close by. There is a star shining brightly overhead. When St. Francis of Assisi thought about this event, he focused on the fact that Our Lord chose to enter our world surrounded by nature and drew as His first visitors individuals that lived close to nature.

Upon taking a human form, God integrated ordinary earthly compounds to form a body, and ingested common substances from the surroundings to nourish and sustain His flesh and blood. All of creation contributed to His earthly being. Also, since the Creator forms all, every entity has the same heavenly Father which makes us all brothers and sisters in creation.

St. Francis loved Christmas because this was the day we also became brothers and sisters with Jesus. St. Francis believed that Christmas was the most important day of the year, and it should be promoted as such. He wanted everyone to realize the light of Christ can shine not only through people but also through all of creation. He encouraged his followers to place candles on trees to spread the word that the light of Christ has come to the earth and can be seen through all of nature.

St. Francis' celebration of Christmas not only incorporated lights on trees but also an image of the stable and those present for Our Lord's birth. Initially, St. Francis incorporated live barnyard creatures and real people for his first Nativity scenes. Later, statues would be used as they are today.

St. Francis wanted his followers to sing on Christmas, ring bells and rejoice, because it represents the anniversary of when God joined us here on earth to share our hopes, dreams, pain and suffering. It is when a great light appeared for anyone who wishes to experience it.

The Faith & Ecology Group would like to wish everyone a very blessed Christmas!

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration online is required.

Participants may preregister at www.virtus.org.

Upcoming sessions:

Jan. 3 – 9 a.m. – Sisters of St.

Joseph Motherhouse, Watertown

Jan. 9 – 6 p.m. – St. Patrick's Church, Watertown

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terrianne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: 518-651-2267 days; 518-569-0612 evenings; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; ccarrara@rc-dony.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

Dec. 21 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Dec. 22 – Noon – Diocesan Staff Christmas Party at Bishop's Residence

Dec. 23 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Dec. 24 – 4 p.m. – Christmas Vigil Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Dec. 25 – Midnight – Midnight Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

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

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

5 p.m. – Evening Prayer and Christmas Dinner with Our Seminarians and their Parents at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

Dec. 29 – 11 a.m. – Council of Priests Meeting at St. Mary's Cathedral (Brzana Hall)

Dec. 30 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Dec. 31 – 4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Jan. 1 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Jan. 3 – 3:30 p.m. – New York State Catholic Conference Board of Bishops Conference Call

Rest in Peace

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

Dec. 14 – Rev. P.M. O'Shea, O.S.A., 1942, Rev. Paul Beyette, 2016

Dec. 15 – Rev. Leon Pierre Cochard, 1915; Deacon Joseph H. Gilbert II, 2010

Dec. 16 – Rev. J. F. McGowen, O.S.A., 1935; Rev. Frederick Cummings Horton, 1975

Dec. 17 – Rev. John Orrin Senecal, 1980

Dec. 18 – Msgr. Narcisse Lorrain, 1915; Rev. Laurent Legoff, O.M.I., 1932; Rev. Louis Kopp, M.S.C., 1946; Msgr. Harold J. Skelly, 1980; Rev. George A. Fortaine, 1990

Dec. 20 – Rev. Luke Harney, 1892; Rev. Jean B. A. Barette, O.M.I., 1955

Dec. 21 – Rev. Camillus Mondorf, O.S.F., 1914; Rev. Charles A. Grady, O.S.A., 1981

Dec. 22 – Rev. Edgard Thivierge, O.M.I., 1975

Dec. 23 – Rev. John B. P. Honorat, O.M.I., 1862

Dec. 24 – Rev. Jean Claude Leonard, O.M.I., 1868

Dec. 25 – Rev. Patrick Lyons, 1911; Rev. Oswald L. Bentley, 1940

Dec. 26 – Rev. Aloysius Hyacinth McMahon, 1936; Deacon Andrew Yarchuk, 2019

Dec. 27 – Rev. Hollis David Burns, 1936; Rev. Henry Gilbeau, O.F.M. Conv., 1978; Rev. Wilfred L. DeRoche, 2013

Dec. 28 – Rev. Nicolaus Burtin, O.M.I., 1902; Msgr. John M. Waterhouse, 1995; Rev. Eugene J. Beaudet, 2004; Rev. Howard P. McCasland, 2010

Dec. 29 – Rev. John A. Mullen, 1887

Dec. 30 – Rev. Jean Baptiste Lemerrier, 1863; Rev. Sam D'Angelo, O.S.A., 1961; Deacon Victor Demers, 2003

Dec. 31 – Rev. Joseph Butler, 1894; Rev. Benedict Granottier, 1930; Msgr. Clarence A. Kitts, 1949

Jan. 1 – Rev. Earl Leo Taylor, 1974

Jan. 2 – Rev. Henry William McFadden, 1978; Deacon Robert J. LeClair, 2009; Rev. Patrick J. O'Reilly

Jan. 3 – Rev. A. J. M. Viau, 1966; Rev. Hilary Neal, O.P., 1986



Wishing you all of the peace and joy of the Christmas season.
Merry Christmas!

From Fr. Chris, Sister Sharon,
and all of St. Mary's families
students and staff



MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

Did I make the right choice as dad was dying?

Sometimes people will contact the National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) wondering if the decisions they made on behalf of a dying family member were the right ones. The NCBC provides a free Ethics Consultation Service where individuals can ask questions and seek guidance about ethics and medical decisions.

