

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

NOVEMBER 8, 2023

Vocations Awareness Week



PHOTOS PROVIDED & PHOTOS BY DARCY FARGY & KEITH BENMAN

(Left) Mary Beth Bracy reflects on her vocation as a consecrated virgin living in the world six months after her consecration. (Middle) Father Leland Thorpe, a priest with the Oblates of the Virgin Mary with ties to the North Country, poses for a photo with his family and Bishop Thomas John Paprocki on the day of his ordination. (Top right) Deacon Brent Charland, pictured with his wife Becky, lives his vocation in service of his parish, St. André Bessette Parish in Malone. (Bottom right) Sister Cindy Sullivan, a sister of the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, will be retiring soon from her position as director of Massena Meals on Wheels, but she'll continue to serve God and his people in Ecuador. This edition, the North Country Catholic celebrates National Vocations Awareness Week. See the stories on Pages 3-9.

Pope prays for peace, hope on All Souls' Day

By Hannah Brockhaus
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis prayed for peace, hope, and mercy at a Mass to mark All Souls' Day on a rainy morning at the Rome War Cemetery.

"Today, thinking of the dead, cherishing the memory of the dead and cherishing hope, we ask the Lord for peace, so that people will no longer kill each other in wars," the pope said in an improvised homily on Nov. 2.

Pope Francis presided at a Mass at the war cemetery amid scattered rain showers on a breezy, cool morning.

He lamented the loss of the lives of so many people, espe-

cially the young, in war, and said there can never be a real victory because of the price that is paid to reach it.

"We pray to the Lord for our dead, for all, for all: that the Lord will receive them all," Francis said. "And we pray also that the Lord will have mercy on us and give us hope: hope that we can go forward and that we can find them all together with him when he calls us. So be it."

The cemetery Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Diego Ravelli, the papal master of ceremonies.

The small cemetery, which contains the graves of 426 soldiers from Commonwealth countries who died in World

War II, is located near the Pyramid of Cestius, a Roman-era pyramid in the Ostiense neighborhood south of the historic center of Rome.

In his homily, Pope Francis said the day's commemoration of the faithful departed made him think of memory and hope.

"Memory," he explained, "of those who have gone before us, who have spent their lives, who have concluded this life" — both those who have done good and those who have failed in doing good, "but were received into the memory of God."

The pope said All Souls' Day is also a good moment to dwell on the theological virtue of hope, which he called an "everyday"

virtue.

"I will call it the theological virtue of 'the kitchen,' because it is at hand and always comes to our aid," he said. "We live in this tension between memory and hope."

Before the Mass, Pope Francis passed through the cemetery in prayer, pushed in a wheelchair. He also placed white roses on some of the graves, including before the headstone of 28-year-old W. Perkins.

After Mass and before returning to the Vatican, the pope also stopped for a brief moment of prayer in front of Rome's historic Non-Catholic Cemetery for Foreigners, also known as the Protestant Cemetery.

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'Open to where God calls me'

I don't recall if it was the sole purpose of the phone call or if it came up after another conversation, but I remember him asking.

The deacon who serves our parish, Deacon Lee Trudeau, asked if my husband and I were ok with him talking to our son, Jake, about the Andrew Dinners being held in locations around the diocese for men discerning their voca-

Deacon Trudeau noted that attending one of the dinners would be an opportunity for Jake to eat, pray and talk with men

discerning their vocations, priests of the diocese and Bishop Terry R. LaValley.

"You're more than welcome to talk to him about it. In fact, I encourage it. But I've already brought it up with him," I told the deacon. "Jake told me he didn't think he was called to the priesthood, but he said, 'I'm open to where God calls me.'"

"I'm open to where God calls me."

A junior in high school, Jake is currently interested in learning more about career opportunities in sports - sports journalism, sports marketing,

sports management... He loves sports.

While he continues to pursue those natural interests, he remains open to God's will, and he recognizes that sometimes God's plan is different than our plans.

I've experienced that in my own life. When I started dating a shy photographer who worked with me at The Malone Telegram, I told him I had a "three-month rule," and I dated men for only three months before breaking up with them. God had other plans. That photographer and I have been together for 21 years, married for 19.

Jake also recognizes that regardless of what

we think we want, God has the best plans for our lives. Whether we're called to live as a single person, married person, priest, consecrated religious, consecrated virgin and/or deacon, the joy comes from following the Lord and his path for our lives.

This week, the North Country Catholic celebrates National Vocations Awareness Week. It's a great opportunity to learn about a few of the people around us who are trying to follow God's call and how they're living their vocations.

And please join us in praying for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life, especially here in our diocese.

**Darcy L. Fargo**

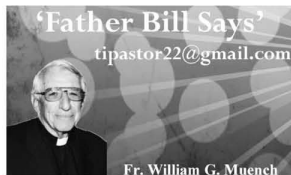
Look at the family around you

First, I want to tell you how impressed I was with the Eucharistic Congress at the North American Martyrs Shrine in Auriesville. I did not attend myself.

However, I have heard from many who did and were so impressed and pleased with the Congress. Many told me how impressed they were with Bishop LaValley's homily at Mass. I am certain many people will realize the huge faith that we, Catholics, have in the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Now some thoughts for today. Do you notice others? Do you see other people in your day? Have you taken some time to look at your husband or wife today? Not just a glance, but have you really looked at them? Have you taken time to look at your children today? I don't mean watch; I mean just looked at them. Or your teenagers?

Today, I went to the bar-

**Fr. William G. Muench**

bershop. While I was waiting, a man came in with his little boy. The boy looked to be three years old. I must tell you I couldn't take my eyes off him. He walked about, he even ran about, he wiggled all over the place. I was absorbed seeing all this new life.

So, be sure to look at your children today. They have much to give you.

Sometimes, I wonder if the people at Church notice each other at Mass. Occasionally, at the beginning of Mass, I suggest that people take a moment to look around at the others in Church. This is our family today, our family at Mass. I mention that my mother would be annoyed with me when I was young and looked around at Mass. Yet here

I am today suggesting you observe the people with you. As the people of God at Mass, you should be praying for them all. You should be hoping that they are praying for you. As the priest celebrant at Mass, I take the time to notice them all and pray for them all.

Each time we pray, each time we participate at Mass, we should begin by remembering the presence of God. We, Catholics, believe that our God is a person - a person who knows us, who loves us, who wants to be with us. We believe in the Blessed Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, Jesus, and God the Holy Spirit. Each time, as you and I prepare to participate at Mass, we should, we must take time to recognize God's presence with us - the God who loves us so much. We are taking the time to worship our God, we seek God's healing power for ourselves, for others.

All of this prepares us well as we go out into our world to work, to teach, to follow our careers.

There are so many people that are part of our world. I ask you again, do you see them? Do they recognize you as someone who is a Christian, someone who is close to God? Do they see you as someone who "loves your neighbor as yourself?"

This leads us all on our road to become saints, and this demands a community. We should recognize our community. We should be part of our community.

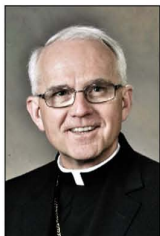
Together, we realize who we are and what our goal is - to be saints.

Thomas Merton tells us that shortly after he was baptized, he was asked what he wanted to be. He says he fumbled a bit and then suggested I want to be a good Catholic person. His friend, however, told him that his goal was to become a saint.

FOLLOW ME

Creating a culture of vocations

National Vocations Awareness Week begins Sunday, November 5. This provides us with a good opportunity to review our efforts to encourage and promote Church vocations from our own families and parishes - the solid ground from which Church vocations grow in our North Country.



Bishop Terry R. LaValley

We continue to address our Diocesan Priority of *Creating a Culture of Vocations* in our Diocese. During the month of October, our Vocations Office coordinated three Andrew Dinners that took place at St. Alexander's in Morrisonville, the Church of the Visitation in Norfolk, and St. James Church in Carthage.

We refer to these gatherings as Andrew Dinners because we remember that St. Andrew, the Apostle, was one of the very first evangelists of

our faith. St. Andrew heard John the Baptist preach and he immediately followed Jesus. But, first, "he found his own brother Simon and told him, 'We have found the Messiah.' Then he brought him to Jesus." (John 1:40-42) From his own family, Andrew invited his brother to meet the Lord.

Young high school and college men and their parents gathered to meet the Eucharistic Lord at a Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration. This was followed by a delicious meal and personal vocation reflections offered by some of our priests and parents of seminarians. I am grateful to Father Scott Seymour, Father Kris Lauzon and Father Todd Thibault and their parish staff for the warm welcome and tasty meals their parishes provided.

I am grateful to Father Chris Carrara, Director of Vocations and Seminarians, Father Matthew Conger, Associate Director, and Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ, Diocesan Vocations Coordinator for their ministry. They are eager to support our family and par-

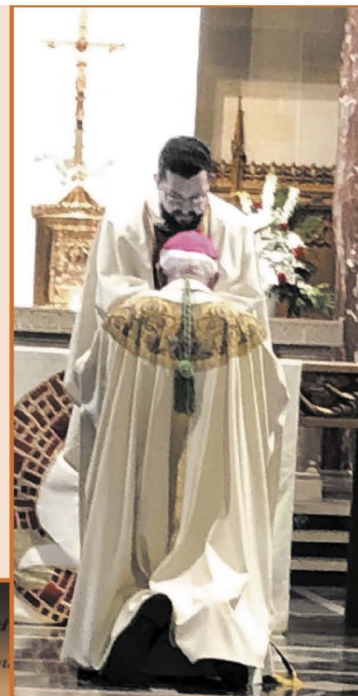
ish's efforts to create local vocational launching pads.

