

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Funeral celebrated for Sister Cathering Cummings | Page 5

Collection supports 50 retired priests | Page 7

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 78 Number 32

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

DECEMBER 20, 2023

MERRY CHRISTMAS



Knights of Columbus Father John Cosmic Carthage Council sponsored this billboard on Route 3 in Carthage to remind those who see it to keep Christ in Christmas. See Bishop Terry R. LaValley's Christmas message on Page 3.

MORE PARISHES EVANGELIZING WITH ALPHA



Candles are lit and resolutions made at the concluding session of St. Agnes parish's Alpha "day away" held at Paul Smith's College visitor interpretive center in the fall. The Lake Placid parish has been offering the Alpha course on the basics of Christianity since 2022 and is one of several parishes using the program in their evangelization and faith formation efforts, including St. Peter's Parish in Massena and the Cathedral Parish in Ogdensburg.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

Pope: Be open to the word of God, service

By Matthew Santucci
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis on Wednesday closed his catechetical series on apostolic zeal, delivered during his recent general audiences, by noting that the attitude of being open is a duty for every Christian and a precondition for authentically announcing the Gospel.

"The Christian must be open to the Word of God and to the service of others," the pope said during the audience. He went on to juxtapose this notion of openness with a mentality of "closure," noting that the latter contradicts the central message of the Gospel and allows for people to fall into ideological

ways of thinking.

"Closed Christians always end up badly, because they are not Christians, they are ideologues, ideologues of closure," the pope said.

The pope highlighted this openness by pointing to the Gospel of Mark when Jesus performs the miracle of healing a deaf-mute man, using "the decisive word" of "effatà," which the Holy Father noted means "open up" in Aramaic.

"And for this reason, this effatà, this 'open up,' is an invitation to all of us to open up," he continued.

While acknowledging the condition of "physical deafness," the pope noted that in the biblical context it assumes a met-

aphorical character, conveying that "one who is deaf to the word of God is mute, who does not communicate the word of God."

Pointing out that it is Jesus "who is capable of opening his ears and mouth," the pope noted that this mandate to be open in evangelizing comes for all Christians at the moment of baptism when the priest, "touching the ears and lips of the baptized person," says: "May the Lord Jesus, who made the deaf hear and the mute speak, grant you to quickly listen to his word and profess your faith."

"We too, who have received the effatà of the Spirit in baptism, are called to open ourselves. 'Open yourself,' says

Jesus to every believer and to his Church: Open yourself because the message of the Gospel needs you to be witnessed and announced," Francis continued.

The Holy Father closed his remarks by suggesting that before becoming a witness to the Gospel, it is critical to have a moment of reflection and ask ourselves a series of key questions.

"Do I really love the Lord, to the point of wanting to announce him? Do I want to become his witness or am I content with being his disciple? Do I take the people I meet to heart, do I bring them to Jesus in prayer? Do I want to do something so that the joy of the Gospel, which has transformed my life, makes their lives more beautiful?"

NORTH
COUNTRY
CATHOLIC

PO Box 326

Ogdensburg, NY 13669
USPS 0039-3400**Bishop Terry****R. LaValley**

President

Rev. Joseph A. Morgan

Vice President

James d. Crowley

Secretary-Treasurer

Darcy L. Fargo

Editor &

Communications Director



Publish

45 issues

per year:

Weekly except

skipping every

other week be-

ginning July through August

and skipping one week in

December by the

Diocese of Ogdensburg.

622 Washington Street,

Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

Editorial Office:

622 Washington Street,

Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.

Telephone:

(315) 608-7556

E-mail:news@northcountry
catholic.org**Entered at the****Post Office:**Ogdensburg, NY
13669 and additional mailing
offices as
Periodical Postage.**Subscription:****For one year:**In-Diocese Rate: \$27
Outside of Diocese Rate: \$30Matters for publication
should be addressed to

PO Box 326

Ogdensburg, NY 13669

and should be received by

Wednesday prior to

publication. Paper is

printed each Friday;

dateline is Wednesday.

Member, Catholic

Press Association.

POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to

North Country Catholic,

PO Box 326

Ogdensburg, NY

13669-0326

The struggles are why I celebrate

"Is everyone riding the struggle bus right now?"

I posed that question to a close friend recently.

I think this time of year can be challenging for many people. Approaching Christmas, it's easy to dwell on thoughts of the loved ones who won't be joining us around the tree this year. It's stressful trying to complete all the shopping, wrapping, cooking, cleaning... that often accompany celebrations of the holiday, and everything is more expensive than it was in years past.