Some who call are interested in reviewing the details of how a loved one died, along with the advice they were given by doctors, nurses, hospice workers, family members and friends. While their loved one may have died months or even years earlier, they may still be unsure or unsettled about the treatment decisions they made.

End of life situations are not easy to sort out. Important practical details and medical facts may no longer be available or may have been forgotten with the passage of time. Sometimes family members may have disagreed with each other or were feuding about how best to proceed, or may not have wanted to seek out expert advice or guidance, so the decisions they made might have been hasty or under duress.

A friend once spoke to me about a young man who had shared with her some details about his father's death. He told her that as he looked back on it, he had doubts that he had made the right decisions as his dad became more debilitated. He felt he had failed his dad because of the limited

kinds of care he ended up authorizing on his behalf. My friend sought to reassure him that he really shouldn't be troubled about it, because she couldn't imagine that he would have done anything but his best under the circumstances, and so his dad likely had received very good care.

When she recounted the story to me, I asked, "But how would you actually know that his dad received good care and that the son really did make the right choices? Objectively speaking, the son may be right that some of the decisions were poorly made or selfish or otherwise flawed." I asked her whether her first instinct may have been to try to soothe his feelings and emotions, rather than considering the specific medical and ethical concerns he was raising.

I continued and offered: Maybe he really does need to discuss the facts of the case as best he remembers them. Perhaps he might benefit from bringing some of his concerns to the Sacrament of Confession. Assuming his concerns have some basis, even while acknowledging the uncertainties in his own decision making, such a step would help him find needed healing. By turning to the infinite mercy of God, and "clearing the decks" with the Lord in this manner, he would be strengthened to

move forward in a new way without continually having to look over his shoulder and wonder endlessly about whether he did right by his dad.

Finding a sense of peace and resolution in this way is important, and his father, now long deceased, would, we could presume, want to see that kind of healing for his son as well.

My friend was intrigued by my comments and acknowledged that her first inclination had been to try to palliate and calm the situation by mostly talking around the issues and concerns he had raised. On further reflection, she could see the value of dealing more directly with those concerns so he could find a real measure of closure.

Dying well, of course, is a profound grace, not only for the person who passes on, but for all who are left behind. To die well does not imply that we have to use every medical treatment that may be available. We are required only to use those medical treatments or procedures that are deemed reasonable or "ordinary." In other words, we should avail ourselves of those treatments that offer us more benefits than burdens.

It can be challenging to find useful and reliable sources of information to assist us as we try to make informed decisions about complex health care situations that may arise as

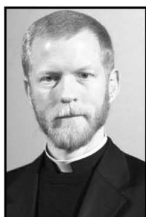
death approaches.

I typically recommend these resources from the NCBC: (1) some of my writings on End of Life Decision-Making available at Tiny.one/EOL-decisions, (2) a newly-released video, entitled *The Gift of Dying Well*, available at Vimeo.com/bioethicsvideos, and (3) the NCBC's Catholic Guide to End-of-Life Decisions available at Tiny.one/NCBC-Guide.

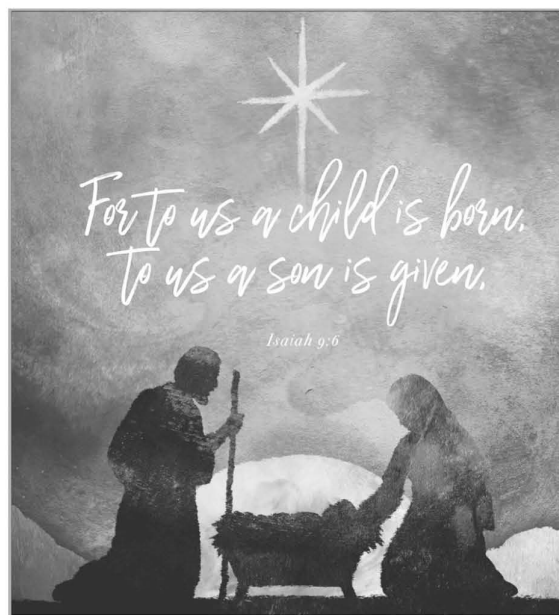
Our efforts to lovingly support our family members through the dying process and to make careful and morally correct decisions on their behalf as they decline in health are very important. Those committed efforts are signs of our de-

sire to be faithful to the beautiful bonds of love connecting us to our dear ones and to the Lord of life. Therefore, we should never be afraid to seek counsel and to avail ourselves of the Church's wisdom in these areas.

Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, Massachusetts, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. For more information see www.ncbcenter.org and www.fathertad.com.



Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk Ph.D.



From the parishes of
St. Alphonsus - Holy Name of Jesus, Tupper Lake
St. Henry's, Long Lake
St. Therese, Newcomb

Pope: World needs more diplomatic efforts

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The only way "to protect the dignity and human rights of all, to promote justice, reconciliation and dialogue for the sake of enduring peace and to care for our common home" is to strengthen diplomacy and collaboration among nations, Pope Francis said.

Welcoming new ambassadors to the Vatican from Belize, Bahamas, Thailand, Norway, Mongolia, Niger, Uganda and Sudan Dec. 15, the pope thanked the nations they represent for the many ways they contribute "to the common good not only of their citizens but of our entire human family."

He encouraged them to increase such efforts say-

ing, "your resourcefulness and talents are also gifts that can be placed at the service of the wider world, in both bilateral and multilateral contexts, for the betterment of humanity."