We know that it is essential that personal prayer, public worship, personal invitation (like Andrew), and creative activities be part of our vocational promotion.

Each of our seminarians is a wonderful blessing to the Church. Continue to keep them in your thoughts and prayers. Their faith, enthusiasm and brotherly support for each other is so inspiring and causes us to be truly hope-filled.

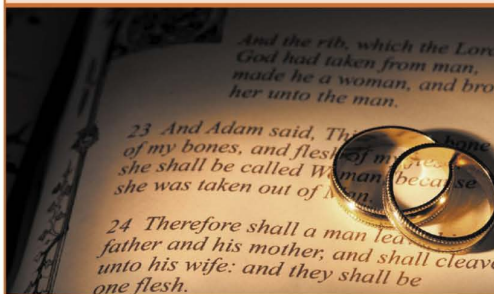
National Vocation Awareness Week

November 5-11, 2023



Priesthood

Come, follow ME, and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19)



Marriage Vows



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Vocations Office Diocese of Ogdensburg



Consecrated Religious Life

VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK

A call to be the face of Christ for others

By Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ
Diocesan Vocations Coordinator

"I am the Living Bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." - John 6:51

It was not enough for the Son of God to take on humanity, even to suffer, die and rise for us and our salvation. He wanted to feed us and remain with us so that we could continue His mission.

As we celebrate National Vocation Week, November 5-11, the Church takes this opportunity to reflect on the call to holiness given to us at the time of our baptism.

We believe that God

has a plan for each of our lives! He calls some to marriage, some to the priesthood, others to the consecrated life or to live as generous single people.

The New York State Eucharistic Congress was just celebrated at Our Lady of Martyrs Shrine in Auriesville. Thousands of pilgrims arrived in Auriesville to be inspired and renewed in the presence of the Eucharist.

There was the experience of over 40 hours of listening to inspiring talks, Mass celebrated by our own Bishop Terry LaValley, and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament throughout Friday and Saturday nights.

Adoration of the Eucharist held in so

many parishes around the diocese graces the Church. Each person who offers an hour before the Blessed Sacrament, who gazes upon the Host - the Real Presence of Jesus Christ - is loved by Him. It is the "Real Presence" - Jesus Christ who strengthens our call to love and to serve Him more closely. We like to spend time with someone we like and love. There is nothing Jesus wants more than to give us is His Presence and for our presence with Him.

Why not spend an hour of your time before the Blessed Sacrament to pray for more vocations to the priesthood, consecrated life, married life or single life who would go forth to live the Gospel and

to proclaim it in the very life God has called each of us?

Every vocation is the Lord's initiative and His gracious gift that calls for a response on our part. This divine call and our human response are a partnership of love between God and everyone. God is the divine architect, the divine sculptor, who "uses" His hands and forms His heart within each of us to go forth from ourselves, to become the masterpiece that each of us is called to be, and to make new in the world. God calls in love, sees us in love and seizes our hearts, and we, in turn, respond in love and gratitude to love and to serve in a manner that He desires for each of us.

To strengthen our call is an invitation to spend time in the presence of the Eucharist. God's loving gaze always meets us, touches us, sets us free and transforms us to make a difference that no one else can do. Just as Jesus asked the disciples the night of His agony,

"Could you not watch one hour with me?"

(Matthew 26:40), can we give the gift of an hour of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament for an increase of vocations in the Church, especially in our diocese; and for peace in the world where there is so much discord, war, suffering and persecution?

As we go forth from the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament, every vocation calls us to mission. Pope Francis in his Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, stated that each of us needs to see our entire life as a mission and be able to say, "I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world."

Let us continue to pray for an increase of vocations in the Church by devoting an hour before the Blessed Sacrament.

Vocation is a call from God, the Divine Sculptor, who uses His hands to make each of us to go forth from ourselves and to become the masterpiece, the face of Christ for others.

UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

In re The Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg, New York
Case No. 23-60507

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE THAT, On July 17, 2023, The Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg, New York, ("Diocese") filed for protection under chapter 11 of title 11 of the United States Code (the "Bankruptcy Code").

The Bankruptcy Court has established **January 18, 2024 at 11:59 p.m.** (prevailing Eastern time) as the deadline all claimants (including governmental units) to file proofs of claim against the Diocese (the "**Bar Date**").

If you have a claim against the Diocese, including, without limitation, a claim related to abuse committed by any person connected with the Diocese, you must file a claim on or before the applicable Bar Date.

Please visit <https://case.stretto.com/dioceesefogdensburg> or call (844) 634-0003 for more information on how to file your proof of claim.

IF YOU DO NOT TIMELY FILE A PROOF OF CLAIM, YOU MAY FORFEIT YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE ON ANY PLAN OF REORGANIZATION AND TO SHARE IN ANY DISTRIBUTIONS TO CREDITORS IN CONNECTION WITH THE DIOCESE'S CHAPTER 11 CASE.



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For Vocations*



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VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK

God called the shots, Sister Cindy followed

By Keith Benman
Contributing Writer

After graduating Massena High in 1971, Cindy Sullivan dreamed of being a professional golfer. She even moved to California and started training for a pro career. But just a couple of years later, she was in Ecuador, South America, as a Peace Corps volunteer.

So, what happened? "I didn't want playing golf to be like work," she said with a laugh. "I wanted to play golf for fun."

And "something else" happened to her in California. She said that "something" went all the way back to her education at Sacred Heart School in Massena.

"Because if you're of a Catholic background, you're always hearing about service to others, doing something for others," she said.

Once in Ecuador, she felt the pull of service to others even more strongly.

"I had thought I was calling the shots," she said. "But God was calling the shots."

She worked closely with priests and sisters in service to the poorest of the poor in Quito, a city of 3 million people. Those priests were Jesuits, and the sisters were Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also known as the BVMs.

"Working with them, I knew I had a vocation," she said.

After finishing her four-year stint with the Peace Corps, she would return to the United States to serve a three-year novitiate with the BVMs. She took first vows three years later, and then it was back to



PHOTO BY KEITH BENMAN/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Sister Cindy Sullivan BVM, front, and Stacie Sweet, back, get out the day's meal at Massena Meals On Wheels on a recent morning. Sweet will be assuming the role of director of Meals on Wheels when Sister Cindy officially retires from the post.

Ecuador. This time it was not as a Peace Corps volunteer, but as Sister Cindy Sullivan, BVM. She would spend the next four decades there working to better the lives of shoe-shine boys, their families and others.

She related all this on a recent morning at Massena Meals On Wheels.

She took up the director's post there in 2017 when she returned from Ecuador to Massena to look after her aging parents in Louisville. At Massena Meals On Wheels, she's in charge of an organization preparing 80 meals a day and the 55 volunteer drivers getting them to seniors.

She'll be giving up her Meals On Wheels job at the end of this year.

Meals On Wheels will remain in good hands. Head cook Stacie Sweet will take over the director's job.

Sister Cindy needs more time to devote to her parents' care. And she'll continue to work

as the Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary's chief fundraiser for the Ecuadorian missions.

Those missions continue the kind of work she did for more than 40 years. They focus on education that will allow the poor families of Quito to make a living in a city that sees others like them streaming in from around the continent. The BVMs also serve those with Hansen's dis-

ease in the coastal city of Guayaquil.

In her day, Sister Cindy in Quito taught carpentry for toy making, baking, religion, music and more. She and her fellow mission workers also served up three meals a day for 2,000 people six days a week. On weekends, they organized house building.

Sister Cindy is a vivacious woman who laughs frequently as she tells her story. It's obvious

she enjoys serving the elderly in Massena, but that her heart remains with the poor in Quito. That's why she'll continue on as fundraiser for the missions there.

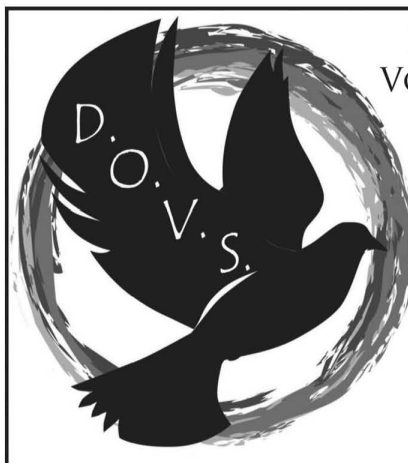
As she talks about her journey and vocation, she wonders how exactly a kid obsessed with sports in Massena got to go the places she went and do the things she did. And she has some advice for other young people who might feel the same call to service as she did 50 years ago.

"I think if they open their eyes to what's around them, they'll find a tremendous number of opportunities for service," she said.

For those specifically interested in serving people as a religious, she advises checking out the different charisms of the orders. Each has its own. A young person should make sure the charism and mission match up with their own, she said.

And place your trust in God. And go where he leads.

"He had me go to these places," she said. "It was an adventure. Everything was so different. So totally different from what I'd known."



DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG
VOCATIONS SOCIETY (D.O.V.S.)

To encourage and promote vocations to the priesthood, permanent diaconate, and consecrated religious life in our diocese.

