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NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

FEBRUARY 2, 2022

Catholic schools celebrate

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MASS BEFORE CLASS



Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated Mass on January 27 at Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsville, Maryland, where several diocesan seminarians study. Bishop LaValley was joined by diocesan Vocations Director Father Christopher C. Carrara. Bishop LaValley and Father Carrara received updates from seminary faculty and administration and visited with seminarians Michael Lennox, Carter Pierce, Douglas Schirmer and Deacon Leagon Carlin.

WORLD DAY OF CONSECRATED LIFE



As we prepare to celebrate World Day of Consecrated Life on February 2. In honor of that celebration, this week's North Country Catholic features the religious communities who serve in our diocese, as well as Sister Helen Hermann, a Sister of St. Joseph, who dedicated her life to the Lord and service of his people.

STORIES ON PAGES 5 & 7

Pope: God offers courage to those in difficulty

VATICAN CITY (CNS)—God always offers people the help and courage they need to face life's fears and difficulties, Pope Francis said.

The pope said his thoughts were with all those who "are crushed by the weight of life and can no longer hope or pray."

Parents, in particular, often must grapple with situations or problems that are out of their control, such as when their child is sick or has a chronic illness. "How much pain is there!" the pope said Jan. 26 during his weekly general audience.

Parents also may be aware their children have "different sexual orientations," so they must figure out "how to deal with this and accompany their children and not hide in an attitude of condemnation," he said.

Parents may see their children die of an illness or in a car accident, or they see them struggle in school, he said. There is so much pain or fear, he said, but "never condemn a child."

Continuing his series of audience talks about St. Joseph, Pope Francis focused on how the saint

would discern the voice of God through prayer and dreams.

It is important to be able to recognize the voice of God amid so many other voices, such as "the voices of our fears, the voices of past experiences, the voices of hopes," the pope said, adding "there is also the voice of the evil one who wants to deceive and confuse us."

"Joseph demonstrates that he knows how to cultivate the necessary silence and, above all, how to make the right decisions before the word that the Lord ad-

resses to him inwardly," he said.

God "does not cast us alone into the fire. He does not cast us among the beasts. No," the pope said. "When the Lord shows us a problem, or reveals a problem, he always gives us the intuition, the help, his presence, to get out of it, to resolve it."

"Life often puts us in situations that we do not understand and that seem to have no solution. Praying in these moments, this means letting the Lord show us the right thing to do," he said.

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'I can't make the pivot'

Some weeks, I'll start three or four completely different versions of this column before I get one set to print.

More often than not, I have to scrap those early attempts because, as I describe it, "I can't make the pivot."

If you haven't noticed, I often start my columns with a story from my life then pivot into how that story fits into the work God is doing in my life and in the world around me. When "I can't make the pivot," it means I can't clearly articulate that connection.

As I sit and write this week,

I can't make the pivot.

But it's a different sort of pivot.

To be honest, I didn't want to write about this this week. It's still pretty raw. But I couldn't think about much else.

This week, there was a tragedy in the small community where my family and I reside. A young man, one of my son's classmates, was killed in a car accident.

I think it's fair to say our collective community is grieving. We're heartbroken for the involved family, as well as this young man's friends, teammates and

classmates. We're offering our love and support. We're praying for this young man's soul and for his loved ones.

While I join that collective community experience, I'm also feeling a combination of angry and upset. I'm angry/upset that God would end the life of a young child. I'm angry/upset things like this happen.

In times like this, we frequently hear things like "God has a plan." I know I've written those exact words in this very space. I know that to be true in my head. But right now, my heart is screaming, "how can something this awful be part of the plan of a good and loving God?"

And I can't make the pivot

away from that.

If this is part of God's plan, I can't understand it right now. Maybe I never will. I'm almost certain I won't in this life.

We all grieve differently. I know some people can instantly find solace in God's love in times like these. I'm not one of those people. I have to work through the flood of emotions before I can get even close to being open to God's love and peace.

I'm sure I'll get there. I pray everyone close to this young man and his family, and everyone experiencing any type of tragedy gets there.

But I'm not ready to make the pivot just yet.



**Darcy L.
Fargo**

Inspired by the words of a prayer

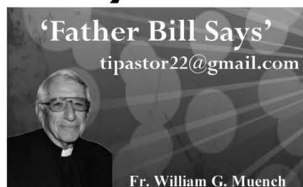
Often, as I am celebrating a Mass and speaking the words of a prayer, the words of that prayer touch me in a very special way. I think myself, "I could write a whole column about the words of this prayer." Here is one:

"Pour on us, O Lord, the Spirit of your love, and in your kindness make those you have nourished by this one heavenly Bread one in mind and heart. Through Christ our Lord."

This is the Prayer after Communion for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time.

The focus of this prayer is seeking the Lord's help to make our whole parish and community united "in mind and heart." – united in mind that these people who are praying with me at this Mass will join in planning something special for the parish, and that the parish – united in love – will do something for those who need help and care, something inspired by the Lord.

In this prayer, the congregation asks for the Lord's wisdom and strength, and inspiration to act together.



Fr. William G. Muench

We have joined together as one family at the altar of the Lord for Eucharist. This Eucharist not only feeds each one of us, but it also gives us the strength and the power to do something for those in need, to do something that is inspired by our God.

I am certain you and I could think of examples right now – possibly something to help those in need; possibly a way to transform the parish as a caring community. The inspiration for such would come to us through an inspiration from the Lord through a special gift given us through our sharing in the Blessed Eucharist.

This particular prayer serves also as a reminder as we pray together. We ask God to transform us through the prayer of the

Blessed Eucharist and to make each of us a new person in the Lord, truly more alive, a more powerful disciple of the Lord. We ask this because we have been nourished and strengthened by the Blessed Eucharist. The Eucharist is such a transforming sacrament for us.

As we pray this prayer, we ask Our Lord to truly pour on each of us the Spirit of his love. We pray that the Lord will make us new and stronger than ever before. This is the task of the Holy Spirit. We pray that we may become a people so that the Spirit makes our parish all that it can and should be – to make our world a better place.

Our prayer asks God to literally pour the Spirit upon us that we may be transformed by the Holy Spirit. We pray that the Holy Spirit will give us the power of God's love so that we will be enflamed as followers of the Lord. We pray because we want the strength to do so many things for the Lord, so that we will be alive with the Wisdom of our God, know-

ing what should be done and that we are filled with God's love and ready to accomplish so much.

And our prayer mentions one more thing: we pray to the Lord to treat us with kindness. We have asked the Lord to love us, to give us Spirit. Now we ask for kindness. Of course, what does this kindness mean here? Being kind, showing gratitude, doing service, being respectful, noticing the good things that others do, giving time to someone else. The Lord seeks that we recognize God's kindness so that we can be transformed into the Spirit of Kindness and live our Christian lives in that Spirit of Kindness. We ask God to be kind and to teach us to be alive in the kindness of the Lord. In this way, we pray that God will make our lives so much better and that our community is ready to do something good and powerful as God leads us with kindness.

The words of our prayer are such a powerful dedication to our God and a readiness to act now.

Helping, educating more students, families

Mother Cabrini Health Foundation grants boost Catholic school efforts in challenging times

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

OGDENSBURG— There's a lot to celebrate in the Catholic Schools within the Diocese of Ogdensburg!

In addition to receiving grants that will allow diocesan schools to offer additional services and serve additional students, the schools are celebrating Catholic Schools Week from Jan. 30 to Feb. 5.

"As I thought about Catholic Schools Week, I thought back to the inception of the Catholic educational system back in the 1800s," said Sister Ellen Rose Coughlin, a Sister of St. Joseph and superintendent of Catholic schools for the diocese. "At the third plenary council in Baltimore, the U.S. bishops decided that every child should have the opportunity to attend a Catholic school. Part of the dedication to their goal rested in the fact that they wanted students to be educated not only in academic pursuits but also educated well in their faith. That remains a hallmark of Catholic schools - excellent academic programs that integrate a Catholic worldview and faith. For years, every child had the opportunity to receive a quality education in both faith and academics without paying tuition because the schools were supported by the religious communities that founded them or by parishes that had the resources to support them. That's changed in our time."

Despite the changing times, grant funding from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation is enabling

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Ogdensburg to serve students and families who might not otherwise be able to easily access Catholic education and help them in more ways than ever.

The diocesan Catholic school system was awarded two Mother Cabrini Health Foundation grants: \$650,000 for an expansion to the Healthy Families for a Hopeful Future Grant and \$250,000 for a Regional Scholarship Grant.

REGIONAL SCHOLARSHIP GRANT

"This school year we were able to give scholarships to 316 students from 217 families," Sister Ellen Rose said. "Included in that were 105 new students from 69 new families. Mother Cabrini Health Foundation provides assistance to families at no more than 200 percent above the federal poverty guidelines. We can also provide assistance to families experiencing special circumstances, including the loss of a job, outstanding medical expenses or difficulty meeting the demands of inflation on fixed incomes. We saw the possibility to attract new families who otherwise might not consider Catholic education because they didn't feel they had the financial means."

Sister Ellen Rose noted that Catholic schools have also worked to educate families and their communities about the programs available to make Catholic education accessible to all.

"Parents who've sent children off to college are well aware they can't do it without assistance," she said.

"Parents of high school and elementary students haven't always made that leap and realized they may benefit from assistance. We've been working to educate families that there is assistance available. Considering this \$250,000 grant and our own tuition assistance program funded through our Bishop's Fund, we have half a million dollars to help students and families access Catholic education."

HEALTHY FAMILIES FOR A HOPEFUL FUTURE

Those students, their families, their parishes and their communities also have additional resources available to them thanks to

the Healthy Families for a Hopeful Future Grant.