"In this vital and collective task of striving to safeguard and advance the well-being of men and women everywhere, especially in these days marked by the continued problems associated with the global health crisis and by the entrenched violent conflicts around the world, the concerted action of the whole family of nations and the work of diplomacy are required more than ever," the pope said.

"Indeed, it is only by striving to confront the

problems facing humanity in an increasingly integrated and solitary way that solutions may be found," he said.

"If peace is to have a chance and the poor the prospect of a better future," the pope said, "we are all called to show greater vigilance and respond to the call to be peacemakers in our time."

Other challenges the pope said are impacting fundamental human rights and require greater attention from the international community include: "the lack of universal access to drinking water, food or basic health care; the need for equitable access to education for those all too often excluded; as well as the opportunity for dignified work for all."

Pope Francis said efforts must be made to ensure that all opportunities are open and accessible to those who are often marginalized, such as those who are sick, have disabilities, young people, "girls -- who are frequently given insufficient opportunities for realizing their potential -- and all those from impoverished backgrounds at risk of being left behind, forgotten or even deliberately excluded from fully participating in their communities."

"It is my hope that in the exercise of your high duties, you will be able to seek, both here in Rome and elsewhere, fresh and creative ways of promoting solidarity and social friendship, particularly with the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters," he said.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Advocates praise decision to commute inmates' sentences

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Catholic and other opponents of the death penalty applauded Oregon Gov. Kate Brown's decision to commute the sentences of the state's 17 inmates on death row, changing their sentences to life in prison without the possibility of parole. The decision, effective Dec. 14, was announced the previous day by the Democratic governor, who said she was using her executive clemency powers in this decision, stressing that she has "long believed that justice is not advanced by taking a life, and the state should not be in the business of executing people -- even if a terrible crime placed them in prison." Archbishop Alexander K. Sample of Portland was pleased with the announcement and said his "prayer is that a recognition of the true value of human life will take deep root in the minds and hearts of all Oregonians."

Jordan to develop tourist village next to Baptism Site


AMMAN, Jordan (CNS) -- Jordan began Christmas celebrations by unveiling a project that could attract 1 million pilgrims annually to the officially recognized site of Jesus' baptism on the east bank of the Jordan River. An area adjacent to Bethany Beyond the Jordan, as mentioned in the New Testament, will be developed to allow Christian pilgrims and visitors to spend more quality time at the Baptism Site, as it is called, "to learn, appreciate and renew their journey of faith and spirituality." More than 25 years ago, excavations began on the east bank of the Jordan River and uncovered the Baptism Site. The area is full of the ruins of ancient Roman and Byzantine churches and chapels, a monastery, hermit caves and baptism pools, destroyed by earthquakes and the river's flooding. Through the centuries, the area had commemorated the site of Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. Now, modern-day visitors can spend only a couple of hours there due to a lack of accommodations and services. A \$300 million six-phased building project to establish a biblical tourist village located adjacent to this UNESCO-designated World Heritage Site seeks to address that, while respecting the spiritual integrity of the holy site itself.

Russia: Vatican apologized for pope's remarks about fighters

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The Vatican has had diplomatic contact with Russia regarding comments Pope Francis made about Russian minorities being responsible for the worst acts of cruelty in the country's war on Ukraine. Maria Zakharova, spokeswoman for Russia's foreign ministry, told reporters Dec. 15 that the Vatican had apologized and so Russia considered the matter closed, the Russian news agency Tass reported. "We received a letter through diplomatic channels from the Vatican, which contains an official statement on behalf of Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin in connection with the pontiff's aforementioned statement," Zakharova said, according to Tass. The Vatican letter "says, in particular, the following: 'The Vatican Secretariat of State apologizes to the Russian side. The Holy See has the utmost respect for all peoples of Russia, their dignity, faith and culture, as well as for other countries and peoples of the world.'" Tass reported Zakharova as saying. Matteo Bruni, director of the Vatican press office, told reporters, "I can confirm there have been diplomatic contacts in that respect." He did not add other details. In an interview in late November with America magazine, Pope Francis spoke of the "cruelty" of Russian troops in Ukraine.

MONASTERY CARD SHOP
Cards for All Occasions
Mass Enrollments for your living & deceased loved ones.
Precious Blood Monastery
OPEN: 9 AM - 5 PM
SATURDAY 9 AM - 12 PM
400 PRATT ST., WATERTOWN
315-788-1669
www.sisterspreciousblood.org

*May the Hope of Christmas
shine brightly on you and
your loved ones.
And may the wonder,
love and peace of our savior
Jesus Christ,
be with you this season
and all year through.
Merry Christmas
from
St. Peter's Parish, Massena!*



Montreal abuse commission co-chair resigns

MONTREAL (CNS) – The retired judge who has co-chaired the Montreal Archdiocese's committee to implement abuse procedures has resigned, saying serious problems remain in the application of "regulations, policies and procedures approved by the archbishop."

"I began my mandate as co-chair with real enthusiasm and the hope that I would be able to make important changes that would make the Catholic Church in Montreal an example of transparency and accountability to victims of abuse," Pepita G. Capriolo wrote in her resignation letter, dated Dec. 7 and published as an appendix to the Fifth Ombudsman's Report for the Archdiocese of Montreal. The ombudsman's report was submitted to Montreal Archbishop Christian Lépine the same day.

She said "the numerous difficulties highlighted in the ombudsman's last reports" led to her resignation.