"It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you"

John 15:16

VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK

‘Spiritual fatherhood is real’

By Mary Beth Bracy,
consecrated virgin
Contributing Writer

Father Leland Thorpe, a priest with the Oblates of the Virgin Mary (OMV), recently celebrated his first anniversary as a priest. Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and is currently assigned to a parish in Alton, Illinois, Father Thorpe has strong North Country connections. His recent presentation “Friendship Group Meeting: Biblical Way of Praying the Mass” - attended by faithful in our diocese and beyond via Zoom - may be viewed on YouTube.

Roots of a Vocation

“I grew up in a fairly de-

vout Protestant family,” shared Father Thorpe. “The church we attended was a large part of our lives, and my parents were actively involved in it in a wide variety of ways. Going back further, my family has been very involved in the denomination I grew up in (the Evangelical Covenant Church) for multiple generations. In fact, my mom’s dad was a minister in the denomination, and my dad’s parents were medical missionaries for the denomination in Zaire. In a way, ministry is something of a family business!”

“After graduating from high school, I attended Carnegie Mellon Univer-

sity in Pittsburgh, and majored in Computer Science. During those years, I drifted away from the faith and fell into the typical college scene. But in my last year of my undergrad studies, God really started to make His pursuit of me tangible, as He began making His presence known from seemingly every direction all at once. In my reading, puzzling things out on my own, in friendships, even through my ultimate frisbee team, He started really capturing my attention. This led to a profound reversion to Christianity as I began encountering His mercy, especially in prayer and the Scriptures.

“That reversion experience eventually led to the conviction that I had to know what the Catholic Church said about itself, so I found myself attending the RCIA classes with no real intention of becoming Catholic. However, the more I learned about the Church, the more I fell in love with it - and especially with the

Eucharist. By the time I was confirmed and received my first Communion at the Easter Vigil in 2010, I was attending Mass most days and even spending time in Eucharistic Adoration regularly.”

Reversion & discernment

“My vocation story is a bit unique,” continued Father Thorpe. “As I was going through my intense reversion experience and being positively flooded with consolations, God gave me a really clear call to the priesthood. This is one of the ways that God sometimes leads souls - some of us are thickheaded and stubborn enough that we need God to speak really, really clearly to us. In His mercy, He knew that I needed to hear the call in a very clear way that I couldn’t ever deny. I knew I was free to do something else, but I also knew that I couldn’t ever doubt His call.”

“As I continued on my reversion journey, I had to keep asking how and where God might be

leading me for ministry. So that was also part of the RCIA process. Now, I was fortunate, in that the RCIA program I joined was run by some very holy lay people, but they had recruited a team of really good and young priests who took turns teaching the catechetical material. This RCIA program was run through the cathedral parish in Pittsburgh, St. Paul’s, but met in the Newman Center which was staffed by priests of the Pittsburgh Oratory of St. Philip Neri. So I had these really solid, young priests who were showing me the joy of the priesthood, but also the level of virtue and character that came from their years of seminary formation. I was really inspired by their witness, and that really helped to draw me.

“Once Catholic, I began meeting with a good priest to help me continue my discernment, while also reading pretty much everything I could about the priesthood and reli-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

God has done
great things
for us!

As recipients of God’s bountiful
gifts, we are called to:

Receive

those gifts gratefully,

Cultivate

those gifts responsibly,

Share

those gifts in justice and love,

And return them with increase
to the Lord

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NOVEMBER 8, 2023

Father Thorpe: Spiritual fatherhood

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

gious life. With his help, and through that reading and learning, I found a lot of confirmation of the call that I had heard in prayer, and so continued forward in my discernment.

"My discernment of where God was calling me to be a priest was a bit messy. I visited with my diocese, but felt pretty strongly that God was calling me to community life. I visited a number of communities, but none of them really felt like the right fit at the time. This even included the Oblates of the Virgin Mary. I ended up beginning formation with the Pittsburgh Oratory of St. Philip Neri, where I had found a spiritual home. That community had played a large role in my initial formation as a Catholic, and St. Philip was a great blessing to me. However, I found pretty quickly that I wasn't a good fit with the community. After about a year and a half of trying to make it work, the community actually approached me and asked me to withdraw. They said, 'We think you could make a good priest and maybe even a good religious somewhere, but it's not here.' So, I withdrew from that community, and had to go back to the drawing board.

"This was really tough, and I spent a lot of time wondering if I had completely blown it. But in prayer and conversations with my spiritual director and some good friends, the Oblates of the Virgin Mary started coming up. In particular, there was a line from one of the letters written by the founder, Venerable Bruno Lanteri, that kept coming to mind. This was definitely a Holy Spirit moment, because



Father Leland Thorpe, a priest with the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, blesses the throat of a child on the Feast of St. Blaise.

I didn't even know that I remembered it, but it really spoke to my heart at the time and continues to. In a letter to a nun who was really struggling with discouragement in her vocation, he wrote, 'I recommend that you renew more than ever and very often that holy presumption that seeks grace from the Lord to attain the holiness you would have attained had you always been faithful to his grace.' In my own place of discouragement and shame, those words - and other writings of Father Lanteri - brought new hope to my discernment.

Inspired by that, I went to visit the Oblates of the Virgin Mary again, and this time I felt right at home. It took a good bit of discernment, and some important conversations between them and the Pittsburgh Oratory, but ultimately I ended up starting formation with the Oblates in 2014, and finished my seminary studies in 2022.

North Country connections

"My parents moved to the North Country in 2012, when my dad accepted a position at Clarkson University, where he continues to work today," Father Thorpe explained. "I visited them in Potsdam a few times, and enjoyed those visits. In early 2014, I moved into my parents' house and started thinking of Potsdam as home. I was really fortunate to get to know the people at St. Mary's and St. Patrick's. They were such a blessing to me! My experience of the church, as an adult convert through the cathedral, was a little unusual. I hadn't ever really experienced parish life. So the chance to spend time at St. Mary's and St. Patrick's, through multiple seasons, was a real joy.

"During the first few years of the formation program of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, we send our men home for vacations - including during the long summer

break. So I spent most of three summers, as well as several Christmases, in Potsdam and with the people of St. Mary's and St. Patrick's. Getting to know the goodness of people in the North Country and the joys of life in a small town were really good for me, and a source of great encouragement and healing in my discernment process really helped me along the way.

"I had the great joy of making it back to Potsdam this summer, about eleven months after my ordination to the priesthood. It was such a joy and blessing to celebrate a Sunday Mass at St. Mary's with many of the people and families who had been so encouraging to me along the way!"

Challenges & joys

"Spiritual fatherhood is real," emphasized Father Thorpe. "One of the surprise graces of ordination was experiencing a fundamental shift in my heart to really feel and experience the grace of fatherhood flowing through me, especially while preaching and administering the sacraments. This has provided simultaneously some of the greatest challenges and the greatest joys of being a priest.

"Fatherhood, whether spiritual or natural, is a path to perfection - and so it can be extremely demanding. Nothing in seminary prepared me for the extent of the demands on a spiritual father's time there can be. But at the same time, those have also provided some of the greatest joys, and the greatest opportunities to marvel at God's providence. A hospital call comes in the middle of an already full day, and the blessing of bringing the sac-

raments to God's people not only outweighs the cost by any measure, but also spills over into everything else and ends up making the rest of the day work better than I could have planned."

Model of Inspiration

The founder of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary remains an inspiration to Father Thorpe in his priesthood. "Venerable Bruno Lanteri was a priest in Northern Italy in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Inspired by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, he helped to lead a renewal of the faith in his region by giving parish missions, helping people to appreciate the full richness of the Catholic faith and to encounter the great mercy of God.

One of his frequent sayings really expresses this well: 'If I shall fall, even were it a thousand times, I will not lose courage. I will not be troubled, but say immediately and with peace, 'Nunc Coepi - Now I begin.' He was constantly calling people to 'begin again,' with great confidence in God's mercy. A group of priests formed around him to help with this work, and that became the kernel of the congregation.

The OMs are now in 10 countries.

"Within the United States we have four parishes, two retreat houses, two chapels, and a special ministry for training spiritual directors in Denver, said Father Thorpe. "A good number of us also serve as faculty or spiritual directors in seminaries. You can learn more about us online at www.omvusa.org. You can also access some of our founder's writings there and submit requests for prayers through his intercession."

VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK

Consecrated virgin: 'Everything is grace'

By Mary Beth Bracy,
consecrated virgin
Contributing Writer

Before I became a consecrated virgin, I saw an interview Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke - former moderator of the U.S. Association of Consecrated Virgins - gave about the vocation. Asked "What difference would the Consecration make in my life if I already have a promise of perpetual virginity?," he simply replied: "Grace."