Those difficulties particular to this time of year are in addition to regular life struggles, and some



Darcy L. Fargo

people have a lot of them. I know many people struggling to obtain or maintain good physical, mental and spiritual health, struggling in relationships, struggling financially...

I know a lot of people who are struggling. I'm not exempt. I have my struggles. I'm fairly certain no one is exempt. We all struggle. It's part of our humanity.

I sat down recently and took a few minutes to try

to figure out what I could drop from my calendar and what burdens I could make lighter by asking for a bit of help from my family, friends and colleagues.

I thought, "how am I even supposed to think about preparing for Christmas spiritually - preparing to celebrate the birth of our Savior - when I have all this to manage?"

It struck me like a ton of bricks. The struggles - the human condition - are exactly why I celebrate.

God - the embodiment of perfection and love - chose to take on this human condition. He chose to take on the struggles - including pain and grief - to save us from our strug-

gles for eternity.

That's powerful love. That's love beyond understanding.

That's something to sit with as I prepare to celebrate the moment it happened. That's an incredible gift from an incredible God.

Speaking of incredible gifts, you, the readers of this newspaper, are gifts in my life. I sincerely appreciate your kind words, your prayers, your constructive feedback and your support of the North Country Catholic this year.

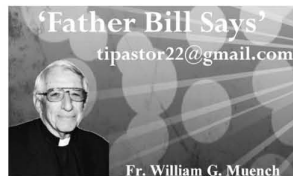
Merry Christmas! I pray we all remember God's love and find peace and joy in it this Christmas, even through the struggles.

I wish you all the joy of Christmas

Happy Christmas to you and your family. I wish you all the joy of Christmas, the love and peace of our God, as we celebrate the birth of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I will remember you and your family in my Christmas Masses. I do ask that you keep me in your prayers.

Today, I would like to take a moment to remember my friend, Msgr. Paul Whitmore, who died recently. When I think of Father Paul, I remember an excellent professor and then an excellent pastor at several North Country parishes. Father Paul was always a dedicated, holy priest.

When I first became a pastor myself, Father Paul was teaching at Wadhams Hall. He would come down to my parish on weekends to assist. In addition, we were collaborators here at the North Country Catholic. It was very special for us



both that we were able to write for the paper. So, I hope you will join me in remembering and praying for Father Paul. My prayer is a prayer of gratitude for his ministry as a priest of the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

And now I would like to add a Christmas message as we all prepare to celebrate again the birth of Jesus. Each time I read the Gospel story, I wonder who else was there at the time of the Lord's birth. I know there must have been some other people there to assist Mary and support Joseph. Personally, I have no idea who was there at my birth and supported my mother and father. I am certain you remember that I of-

ten write and talk about that special day when I was invited by Susan and Paul to be with them at St. Joseph's Hospital for the birth of their second child, Will. I have told this story several thousand times. It was truly the most exciting day of my life. I thank God for that day; it has become my Christmas story.

I often see that child, now a 25-year-old man. Each time I do, I am reminded and I remind him that I was there when he began his life journey. I am certain that this gives us a closeness with each other. It is a relationship that is important to me, so I will always continue telling the story - my Christmas story.

Each Christmas, the Masses I offer are very special opportunities; these Masses are a real celebration we are honoring the coming to this world of Our Savior, Je-

sus, to be one of us, coming to bring his message of love and peace to us and for us. We became a blessed people. Jesus, the Son of God, was one of us, like us in every way. This race of ours is a sacred race. Jesus, the son of God, was one of us. So, we must be a dedicated people, called to live as a sacred people. Jesus was one of us.

Christmas reminds us of the Lord's message each year and his challenge for us. We can and must make a difference in this world - our world and the Lord's world. And with Jesus we can accomplish this.

God surrounds us with a peaceful winter beauty when all Creation shares in celebrating the birth of Christ. His love and light fill us so we can shine in the world, serving him as we pray for peace. I want to wish you all the joy of Christmas.

FOLLOW ME

'A time of renewed hope and grace'

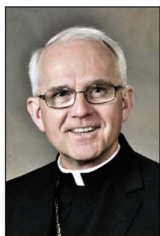
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Peace Be with You! These words of greeting that we hear at every Mass are the first words that Jesus spoke to His disciples in Jerusalem when He appeared to them after His resurrection from the dead (Luke 24:36). Yes, our risen Lord, whose birth we now celebrate desires peace and unity among us.

Still another Christmas is upon us where we find our fractured world far from peace. Hopes for genuine reconciliation on the global scene seem so remote. Our nation-

al leaders become entrenched in their ideologies and our divided nation continues to limp badly. Many of us, particularly during the holidays, are painfully aware of fractures and division within our own families.