Two years ago, Capriolo signed an incriminatory report on the handling of Father Brian Boucher's case by Montreal archdiocesan authorities and even

Vatican officials. Her report included 31 recommendations to better the management of procedures and accountability in complaints concerning abuse. Capriolo co-chaired the implementation committee until her resignation.

Among other examples, she deplored the "inexcusable delay" before the recent removal of an episcopal vicar, given that "the archbishop and the two vicar generals had been made aware of serious faults and breach of confidentiality nearly three months earlier." She said she was "revolted by the inadmissible treatment" by the archdiocese of an employee who worked closely with the ombudsman.

"I cannot continue to participate in a body that is subject to contradictory pressures, possibly emanating from persons and bodies who are not privy to our discussions and don't seem to share the same vision of an open, transparent church that is concerned with the well-being of the most vulnerable people," she said.

In a phone interview with the Montreal-based Presence info,

Capriolo confirmed that her decision was quite recent.

"The main reason for my resignation is that I didn't want to appear to condone what was being done. As long as I thought I could play a positive role and that my advice served its purpose, I stayed. I fought," she said.

Recently, she said, she noticed "pressure exerted on the archbishop." She said people encouraged him "not to act," to "slow down" the pace of change, to "not do things as clearly, transparently and strongly" as he intends it.

She said it took six months for the implementation committee to write "procedures and protocols for the management of sex abuse complaints in the archdiocese and for the formation of all pastoral personnel." All of this had been agreed to by the archbishop, "including a policy for sanctioning those disregarding what is planned" in these decrees and documents. However, "these sanctions are not applied."

Capriolo stressed the solitude of Archbishop Lépine in all of this. "Up there, he's very much alone. There's an impermeable

wall between the faithful and him."

She said people stop her in the streets, write her letters and comments, to thank her "for what we are doing. They tell me it gives hope to faithful Catholics to see someone who wants change."

"I think that if the archbishop could see through that impermeable wall and listen to the people, he would realize they support him," she said.

She explained the pressure as "clericalism resurfacing and a fear of transparency." Some church people say to her, "You have to understand, it's a cultural change." She said she recognizes such a change is necessary – but she will not accept "the slowness and dysfunctions."

Despite her resignation, Capriolo remains optimistic. "If the archbishop is able to do what he wants, he will succeed. And I'll tell you why: because he has the support of the people, the faithful. And if he needs me, I will always be ready to help him. But I can no longer endorse the system in place."

Ukrainian pastor didn't expect pope to share letter

LVIV, Ukraine (CNS) – When the Rev. Hennady Mokhnenko, a pastor and bishop of the Pentecostal Church of God of Ukraine, wrote to Pope Francis, he never expected the pope to share his letter at the Vatican.

The pastor and chaplain from Mariupol, Ukraine, is the founder and head of the nation's largest rehabilitation center for children, and he runs a network of such centers for adults.

During the early days of the war, his center for troubled teens in Mariupol came under heavy fire, so he evacuated them and later managed to evacuate more than 1,200 Mariupol residents.

"I became aware of the

vital role of Pope Francis in the exchange of prisoners and the returning of our Ukrainian defenders. And when I realized the great work that the pope is doing for Ukraine, I just wanted to thank the pontiff for supporting us," he told Catholic News Service in early December.

Rev. Mokhnenko said his friend Denis Kolyada, a graduate of the Ukrainian Catholic University, gave his letter to the pope.

"Two days later, which was very unexpected for me, Pope Francis quoted this letter in his speech."

Pope Francis quoted the letter Nov. 2, during a memorial Mass for bishops and cardinals who had died in the previous

year.

In his homily in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope said he had just received a letter from a Protestant chaplain at a children's home in Ukraine.

"Children orphaned by war, children who are alone, abandoned. And he said: 'This is my service: accompanying these discarded (children) because they have lost their parents; the cruel war has left them on their own.' This man does what Jesus asks of him: caring for the least in the tragedy. And when I read that letter, written with so much pain, I was moved, and I said, 'Lord, it is evident that you continue to inspire the true values of the kingdom.'"

Later, the pastor said,

Auxiliary Bishop Jan Sobilo of Kharkiv-Zaporizhzhia invited him to Zaporizhzhia.

"He and I are currently working on various front-line issues, and our base is here in Zaporizhzhia," the minister said.

Rev. Mokhnenko said Bishop Sobilo told him Pope Francis had instructed him to send aid to the front.

"We received many food items for people living on the front lines. Every day, under fire, my commanders get to the red zones, to the front. Besides food supplies, we received significant financial aid from the pope for my chaplaincy and Protestant team. It was very unexpected,"

said Rev. Mokhnenko.

"I could never have imagined that a provincial pastor somewhere on the Ukrainian front would receive such a reaction from the pontiff. I understand that not many Ukrainians have information about the pope's role in the exchange of prisoners, so I would advise them to be very careful with criticism, because this priest – the leader of the Catholic Church – is doing an important thing. If he doesn't understand something the way we do, that's normal, for it's all dialogue. It's communication. He hears the voice of Ukrainians when there is direct communication, which is very important."

VIRTUAL EVENTS

BROWNBAG CHATS BEGIN

The Office of New Evangelization will be running a new Brownbag Chat during lunchtime via zoom.

Date: Wednesdays Starting Jan. 11

Time: Noon to 1 p.m.