At the time, I scratched my head at the brevity of his answer. However, having recently celebrated my six-month anniversary as a consecrated virgin in the world, I better understand the wisdom of the reply, also an echo of my patroness St. Thérèse of Lisieux's words: "*Everything is grace.*"

Those who know me would probably say I am a reserved person, so "going out into the deep" (Luke 5:4) in a public vocation was a big plunge. For instance, before becoming a consecrated virgin, if I was asked to do an interview I would pray about and plan out my responses in detail in advance and ask trusted loved ones to look at my answers. Shortly after becoming a consecrated virgin, I began acting as a spokesperson for the book *I Would Like to Travel the World*, written by Bishop Guy Gaucher. By God's grace - that is His free gift - I've done about 20 radio interviews or podcasts, and a few TV interviews. The Holy Spirit has filled me with courage and guided me to answer questions about this book, my vocation and other topics, often on live programs. "*Everything is grace.*"

Soon after my consecration, a ministry I had

prayed about for several months also began - Friendship Groups. This virtual opportunity has drawn faithful from the North Country and throughout the world together to learn about and discuss spiritual books. Thanks be to God, many have shared how much the group has helped them experience God's mercy and love more deeply in their lives. "*Everything is grace.*"

It is always a blessing to write articles for the *North Country Catholic*, *Catholic Exchange* and other faith publications. Through these forums, I have received interview requests about my vocation, saints I've written about, etc. Before I began working for Sophia Institute Press, I was joking with Darcy Fargo about my dream job and said, "It would be great to get paid to write about the saints full-time." Praise God, the work I do is quite similar and lends itself to living out my vocation. "*Everything is grace.*"

People often ask me, what is the ministry of a consecrated virgin? How is your life different after you become a consecrated virgin? Above all, a consecrated virgin is called to be a sign of the Church's love for Christ. As a Bride of Christ, the heart of who I am is to be "all in," mystically espoused to Jesus. Strong relationships require open communication and frequent time spent with the people we love. Daily Mass and Holy Communion, Adoration, Liturgy of the Hours, prayer, and the Rosary help me foster more fervent love for my Bridegroom. They also afford me the opportunity to, as Bishop LaValley said during my consecration, "pray without ceasing for the salvation

of the world." This vocation and mission are immense gifts. "*Everything is grace.*"

As with all vocations, my life is not meant to be lived in isolation or for myself - it is for the Church and humanity. At my parish, Holy Cross, we are blessed to have recently begun praying the Liturgy of the Hours a few times a week. Additionally, in October, Holy Cross added the recitation of the Rosary before all weekend Masses. Volunteers also passed out vocation prayers to all of the shut-ins in my parish to ask them to pray for vocations and the seminarians in our diocese. Father Kevin (McEwan) encouraged promotion of Eucharistic Adoration in our parish in solidarity with the Eucharistic Congress. It has also been a great joy for me to share with others about the many graces that flow from the weekly Adoration at St. John's.

When I attended the Eucharistic Congress in Auriesville, I was reminded more profoundly of the unity of the Church in its vocations. Praying in the beautiful chapel where the 40 Hours of Eucharistic Adoration was held, I noticed that to the left of the monstrance was

a painting of St. Isaac Jogues. Underneath the painting, text read "The blood of the martyrs," and to the right of the monstrance was a painting of St. Kateri Tekakwitha with the caption "is the seed of Christians." St. Kateri is a model for consecrated virgins and all of us. As Bishop LaValley said in his homily at the Eucharistic Congress, "The Lily of the Mohawks, all our North American Martyrs, the communion of Saints, have shown us what love can do. Their love, their encounter with the Eucharistic Christ empowered their mission mindedness in the face of real opposition. God is love, my sisters and brothers. If we want to know what love is, we've got to know God intimately. I couldn't help but think as the Blessed Sacrament was exposed in front of this high altar before the crucified one ... if you want to know love spend time gazing on the crucified one and the Real Presence in the tabernacle."

Above all, consecrated virginity is a "vocation of love." It's not so much about what or how much we do in terms of ministries, it is about intimate love for God which pours out into the lives of oth-

ers. As I lay prostrate on the church floor during my consecration and the Litany of the Saints was sung, I remember hearing in my heart "You are called, you are chosen." This is the same message God personally speaks to each of our hearts. Resting in the knowledge of how much we are loved and cherished by God, by His grace, we are able to respond through our humble prayers and hidden acts of charity for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

So, why should someone "go out into the deep" and live out a public vocation in the Church? Recently, I felt overwhelmed by practical demands, and I shared this with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration. He replied: "Let me overwhelm you with My love." Overwhelming love and grace are wedding gifts of the Divine Bridegroom. So, with St. Thérèse, we can say: "Because I was little and feeble, Our Lord stooped down to me and lovingly instructed me in the secrets of His love." And, in responding to His divine invitation, we can echo the Little Flower's words: "I thank You, O my God! for all the graces You have granted me." "*Everything is grace.*"



"It is your face, O Lord, that I seek."

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VOCATIONS AWARENESS WEEK

From 'leave me alone' to 'God help me'

By Suzanne Pietropaoli
Staff Writer

Deacon Brent Charland felt very drawn to the priesthood as he grew up serving daily Mass. Decades later, he was taken aback by the call to diaconate.

"My deacon vocation started when I was working, which is when I do my best thinking," he explains. "I definitely felt I was being called. But my conversation with God was: 'Leave me alone.' What good could come of being a deacon? But the nudging didn't stop. It kept getting worse."

With a wife and young kids, he initially wasn't sold on the idea.

"I didn't want any part of this," said Deacon Charland, who serves at St. André Bessette Parish in Malone. "When the idea kept eating at me, I took my wife, Becky, out for dinner and tried to work up the nerve to tell her about this call. When I finally did, she said, 'I know.' What a huge relief! Becky has stood by me my whole life. Now, without knowing what this would involve, she agreed that I should pursue it."

Encouraged by Becky and their children, who he says also knew about his vocation before he did, the future deacon reached out for help discerning this unexpected call, "all the while hoping to be told I was crazy." He first approached his former Malone pastor, Msgr. Dennis Duprey, then Father Joseph Giroux, Malone pastor at that time, as well as his spiritual adviser, Father Martin Cline. "Each time I struck out," the deacon laughs. "All of them affirmed that I should



Deacon Brent & Becky Charland

move forward."

Deacon Charland credits his pastor for helping him through the application process: "Father Joe was great," he said. "He was very supportive, but there was never any pressure. I had total freedom to discern."

The work of discernment continued with two years in the Formation for Ministry program, which the deacon calls "an awesome experience."

"I made good friends and excelled there, which told me I was in the right place," Deacon Charland said. "My prayer changed from 'Leave me alone' to 'God help me!' I prayed that quite a bit through the years of formation."

From Formation for Ministry, he moved on to the diaconate program.

"Deacon training was spot on. It really covered a lot," recalls Deacon Charland. "It was also very challenging. I remember the first weekend our deacon class gathered at Wadhams Hall. I called Becky on the way home to say, 'I can't do this!' They had loaded us with reading

and writing assignments in the very first class – and I didn't even know keyboarding. Doing the University of Notre Dame classes was very daunting. But I learned fast how to keyboard!"

And of course, the aspiring deacon learned many other things as well through four years of intensive study. He even learned more about himself.

"I am not a public speaker but did discover a gift for listening," Deacon Charland said. "The homiletics training was excellent, and by the fourth year I was able to see preaching more as a privilege than a cross. It was great to share the experience with great guys who became friends – all there for the same reason, all from different walks of life!"

Nevertheless, those four years were hard, the deacon recalls. While deacons' wives must consent to their husbands' participation in the program, the reality of it only unfolds with time.

"Becky gave her blessing from the start," her husband says, "but get-

ting into this, you don't really think about all the birthdays, anniversaries, and family events you will miss. It was a bit harder for our kids that I couldn't be at all the 'big doings,' but they were very supportive and knew that 6 p.m. on was my deacon study time."

That is no small feat for someone whose days start at 4:30 a.m. to accommodate his job as director of Maintenance and Cemeteries for St. André Bessette Parish in Malone, a capacity in which he has served Catholic parishes in Malone since 1983.

Those long years of study and preparation came to fruition with ordination to the diaconate in October 2017. Deacon Charland said he recalls telling Father Giroux years before, "I won't change when I become a deacon." But he smiles, "Everything has changed. My prayer life is different – richer, better. I love praying the Divine Office. It is easier now to see the good in people. I listen differently. Even the colors outside are more vibrant. I started this diaconate journey asking God to leave me alone because I didn't think there was room in my life for it. But what I didn't know was how being a deacon would bless my life."

That joy touches the many dimensions of Deacon Charland's ministry at St. André Bessette Parish. Like other deacons, he assists at Mass each Sunday, and preaches every third Sunday.

"I really enjoy preaching," he said. "I pray with the readings all week to prepare for Sunday and things fall into place. I don't know how, but God uses my words to touch

people. I have had people cry during homilies and have received thank you notes and letters. I am honored that God can use me this way, and I always thank people for their compliments. I love to preach on forgiveness! How often I see people struggle because they don't know how to forgive. But forgiveness is so important. It is good for you and pleasing to God."

Unsurprisingly for one who is also a husband, father, and grandfather, Deacon Charland likes being part of weddings and baptisms. Also significant is his work with bereaved families.

"I get all the death notifications and meet with families to prepare funeral liturgies," he said. "It is an absolute privilege to sit with grieving families, to hear their concerns and answer their questions. I assist as deacon at funeral Masses, officiate at funeral home services and offer committal prayers at the cemetery. On that occasion, after the prayers are ended and the mourners have left, I change clothes and do the burial. It is a privilege to bury a person, and it should be done with the greatest care and respect. This is God's son or daughter going home to him, so I still prefer to do this work myself; I have dug more than 4,200 graves in the past 40 years."

Deacon Charland is blessed to see his many works as a privilege.

"For 40 years, I have arisen at 4:30 a.m.," he said. "My feet hit the floor and I can't wait to get to work. People need help, and as long as the good Lord allows, I will do this."