"As has been reported previously, this grant has enabled us to place a Family Support Coordinator in each of our schools," Sister Ellen Rose said. "The grant that was recently approved includes a new initiative that meets the needs of our students and families in very important ways."

"We've developed a partnership with Catholic Charities to provide support for families in need beyond what our current program offers," added Karen Donahue, assistant superintendent of diocesan Catholic Schools. "Catholic Charities has numerous resources to

assist families struggling through challenges in ways that go beyond the scope of the initial grant."

Starting this month, Family Support Coordinators who identify families in need of additional support will facilitate contact with Catholic Charities staff.

"Catholic Charities can provide emergency services and follow-up services to stabilize a family situation when they're experiencing stress or duress," Donahue said. "Since the pandemic, we're seeing families struggling financially. The cost of everything is going up, but the amounts in their pay

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Celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2022

January 30 - February 5 #CSW21

a dozen reasons

to choose Catholic Schools

1 We offer an education that combines Catholic faith and teachings with academic excellence

2 We partner with parents in the faith formation of their children.

3 We set high standards for student achievement and help them succeed.

4 We provide a balanced academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture and life.

5 We use technology effectively to enhance education.

6 We instill in students the value of service to others.

7 We teach children respect of self and others.

8 We emphasize moral development and self-discipline.

9 We prepare students to be productive citizens and future leaders.

10 We have a 99 percent high school graduation rate. 85 percent of our graduates go to college.

11 We cultivate a faculty and staff of people who are dedicated, caring and effective.

12 We provide a safe and welcoming environment for all.

THE NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
NCEA.org/csww

Augustinian expands after-school program

By Deacon Kevin Mastellon
Contributing Writer

CARTHAGE— When the staff at Augustinian Academy in Carthage applied for their first Mother Cabrini Health Foundation grant, they were hopeful for the support but never anticipated how successful the after-school program would be. The first grant was for \$75,000 to establish a “wholistic and healthy after school program.”

With COVID and all the restrictions they faced for people coming into the school building, Mrs. Mary Ann Margrey, principal at the private Catholic Pre-K-8 school, did not think the after-school program would fly, but it did.

“It was such a hit,” she said “As soon as I would send out information about each program we planned to have, I would have parents sign up. If I sent the notice at one o’clock, I would have registrations by two o’clock that same day.”

This year’s Cabrini grant of \$80,000 will continue the program

and expand it.

“The kids and parents were craving something to do,” Margrey said. “We had such a wealth of opportunities last year. We will continue many of them and expand the program.”

The after-school program envisioned by the Augustinian team was for a day or two each week.

“This year, we are increasing the number of activities we are offering and the frequency,” Margrey said. The first students were exposed to a STEM (science, technology, engineering & mathematics) program during a week-long science fair. They enjoyed classes in dance, cooking, embroidery, sports camps, martial arts and other disciplines the children expressed a desire to pursue.”

The school introduced a vacation bible school with upwards of 50 children participating. Middle school and high school students helped, especially with the vacation bible school. Students in the confirmation program earned community service hours as a re-

sult.

“We were even able to bring in a certified fitness instructor who works with seventh and eighth graders one day a week and comes two days a week after school to work with my faculty. All this was part of Mother Cabrini,” Margrey said.

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, announced more than 450 year-end 2021 grants totaling \$140 million to support organizations and programs addressing the health-related needs of low-income residents and underserved communities across New York State in 2022, including nearly \$4 million in the North Country. This is in addition to \$20 million in funding authorized for emergency COVID-19 programs in 2021.

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation, a private, nonprofit organization, was formed after the 2018 sale of Fidelis Care, a nonprofit health insurer created by the Catholic bishops of New York State. This is the Foundation’s third annual round of grants.

Augustinian Academy has made good use of the grant money. “It supports parents who want to use our before and after school care program but can’t afford that extra fee outside of the tuition. For low-income families it covers their tuition or their payments and it also covers any registration fees for events we are hosting by outside groups. The Cabrini grant has been a real real blessing,” Margrey said.

Principal Margrey acknowledges money is often tight for a small, private school. Instead of frivolous spending, she told us, she had money “that I could spend on something that I know the kids would really truly like but maybe in the past we would never have been able to afford to bring it to them, to have them to do.”

Mary Ann Margrey is thrilled Augustinian Academy is benefitting from its Cabrini Foundation grant thrilled for the children, their parents, the community and the staff of the school. As she said, “It is such a hit!”

Catholic schools week

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

checks are not. That has a challenging effect on families. There are some situations Catholic Charities can handle with great success that can’t be quickly or easily addressed through our existing network of partners. Catholic Charities is able to help with needs like fuel, transportation costs, food insecurity and housing issues. By helping with emergency needs, it allows families to regroup and an opportunity to build a plan for the future.”

Donahue noted that Catholic Charities serves individuals and families around the diocese.

“Our existing networks have been supportive, but those networks only go so far,” she said. “That’s a huge benefit to partnering with Catholic Charities. They’re diocesan wide, and our program is diocesan wide,

and Catholic Charities can respond without red tape.”

Sister Ellen Rose said the Family Support Coordinators have existing relationships with many families in their schools, parishes and communities.

“Partnering with families is a hallmark of Catholic education,” she said. “While there are dozens of reasons to choose Catholic education, one of them is that our schools partner with families in faith development and helps the child and family as a whole. Going beyond that, our Family Support Coordinators outreach extends beyond the Catholic school families and into their parish families and communities.”

“The families are appreciative of the respectful way the Family Support Coordinators interact with them,” added Donahue.

“They offer after-school and weekend programs and events in communities that may not have a lot of those types of offerings. The coordinators get to know the communities and families, and they become very aware of the needs. For example, at St. James School in Gouverneur, they were doing a program with the older students related to self-image, fitness and mental health. It turned out, parents were interested in a program like that, and they started offering a version for adults. The kids and families know the coordinator is there as a support. They provide an additional link between the school and the families.”

The grant also included opportunities for the Family Support Coordinators to undergo training with Catholic Charities about the program expansion.

“They were able to learn about the services Catholic Charities can provide and how to access those services,” Sister Ellen Rose said. “That training also helped them understand their role as Family Support Coordinators versus the role of a counselor or social worker. They don’t fill those roles, but they are able to connect families with those services if needed.”

CELEBRATING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

While the Family Support Coordinators are a huge boost in the Catholic schools’ efforts to provide education and care for the whole child and family, Sister Ellen Rose noted that they’re just one part of that effort.

“Catholic schools, like the Catholic Church, are more than buildings,” she said. “The brick and mortar don’t make the Church. The

Church is the members, the living stones. So, too, with the Catholic Schools. They’re more than just buildings. Our schools are the people – the administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents and volunteers. They’re creating communities based in our faith and that recognize the value of every person and the need of every person to have their total personhood attended to. That’s what our Catholic School environment tries to do. Our administrators, faculty and staff show outstanding dedication during any year, but especially during the last couple of years. They’re absolutely dedicated and committed in what continue to be challenging and adverse situations. Our staff, faculty and administrators are a remarkable group of people.”

Celebrating World Day of Consecrated Life

By Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ
Diocesan Vocations Coordinator

"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord..." (1 Corinthians 12:4). We celebrate the many gifts of the religious congregations serving in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. These "different kinds of spiritual gifts" are "charisms," that is, grace given to a congregation of consecrated women and men who have been called by the Holy Spirit to do a particular work of mercy for the People of God.

The Church celebrates Consecrated Life of women and men who have been called by God to live a vowed life of poverty, chastity and obedience according to the particular charisms of their congregation. Each congregation's ministry fleshes out their mission to serve the people of God within the life of the Church, that is, education, parish life, social service, etc.

The congregations presently serving in the Diocese of Ogdensburg are:

The Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Watertown, are an international congregation of religious priests and brothers who reach out to those who are poor – materially, emotionally or spiritually – to bring God's compassionate and tender love to all. They have been serving the people of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart parish, Watertown for almost 150 years. Their motto, "May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be loved everywhere," has been experienced in the lives of many. Father Frank Natale, a Missionary of the Sacred Heart, is pastor of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Parish, Watertown, who continues to bring the love and heart of the spirit of Jesus Christ.



In October, Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated the Marriage & Consecrated Life Jubilee Mass honoring married couples celebrating anniversaries and religious sisters marking jubilee milestones in 2021. Because the jubilee Mass could not be held in 2020 due to the pandemic, sisters who celebrated jubilees that year were also honored in 2021. Celebrating jubilees in 2021 were Sister Diane Marie Ulsamer, SSJ, 50 years; Sister Shirley Anne Brown, SSJ, Sister Mary Juliana Raymond, SSJ, Sister Judy Adams, SSJ, Sister Carol Louise Kraeger, SSJ, Sister Cecilia Marie Hermann, SSJ, Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ and Sister Mary Gregory Munger, SSJ, 60 Years; and Sister Mary Denise Wilke, RSM, 70 years. Celebrating jubilees in 2020 were Sister Carolyn Madden, RMS, 75 years; Sister Mary William Argy, SSJ, 70 years; Sister Anne Hogan, SSJ, and Sister Judith Baumert, SSJ, and Sister Catherine Mary Cummings, RSM, 65 years; and Sister Norma Bryant, SSJ, and Sister Mary Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ, along with Sister Janet Peters, RSM, 60 years.

The Sisters of the Precious Blood, Watertown, are an enclosed, contemplative community of sisters who dedicate their lives to prayer. Their charism is a call to a way of holiness rooted in the wisdom of the past yet adapted to the needs of the present day. They earn their livelihood by various works: the distribution of altar breads; spiritual enrollment cards; printing of prayers and mailing of articles of Precious Blood devotion and correspondence to those who ask for our prayers. To live more fruitfully the vows of consecrated chastity, poverty and obedience, their founders encouraged them to embrace adoration, reparation and suffering with fidelity, constancy and generosity. Realizing how much the Church depends upon the intercessory prayer of its contemplatives, their orientation is toward complete self-giving as they implore the mercy of the

Blood of Christ upon the entire world. Prayer for priests is of foremost importance in their daily devotions. One with the Heart of Christ, they fulfill their missions of spreading the Good News: "Christ the Son of God has redeemed us with His Precious Blood. Come, let us adore!"

The Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod, an apostolic religious institute which is international, the Institute is present in 15 countries on four continents. There are sisters serving in parishes and hospitals in the Diocese of Ogdensburg in Chazy, Sackets Harbor and Watertown, where the sisters show the merciful love of God. They have come from various parts of India to help meet the needs of the Church. Their charism is "to participate in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus dead and risen in His mission in the world for the salvation of all." Their mission is to "reveal to all people the merciful love of the Father and the liberat-

ing power of the Paschal Mystery."

The Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Diocese of Ogdensburg is an apostolic religious community who, by their vowed lives, express their love of God through the pursuit of a closer union with God and "the dear neighbor." Through the spiritual and corporal Works of Mercy, the sisters proclaim and live this great love in a spirit of unity and reconciliation. The mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph is to generously and freely respond to the call of the Holy Spirit and the challenges of the Gospel. The Sisters of St. Joseph are a diocesan community who are involved with the works and priorities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg. The sisters are involved in prayer ministry, teaching in our Catholic Schools, religious education and parish programs, deacon formation, social service programs, and diocesan offices.

The Sisters of Charity of Saint-Louis, located in Plattsburgh, live according to the charism "Charity can do anything," as stated by Mother Saint-Louis, their foundress. They are called "to bring about the Kingdom of God in the world, a world that seeks, without knowing too much, the face of compassion and mercy of Christ." These Sisters have done so with their prayer and works and volunteer outreach in Plattsburgh for many years.

The Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, the Mid-Atlantic Sisters of Mercy have been the first to establish and staff Catholic schools in the diocese. They continued to staff the Catholic schools, especially in Plattsburgh, Saranac Lake and Brasher Falls. They staffed Mercy Hospital and the Nursing Home in Watertown until it closed. Mercy Care for Adirondacks continues to respond to the needs of the North Country in caring for the elderly. Their charism is, "that all Sisters of Mercy take a life-long vow of prayer, service, advocate for justice and systemic change on behalf of marginalized people and serve people in need." In each of these ministries, sisters and associates continue to live the spirit and rich heritage of their deep roots in Mercy, as established by their founder, Catherine McAuley. They are also guided by their five critical concerns: care for the planet, immigration, nonviolence, racism, and the rights and needs of women and children.

The Dominican Sisters of Hope are in Plattsburgh and have served in the diocese for many years. They have committed their lives to living and preaching the Gospel message of hope. They have been involved in teaching in Catholic

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Environmental Stewardship

Watching a bird feeder

During the depths of winter, it may seem impossible to regularly connect with nature, especially for older people. Yet, there are ways to experience that sense of awe and wonder that Pope Francis talks about in his encyclical *Laudato Si* when he states "... there is a mystical meaning to be found in a leaf, in a mountain trail, in a dewdrop, in a poor person's face." A bird feeder brimming with sunflower seeds and a chunk of suet placed on a nearby tree can be most effective in attracting a variety of wild creatures. Such an oasis of nourishment is well known for luring various species of year-round avian residents along with numerous transients that visit our region on an irregular basis during this time of year. In addition to birds, feeders also attract both red and gray squirrels, and both become experts at obtaining the seeds regardless of the defenses used to discourage such rodents from foraging. Also, mice and shrews have been known to frequent areas below feeders, especially at night, to rummage through the remnants of the material that has dropped to the ground for any morsels of edible matter that remains in the discarded shells.

Occasionally, predators like a weasel, fox or cat are enticed to spend time near a bird feeder, as the presence of small animals creates an attractive hunting spot for these meat eaters.

Observing birds and other creatures around a bird feeder not only can provide some simple entertainment during winter, but it can also yield some insight into several of their behavioral traits.

Learning the physical characteristics of the visitors, some of their more common habits, and how they interact with members of their own flock and other forms of life around them can give a person a real connection to the natural world just outside their home. It can also stimulate that sense of awe and wonder when considering that these creatures are the handiwork of the Creator, as are we.

By Tom Kalinowski

St. Bernard's Parish
Faith and Ecology Member

World Day of Consecrated Life

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schools, parish religious education, adult formation and outreach to the marginalized. Sister Debbie Blow, a native of the North Country, is co-founder of the North Country Mission of Hope. She and Sister Stephanie Frenette are actively involved in humanitarian outreach to the people of Nicaragua. Sister

Elizabeth Menard, also a native of the North Country, serves on the leadership team of the Sisters of Hope.

The Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary are a community Catholic women called to live the mission of Jesus through the core values of freedom, education, charity, and justice. Sister Cindy Sullivan, BVM, spent 43 years in Quito, Ecuador, at a mission working with children and families. It was the only total family development program of its kind. The purpose was to educate the members of the family helping them to break their cycle of poverty. Sister Cindy returned to the North Country in 2017 to care for her parents and is presently the Director of the Meals-On-Wheels Program in Massena.

The Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers is a Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America. Maryknoll mis-

sionary priests and brothers have, for over 100 years, modeled themselves after the compassion and love of Jesus Christ in reaching out to those in the world who are most in need. Their work involves various pastoral ministries, healthcare, education, agricultural and vocational training, HIV/AIDS ministry, disaster relief, and other service as heralds of God's love and hope in the poorest areas around the world. Maryknoll Brother Wayne Fitzpatrick is from Malone. He was educated by the Ursuline sisters who lived and taught in Malone for many years. Brother Wayne entered the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers because of the missionary zeal of the many priests and brothers who served in the missions. Brother Wayne is actively involved in elder care and is presently managing director of the Senior Care and Transition Services for the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers.

Father Daniel Chapin, a priest of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, is living and serving the people of Cochabamba, Bolivia, along with the Maryknoll Brothers and Priests. Father Chapin's heart is for mission to the poor. He served many years in Arequipa, Peru, with the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

The Daughters of the Charity of the Sacred Heart is a congregation of women religious with pontifical approbation whose motherhouse is in LaSalle-de-Vihiers in the Diocese of Angers, France. In 1905, four sisters came to the United States and opened a school in Newport, Vermont. In 1906, they extended their work to Champlain, New York, teaching at St. Mary's School. The sisters are engaged in education at all levels, catechetics, pastoral ministries and counseling.

The United States headquarters is in Littleton, New Hampshire; the generalate is in LaSalle de Vihiers, France. Sister Mary Ann Gour, FCSCJ, a former principal and teacher at St. Mary's School, Champlain, is presently the spiritual care coordinator for Hospice of the North Country, Plattsburgh.

These men and women, who have been called by God to serve Him in a special way have contributed to the upbuilding of the Kingdom of God. Justice, mercy, compassion, love of God and love for all of God's people has been poured out in the diocese and in the Church throughout the world. The fruits of their love of God have grown, and their works of charity have been and continue to be fruitful.

In the past, the Diocese of Ogdensburg has been blessed with many women and men religious congregations. These congregations left the diocese because there were other works necessary for the spreading of the Gospel. Also, vocations to the religious life have been on the decline, and many of these religious women and men are aging or have died, and there are not enough of them to serve the needs of our diocese.

The diocese is very grateful for the many years of service these religious women and men gave to the people of the North Country.

The Diocese of Ogdensburg is looking for more women and men who are willing to serve the needs of the Church, willing to separate themselves from the world of materialism and secularism for the sake of the Kingdom of God and to offer their lives wholly to God. Do you hear the voice of the Good Shepherd who calls each of us by name, "Will YOU, Come Follow Me!"

Rest in Peace

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

Feb. 2 – Rev. William Bennett, O.M.I., 1887; Rev. Amadeus Viger, O.S.A., 1915; Rev. George E. Racette, 1961; Rev. Gilbert O. Boisvert, 2017

Feb. 3 – Rev. John McDonald, 1879

Feb. 4 – Rev. Joseph Redington, 1892; Rev. Edmund Walsh, 1925; Msgr. Michael R. Burns, 1932; Rev. Henry McArdle, O.S.A., 1969; Rev. Francis Maurus Kearns, 1990

Feb. 5 – Msgr. Thomas E. Walsh, 1901; Msgr. F. Gordon Coseo, 1997; Rev. John J. Fallon, 2005

Feb. 6 – Msgr. Gerard Gefell, 2009

Feb. 8 – Msgr. Patrick Bernard Riley, 1981

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terri- anne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terri- anneyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: 518-651-2267 days; 518-569-0612 evenings; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; ccarrara@rcdony.org Phone: 315-393-2920 ext. 1340. If you have a complaint of suspected sexual abuse or related misconduct by the bishops, contact the **Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service** at 800-276-1562 or www.ReportBishopAbuse.org.

Bishop's Public Schedule

Feb. 2 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 3 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 4 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 5 – 4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 6 – 8 a.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 7 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Feb. 8 – 9:45 a.m. – Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence

Feb. 9 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg uses the training, Protecting God's Children for Adults. If you need to complete VIRTUS training, contact Jean Grizzuto, jgrizzuto@rcdony.org or 315-393-2920 x 1413.

CELEBRATING WORLD DAY OF CONSECRATED LIFE

‘A wonderful life filled with many blessings’

By Mary Beth Bracy
Contributing Writer

PLATTSBURGH – Every year, Sister Helen Hermann, a Sister of St. Joseph, regales us with wise and humorous stories when she talks about the importance of Catholic education. Many have also been blessed to hear Sister Helen share her musical talents through playing the organ or singing. Director of curriculum and professional development at Seton Catholic in Plattsburgh, Sister Helen shared about her early life, faith formation, and vocation as a Sister of St. Joseph.