Features: We will use videos from *The Generational Divide: Who's in the Pews* with Katie Prejean McGrady available on revivieparishes.com In each session, we will watch one or two short videos together via zoom and have an informal discussion. Let Katie help you become an expert on Millennials and Generation Z through a deep-dive into stats and practical ministry applications.

Contact: If you would like to join us this series of lunch-time chat discussions, please sign up online at <https://www.rcdony.org/brownbag>. For more information, contact Marika Donders at mdonders@rcdony.org.

ADIRONDACK-FRANKLIN

DEVOTION AND HOLY HOUR

St. Regis Falls – All are invited to the monthly first Saturday Devotion and Holy Hour for Vocations.

Date: First Saturday of the Month
Time: Following the 4:30 anticipated Mass

Place: St. Ann's Church

Features: Prayer after Mass, Night Prayer, Prayer for All Souls and the Holy Souls, Novena in Honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, The Reparation Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary with private meditation on the 15 Mysteries of the Rosary, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament reposed in the Tabernacle, and Prayers for the Holy Father and his intentions.

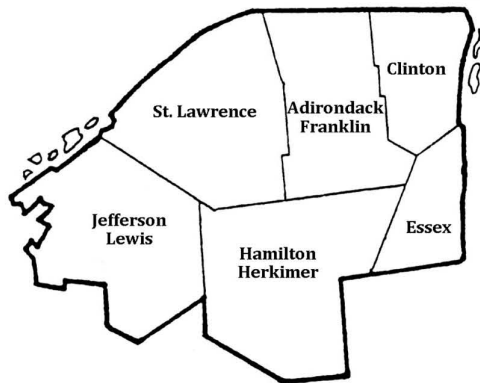
JEFFERSON-LEWIS

POLISH CHRISTMAS WAFER

Houseville – The Polish Christmas Wafer, Oplatek, is available from St. Hedwig's Church.

Cost: \$3 per package plus postage.

Features: Oplatek is part of a Polish, Lithuanian and Slovak custom that is observed during the Vigil of Christmas (Wigilia). After the first star is visible, family and friends gather around the dinner table to share the Oplatek, which symbolizes the presence of Christ, the Newborn Child. The oplatek is sent and shared with family and friends all over the world as a symbol of love, unity and forgiveness



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@northcountycatholic.org.

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

while wishing God's Blessing on each other this Holy Night.

Contact: 315-348-6260

LOWVILLE CHRISTMAS MASSES

All Christmas Masses for the Catholic Community of St. Peter's, St. Mary's and St. Hedwig will be at St. Peter's Church in Lowville.

Schedule: Christmas Eve, Dec. 24th 4 p.m. and 8 p.m.; Christmas Day, Dec. 25 at 9 a.m.

HOLY HOUR AND DIVINE MERCY

Houseville - A Holy Hour of Adoration with the Divine Mercy Chaplet will be observed the first Sunday of the month.

Date: Jan. 1

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

Evans Mills – The Indian River Knights of Columbus 7471 will be having a spaghetti and meatball dinner.

Date: Jan. 14

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$9; Seniors, \$8; Children under 12, \$5; under 5, Free; Sauce, \$6 per quart

Menu: Includes spaghetti & meatballs, salad, bread, beverage and dessert.

ST. LAWRENCE

MEAL DRIVERS NEEDED

The St. Lawrence County Office for the Aging is seeking drivers for home delivered meals in Brasher Falls, DeKalb, Canton, Gouverneur, Morris-town, Ogdensburg, Potsdam and Star Lake.

Features: These drivers deliver hot, nutritious meals to older adults. Many are homebound and receive a lunchtime meal Monday through Friday. A critical component of this program is the daily wellness check that is provided by this service. Drivers receive a mileage reimbursement. Typical deliveries take place between 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Routes can be between one hour and two hours. You can volunteer for one day a week or several. Any help is greatly appreciated.

Contact: If you are interested please contact Danielle Durant at 315-386-4730.

GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA

Massena – Glenn Miller Orchestra to present a Christmas Show.

Date: Dec. 21

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Sacred Heart Church

Cost: \$30 Prime Seating or \$20 General Admission

Contact: Trinity Catholic School for tickets and more info 315-769-5911

HOLY INNOCENTS MASS

Canton – Mass to be held for those who are grieving the loss of a child,

regardless of the age, born or unborn.

Date: Dec. 28

Time: 12:15 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church

Features: Mass will be held on the feast of Holy Innocents. If you would like the name of your child(ren) listed and candles lit, please contact the parish office at 315-386-2543 or email at office@cantoncatholics.com

ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

Ogdensburg – The Legion of Mary will pray the rosary for First Saturday.

Date: Jan. 7

Time: 8 a.m.

Place: Notre Dame Church, Ogdensburg

Features: Rosary with devotions

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

Massena - Sacred Heart Church to have first Saturday Rosary Devotion.

Date: Jan. 7

Time: 3:15 p.m.

Features: First Saturday Rosary Devotion to OUR Lady of Fatima. Confessions will be available. Saturday Vigil Mass at 4 p.m.

MEN'S PRAYER GROUP

Massena – First Saturday of the month, men's prayer group to meet for Mass and Adoration.

Date: Jan. 7

Time: 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Place: St. Mary's Church

Features: Coffee and donuts after service in the parish center

Contact: Bob Brothers at 315-842-2886

MONTHLY BRUNCH

Norfolk – Parish of the Visitation and St. Raymond's will have their monthly Knights of Columbus Brunch.