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

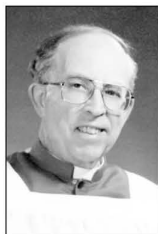
The most precious gift

If God were to give you one wish, what would you ask for? Many of us would ask for riches, while others would ask for health or long life.

In today's first reading, we are told that wisdom is the most precious gift God could give us. Why? Because it will fill our lives with light and radiance to see the best possible route that leads to happiness. Wisdom will prevent us from making foolish and harmful decisions on our journey. Wisdom will give us also

God's special love and protection. In the reading, wisdom is pictured as a woman who will seek us out herself to give us her special gifts. To seek and find wisdom is far better than to win the jackpot!

St. Paul, in the second reading from Thessalonians, urges the new Christians (who thought that the Second Coming of Jesus would come immediately) to be patient and continue to grow in virtue and in all the teaching of the Gospel while they wait. "Console one another



Monsignor Paul E. Whitmore

November 12

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

READINGS

Wisdom 6:12-16

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Matthew 25:1-13

with these words," he concludes.

The whole Gospel advice of Jesus can be summed up in the phrase, "Be alert!" He uses a parable about ten virgins who await the bridegroom. Apparently, the bridegroom is running late. The virgins all carry lamps with which to conduct the bridegroom into the wedding hall. Five of the virgins foolishly

have not enough oil for their lamps. When they rush to the merchants to buy more oil, they miss the bridegroom's return and are locked out.

In the parable, the oil represents the virtue that the other virgins have jealously guarded. The oil also represents a life of wisdom. Jesus gives special urgency, for He and his followers are on their way to Jerusalem where Jesus will be crucified. It certainly is of great importance for us who, like the ten virgins, can grow lax and careless as we await the final judgment. If we have foolishly failed to seek

out wisdom and virtue, we may be shut out of the kingdom at the final judgment.

Today, we need also to pray for wisdom for our leaders who should all work for the common good of our nation. We need to pray for our legislators who should be working for the common good of all. Above all, we need wisdom to bring faith into focus among educators responsible for training our youth in the importance of God in their lives.

We need to be alert for the judgment that awaits all people of the earth when the Bridegroom comes.

CALLED TO SERVE

Picking a road for the journey

If someone asks me to tell them my vocation story, I flippantly respond, "which one?"

A vocation is, by definition, "a strong feeling of suitability for a particular career or occupation." I consider my marriage a vocation, my career in broadcasting a vocation, and certainly my call by God to serve him and the Church as a deacon a vocation.

Since the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops dubbed this National Vocation Awareness Week, I suppose the question is about my church vocation. But I passionately believe all my "vocations" are linked.

The notion gives credence to my belief every experience in life prepares us for today. I would argue the romance with my wife that began in high

school, the prompting of two guys I had never met before to interest me in the radio field in college, the shout to get my attention from my pastor at the time across a parking lot after Mass that led to lay ministry formation were all tied together in God's plan for this creation of his, me.

Our daughter likes to say, "that's my story and I'm sticking with it!" I could not agree more in this case.

My guess is every deacon worldwide has a unique story about his call to the order. Mine is not terribly dramatic. I did not have a St. Paul knocked to the ground by God moment, but it is my story, and I am sticking to it.

I was an altar boy back in the days of the Latin Mass. It was an honor to serve. At that time,

it was ego satisfying too. Nothing pleased me more than to strut into grammar school class carrying my cassock, surplice, gloves, collar, and tie and announce to Sister that I was serving a funeral at 9:15 a.m. and would have to leave class for that assignment around 8:45 a.m. The church was next door. The other kids were jealous.

When I went away to college, I became lazy about Sunday Mass. That means I went sometimes, and sometimes I did not. Missing Sunday Mass is a sin. I did not understand the seriousness of that sin at the time. I do now.

The aforementioned daughter ended my

period of ambivalence about Sunday Mass. Kathy and I recognized the obligations of a Catholic parent, obligations we agreed to at



Deacon Kevin Mastellon

Ticia's baptism, so, among other things, we tried to be in a pew every Sunday and Holy Day. Over time that regimen became more than a habit for us. Attending Mass was, and is, an opportunity to gather with friends, and some people I do not know yet, to collectively worship and thank the God we love.

By the time I was invited to become a Commissioned Lay Minister, I knew the road to the diaconate was an option I would have to pray on soon. You know how that turned out.

As we celebrate National Vocation Week, pray for all the people in your life who are trying to decide what they will be when they grow up. Perhaps they will choose a field to work in, perhaps they will marry, perhaps they will choose to remain single. Perhaps they will seriously consider priesthood or consecrated life. That's wonderful. Maybe a man in your life is considering the diaconate. That's wonderful too!

Pray for everyone choosing a path for their life journey. Celebrate National Vocation Awareness Week.

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

Environmental Stewardship

Life lessons learned from creation

Praying with God's creation is a practice that dates back as far as the Bible itself, i.e. the Book of Psalms and the parables of Jesus.

It can reveal to us the mysteries hidden beneath the surface of life if we take the time to be still and listen. This practice continues through history to our present day. Some examples are: St. Hildegard of Bingen stated, "Glance at the sun. See the moon and the stars. Gaze at the beauty of the Earth's greenings. Now, think. . . . There is the music of Heaven in all things."

In the words of Thomas Merton: "By reading the scriptures I am so renewed that all nature seems renewed around me and with me. The sky seems to be a pure, a cooler blue, the trees a deeper green. The whole world is charged with the glory of God and I feel fire and music under my feet."

In her prayer for Autumn season, author Sister Joyce Rupp

prays with all of creation as she shares the messages they have inspired in her:

"God of Autumn, as trees are saying goodbye to their green, letting go of what has been. We, too, have our moments of surrender with all their insecurity and risk. Help us to let go when we need to. God of geese going south for another season, may Your wisdom enable us to know what needs to be left behind and what needs to be carried into the future. May we yearn for insight and wisdom. God of flowers touched with frost and windows wearing white designs, may your love keep our hearts from the cold in empty seasons."

When Jesus wanted to teach us about the paschal mystery of life we are called to enter into freely, He turned to the cycles in nature found in the grain of wheat.

What have you observed in nature that has taught you a valuable lesson about life?

Bishop's Public Schedule

Nov. 8 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

1 p.m. – Annual Catholic Charities Board of Trustees Meeting at Bishop Conroy School, Ogdensburg

Nov. 9 – 10:30 a.m. – Mass with the Students at Augustinian Academy in Carthage followed by a Veteran's Day Lunch

Nov. 10 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Nov. 12 – 8:30 a.m. – U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Native American Subcommittee Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland

Nov. 13-16 – U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Plenary Meeting in Baltimore

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg

is able to schedule sessions of the training, Protecting God's Children for Adults. To arrange for training, call 315-393-2920 or email jgrizzuto@rcdony.org

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victims Assistance Coordinator, Terrienne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terriannyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: 518-358-3145, Ext. 7179 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.

Rest in Peace

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

Nov. 8 – Rev. Patrick McGilligan, 1828

Nov. 10 – Msgr. Francis M. Kenny, 1952; Msgr. Raphael A. Hoffman, 1968

Nov. 11 – Rev. Edward O. Hervieux, 1947; Msgr. Bernard E. Christman, 2012

Nov. 13 – Rev. S. Alphonse Vollmer, 1931; Rev. Victor Van den Hende, 1939; Most Rev. Francis J. Monaghan, 1942

Nov. 14 – Msgr. Edward Joseph Pierce, 1980

Diocese of Ogdensburg Family Life Office

Helping to build strong families with programs and activities that strengthen family life.

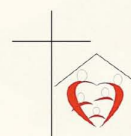
Don't just pray for more priests and religious...pray for faithful, sacramental marriages, because that's where vocations to the priesthood and religious life come from.



Do you want to:

- ◇ Build a marriage that has a less than 3 percent chance of ending in divorce?
- ◇ Learn how you can strengthen your marriage and your family?
- ◇ Know why families fall apart and what you can do to prevent this?
- ◇ Benefit from a network of support with other faithful families in this diocese?

If the answer to any of those questions is yes, contact:



Steve Tartaglia
Director of Family Life
Diocese of Ogdensburg
(315) 393-2920
startaglia@rcdony.org

VIRTUAL EVENTS

ZOOM PRIESTHOOD DISCERNMENT

Are you a single Catholic man who is hearing the Lord's call to the Priesthood? Consider joining others virtually who are listening and seeking to respond.

Date: Nov. 12, Dec. 3, Jan. 28

Time: 4 p.m. to 5

Place: Zoom

Features: High school age men and older are invited to join fellow discerners and Father Howard Venette to discuss this vocation.

Contact: You must register in order to attend, please go to www.rcdony.org/priesthooddiscernment

FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

You are invited to take part in a Friendship Group that will provide you with dynamic reading and personalized formation to grow in holiness with others online.

Date: Nov. 16

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: Zoom

Features Father Mike Warren, OMV will talk with us about the book "Praying with St. Augustine" by Sara Park McLaughlin and answer your questions. For years, there have been no books of St. Augustine's prayers available. Finally, in this treasure trove, you will find select prayers from his works — some of the most potent prayers ever composed. St. Augustine taught that prayer makes you ready to receive God's blessings. As you pray with St. Augustine, be prepared to be blessed!