Sister Helen remembers her childhood in the North Country with fondness.

“I am the youngest of 10 children,” she said. “The senior members of my family say that I was spoiled. I can’t imagine why they would say that. I grew up on a farm just outside of Watertown. My parents were hard working and were incredibly good. I will never understand how they were able to do all that they did. Sometimes I helped with the farm work, but I can’t say I enjoyed it. I hate to admit it, but I wasn’t overly ambitious.”

From her youth, Sister Helen had a love for education.

“I was fortunate to attend kindergarten at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School,” she said. “All I needed to know I learned in kindergarten, so I guess I don’t need to say anything more about my education. However, if you really want to know, I continued on at Sacred Heart School and Immac-

ulate Heart Academy in Watertown, New York. After I entered the convent, I attended Mater Dei College, The University of New York at Potsdam, and Niagara University, where I received a Master of Science degree in Education. But the best education and best teachers of all were my mom and dad. From them I learned how to be a loving follower of Christ.”

Throughout her life as a religious, Sister Helen has worn many hats.

“I have been assigned to various schools throughout the diocese including: St. Mary’s in Massena, St. Patrick’s in Port Henry, St. Mary’s in Fort Covington, St. Joseph’s in Massena, St. Patrick’s in Watertown, St. Agnes in Lake Placid, St. Joseph’s School in Dannemora, Sacred Heart School in Watertown, Holy Name School in AuSable Forks, Trinity Catholic in Massena, St. Augustine’s in Peru, Seton Academy and Seton Catholic in Plattsburgh, she said. “That’s quite a litany, I would say.”

What first attracted her to the religious life was the way the sisters lived out their vocations.

“I absolutely loved the sisters who taught me in school,” she said. “When I was in fourth grade, I decided I wanted to be just like my teacher, Sister Victorine. Then, in seventh grade, I idolized Sister Mary Alice and wanted to be like her. Both of these sisters have gone on to their heavenly reward. May they rest in peace! In high school, I really loved all the sisters, especially Sister Mary

Christine. Thank God, Sister (Mary Christine) is still living and is one of my dearest friends.

“I was attracted to the Sisters of St. Joseph because they were my teachers, and I loved them,” she continued. “As I said, I wanted to be just like them. However, I have never been able to measure up to all that I saw in them. I am blessed to have one of my biological sisters, Sister Cecilia Marie, in the community of the Sisters of St. Joseph.”

Not all of Sister Helen’s family believed that she was destined for the religious life.

“I have been a sister for 57 years, but some of the members of my family thought that I would never persevere as a sister because I like to have things go my way. Guess what? I still do. Realistically that could not happen once I entered, but with the grace of God I have remained in the convent, and I’m glad I did. I had a great group of sisters that entered at the same time as I did including: Sister Yvonne Cusson, Sister Maureen, Sister Mary Eamon, and Sister Annunciata. How blessed I have been!”

Sister Helen reflected upon the joys and struggles of the religious life.

“Being a sister and educator has brought many blessings and challenges,” she said. “I am blessed to be able to bring the Gospel message to students and watch them grow in the faith. I have been able to help children and young adults prepare for first reconciliation, first Eucharist, and confirma-

tion. That is an awesome journey. In addition to that, in the classroom I have been able to prepare students for their future by giving them the skills and tools they need to be successful. I really enjoy teaching. I enjoy children’s comments and funny remarks. I also am amazed at their energy and wish I could bottle some of it up and infuse it in me. No such luck!

“I have had many opportunities to work with other teachers and help them develop their teaching skills. That has been fun. I’ve also taught adults in the Sacramental programs and the Protecting God’s Children program.”

While she’s enjoyed most of her time in education, Sister Helen has her favorite aspects.

“I really enjoy music and using music in the classroom,” she said. “I think that children remember things better if it is connected with a song. I especially like to use music when I am teaching religion. Yes, there have been challenges. Sometimes I haven’t been able to reach some of the students I have tried to teach. Sometimes I haven’t been successful with their parents. I have certainly made my mistakes, but I need to move forward.”

Sister Helen’s spirituality is reflected in her deep faith.

“Being a Sister of St. Joseph I have special devotion to St. Joseph and to the Eucharist,” she said. “I have lots of other devotions that are connected with the Church year. In May, I have devotion to Mary, the Mother

of God, and love singing all the Marian hymns, especially, ‘Lovely Lady Dressed in Blue.’ At the time of Pentecost, I have devotion to the Holy Spirit. In June, I like to pray to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In October, I have a devotion to St. Therese of the Child Jesus and to the North American martyrs. In November my devotion is to the Souls in Purgatory. In January my devotion is to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and St. Brother Andre. Of course, the whole month of March is dedicated to St. Joseph.”

Sister Helen’s joyful spirit shines through her advice.

“I think everyone should pray daily to know how God is calling him or her to use the gifts He has given to that person and to know what God wants him or her to be,” she said. “God has a plan for each of us. If a person feels a call to religious life, I would encourage him or her to pursue that call. Religious life is a wonderful life filled with many blessings. God will never be outdone in generosity.”

Prayer of Thanks to St. Joseph of Cupertino

Almighty and ever living God, Your love and providential care for us knows no bounds.

In the Saints, you provide us with an example of lived Christianity, and a powerful source of intercession for our needs.

Thank you, Holy and Triune God, for hearing the prayer of St. Joseph Cupertino and, by his intercession, assisting me in succeeding in my studies.

Glory be to You, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

~D. L.

MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

The ethics of pig-to-human organ transplants

Early this year, a Maryland man suffering from severe heart failure underwent a new experimental procedure, receiving a pig heart transplant. His medical team had determined he would be a poor candidate for a human heart transplant or for an artificial heart, so he was offered the opportunity to participate in a novel treatment using a genetically modified pig's heart.

The pig had been specially bred and modified with DNA edits to increase the likelihood of successful transplantation. Three genes of the pig that contribute to the rapid antibody-mediated rejection of pig organs by humans were "knocked out." Six human genes that would produce "human protective proteins" and improve immune acceptance of the pig heart were also inserted into the pig's genome. An additional gene knockout was done to prevent the pig's heart from becoming too large.

The transplantation of animal organs into humans is known as "xenotransplantation" and is a new field that appears poised to expand rapidly

in the future. Xenotransplantation can be ethical as long as pilot studies are performed in animals ahead of use in humans, safety issues are carefully addressed, the benefits of the transplantation procedure outweigh the burdens, and risks are reasonably limited.

While we have a duty to treat animals well and should try to avoid causing them undue suffering, it's also clear that human beings have been given by God a legitimate dominion over members of the animal kingdom. Animal trials have always been key to launching new therapies in humans.

Pig organ transplants into baboons and other non-human primates have been taking place for decades. These transplants have become more beneficial and less risky over time, especially as tailored genetic modifications have been introduced into the pigs. Xenotransplantation offers an important advantage over traditional human-to-human trans-

plants: the opportunity to modify the donor organ, rather than only modifying the recipient through suppressing his or her immune system.

In the early days of implanting pig organs into non-human primates, researchers faced the serious problem of immediate organ destruction due to hyperacute rejection, with the failure time being measured in min-

utes, rather than hours or days. Hyperacute rejection occurred because the baboon's immune system recognized a carbohydrate molecule on the surface of the pig organ. By knocking out the troublesome carbohydrate molecule via genetic engineering, and relying on additional immune-suppression techniques, scientists were able to extend significantly the survival times of transplanted pig organs in baboons, in some studies up to nearly three years.

The very complex changes made in the genetically-engineered pigs, when coupled with continued advances in im-

mune-suppression strategies in organ recipients, led to the realization that it might finally be possible to attempt implantation of a genetically-modified pig heart into a human patient.

In the future, additional and more sophisticated genetic engineering of source animals and the use of new immunosuppressive agents in recipients should further improve compatibility and decrease the chances of xenotransplant rejection.

Still, it should be noted that there are other potential concerns besides organ rejection. Animal retroviruses or diseases could potentially be transmitted to humans when they receive an animal organ. Some have argued, however, that by maintaining strict control over how animals are housed, fed and bred for organ procurement, scientists can achieve a greater degree of assurance in terms of minimizing their exposure to pathogens through the highly biosecure laboratory conditions the animals are raised in; meanwhile, for human organ donors, detailed knowledge of individual exposure profiles may not be available.

Surveys and focus groups assessing attitudes to xenotransplantation generally report public support for the use of pig organs. Such surveys also suggest that many Christians, Jews and Muslims would consider xenotransplantation to be acceptable as a life-saving measure. Some people object to the use of animals, but the fact that more than 100 mil-

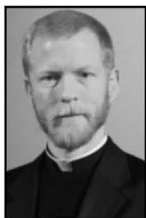
lion pigs in the US are slaughtered annually for human food production lessens for most the concerns around using them to alleviate the chronic shortages of life-saving organs. Thousands of people die every year on waiting lists for human organs.

Moreover, if pig organ transplants into humans were to become standardized and widely available, this could also significantly reduce the illegal trade in human organs like kidneys, where the poor and disadvantaged are often victimized.

Even though remarkable advancements have been made in "neutering" pig organs so they no longer provoke a powerful immune response in humans, and striking progress has been made in extending survival times for xenografts, there are sure to be many more twists and turns along the road of getting our immune systems to cooperate fully with implanted animal organs.

Recent forays into xenotransplantation offer a significant first step on the long journey from yesterday's "scientifically unimaginable," to today's "barely achievable," to tomorrow's basic "standard of care."

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



Father Tadeusz Pacholczyk Ph.D.



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VIRTUAL EVENTS

HOW TO: SMALL GROUP YOUTH DISCIPLESHIP

Join fellow ministers, volunteers, and anyone interested in working with young people for a video series and discussion on Small Group Discipleship for youth.