Enduring peace is a fruit of faith. Peace is communion with God. Through our own earnest efforts to grow in our relationship with Christ during this time of Eucharistic Renewal, we can become peacemakers who inspire others by our



Bishop Terry R. LaValley

example. Such efforts might include: daily recitation of the Rosary; spending a Holy Hour of Adoration each week before the Blessed Sacrament for the innocent victims of violence; celebrating the Sacrament of Penance and seeking forgiveness for personal sins that work against peace and unity; making Fridays a day of Penance for Peace by abstaining from meat; taking the time to become more knowledgeable about those who suffer oppression;

or including in your prayer intentions at Mass, a special petition for peace and healing in our families.

Our Church has a rich treasury from which we can draw to help us work toward a lasting peace.

I pray that you and your family will avail yourselves of these treasures of our Church and make Christmas 2023 a time of renewed hope and grace.

May the Prince of Peace lead you and your loved ones along the path of peace. With outstretched arms from the manger and then later from the Cross, God reaches

out to us in peace and wants us to reach out to one another. Peace is God's gift to us; our gift to God is to make peace with one another. Let us join the angels in song: "Glory to God in the highest and peace to His people on earth!"

A blessed Christmas and peace-filled New Year to you and your family!

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend
Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

Christmas Peace to All

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

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

Wishing you and your families a Blessed Christmas!



Saint Lawrence Society

The Permanent Deacons of the Diocese of Ogdensburg



More parishes evangelizing with 'Alpha'

By Keith Benman
Contributing Writer

An evangelization effort described as “a gentle on-ramp” to Christianity has drawn increasing interest from parishes in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

The “Alpha” course in basic Christianity was offered for the first time at St. Mary’s Cathedral parish in Ogdensburg this fall. About 15 people went through the Alpha course held at Brzana Hall, according to Amy Schirmer, parish evangelization committee chair.

She brought Alpha to St. Mary’s after seeing its success at other churches.

“What’s made me a fan of Alpha from the very beginning is it gets people talking about who Jesus is, and seeing him in their lives and work, and talking about him,” Schirmer said.

The basic format for each Alpha session consists of a communal dinner, an Alpha video covering one core aspect of Christian belief, and a half hour or so of conversation in small



PHOTO COURTESY OF ST. AGNES PARISH

Alpha participants in a small group talk together at St. Agnes parish’s Alpha “day away” held at Paul Smith’s College visitor interpretive center in the fall.

groups.

The sessions, each lasting about two hours and 30 minutes and take place once a week for 12 weeks or so.

There is also a “day away” retreat.

In Lake Placid, St. Agnes parish joined the fold with its first Alpha course in the fall of 2022 with three more held in 2023.

St. Peter’s Parish, in Massena, was the first in the diocese to pilot Alpha in 2017. Since, it has been holding two courses a year, one in the fall and one in the spring.

St. Peter’s Parish

has also made the youth version of Alpha a pre-requisite for confirmation.

Joseph DeCoste took his first Alpha course this fall in Massena. It was held in the the St. Mary’s church social hall. He is an Air Force veteran who said he fell away from the church for awhile but came back when he was in his 50s.

After the last session in late November, he said he would definitely recommend Alpha.

“Basically, what I got out of it is a stronger spiritual relationship with God, more under-

standing, and meeting nice people and creating new friendships,” DeCoste said.

Alpha was pioneered at an Anglican Church in London in the late 1970s.

It has since spread around the world. More than 400,000 people took the course in the United States last year, according to figures from Alpha USA.

St. Peter’s Parish Pastor Father Mark Reilly describes the program as being for “seekers and questers.”

Among the hundreds to attend in the past six years in Massena are steady Catholics, fallen away Catholics, people of other Christian faiths, and people of very little or no faith.

“It’s another way of presenting the gospel, especially for people on the edge or who have walked away from the church,” Father Reilly said.

The Alpha session videos seek to answer basic questions about the Christian faith such as: Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus die? And how can I have faith? Topics such as prayer, the nature of evil and Christian healing are also covered. The videos are fast-paced and laced with humor.

While sticking to Christian concepts accepted by most all Christian denominations, the Alpha video series presented at local parishes does contain a healthy dose of Catholic content.

Catholic priests are among the many first-hand sources to pop up in the videos. Mother

Teresa’s example and words are cited by the host and originator of Alpha, Anglican Priest Nicky Gumble.

Still, Father Reilly said, the question does come up: Why not present something specifically Catholic?

The St. Peter’s pastor uses different analogies such as the “gentle on-ramp” as well as the following one to answer that question.