Contact: To sign up, visit: <https://mailchi.mp/sophiainstitute/friendship-groups>. The book is on sale at www.sophiainstitute.com. For more information, please contact Mary Beth Bracy at mbracy@sophiainstitute.com

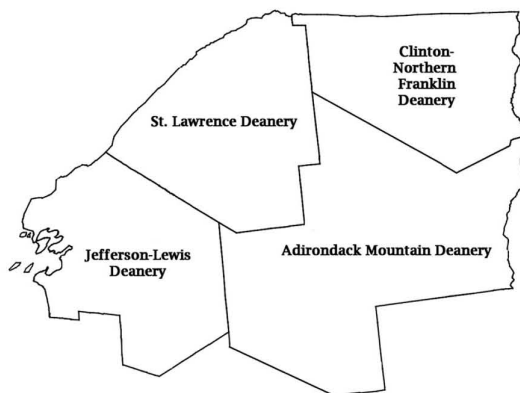
ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Lake Placid — St. Agnes School to have their Annual Christmas Bazaar and Craft Fair.

Date: Dec. 2

Time: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



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

e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

Features: Our annual Christmas Bazaar is a great way to kick off the Christmas season. You can get trees, wreaths, poinsettias, toys, gifts, crafts, baked goods, raffle items, silent auction items and so much more. Vendor space is available.

Contact: For more information please call 518-523-371 or email info@stagnesp.org.

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

CRAFT FAIR

Chazy — Sacred Heart Church to have their Fabulous Fall Craft Fair.

Date: Nov. 11

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

Place: Sacred Heart Parish Center

Features: Great craft festival with a variety of craft vendors. Hot lunches, baked items, silent auction Handicapped Accessible and Free Admission.

Contact: For more info contact Sharon Nephew 518-578-2666.

HARVEST DINNER

Morrisonville — St. Alexander's to have a Take-out only Turkey Harvest Dinner.

Date: Nov. 12

Time: 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Cost: \$14

Features: Curb side pick up at the church or delivery within 10 minutes. Raffles and Bake shop will be available at the door.

COMPASSIONATE COMPANIONS

Plattsburgh — Volunteer Training to be held.

Date: Nov. 14

Time: 8:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Place: St. Joseph's Community Outreach Center

Features: If you would like to offer the gift of companionship, mercy, and friendship to older adults who are isolated and lonely, become a Compassionate Companion! Light refreshments will be available.

Contact: To learn more or to register for the training please contact Starr at St. Joseph's Community Outreach Center, 518-825-0697, Starr@stalexanders.org

HEALING MASS

Dannemora — Healing Mass to be held in celebration of the mighty presence of our God.

Date: Nov. 14

Time: 6 p.m.

Place: St. Joseph's Church

Features: Sacrament of Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Eucharist at Mass. Prayer teams will be available for those who would like additional prayer after Mass.

MICHIGAN DINNER

Peru — St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus Council 7273 is serving a take-out-only michigan dinner.

Date: Nov. 18

Time: 4 p.m. to 6

Place: St. Augustine's Parish Center

Cost: Two Michigan's, \$10; One Michigan, \$7 (also includes baked beans, chips, drinks and dessert)

Features: Proceeds will help the knights donate to local organizations and charitable programs. All are welcome!

ADORATION

Plattsburgh — Adoration to be held weekly.

Date: Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

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

Place: St. John's in the Holy Family Basement

Features: Come to an out of the way place and rest awhile in Jesus' Presence. Experience His healing power, grace, love and mercy for yourselves and loved ones. Pray for the sick, suffering, vocations, our priests, country and peace in the world.

Contact: For more information, to become a substitute or to sign up for an hour, please contact 518-563-3773.

HOUSE SITTERS

Ellenburg Center — Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer is looking for many Volunteer "House Sitters".

Time: The responsibility is to arrive by 10 a.m. on your chosen day(s) and remain on premises until 4 p.m. to welcome visitors.

Features: Lunch and snack items on hand along with tea, coffee, soda, and bottled water. Training will be provided on the history of the House of Prayer, its mission, and the various ways to carry out this gentle ministry of hospitality for those seeking time in a home of Mary to listen to our Lord, browse in the library, or visit the "Gift Shop". Flexible schedule (and hours) are fine.

Contact: If interested in volunteering for one day a month, or week, or more, please call Sarah Anderson at 518-534-9976.

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

Evans Mills — The Indian River Council 7471 Knights of Columbus will be having a spaghetti & meatball dinner.

Date: Nov. 11

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center

Cost: Adults, \$9; Seniors, \$8; Children 12 and under, \$5; under 5, Free

Contact: For more information call 315-629-4678

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Carthage — Pancake Breakfast to be held to benefit Augustinian Academy.

Date: Nov. 12

Time: 8 a.m. to Noon

Place: St. James Community Room

Cost: Adults, \$9; Seniors, \$7; Children under 10, \$4; Family of 4 or more, \$27

Features: Event is sponsored by the Carthage K of C and Ave Maria Circle.

FALL FUNDRAISER

Copenhagen — St. Mary's Church to have their Fall Fundraiser Raffle.

Date: Drawing to be held Nov. 19

Cost: Tickets are \$10 each or 6 for \$50

Features: Prizes to be won are one \$500 Cash, Quilt (\$300 Value), Afghan (\$100 Value), Gift Card Tree (\$400 Value), Bird House (\$250 Value), Folding Picnic Table (\$100 Value), Lottery Tree (\$100 Value), Bear Carving Table (\$250 Value), Fire Pit (\$200 Value), \$250 Gift Certificate Lucky Leaf Beef, Hand Carved Welcome Sign, (\$100 Value), Fall Basket (\$100 Value), Christmas Basket (\$100 Value). Must be 18 years or older to purchase.

Contact: For tickets make checks payable to St. Mary's Church and mail to: Mary Jane Fleming, PO Box 103, Copenhagen, NY 13626 or Marcia Mundy, PO Box 303, Copenhagen, NY 13626

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'The Chosen' to offer Christmas special

By Francesca Pollio Fenton
Catholic News Agency

On Nov. 1 the hit Christian series "The Chosen" released the trailer to its upcoming Christmas special, one that will be shown exclusively in theaters Dec. 12-17.

"Christmas with The Chosen: Holy Night" weaves "The Messengers," a Christmas special depicting the story of Jesus' birth, and "The Shepherd," the pilot episode of "The Chosen," into one remastered and re-scored story.

The new special tells the story of Jesus' birth through the eyes of a young mother labeled

impure and a shepherd boy considered "unclean." It also includes a never-before-seen performance from Italian singers Andrea and Matteo Bocelli.

Other performers include Matt Maher, Brandon Lake, Zach Williams, One Voice Children's Choir, Joy to the World, and the Bonner Family.

Tickets go on sale in the U.S. and Canada on Nov. 20.

Dallas Jenkins, creator, director, and co-writer of "The Chosen," told CNA in an interview that the new special "turned out better than we expected."

"We didn't know it was going to work. We thought it might be clunky and then it turned

out beautifully," he said.

"Even though the crew was different and the setting is different and the sets are all different and we had different levels of resources to work with, the story itself blended together beautifully."

"We also took six of the performances from the first two specials that were the most resonant with viewers, we put them into this," Jenkins said. "And we also have an exclusive performance from Andrea Bocelli, of all people, who's one of the most beautiful voices in the history of the world, who performed 'O Holy Night' in Italy for this Christmas special."

Jenkins urged fans to see it in theaters as "it's a really beautiful experience." He said he hopes it will "tide people over until Season 4."

Originally begun as a crowd-funded project, "The Chosen" is one of the most-watched shows in the world. It has reached more than 600 million combined episode views and has more than 10 million followers on social media.

It is also on its way to becoming the most-translated series in history, according to its creators; the first three seasons will soon be available in 50 languages with plans to subtitle in more than 600.

Around the diocese

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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: Dec. 2

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

ST. LAWRENCE

CATHOLIC PARENTING

Potsdam - A series of workshops from the Franciscan University Catechetical Institute to be held on Catholic Parenting.

Date: First Sunday of the month from Oct. to April

Place: St. Mary's Rectory, second floor

Features: Attend all or only those that interest you. Child care can be provided. Event is free.

Contact: For more information contact Mike Neaton at 315-335-6302 or Liz Tarbox at formation-stp@gmail.com

FISH FRY DINNER

Ogdensburg - Fish Fry dinners are back at the Knights of Columbus.

Date: Nov. 10 and 17

Cost: Single Serve, \$13; All you can eat, \$16

Features: Dinner choices include fried haddock, mac and cheese, french fries, chicken nuggets, baked haddock (need 30 minutes notice), coleslaw, baked potato and roll.

PARISH BAZAAR

Massena - St. Peter's Parish to have a bazaar.

Date: Nov. 11

Time: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Social Hall
Features: Win \$2500 in Big Money Raffle. Come enjoy some delicious fried bread dough as well as other great food from the concession all day! Ticket Central, Turkey Raffles, Pull Tabs, 50/50, Skilo, Quilt Raffle, Country Store, Cake Walk, Children's Games and Activities and religious Items. Free admission.

Contact: For more information call St Peter's Parish Office 315-769-2469

MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

Date: Nov. 12 (Second Sunday of each month)

Time: 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Place: Father Amyot Parish Center

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

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

BINGO

Canton - The Knights of Columbus will be holding BINGO.