Date: March 1 and 2

Time: 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Features: The five-video series provided by YDisciple will be spread out over the two sessions, and we will meet via Zoom to view and discuss how to best apply these techniques in our parishes, homes, and schools. Each video is 10 to 15 minutes long and easy to absorb. **Contact:** To Register for this free webinar please visit:

<https://www.rcdony.org/ministry-development> For more information please contact Tom Semeraro at tsemmeraro@rcdony.org 315-393-2920

ADIRONDACK

FIRST FRIDAY PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Lake Placid – Monthly praise and worship to be held.

Date: First Friday of the month

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: St. Agnes Church

Features: Music led by Joey and MC Izzo. Time for fellowship and snacks afterwards. Will be livestreamed as well on St. Agnes Facebook page.

PARISH NURSE TRAINING

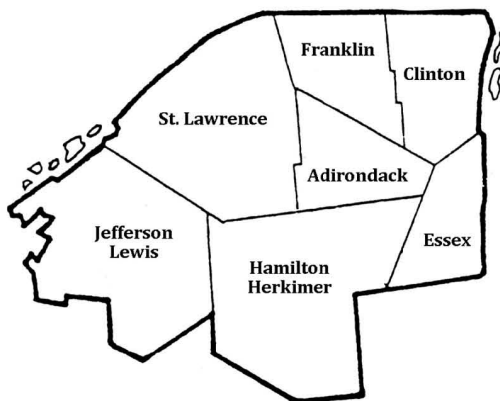
Lake Placid - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks, a mission sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, will offer the Foundations Course for Faith Community Nursing.

Dates: March 11, 12, 18, 19, 25 and 26 (All 6 sessions are required).

Place: to be determined or can be attended virtually.

Features: The course is offered to registered nurses of all faiths. Mercy Care provides the training at no cost to participants but pre-registration is required. Parish Nurses (Faith Community Nurses) assist the members of their faith community to maintain or regain wholeness in body, mind and spirit. They promote wellness by health screening, health education, advocating for clients, connecting them to services in their community, listening and providing support.

Contact: To register, visit our website at www.adkmercy.org. If you have any questions please contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Education and Volunteer



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

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

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

Training Manager at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or by phone at 518-523-5446.

CLINTON

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST: JESUS PRESENT AND HOW TO SHARE IT

Plattsburgh – As a continuation of the Eucharist Initiative a presentation to be held on the Liturgy of the Eucharist: Jesus Present and how to share it.

Date: March 12

Time: 9:30 a.m. to Noon

Place: Holy Cross Parish Center

Speaker: Fr. Tojo Chacko, HGN

Features: Cost is free. Please bring a bagged lunch for food and conversation afterwards.

Contact: To register for a location go to: www.rcdony.org/liturgyeucharist

ESSEX

NO LATIN MASS

Port Henry – There will not be an Extraordinary Form Latin Mass held until Feb. 20.

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

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: Feb. 6

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

ST. LAWRENCE

11TH AND 12TH GRADE RELIGION CLASSES

Ogdensburg – St. Mary's Cathedral Parish is kicking off its 11th & 12th grade religion class. Youth in the applicable grades from outside the Cathedral Parish are welcome to attend.

Date: Monthly Feb. 13, March 13, April 10, May 15

Time: 5 p.m. to 7:30

Place: Brzana Hall below St. Mary's Cathedral

Features: We have no curriculum; YOU will help decide what we discuss! Lots of discussion, less lecture. Games with prizes. Classes are self-contained units. Can't make it in October, you are still invited for November, December... No makeup assignments! Guests welcome! Bring a friend!

Contact: If you have questions or concerns that can't wait, contact Deacon Jim Crowley via email jcrowley@rcdony.org or Jessica Hargrave via email jhargrave@rcdony.org.

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY DEVOTION

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

Date: Feb. 5

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.

PRAYER AND ADORATION

Massena – Commissioned Lay Minis-

ters are invited to gather for Adoration and Rosary.

Date: Every third Wednesday of the month (Feb. 16)

Time: 6:30 to 7 p.m.

Place: Sacred Heart Church

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST: JESUS PRESENT AND HOW TO SHARE IT

Waddington – As a continuation of the Eucharist Initiative a presentation to be held on the Liturgy of the Eucharist: Jesus Present and how to share it.

Date: March 12

Time: 9:30 a.m. to Noon

Place: Waddington Parish Center

Speaker: Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSI

Features: Cost is free. Please bring a bagged lunch for food and conversation afterwards.

Contact: To register for a location go to: www.rcdony.org/liturgyeucharist

DIOCESAN EVENTS

SURVIVING DIVORCE

The Family Life Office is offering the Surviving Divorce Program, beginning mid-February in Watertown, Gouverneur, Canton and Potsdam.

Dates: To be determined (will be held once a week)

Time: 2-3 hours

Cost: \$25

Features: This program helps participants find personal healing and hope by working through the emotional upheaval of separation and divorce.

Contact: Register online at rcdony.org/survivingdivorce. For more information contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920 or startaglia@rcdony.org.

LOVING AUTHENTICALLY

Commissioned Lay Ministers and candidates are invited to this program that is designed to strengthen the participant's conviction about the truth, beauty and importance of church teaching on natural law and sexual morality and to give participants a basic understanding of the ethical basis of the teaching.

Date: April 23 at St. Peter's Church, Lowville.

Time: 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Presenters: Deacon John Fehner & Dr. Maura Fehner, Mr. Steve Tartaglia and other members of the Family Life Department.

Features: Cost is free and all are

welcome. Must watch an 80-minute video prior to the event. Link to video will be sent after registration. Bring your own lunch.

Contact: Register at: <https://www.rcdony.org/lovingauthentically>. If you have questions, contact Family Life Director, Steve Tartaglia at startaglia@rcdony.org or call 315-393-2920

REFLECT AND RECONCILE

A Diocese of Ogdensburg youth Lenten retreat to be held for all young people in grades 7 to 12.

Schedule: March 12 at St. Mary's Cathedral Brzana Room, Ogdensburg; March 26 at St. Mary's Parish Center, Champlain.

Time: 1 p.m. to 5

Features: As we dive deeper into the sacrament of Reconciliation and the season of Lent, we should center ourselves and work to understand who we are. Join fellow youth in grades 7 to 12 as you get a chance to dive deeper, to understand more in a space that is judgment-free and supportive. The pace of this retreat experience will contain moments of fun, quiet reflection, candid conversation, and a presentation. Drinks and Snack included.

Contact: Registration is at rcdony.org/lentenretreat. For more information please contact Tom Semeraro, Office of Youth Ministry, 315-393-2920 or tsemmeraro@rcdony.org

PRESENTATION OF FORGIVEN

A Continuation of the Eucharist Initiative. Explore the transforming power and the healing grace of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Discover the merciful way that God calls us back to Himself when we have sinned.

Date: March 26

Time: 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center, Clayton; Dostie Hall, Watertown; St. Peter's Church, Lowville; Fr. Amyot Parish Center, Norfolk; St. Edmund's Parish Center, Ellenburg; The Emmaus Room inside St. Peter's Church, Plattsburgh; St. Bernard's School, Saranac Lake

Features: There will be much time for discussion during the event which is free to attend. Please bring a bagged lunch.

Contact: To register go to: www.rcdony.org/forgiven

Vatican projects budget deficit for 2022

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Presenting a budget projection that foresees a deficit of \$37.1 million in 2022, the prefect of the Vatican Secretariat for the Economy said he believes the Vatican is on the path to honesty and transparency in financial matters.

"We are well aware that we have made major mistakes in financial management, which have undermined the credibility of the Holy See. We seek to learn from them, and we believe we have remedied them so that they do not happen again," the prefect, Jesuit Father Juan Antonio Guerrero Alves, told Vatican News.

The secretariat Jan. 28 released the Vatican's 2022 "Mission Budget," reflecting a new approach to reporting the income and expenses of the offices of the Roman Curia and related institutions.

The "Mission Budget" includes not just the Vatican Secretariat of State, apostolic nunciatures around the globe and the dicasteries, councils and commissions of the Roman Curia, Father Guerrero said. It also includes entities that "are either the property of the Holy See or depend on and are under the financial responsibility of the Holy See," including the Bambino Gesù pediatric hospital in Rome, the four major basilicas of Rome and the shrines of Loreto, Pompei and Padua. The Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza, the hospital in San Giovanni Rotondo founded by St. Padre Pio, will be included in next year's budget, he said.

The combined budget of the 60 entities that were

part of the previous Holy See budget would have been close to 300 million euros (\$334 million) for 2022, but with the addition of the 30 new entities into the "mission budget," the combined budget for 2022 is close to 800 million euros, he said.

The new combination also includes foundations and other entities that generate income for the activity of the Holy See and the church around the world, so the projected deficit is about 12 million euros less than it would have been, according to the report.

The ongoing pandemic is having a negative impact on Vatican finances and that is expected to continue, the budget shows.

While cost containment is still the goal, Father Guerrero told Vatican News, "this year, trying to be optimistic, we have budgeted 13 million euros more ordinary income than last year, (but) we will see how the pandemic behaves."

The Jesuit also told Vatican News that he is preparing a detailed report on the global Peter's Pence collection and will send it to bishops' conferences around the world.

While the figures will not be finalized until late February, he said, "roughly speaking, I can say that in 2021, there has again been a decrease compared to the previous year, which I would venture to quantify at no less than 15%."

"If in 2020 the total collection of the Peter's Pence was 44 million euros, in 2021 I do not think it will amount to more than 37 million," he

said. "The decrease in 2021 is in addition to the 23% decrease between 2015 and 2019 and the 18% decrease in 2020, the first year of the pandemic."

Peter's Pence is a papal fund used for charity, but also to support the running of the Roman Curia and Vatican embassies around the world. The collection for the fund occurs each year around June 29, the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul.