“If someone can’t swim and is terrified of going in the water, you don’t just throw them in the deep end,” Father Reilly said. “Alpha is kind of the kiddie pool.”

St. Agnes parish’s experience with Alpha in Lake Placid has been similar to St. Peter’s in Massena.

Alpha at St. Agnes has attracted a good many people who are steady Catholic church-goers, said parish evangelization coordinator Gin Shaw. It also has attracted people who have fallen away from the church as well as people of other faiths.

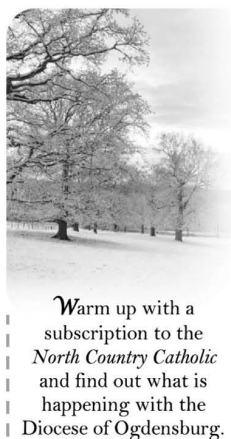
Two recent attendees are taking added instruction to become Catholic.

“It brings a culture of hospitality and invitation to the parish,” Shaw said.

In the fall, St. Agnes added a youth Alpha program.

Shaw says as each Alpha course ends many people want to know how they can get more involved in parish life.

“They become on fire for love of Jesus and then they want to get more involved,” she said.



Warm up with a subscription to the *North Country Catholic* and find out what is happening with the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

Warm up with Good News!

Visit our website at www.northcountrycatholic.org
to pay by Credit Card for immediate delivery.

OR Send this coupon with payment to:
North Country Catholic
PO Box 106, Canajoharie, New York, 13317

Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery when mailing in your renewal

Inside Diocese \$27 Outside Diocese \$30
I want to be a Patron: \$35 \$50 \$100 \$250
 New Subscription Renewal

Please send my
subscription to my
e-mail address:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Parish _____

Funeral celebrated for Sr. Catherine Cummings

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Sister Catherine Mary Cummings, a Sister of Mercy, on Saturday, December 16, at Reiss Family Memorial Chapel at Elderwood of Uihlein in Lake Placid. Father John Yonkovig and Father Paul Kelly will celebrate the Mass.

A spring burial will be in St. Alphonsus Cemetery in Tupper Lake.

Sister Catherine Mary Cummings died Monday, Dec. 11, 2023, at Adirondack Medical Center in Saranac Lake. She was 86.

Born Shirley Ann Cummings in Ogdensburg on Aug. 29, 1937, she was the daughter of Katherine and Myron Cummings.

She entered the Sisters of Mercy in Tarrytown, New York, on Sept. 8, 1955, and along the way received a doctorate in nursing education.

She began her ministry of teaching nursing at Mercy Hospitals in Watertown and Port Jervis. Sister continued that ministry in New York City, Syracuse, Hartford, Connecticut, Worcester, Massachusetts and Hartsdale, New York.

In 2006, she started



Sister Catherine Mary Cummings

a new ministry at Mercy Care for the Adirondacks as director of Mercy Care's Parish Nurse and Mission Integration programs. She recently retired from that position.

In addition to the Sisters of Mercy, she is survived by her brother Thomas (Beverly Wernet) of Liverpool, New York, and many beloved nieces, great-nieces and great-nephews.

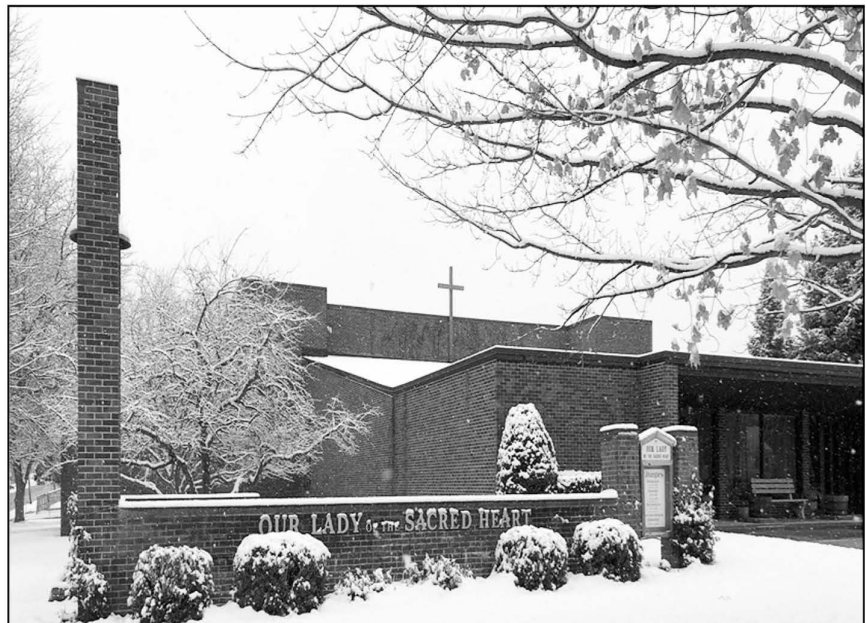
She was predeceased by her parents; her brother, Robert; and her sister, Mary Gertrude.