Date: Nov. 6, 13, 20 and 27

Time: Doors open at 4:30 p.m., First call at 7 p.m.

Place: 30 Miner Street

Cost: Admission is \$5 at the door

FALL BAZAAR

Waddington - St. Mary's Family Circle Fall Festival and Bazaar to be held.

Date: Nov. 18

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

Place: St. Mary's Parish Center
Features: There will be a crafters/vendors, silent auction, bake sale, and lunch will be available as well. **Contact:** For more information, contact the parish at 315-388-4466

ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

Ogdensburg - The Legion of Mary

will pray the rosary with devotions for First Saturday.

Date: Dec. 2

Time: 8 a.m.

Place: Notre Dame Church, Ogdensburg

Features: Rosary with devotions

MEN'S PRAYER GROUP

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

Date: Dec. 2

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

Place: St. Mary's Church

TRIVIA NIGHT

Canton - St. Mary's to have a Trivia Night for those 21 years and older.

Date: Dec. 9

Time: Doors open at 5:30 p.m., Trivia starts at 6 p.m.

Place: Parish Center

Cost: \$20 per person, includes 2 alcoholic beverages (beer or wine), 2 Slices of Pizza, popcorn & chips. Non-alcoholic beverages included.

Features: Childcare will be provided. Teams of 4-6 Players, Single players welcome and will be placed with a team. Door prizes and grand prize!

Contact: Call 315-386-2543 for more info or to sign your team up or visit www.cantoncatholics.com/trivia

MEAL DRIVERS NEEDED

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

Features: These drivers deliver hot, nutritious meals to older adults. Many are homebound and receive lunch Monday through Friday. A critical component of this program is the daily wellness check. Drivers receive mileage reimbursement. Deliveries take place between 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. Routes can be between one and two hours. You can volunteer for one day a week or several.

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



CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Pope Francis to attend climate change conference in Dubai

Pope Francis said in an Italian television interview on Wednesday that he intends to travel to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, for the COP28 climate change conference in early December. "I believe I depart on the 1st [of December] and stay until the 3rd. I'll be there three days," the pope said on the Italian state television network RAI in an interview broadcast on the evening of Nov. 1. Francis did not provide further details on the schedule of the trip, which was officially announced by the Vatican on Nov. 3. The pope met the president-designate of COP28 UAE, Sultan Al Jaber, at the Vatican in mid-October. The climate change summit will take place at the Expo City Dubai Nov. 30–Dec. 12. The United Nations annual climate change conference, known as the "Conference of the Parties" (COP), includes governments that have signed the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, and/or the Paris Agreement. The summit is an opportunity for world leaders, representing state and nonstate actors, to meet and discuss policy goals that seek to establish common goals for climate change mitigation.

Bishops say Catholic Church in Ukraine facing extermination

The Catholic Church in Ukraine will face extermination if the Russian invasion is successful, leading Ukrainian Catholic bishops told CNA this week. The bishops spoke with CNA after a panel discussion of Ukrainian faith leaders titled "Faith Under Fire in Russia's War on Ukraine" hosted by the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C., on Monday. Though Ukraine is majority Eastern Orthodox, there are nearly 5 million Catholics in the country, according to a 2019 State Department study. The bishops said that the Church in Ukraine could be facing severe repression and may once again be forced underground as in the days of the Soviet Union. Archbishop Borys Gudziak, the head of the Ukrainian Archeparchy of Philadelphia, told CNA that there "are many, many Catholics that are dying every day" and that "the danger for Catholics is particular in Ukraine." Under Russian occupation, Gudziak said that the Church "is eliminated as a visible body."

UNICEF director warns of looming 'catastrophe' in Gaza

The director of the United Nations Children's Fund warned this week of a looming humanitarian disaster in Gaza as clean drinking water supplies reportedly dwindle to dangerously low levels there. Catherine Russell, the executive director of UNICEF, said in a briefing to the U.N. Security Council on Monday that the "devastating tally" of the week-long Israel-Hamas war is "quickly adding up," particularly among children, "over 3,400" of whom have been killed in Gaza so far, she said. On Oct. 20, the Catholic humanitarian group Aid to the Church in Need similarly warned of the looming "devastation" facing civilians caught in the conflict. After being attacked by Hamas on Oct. 7, resulting in the deaths of some 1,400 Israelis, Israel has waged a war in Gaza against Hamas' military forces. The Gaza Health Ministry says more than 8,000 people have been killed in Gaza, though that tally has not been verified.

U.S. Bishops: Proposed workplace guidance is a 'chill' to free speech

By Joe Bukuras
Catholic News Agency

The U.S. Catholic bishops told the Biden administration last week that its newly proposed guidance on sex-based harassment in the workplace is unconstitutional because it bans speech opposing abortion and expressing certain views on contraception, same-sex relationships, and gender identity.

The proposed guidance advises "sex-based harassment ... also can include harassment based on a woman's reproductive decisions, such as decisions about contraception or abortion."

Additionally, it says that "sex-based harassment includes harassment on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, including how that identity is expressed."

The U.S. bishops' Office of the General Counsel said in an Oct. 27 letter to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the agency that proposed the guidance, that the proposed guidance would "chill" free speech.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is an agency charged with enforcing federal nondiscrimination regulations and laws, such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination against employees and applicants based on race, color, religion, sex, and national origin.

"We believe that reading Title VII to chill or prohibit speech that upholds the sanctity of life, the nature of conjugal relationships, or the created, bodily reality of human beings is not supported by the text of Title VII and likely runs afoul of constitutional rights of speech, expressive association, and religious exercise," the letter said.

Abortion

The bishops' letter acknowledges that Title VII forbids workplace harassment and discrimination based on sex but adds that talking about one's opposition to abortion should not be forbidden because "it is not based on sex."

The letter from the general counsel cites the 1993 Supreme Court decision in *Bray v. Alexandria Women's Health Clinic*, which ultimately decided that pro-life demonstrators who obstructed access to abortion clinics didn't violate the civil rights of women seeking an

abortion.

"As the court pointed out, sex-based discrimination 'demand[s] ... at least a purpose that focuses upon women by 'reason of their sex,' and opposition to abortion is not by reason of an individual's sex," the letter said.

The letter said that the opinion in *Bray*, which was written by Justice Antonin Scalia, "rejected the notion that opposition to abortion functions as a proxy or surrogate for sex-based discrimination."

Referencing the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, the letter said: "It is inconceivable that our nation's highest court, having just recently held that the Constitution does not enshrine a right to an abortion, would now interpret Title VII to forbid or chill workplace speech on this subject."

Contraception

The bishops' letter said that federal courts on the lower levels are "divided" on the question of whether Title VII's protections against sex-based discrimination include an individual's contraceptive use.

However, it went on to say that the only appellate level court to rule on the issue has said that contraceptives are not protected under sex-based discrimination in Title VII, citing *In re Union Pacific Railroad Employment Practices Litigation* from the 8th Circuit.

In that 2007 case, the court held that a Nebraska company that didn't include prescription contraceptive coverage was not in violation of discrimination under Title VII.

The letter said that "workplace speech opposing artificial contraception, like speech opposing abortion, is not based on sex and therefore does not constitute sexual harassment under Title VII."

"As it happens, both men and women may practice or refrain from practicing artificial means of preventing conception, whether temporarily (including through the use of condoms) or permanently (sterilization), further undermining the claim that opposition to artificial contraceptives is based on sex," the letter said.

Additionally, the letter said that forbidding workplace speech opposing contraceptives would pose the same constitutional issues as with abortion.

'Channel of God's goodness'

"We live on the 'frontiers of the Gospel' in Gode, a place where the vast majority of the population is Muslim; there is a small presence of Orthodox and Evangelical communities, and a tiny presence of the Catholic Church in our mission of seven missionaries, three of whom are volunteers," said Sister Joaquin Brown, who lives and works as a missionary in the Somali region of Ethiopia, in a report to Fides on the visit of the Apostolic Nuncio of Ethiopia and Djibouti, Archbishop Antoine Camilleri, in the small Catholic community. "Through the nuncio's short visit here in Ethiopia, we experienced the special attention of the Church," writes the missionary. "Normally the Prefect of the local Church, Father Angelo Antolini, OFM cap., visits us every two weeks to celebrate Holy Mass and



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith
Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296
mbrett@rcdony.org

help us in our mission of making Christ present both through our work with vulnerable women and their children, and the work of transforming our desert through growing fruit and vegetables to make us more self-sustaining."

"For various reasons," the missionary continued, Father Angelo had to be absent, a priest who had kindly offered to come for a few days had a death in the family, and without any replacement we ended up having no Mass for more than a month. Therefore, Archbishop Camilleri's presence - even if it was brief - was particularly import-

ant for us and helped us to feel the closeness of the universal Church."

"To reach us," emphasizes the missionary, "the Nuncio braved the plague of insects and beetles that had arrived with the rains, which we had hoped would fall since we had had very little rain until then. And so we received both natural rain and supernatural grace at the same time: Holy Mass, homilies on the Word of God, and the possibility of confession... We had the gift of hearing again the proclamation of the life of the Church in different places, of being comforted with the news of the

latest Apostolic Letter of the Holy Father on St Therese of Lisieux."