Date: Jan. 15 (Second Sunday of each month)

Time: 8:30 a.m. to 11:30

Place: Fr. Amyot Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$10; under 12, \$5; under 5, Free; Omelets, add \$3; Take-outs available

Contact: For more information contact Grand Knight Gil Gonthier 315-212-5166.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

DISCERNMENT RETREAT

For young men discerning the priesthood. Have you felt the invitation to follow Jesus Christ as a Catholic priest? Gather with other young men from across New York

State who are considering the call to the priesthood at the New York State Discernment Retreat.

Date: Jan. 2 – 4

Place: Christ the King Retreat House

Features: Hear talks on the priesthood and meet seminarians and hear their stories.

Contact: If you're looking to take your life of discernment to the next level, register by Dec. 29 by emailing the Diocese of Ogdensburg's Vocation Coordinator, Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ@elyng@rcdony.org.

LOVING AUTHENTICALLY

All are invited to attend this free seminar designed to deepen our understanding of how Church doctrine on sexual morality connects with our happiness.

Schedule: Three times and locations to attend. Feb. 12, 2023 at Newman Center, Plattsburgh; April 22, 2023 at St. Bernard's Saranac Lake; May 20, 2023 at St. Mary's Ticonderoga.

Time: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. except the Plattsburgh session, which will run 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Features: Program will be a showing of "Unprotected: A Pope, the Pill, and the Perils of Sexual Chaos." With Q & A led by Natural Family Planning Directors, Angelo and Suzanne Pietropaoli and Catholic Theologian, Maura Hearden Fehlner, Ph.D.

Contact: to register go www.rcdony.org/lovingauthentically. For more information contact Stephen Tagaglia at 315-393-2920 or startaglia@rcdony.org

SUMMER CAMP DIRECTOR

Saranac Lake - The Diocese of Ogdensburg is seeking an energetic and dedicated individual for the position of Summer Youth Camp Director at the Guggenheim Center.

Features: Summer Camp Guggenheim has been a "home away from home" for young people ages 12 to 18 years old since 1972. Summer camp Guggenheim is a high energy camp filled with exciting activities and opportunities for campers to experience and celebrate their faith.

Contact: To apply please visit: www.rcdony.org/information/employment Questions or inquiries Tom Semeraro, Director of Youth Ministry 315-393-2920 ext. 1415 www.rcdony.org/youth

SHARING THE TRADITION



The Polish Christmas Wafer, Oplatek, is available from St. Hedwig's Church in Houseville. Cost is \$3 per package plus postage. Oplatek is part of a Polish, Lithuanian and Slovak custom that is observed during the Vigil of Christmas (Wigilia). After the first star is visible, family and friends gather around the dinner table to share the Oplatek, which symbolizes the presence of Christ, the Newborn Child. The oplatek is sent and shared with family and friends all over the world as a symbol of love, unity and forgiveness while wishing God's Blessing on each other this Holy Night. To order, call 315-348-6260.

KNIGHTS IN ACTION



PHOTO BY PAST GRAND KNIGHT JOHN TAILLON

The Canton Knights of Columbus followed their annual holiday tradition by delivering chocolates and roses to Council widows. Pictured are, from left, Chancellor Russ Backus, Grand Knight Bob Clemmer and Deputy Grand Knight Corey Swinwood.

CALLED TO SERVE

He rules the world with truth and grace

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come
Let Earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare
Him room
And Heaven and nature sing
And Heaven and nature sing
And Heaven, and Heaven,
and nature sing*

An online encyclopedia reports "Joy to the World" is an English Christmas carol written in 1719 by the English minister and hymn-writer Isaac Watts. The lyrics are an interpretation of Psalm 98 celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.

Today, the carol is usually sung to an 1848 arrangement by the American composer Lowell Mason. Since the 20th century, "Joy to the World" has been the most-published Christmas hymn in North America. It contains fitting lyrics for our world today.

*Joy to the Earth, the Savior reigns
Let all their songs employ
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy*

*Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy*

*Him room
And Heaven and nature sing
And Heaven and nature sing
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing*

Pope Francis started his 2015 encyclical on care for our common home, earth,



Deacon Kevin Mastellon

with words from St. Francis of Assisi, a deacon. "Laudato Si, mi signore.." The Pope continued, "Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share

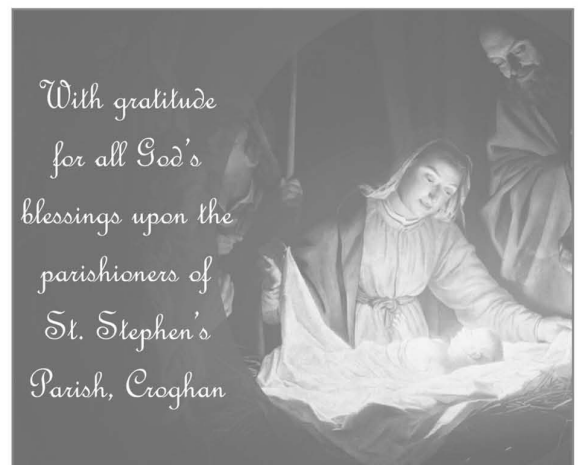
our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs".

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come
Let Earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare*

We remember the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas with joy and a reminder. He gave us life but tacked on responsibility over all his creation. This Christmas is a perfect time to renew our commitment to peace and, as Pope Francis said in Laudato Si, to begin a "new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet."