Father Guerrero also confirmed to Vatican News that a buyer has been found for the property on Sloane Avenue in London's posh Chelsea district that is at the heart of a Vatican trial for 10 people, including Cardinal Angelo Becciu, accused of financial malfeasance.

The Financial Times had reported in November that the Vatican was in the final stages of a deal to sell the property for the equivalent of more than \$270 million, which would mean it would lose as much as \$135 million on the property.

Father Guerrero did not provide exact figures but acknowledged there was a loss.

"The contract of sale has been signed, we have received 10% of the deposit and it (the sale) will be concluded in June," he said. "The loss from the alleged swindle, which has been much talked about and is now being judged by the Vatican courts, was already taken into account in the balance sheet. The building has been sold above the valuation we had in the balance sheet and the appraisal made by the specialized institutions."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Cardinals cite retired pope's action against abusers

ROME (CNS) – A cardinal who had served as an aide to now-retired Pope Benedict XVI and was present for his meetings with survivors of clerical sexual abuse said he "never found in him any shadow or attempt to hide or minimize anything." The depths of human sin and depravity "distressed him intimately, and he sometimes remained silent for a long time – all the more so if these human miseries were the responsibility of men of the church," said Cardinal Fernando Filoni, grand master of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. The cardinal distributed his "testimony" about Pope Benedict to the media Jan. 28, saying he wanted to present an eyewitness account of how Pope Benedict reacted to allegations of clerical sexual abuse and, especially, to the survivors of abuse in the wake of reports about the retire pope's handling of cases when he was archbishop of Munich. A report released Jan. 20 said then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger mishandled four cases. Cardinal Filoni, who was the "sostituto" or substitute for general affairs in the Vatican Secretariat of State from 2007 to 2011, said that in that role, he met with then-Pope Benedict at least once a week and, in addition, oversaw the organization of papal trips abroad. "He had a clear sensitivity for the victims," the cardinal said.

Accurate information is a right, pope tells communicators

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Catholic communicators must help provide correct and truthful information about COVID-19 and its vaccines and do so in a way that avoids oversimplification and creating conflict, Pope Francis said. "Fake news has to be refuted, but individual persons must always be respected, for they believe it often without full awareness or responsibility," he said. "To be properly informed, to be helped to understand situations based on scientific data and not fake news, is a human right. Correct information must be ensured above all to those who are less equipped, to the weakest and to those who are most vulnerable," he added. The pope held a private audience in the Apostolic Palace Jan. 28 with people attending a meeting organized by the "International Catholic Media Consortium on COVID-19 Vaccines." The consortium is headed by the Catholic media outlet, Aleteia, in collaboration with the Spain-based Verificat and French I.Media. Other founding media organizations include: Our Sunday Visitor, SanFrancesco.org and Religión Digital. It includes a scientific committee of researchers, medical experts, scientists, theologians and bioethicists, with the aim of collecting and making available fact-checked, unbiased information for Catholic media in multiple languages.

Pope: People must never forget or repeat horrors of Holocaust

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The cruelty of the Holocaust must never be repeated, Pope Francis said on the eve of the international day of commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. The day, celebrated Jan. 27, falls on the anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp complex in 1945. At the end of his weekly general audience at the Vatican Jan. 26, Pope Francis said, "It is necessary to remember the extermination of millions of Jews and people of different nationalities and religious faiths. This unspeakable cruelty must never be repeated," he said. "I appeal to everyone, especially educators and families, to foster in the new generations an awareness of the horror of this black page of history. It must not be forgotten, so that we can build a future where human dignity is no longer trampled underfoot," the pope said.

In decisions, retiring Breyer supported abortion

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer formally announced his retirement in a Jan. 27 letter to President Joe Biden after news reports the previous day indicated he planned to retire at the end of the current term.

Breyer and Biden made the announcement public at the White House where Biden said he wished to express the "nation's gratitude" for Breyer's "remarkable career of public service and his clear-eyed commitment to making our country's laws work for its people."

The president promised to select a nominee worthy of Breyer's "legacy of excellence and decency" and said he would announce his decision by the end of February. He also said he would nominate a Black woman to the Supreme Court.

Breyer, 83, said in brief remarks that the "experiment" of America still works today as demonstrated by so many who come before the court to solve their major differences under the law.

Breyer has served almost three decades on the court and has been widely seen as one of its liberal voices. His retirement will enable Biden to nominate a successor to Breyer.

During a debate during his campaign for the presidency, Biden said he would appoint a Black woman to the court if he were elected.

Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer, D-N.Y., said Jan. 26 that Biden's nominee would receive a prompt hearing by the Senate Judiciary Committee and would be "considered and confirmed by the full United States Senate with all deliberate



CNS PHOTO/KEVIN LAMARQUE, REUTERS

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer announces at the White House in Washington Jan. 27, 2022, that he will retire at the end of the court's current term.

speed."

Breyer was nominated by President Bill Clinton in 1994. In recent months, some Democrats have been pleading with the justice, who is the oldest on the bench, to retire soon to ensure Biden could name his successor while Democrats were still in control of the Senate.

In an interview with The New York Times last summer, Breyer said he wasn't sure when he would retire and that there were many factors that went into that decision.

He also remembered Justice Antonin Scalia telling him that he didn't want "somebody appointed who will just reverse everything I've done for the last 25 years," which was something he also considered.

In a speech at Harvard Law School last April, Breyer also said he thought it was wrong "to think of the court as another political institution."

Breyer, who is Jewish, has taken stands that both go against and support Catholic teaching. For example, for several years

his decisions have questioned the country's use of the death penalty, but he has also often sided with laws favoring a right to abortion.

In 2015, in a dissent in *Glossip v. Gross*, which dealt with the constitutionality of Oklahoma's use of lethal injections, Breyer wrote that he hoped the court would reassess the constitutionality of the death penalty, noting that it "now likely constitutes a legally prohibited cruel and unusual punishment" under the U.S. Constitution's Eighth Amendment.

And after a federal execution in July 2020, for which the Supreme Court cleared the way, Breyer wrote a dissent joined by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg that said: "A modern system of criminal justice must be reasonably accurate, fair, humane and timely."

He added: "Our recent experience with the federal government's resumption of executions adds to the mounting body of evidence that the death penalty cannot be

reconciled with those values."

The justice also wrote two major rulings defending a right to abortion including the 2016 decision that struck down a Texas law imposing restrictions on abortion clinics and doctors. Four years later he wrote the ruling that struck down a similar law in Louisiana.

He also was critical of the court's decision last December to uphold the Texas law that bans abortions after six weeks of pregnancy while letting one challenge of it move forward.

In 2008, Fordham University's law school in New York presented Breyer with a prestigious ethics prize in a private ceremony despite a protest held outside the event and a call by a national Catholic organization to rescind the honor in light of the judge's support for legal abortion.

When the Jesuit-run university announced the award, William Treanor, the law school dean, said Breyer "has devoted his life to the public good" and is "a brilliant, influential and path-breaking scholar."

He said Breyer embodied the ideals of the ethics prize as a jurist whose "opinions have been marked by thoughtfulness, balance, rigor, and a commitment to justice

and liberty. He has been an eloquent and forceful champion of judicial integrity."

In response to news of Breyer's upcoming retirement, Kristan Hawkins, president of Students for Life Action, said her organization calls on Republicans "to fight against any nominee who ignores the science of life for the callous calculation that ending innocent lives is the price he or she must pay to get a lifetime appointment on the court."

Before his years on the bench of the nation's high court, Breyer was chief judge of the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston. His nomination to the Supreme Court had the support of Senate Democrats and Republicans but the pro-life advocacy group, the National Right to Life Committee, was critical of it.

"It is perfectly clear that Breyer will take an expansive view of 'abortion rights,'" said National Right to Life legislative director Douglas Johnson at the time.

Breyer's wife, three children and other family members attended the Rose Garden ceremony in 1994 where Clinton introduced the judge as a consensus-builder and an insightful leader who would help unite the court to speak "with a clear voice."

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NOW SHOWING

MUNICH: EDGE OF WAR

NEW YORK (CNS)—Jeremy Irons as British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain dominates the historical drama "Munich: The Edge of War" (Netflix).

The unvarnished dialogue that regularly crops up in director Christian Schwochow's otherwise polished screen version of Robert Harris' 2017 novel makes it most suitable for grown-ups. But the parents of older teens may see the film's educational value as outweighing that consideration.

In adapting Harris' work, screenwriter Ben Power uses the story of a fictional friendship as an introduction to the controversial policy of appeasement toward Adolf Hitler (Ulrich Matthes) pursued by the U.K. and France in an effort to avert World War II.

As an opening flashback to their student days at



CNS PHOTO/FREDERIC BATHIER, NETFLIX

Jannis Niewöhner, left, stars in a scene from the movie "Munich: Edge of War." The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Oxford University shows us, Englishman Hugh Legat (George MacKay), a future secretary to Chamberlain, and German-born Paul von Hartmann (Jannis Niewöhner) were once close pals. The duo quarreled, however, over von Hartmann's enthusiastic support of the Nazis and have long been estranged.

Yet, with the strategy of giving in to the Fuehrer's demands about to reach its high point at the 1938 summit conference in the city of the title, von Hartmann – now an official in Germany's foreign ministry who has belatedly cottoned on to the true nature of the regime – tries to renew ties with his ex-

buddy. He hopes the two can collaborate to open Chamberlain's eyes to the true nature of his adversary's goals.

Though occasionally a bit overwrought in tone and somewhat implausible in its plot developments, Schwochow's film captures the moral as well as political dilemmas of the era. It also intelligently explores the issue of how well-meaning people can best oppose evil.

Irons deftly conveys the complexity of a figure whom it would be all too easy to caricature.