"Once Nunzio Camilleri left" continues the missionary, "we returned to some of the practical challenges that were brought on by the welcomed rainfall. It is usual that when rain falls heavily, as it did for a few days, the local electricity from the town cuts out, and whilst we have a generator, the high cost of petrol means that we have to be careful, and anyway it can't substitute all our electrical needs, one of which is to be able to pump water for our needs and to be able to pump 20,000 liters of water a day for our neighbors in the prison!"

"In the next few days, during the ongoing repairs," adds Sister Joaquin "we found a 'flood of needs' on our doorstep: people in desperate need of help. One of whom

was a mother of newborn twins, whom we were taken to see in a forlorn little hut on the outskirts of the town where the rubbish is thrown. Her five other children had not eaten that day, when we arrived at four o'clock in the afternoon. We were able to share with two families food we had in our house, and then take the mother and her husband, with the newborn boys to the hospital." [...]

"In the mission in Gode," Sister Joaquin continues, "we are aware of the great privilege to be part of the mission of first evangelization entrusted to us by the Lord, His presence in the Church, made tangible for us through our shepherds, strengthens and encourages us not only to continue, but to 'go further!'" *Article from FIDES missionary news service of the Pontifical Mission Societies.*

OBITUARIES

Cadyville – Donna A. (McCormick) Moody, 76; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 2, 2023 at St. James Church; burial in Plattsburgh Community Mausoleum.

Carthage – Ruth M. (Slye) Gyurko, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 30, 2023 at St. James Church; burial in Hillside Cemetery, Natural Bridge.

Clayton – Catherine A. (Pietropaoli) Heaslip, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 4, 2023 at St. Mary's Church.

Heuvelton – Erma L. Lytle, 98; Graveside Services Nov. 2, 2023 at Hillcrest Cemetery.

Indian Lake – Jane E. (Mahoney) Locke, 68; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 31, 2023 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Cedar River Cemetery.

Lowville – Kathleen A. Baker, 59; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 31, 2023 at St. Peter's Church; burial in family cemetery, Montague.

Lowville – Calvin L. Farney, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 3, 2023 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Apostolic Christian Cemetery.

Malone – Diana M. (Burdash) Prairie, 82; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 31, 2023 at Notre Dame Church; burial in St. John Bosco Cemetery.

Massena – Gail "Nancy" (Billingham) Carbone, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 1, 2023 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Stella J. (Baxter) Jessmer, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 30, 2023 at Church of

the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Paul Henry King, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 30, 2023 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Moers Forks – Beatrice Florence (Brassard) LaValley, 96; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 4, 2023 at St. Ann's Church; burial in St. Ann's Cemetery.

Morrisonville – Edwin Hewitt, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 6, 2023 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in Riverside Cemetery, Plattsburgh.

Ogdensburg – Barbara Anne Dwyer, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 7, 2023 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Daniel Ross, 73; Funeral Services Nov. 1, 2023 at Frary Funeral Home; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Patricia Grace (Newton) Wells, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 2, 2023 at Notre Dame Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Peru – Beverly Grace (Graves) Uliva, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 30, 2023 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Rouses Point – Bernard T. Duffy, 96; Mass of Christian Burial Oct. 28, 2023 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Saranac Lake – Jeanne Kelly Hart, 97; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 2, 2023 at St. Bernard's

Church; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Saranac Lake – Rita F. Sageman Madden, 98; Mass of Christian Burial in spring at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Bernard's Cemetery.

Star Lake – Daniel M. Szewczyk, 72; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 2, 2023 at St. Hubert's Church; burial in St. Michael's Cemetery.

Ticonderoga – John P. Kolarich, Jr., 77; Private services to be held.

Watertown – Lisa A. Lavarney, 54; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 3, 2023 at Holy Family Church.

West Chazy – Phyllis S. (Gonyea) Lushia, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Nov. 6, 2023 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

WE SHARE THE BURDEN

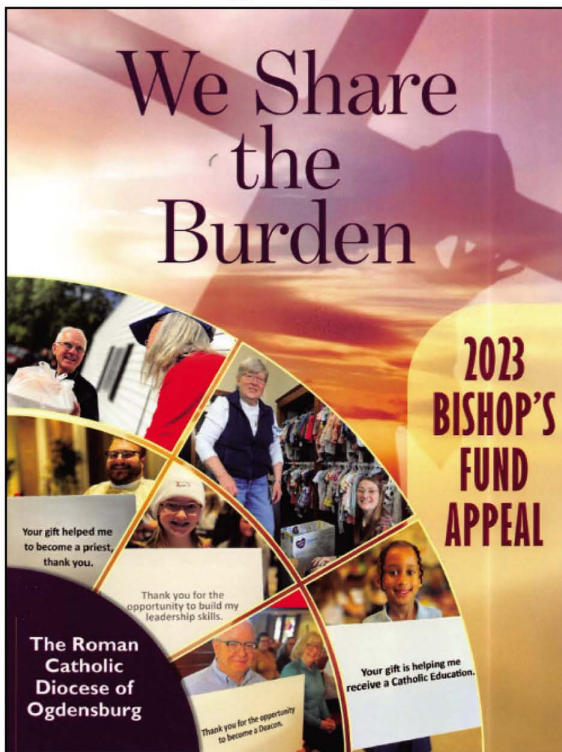
Bishop's Fund helps provide support for couples

By Suzanne Pietropaoli
Natural Family Planning Office

It is awe-inspiring to be a part, however small, of another person's journey of faith. Received as a gift of grace, faith calls us to return the love God gives us and in turn share it with others. Thus, faith opens us to new ways of living the love He has shared with us. Our work in the Natural Family Planning Office focuses specifically on what this means for those called to the vocation of marriage.

In his excellent pastoral letter for NFP Awareness Week 2023, "In harmony with God's design," Bishop LaValley deftly addresses this question. "The Church teaches that the sacrament of marriage symbolizes Christ's relationship with His Church. It's a relationship of generous, self-sacrificing, passion-filled, and fruitful love. Today the Church's teachings regarding sexuality meet aggressive resistance. Many consider her teaching regarding artificial contraception to be outdated, unrealistic, or too burdensome... Responsible parenthood asks couples to discern God's will in their lives and to live in harmony with God's design through natural means of family planning."

Across a variety of forums, the NFP Office proposes and explains these truths which sound so strange in a



culture devoid of God and devoted to the self. More often than not, this is the first time those listening have ever heard the beauty of God's plan for married love. This is especially true in Pre-Canas and other marriage preparation settings, where God's ways seem alien to young people unaccustomed to considering things in the light of faith. So, in those venues, we begin with the truth of the human person first revealed in Genesis: That we are created male and female in God's image. Made in God's image, we are called to love as He loves: freely, totally, permanently, and fruitfully.

This truth encompasses the commitment that couples make in their wedding vows - that, like Christ on the cross,

each is willing to lay down his/her life for the beloved. This mystery only makes sense in the light of faith and is only possible with God's grace; that is why marriage is a sacrament. And that is why it is vital couples preparing to be married in the Church understand what they are choosing. As Bishop LaValley writes, "... Spouses freely commit to... a love that is fully human, respecting God's design for marriage and sexuality... While society insists that artificial means to avoid pregnancy are morally neutral, our faith teaches us that it is the whole person and the whole mission to which he and she are called that must be considered, both its natural, earthly aspects and its supernatural aspects."

For this reason, our presentations to those preparing for marriage begin with this framework of faith and of God's design, using St. John Paul II's Theology of the Body as guide. From there we move into the biology of Natural Family Planning. NFP is actually VERY good news: healthy, holistic, highly effective. No drugs, no devices, no surgeries, no harmful side effects. Just the intricate perfection of human fertility and its "readability." The cyclical alternation of fertile and infertile times can be readily observed and, when accurately charted, empowers couples to reliably plan their families. Modern NFP methods are 99% effective - as effective as "the pill," but without any of its health hazards. Unlike contraception, NFP accepts the human person as created by God, respects the bodies of both husband and wife, honors both the love-giving and life-giving meanings of sexual union, and views children as the great gift of a loving God. And unlike contraception, NFP can also be used to achieve pregnancy. This fact makes it true family planning.

Other opportunities include outreach to parishes each July during the USCCB-sponsored National NFP Awareness Week. In addition to the USCCB posters which we supply to all parishes, we utilize church bulletins and send various informational materials for church book racks. Each year we supply an NFP ad and articles for the marriage issue of

the *North Country Catholic*, as we do for the NFP Week edition in July.

Another blessed part of our work has been to participate, with Family Life Director Steven Tartaglia and Deacon John and Dr. Maura Fehlner, in LOVING AUTHENTICALLY. This one-day program focuses on understanding Catholic sexual teaching from the perspective of Natural Law and the nature of happiness. It also explores the damage done, particularly to women, by fallout from the sexual revolution and proposes a way forward via Theology of the Body, rooted in our identity and our destiny as beloved sons and daughters of God. Participants from around the diocese expressed their gratitude for this opportunity to understand how their lives, and those of their children and grandchildren, have been harmed by the cultural misunderstandings of sex and marriage. To them, the teachings of the Church make sense at last.

To learn more about Natural Family Planning methods, including online and in-person classes, please visit the NFP Office website: www.rcdony.org/nfp. We also welcome your questions. Email : apietropaoli@rcdony.org or phone 518-483-0459.

Through the generosity of the many people who support the Bishop's Fund, we are blessed to share in this work which seeks to strengthen faith and family. To Bishop LaValley, and to all who support the Bishop's Fund: Thank you! God bless you.