Merry Christmas from the the deacon community, ordained men, their wives and widows. "God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love."

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



*With gratitude
for all God's
blessings upon the
parishioners of
St. Stephen's
Parish, Croghan*

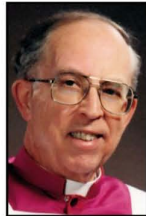
Follow Pope Francis on
Twitter!
www.twitter.com/Pontifex

 #Pontifex

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Finding light in the darkness

So often in our current society, the day of Christmas finds us completely exhausted. This year, we must not let the hectic pace of Christmas shopping, decorations and parties spoil the great feast itself. At a particular time and place this week, we need to stop everything and



**Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore**

take time to prepare our hearts spiritually. We need to focus on the Infant Jesus Himself. A good time might be at one of the penance services when, before leaving the church, we open a missalette in the pew where we're kneeling. Or take your Bible at home and look up some of the references at the beginning of this meditation. Then, slowly look over the readings for the Mass at Midnight, the Mass at Dawn and the Mass during the day. They all speak of light coming into darkness.

Just as the eighth century, B.C., was a time of great turmoil and dark-

ness, so too does war and fiscal uncertainty cast a long shadow over our hearts and hopes. Isaiah's words to God's people of his day and to us from the first reading of the Mass for Midnight tell us: "the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of

gloom, a light has shone." And then the great news: "For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace." That's God's Word!

Flipping to the Mass at Dawn we find words of great beauty in the responsorial psalm "A



December 25

Christmas

READINGS

At the Vigil Mass

Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25

Matthew 1:1-25

Mass at Midnight

Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14;

Luke 2:1-14

Mass at Dawn

Isaiah 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7;

Luke 2:15-20

Mass during the Day

Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6;

John 1:1-18

light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us." The Gospel for the Mass during the Day is one of the most beautiful pieces of poetry and theology in the Bible. "In

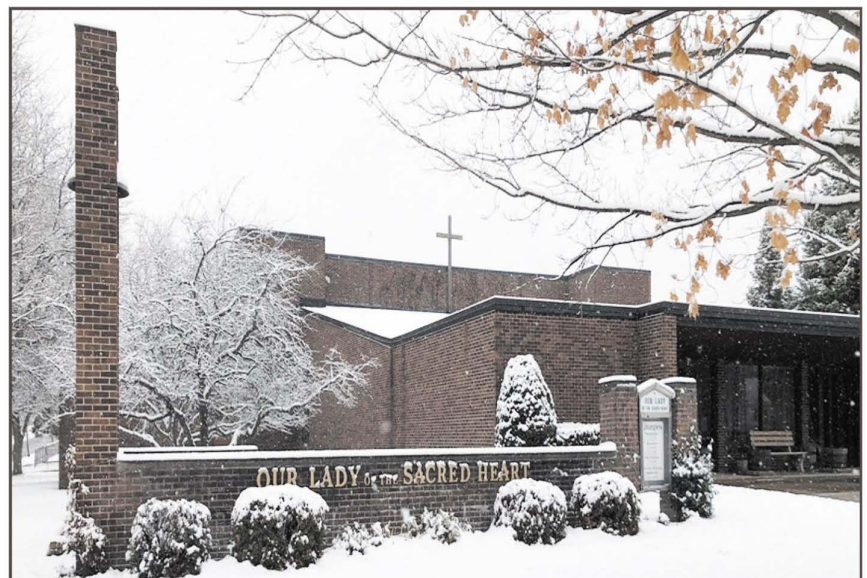
the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It also speaks of the struggle God had to find a place of welcome in our darkness, a place He could call home. As Jesus looked around his manger bed, he must have known a little fear – it was all so different from the heaven He had just left.

Everyone wants to be home for Christmas. For many of us, we know that we can't go home again. Our hearts go out to our servicemen and women in foreign lands this Christmas. The same is true for many older people whose spouses have died, and whose children now

have families of their own. What can they do? They can make Christmas in their hearts.

Home is where the heart is! Like Mary, we ourselves must spiritually give birth to the Son of God. Loneliness can give place to a spirit of joy when we let His presence light up our hearts. As Mary was the bridge between heaven and earth, the divine and the human, so we can share her experience.

The Christmas readings are the key. Pray them slowly. Take time to plant them in your heart. As the Gospel of John tells us, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."



May you have a Blessed Christmas Season and a Happy New Year

From

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church and Calvary Cemetery Association

320 W. Lynde St.

Watertown, NY 13601

*The magic of Christmas is not in presents but in
His presence.*

*May the presence of Jesus fill your hearts with
love and light this Christmas.*

~Office of Episcopal Delegate for Religious~





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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669

(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296

mbrett@rcdony.org

Merry Christmas from Ecuador

Below is an update from the Lenity Project which serves in Quito, Ecuador. The Lenity Project is one of the organizations supported by our yearly Missionary Cooperative Appeal.

It's been more than a year since we achieved a strong semblance of our family of family's operational style here in our new Foundation.

This includes the noonday celebration of Mass. With Christmas coming I could share a holy happiness of more and more folks including adults and kids coming into the dining room for Mass with me making me proud of my attractive powerful short sermons and lively style.

That's the way it was until the day I noticed the competition. Four-year-old Eider along with some of his recruits lined up in front of the altar and were leading the congregation singing the hymn with grandstand gestures indicating where the Holy Spirit was setting them on holy fire first downwards sparking their heads, chests, hips, knees, feet, and then upwards before coming down again.