Was Chamberlain the naive upper-class gentleman whose innocent mind was incapable of fathoming the utter wickedness embodied by his interlocutor? Or was he cannily preparing for the day when ethical outrage would help to fuel his compatriots' resolve to de-

feat the Brownshirts – once conflict could no longer be evaded?

Some viewers may disagree with the conclusion, expressed in the script, that Chamberlain's accommodating approach to Hitler was ultimately successful insofar as it bought his nation time to reararm. But the subject is one that historians, both professional and amateur, continue to debate and will likely never resolve.

The film contains a scene of men urinating, a couple of profanities, about a dozen milder oaths, at least one rough term and considerable crude and crass language. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III – adults. The Motion Picture Association rating is PG-13 – parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

Author calls for respect for dignity in health care

"Losing Our Dignity: How Secularized Medicine Is Undermining Fundamental Human Equality" by Charles C. Camosy, New City Press (Hyde Park, New York, 2021). 224 pp., \$22.95.

I had occasion recently to sign my own "do not resuscitate" directive before surgery. All very standard, I was assured. A friendly member of the hospital staff thrust it my way, told me what it was and I signed it without reading any of it. (Who reads any-

thing in an emergency room before the anesthesia kicks in?)

I had no time to think about whether the people involved in making such a momentous decision were moral or had my best interests at heart, and events all turned out happily, anyway, as they quite often do.

Charles C. Camosy, an associate professor of ethics at Fordham University, covers some of that ground in his thought-provoking "Losing Our Dignity," in which he argues for a more compassionate health care system based on respect for human dignity.

Medical decisions, he observes, have been warped by "deeply secularized and irreligious forces."

This includes more protection for disabled pa-

tients marginalized when they're determined to be in a vegetative state, the unborn and those suffering from neurodegenerative disease and dementia.

This is an essential read for anyone put in the position, however reluctantly, of being the family caretaker. Camosy seeks to bring hope as well as comfort, and he makes an intelligent, trenchant argument for keeping one's moral decisions intact and without compromise.

Observing what few have in decades – that the Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abortion on demand, had more to do with protecting the liability of doctors rather than the health of the mother – Camosy concludes, "The authority of medicine and

of physicians, along with a concern to protect them from prosecution, cannot be overstated as motivating factors."

As for late-stage dementia patients, he concludes, "We have put ourselves on a cultural trajectory which leads naturally and logically to claiming that millions of human beings with a profound intellectual disability do not have fundamental equality with the rest of us."

Camosy does more than outlining the problems. Taking a conversational tone, he outlines strategies "for turning the cultural tide." Most of these have to do with accepting personal responsibility, including making "choices about housing, debt and living situations that allow us to care for our parents or

other older family members."

Better funding of nursing homes, he argues, will enable the hiring of "more health care providers who have the time and incentive to respect the dignity of their patients."

Finally, Camosy asserts, "Can we stop being embarrassed about our religious beliefs in public contexts and respectfully but firmly request an equal seat at the table of dialogue? Can we look for overlapping consensus, but refuse to translate our views (using someone else's moral language) into a milquetoast version of what we actually believe in our hearts?"

Now, he argues, "is not the time to be arrogant and dismissive, but it also not a time to be hesitant and timid."



SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

Answering God's call

When we're young, most of us have glamorous or exciting careers we want to follow.

"I want to be a fireman."

"I want to be an astronaut."

"I want to be a movie actress."

As we grow older, our choices are more realistic.

"I want to be a veterinarian."

"I want to be a nurse."

More rarely, a person feels "called" to be or do some special world. It sounds so noble, for it takes both courage and humility to answer a call!

The two persons in today's readings – Isaiah and Peter – were both called but felt unworthy to accept until strength-

ened and encouraged by God.

In today's reading from the first chapters of Isaiah, the young prophet is aware of his sinfulness as he experiences a vision of God on His throne about to make a decision. Who will He send as His messenger to clean up the mess left by King Uzziah and bring

the people back to fidelity? After one of the heavenly seraphim has touched a burning coal to his lips (ouch!), Isaiah now feels worthy enough to cry out, "Here I am; send me."

And so, Isaiah's whole life's work begins.

The Gospel is just as

February 6

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS

Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Gospel Luke 5:1-11

dramatic. It portrays an unforgettable day on the Lake of Gennesaret. Simon Peter and his partners, James and John, are tired and discouraged after a night of fruitless fishing. Jesus prevails on them to let him use their boat as a pulpit. After Jesus has preached a while to those on the shore, he dares to ask these tired fishermen to try just once more. Simon must have thought, "He's a good preacher, but He doesn't know much about fishing!"

However, he obeys, and puts out to the deep. To his amazement, the nets are filled to breaking with huge fish. In panic, Simon calls for help. Now the two boats are in danger of capsizing as they carefully head for shore.

Like Isaiah, Simon feels unworthy. He falls on his knees, crying out, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man." With amazing powers of persuasion, Jesus says to Simon Peter, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." They leave a profession they know very well for a life filled with uncertainty and danger. And not just Simon Peter, but his partners, James and John, are willing to take the same risk.

While we may not have

the stature of an Isaiah or a St. Peter, God knows better than we do what vocation in life will make us truly happy and fulfilled. The wisdom of God often seems like foolishness to humans. Jesus that day issued an invitation, and Simon Peter, James and John had trust enough to answer it!

How about us! By his death and resurrection, we have been called to witness His truth and His love to the whole world. Every day we must let Him be everything in our lives. In these dangerous times filled with fear, distrust, and division, we can be the unifiers and the peace makers. His plan for creation must be victorious. Through us, it must happen.

OBITUARIES

Brushton – Rita (Bombard) Richards, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 27, 2022 at St. Mary's Church

Cape Vincent – Charles E. Alger, 82; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 25, 2022 at St. Vincent of Paul Church; burial in St. Vincent of Paul Cemetery.

Chaumont – Glenn Newtown Dodge, 104; Private services held Jan. 29, 2022.

Constableville – Lillian Pauline (Korman) Paluck, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 27, 2022 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Croghan – Frederick J. Kohler, 90;

Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 27, 2022 at St. Stephen's Church; burial in St. Stephen's Cemetery.

Crown Point – Robert L. Ross, 84; Funeral Services in the spring.

Ellenburg – Ronald Ryan, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 28, 2022 at St. Edmund's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Evans Mills – Reid Anthony Rajner, 16; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 29, 2022 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Oakwood Cemetery.

Morrisonville – Robert F. "Bud" Seymour, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Jan.

28, 2022 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Edward R. Burwell, 60; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 26, 2022 at Notre Dame Church.

Ogdensburg – Judith E. (Lincoln) Skamperle, 74; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 28, 2022 at Notre Dame Church.

Plattsburgh – Margaret R. (Corrow) Bruce, 100; Services to be held at a later date, burial in West Plattsburgh Union Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Frances M. Ford, 88; Memorial Mass to be held at a later date.

Plattsburgh – Gary Robert Ryan, 71; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 28, 2022 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Mount Carmel Cemetery.

Potsdam – Susan Marjorie (Nicholson) Regan, 66; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 28, 2022 at St. Mary's Church.

Saranac Lake – Patricia (LaVallee) Branch, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 26, 2022 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Theresa – Eugene J. Cappuccetti, Sr., 86; Funeral Services Jan. 25, 2022 at Frederick Bros. Funeral Home, Inc.; burial in Mount Olive Cemetery, Watertown, CT.

Watertown – Muriel J. (Rousseau) Weston, 85; Funeral Services Jan. 29, 2022 at the Reed & Benoit Funeral Home, Inc.

Watertown – Darren K. Yott, 52; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 24, 2022 at Holy Family Church.

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CALLED TO SERVE

Leaving so soon?

Cradle Catholics, those of us who have been Roman Catholics since baptism as an infant, are expected to believe. Father asked, "Is it your will that Kevin should be baptized in the faith of the Church, which we have all professed with you?" My godparents answered, "it is."

My godparents said, on

my behalf, that I believe all those articles of faith embodied in our Creed. I didn't pay a lot of attention to what was said since I was a week old and had one or two other things on my mind at the time, like eating and sleeping – amazing how things don't change much.

Anyway, if the words in

the ritual have not changed a whole lot, I don't think there was anything in the Creed about me believing in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

In fact, the newest Rite doesn't even use the words Holy Communion. It reads, "approaching the altar of the Lord, he (she) will share at the table of his Sacrifice."

Over the years, I have come to understand the doctrine of "real presence" and believe that Jesus is present in the host I receive. Each time I receive the Eucharist, Jesus and I are joined.

That is an awesome moment. St. Justin wrote "no one may take part in the Eucharist unless he

believes that what we teach is true, has received baptism for the forgiveness of sins and new birth and lives in keeping with what Christ taught."

As a deacon, an ordinary minister of the Eucharist, I get to receive the body and blood of Christ and then help to distribute Communion to all the faithful present at the Mass or service.

I've never understood why some people scoot out of church after receiving Communion. Some are so bold as to take the host in their hand and consume it while they are exiting the

building.

Perhaps that's what their parents always did so they learned from that practice. Maybe they have a thing about getting to their car and out of the parking lot first. Maybe, as I heard the other day, some folks just want to make sure they get a table at their favorite diner or will be at the head of

the line at the bakery.

Whatever the reason, it seems wrong to me. Certainly, there is the occasional legitimate reason, but some communicants are habitual about exiting.

I feel sorry for them. Sorry, that they have not grasped the significance of the Real Presence now unified with them. Sorry, that they could not spend a few minutes quietly thanking God for the gift of Eucharist and praying that his presence will help them in their daily pursuits.

Most people stay through the end of Mass and then are sent. I applaud them. It is what is expected, but I applaud them anyway.

The deacon gets to do the sending. It is not the final line that brings the curtain down on another Mass. It is akin to Jesus' line to his disciples at his Ascension. "Go, make disciples of all nations." That's our next conversation.

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



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

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God's love in the face of poverty

"The meaning of life is to love others at all ages and in every place. We Christians proclaim and testify first of all that someone else gives our life meaning because he loves us: he loves everyone and always," writes Father Angelo Besenzoni, missionary in the parish "Sagrada Familia" in Musseque-Kicoca, a suburb of the capital of Angola. "There is not much here in 'musseque,' which in Kimbundo means 'red earth' and comes from the informal settlements that have sprung up on the outskirts of Luanda. There is a lack of work, drinking water and hospitals, but there is never a lack of certainty that God's love gives meaning to everything."

"My parish is located right in the so-called 'musseque,'" says the missionary of the Society for African Missions (SMA) who has shared the hard life in the suburbs with his people for 13 years.

There is no work, and those who want to work have to go to Luanda. There is electricity almost everywhere, but there is still no water, which is called "precious liquid" here.

Regarding education, despite the fact that about half of the population is under 20, young people who wish to study are forced to emigrate to the city given the precariousness of elementary schools and the total absence of secondary schools.

"First the oil crisis and then the Covid crisis exacerbated all of these problems," explains Father Angelo. "Many people have lost their jobs, food prices have tripled, the sick are poorly cared for in the hospitals, absorbed by coronavirus concerns. The heat, or the anti-malarials we have in our bodies, have so far protected us from Covid. The vaccines have arrived in the cities but have not yet reached Musseque. People have extraordinary resilience and adaptability, and every month they get used to living on less and less food and money."

The Italian Father Besenzoni has been in Kikoka for four years, first as an assistant to Father Ceferino Cainelli (SMA) in the formation of young religious candidates who want to become SMA seminarians, and later as head of the new parish consecrated to the Holy Family.

"One way to love others is to keep our door open and listen to those who come to us with their problems - concludes the missionary -, or to visit the elderly and the sick, or to give a hand to families in need to send children to school and put something on the table."

Article from FIDES missionary news service of the Pontifical Mission Societies

Brother: Slain officer had 'burning desire' to 'wear badge'

Jeffrey Rivera, the older brother of slain New York policeman Jason Rivera, said that his brother grew up with the "burning desire" to "to wear that uniform, to wear that badge" from the time he was a small child.

"As a kid, as a baby growing up, if you had something you had to watch on TV, and 'Cops' was on or 'Chicago PD,' good luck, forget about it," he recalled in emotional remarks he delivered at his brother's funeral Jan. 28 at St. Patrick's Cathedral, which was covered live by several television networks.

"(Jason) would lay on couch watching (these shows) or listening to radio transmissions. He would wake up on the middle of the night policing. He was obsessed with a career in law enforcement."

He also never got over his crush at age 5 on a little girl named Dominique, his brother said. Childhood sweethearts, Dominique and Jason grew up and got married.

The couple had been married just a few months when Jason, 22, was shot and killed in an ambush while responding to a domestic incident in Harlem Jan. 24.

His partner, Officer Wilbert Mora, 27, also was shot and was rushed to the hospital where he fought for his life. But he died from his wounds midday Jan. 26, and his funeral will be at St. Patrick's Cathedral Feb. 2.

New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan presided at the Mass for Rivera. It was celebrated in English and Spanish in recognition of the officer's Dominican roots.

Thousands of police officers - from near and far - lined up outside the cathe-

dral to pay their respects. Inside thousands more filled the cathedral pews. The night before ordinary citizens joined police and other first responders at the cathedral for Rivera's wake.

Among those who spoke at the funeral Mass were New York Mayor Eric Adams, Police Commissioner Keechant Sewell and Rivera's widow.

Jason "was dedication, he was joy," said his brother, Jeffrey. "He brought us so much joy. Everyone keeps telling me that I'm strong (but) my brother is giving me strength," he said, adding that he couldn't "really put it into words how broken I am, how broken my mother is, my father is. We feel empty."

"I can't put into words how shattered my family is," he added, but "we feel strength from knowing God put a burning desire in my brother's heart" to be a police officer. "We are so proud of him for saying yes to God. My family and I, we are confident my brother is next to God protecting us, protecting his NYPD family. We are proud of you, we love you," he added.

"This has always been a city of lights and Jason River was one of its brightest," with a "thousand-watt smile," said Commissioner Sewell, who announced she was promoting Rivera to detective first grade posthumously.

"We may not match the sacrifice made by Jason, but we can try to match his incredible sense of service, we may not match his courage but we can try to match his passion. We owe it to Jason," she said.

She called the fatal shooting of Rivera and his partner "assassinations," a "horror" that "shocks the

sensibilities" and an affront to "every decent caring human being in this city and beyond."

Sewell had a message for "the criminals who would victimize and instill fear in innocent people ... who seek to dim the beacons of hope across these five boroughs": The New York Police Department "will never give up this city, we will always prevail," she said, receiving a standing ovation.

Outside the cathedral filled with men and women in blue, she said, was "a glowing wave of blue ... a mosaic of men and women in uniform with a shine of tears in their eyes (who) will proudly carry on the extraordinary legacy of Detective 1st Grade Jason Rivera."

Dominique Rivera, Jason's widow, was the last to speak. As she started her remarks, deep emotion overcame her and she could barely get the words out, but she found her voice, saying: "I can't believe all of this. It seems so unreal, like I am having one of those nightmares you never thought you'd have."

She said she couldn't believe her husband's killing and funeral had brought her to St. Patrick's this day, especially when she and her husband had just talked about wanting to visit the cathedral.

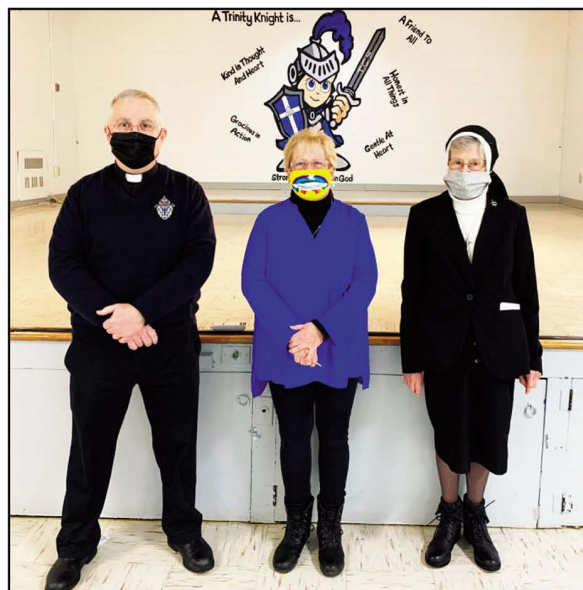
She expressed regret that the last morning her husband was alive, the couple had had an argument over his schedule.

"It's hard being a cop wife sometimes. It's hard being patient when plans are canceled or we'd go days without seeing each other, or you had a bad day at work," Dominique said, but Jason "always reminded me it was going to be all right we were going to get through it."

VOCATIONS VISIT



Diocesan Vocations Director Father Christopher C. Carrara and Vocations Coordinator Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ, recently visited Trinity Catholic School in Massena, where they discussed vocations with the students. (Right) Father Carrara and Sister Mary Eamon were welcomed to Trinity by school Principal Joyce Giroux.



Pope to meet students as part of synodal process

ROME (CNS)—Highlighting the importance of a church that truly listens, Pope Francis will participate in a virtual meeting hosted by Loyola University in Chicago with students from North, Central and South America.

The Feb. 24 virtual meeting, titled "Building Bridges: A Synodal Encounter between Pope Francis and University Students," will be an opportunity to "address the salient challenges of our times," the university's website said.

"The pope will dialogue with these university students who will share concrete educational projects that seek to justly transform environmental and economic realities," as well as discuss the challenges of migration, it said.

Speaking with Catholic News Service Jan. 28, Michael Murphy, director of Loyola's Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage, said he and several colleagues, including Emilce Cuda, an offi-



CNS PHOTO/LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

A promotional image on the website of Loyola University Chicago advertises the university's upcoming virtual meeting with Pope Francis and students from North, Central and South America Feb. 24, 2022.

cial at the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, discussed the idea of an event for university students in preparation for the upcoming Synod of Bishops on synodality.

In November, he said, while discussing possible speakers for the event, "we kind of joked, 'Hey, let's see if Pope Francis is free.'"

Unbeknownst to them, Cuda presented the idea to Pope Francis who agreed to participate.

It was "not a whim on his part," because it fits his vision and priorities, Mur-

phy said. "We knew that so many universities have been asking him, 'What is our role and how can we support' the synodal process.

In preparation for the virtual meeting, students were divided into seven regional groups from North, Central and South America to talk about the thoughts, questions and dreams they would like to discuss with the pope, he said.

"I think it accomplishes what Pope Francis is trying to do: to be a listening

church," Murphy told CNS. "We want to make sure other students feel invited, too, and not be so exclusive in this."

While the discussions will focus on issues ranging from migration to climate change, he said, bringing the young adults from different regions is important in itself, especially at a time of increased division, including because of the digital revolution.

He also hoped it would help build a bridge between the two continents

where, often, colonial and indigenous "past and present collide."

"What the pope wants to do is look at boundaries and see what we know and to remove as much as we can; to say, 'Let us walk together,' conscious of the brokenness of the past, but hopeful in the present," he said.

Murphy told CNS he hopes the meeting will address the increasing polarization and "the sense of exceptionalism" that prevents one from listening to the needs and wants of others.

"I'm not trying to dismantle everything," Murphy said. "I'm just saying let's get real. The church is the living body of Christ. And it's not some 16th-century enterprise, even though that is an important part of its tradition."

"My dad always said, 'You have two ears and one mouth for a reason,'" he said. "So, if we can unclog our two ears and listen better, I think that would be a good result."