I guess my cooperation with the holy hysteria was a bit halfhearted. Whatever; Eider who has a habit of looking back over his shoulder to check on my participation, stopped his own prancing to scorn me a correctional stare until I got moving.

This, of course, gave the whole congregation an excuse for an out loud laugh "in Church."

And that ended my hopes that Santa would reward my Christmas season style show.

But I guess you'll accept my Christmas wishes for your deep happiness even if it comes out of the shadows of Eider's increasing liturgical glory.

– Father Halligan

From the desk of Madre Cindy:

Christmas is a time to think about all the gifts we have been given. Family and friends are on the top of the list. Our Family in Quito continues to grow.

We could not serve these families without your help.

We give thanks to each of you for helping us celebrate the mystery of Christmas year-round.

Merry Christmas and many Blessings for 2023. Maybe Eider will teach Father Halligan to do the floss next year!

OBITUARIES

Carthage – John M. Giovo, 76; Services to be held at a later date.

Champlain – Loretta (Thornton) Ashline, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 12, 2022 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Coopersville.

Champlain – Pauline M. (Langlois) Sriver, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 7, 2022 at St. Mary's Church.

Elenburg – Marjorie Lorretta (Rabideau) Lashway, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 6, 2022 at St. Edmund's Church.

Glenfield – Jerry Fr. "Franny" Root, 84; Private services held; burial in Old Glendale Cemetery.

Lyon Mountain – Jerry Rabideau, 65; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 9, 2022 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Malone – Eileen M. Campbell, 79; Private services held.

Massena – Ralph H. Frary, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 9, 2022 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Lawrence Cemetery, North Lawrence.

Mooers – Jeannette Martha (Cassatine) Trombley, 86; Funeral Services Dec. 9, 2022 at the Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Rouses Point.

Norfolk – Roger L. Murray, 62; Funeral Services Dec. 9, 2022 at the Buck Funeral Home; burial in Visitation Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Patricia D. Brady, 93; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 10, 2022 at St. Mary's Cathedral.

Plattsburgh – Elizabeth J. "Betty" (Trombley) Poitras, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 15, 2022 at St. Peter's Church.

Plattsburgh – Patricia Langlois Racine, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 6, 2022 at St. Peter's Church.

Redford – Kristen Nicole Ahern, 36; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 6, 2022 at Church of the Assumption

Rouses Point – Arlene (Parmen-tier) Penfield, 86; Private services held.

Watertown – Jennie (Malatino) Adsit, 92; Services to be held in May 2023.

Watertown – Thelma E. (Scarpell) Koemel, 103; Mass of Christian

Burial Dec. 5, 2022 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Art B. Pierce, 80; Funeral Services Dec. 10, 2022 at Hart & Bruce Funeral Home.

Waddington – Barbara (Stubbs) Jackson, 85; Graveside services Dec. 8, 2022 at Brookside Cemetery.

North Country Catholic has Green option

Our E-paper is now easier to read online. You can receive your *North Country Catholic* in your e-mail rather than in the mail. Fill in your information and send this form to:

Please switch my current *NCC* subscription to E-mail

Name _____ PO Box 326
Ogdensburg,
NY 13669
OR Call
Christine at
315-608-7556
to make the
change

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

The magic of Christmas is not in the presents,
but in His presence
Prayers & Blessings to you and yours
during this Holy Christmas season & always
Merry Christmas from
Sister Mary Ellen and Alexis Michael



May the Lord
Jesus Christ
bring you
peace this
Christmas Season
and a Blessed
New Year!

St. Raphael's Church,
Heuvelton &
St. Philip and James,
Lisbon



Provide for our priests through a generous gift to your parish

Christmas Collection

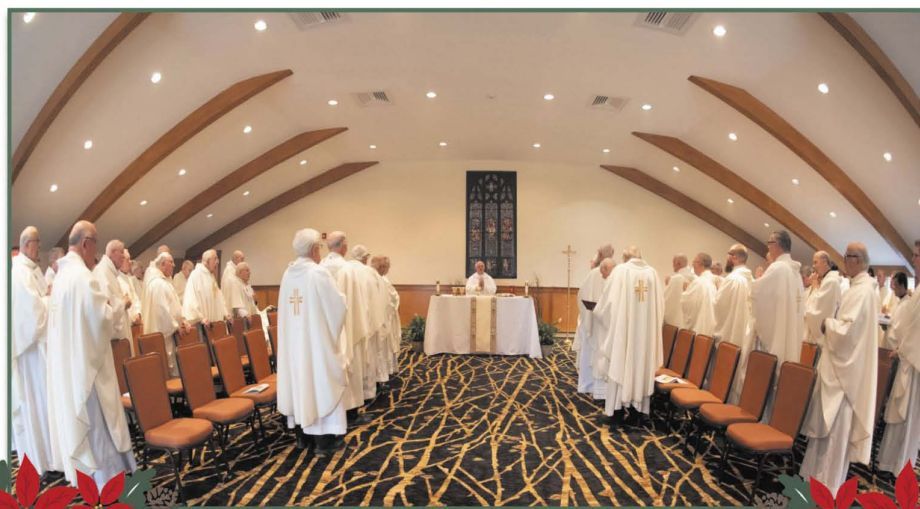


Photo taken by Tom Semeraro at the 2019 Presbyteral Assembly in Lake Placid

*A gift to the Christmas Collection in your parish helps
to support our 51 retired priests.*