The M. B. Clark, Inc., Funeral Home in Lake Placid is in charge of arrangements. Please visit www.mbclarkfuneralhome.com to share a memory or leave condolences.

CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS



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



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

From

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church and Calvary Cemetery Association

320 W. Lynde St.

Watertown, NY 13601

MONASTERY CARD SHOP

Cards for All Occasions

Mass Enrollments for your living & deceased loved ones.

Precious Blood Monastery

OPEN: 9 AM - 5 PM

SATURDAY 9 AM - 12 PM

400 PRATT ST., WATERTOWN

315-788-1669

www.sisterspreciousblood.org

Environmental Stewardship

'Word was made flesh'

Nothing goes to waste in a healthy environment.

All the solids, liquids, and gases expelled by plants and animals are perfectly recycled. Bacteria and organisms of decay act on this matter and reduce it to its molecular structures, which then get absorbed into other forms of life.

Even the human body is continuously taking in oxygen from the air, water from nearby sources and various solids to build new tissues.

Although we often look the same as we did a year ago, very few of the atoms and molecules in our bodies remain present for over a few months.

There is a slow, yet persistent process of change that we undergo every day.

At Christmas, we focus on the fact that Jesus took on a human form. This means the billions of molecules that composed His human body began this continuous process of being shed back into the environment.

We celebrate Christmas be-

cause Jesus wanted to become one of us — a part of earth and every living thing on this planet.

Although the actual number of atoms in our body that were once a part of Jesus is exceedingly minute, the odds of having a few are statistically high.

Christmas is truly a season of joy; but we must know that this joy is not limited to humans, which is why we must respect and care for all of God's creations.

Looking at manger scenes, there are typically more animals adoring the Child than humans. Interestingly St. Paul tells us in Roman 8:22-24, "We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time."

As we visit the manger scene this Christmas, we are reminded that Jesus was born for all of us and all the rest of creation. (347)

By Tom Kalinowski
St. Bernard's Parish,
Faith & Ecology

Rest in Peace

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

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

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

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

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

Dec. 24 — Rev. Jean Claude Leonard, O.M.I., 1868
Dec. 25 — Rev. Patrick Lyons, 1911; Rev. Oswald L. Bentley, 1940

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

Bishop's Public Schedule

Dec. 20 — 2:30 p.m. — Episcopal Council Meeting followed by Dinner at Bishop's Residence

Dec. 21 — Noon — Diocesan Staff Christmas Party

Dec. 22 — Noon — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Dec. 23 — 4 p.m. — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

Dec. 24 — 8 a.m. — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
4 p.m. — Christmas Vigil at St. Mary's Cathedral

Dec. 25 — 9:30 a.m. — Mass at Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg

Dec. 27 — Noon — Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
5 p.m. — Evening Prayer and Christmas Dinner with Our Seminarians and their Parents at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg



*Merry Christmas and
a Blessed New Year
to everyone across the Diocese.*

From Blessed Sacrament Parish,
the churches of
St. Patrick's, St. Anthony's
& Holy Family,
Watertown

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; terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: 518-358-3145, Ext. 7179 days; 518-569-0612 evenings; or Fa-

ther 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.Report-BishopAbuse.org

Collection supports 50 retired priests

By Mark T. Mashaw
Diocesan Fiscal Officer

The 40 retired priests of the diocese currently receiving pensions from the Priests' Retirement Fund will be direct beneficiaries of the generosity of Catholics in the North Country who contribute to their parishes Christmas collection.

Also, 10 priests aged 70 and older who remain active in their ministry in the Diocese of Ogdensburg are receiving partial retirement benefits.

Your gift this year will help support not only priests currently receiving support from the Priests' Retirement Fund but also priests who will retire in the future.

This Christmas, parishes will contribute 75% of their Christmas collection to the Priests' Retirement Fund, with the parish keeping the balance.

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

Actuarial studies are

performed annually to assure the diocese is preparing for its future obligations to retired priests. The firm of Frank J. Walters Associates, Inc. has determined that adequate provisions are being made in 2023-24 to fund the Plan.

It is the diocese's goal to provide an annual pension increase when able to do so. On July 1, 2022, an increase of \$30 in the monthly benefit paid to retired priests of the diocese became effective. The diocese is currently planning an increase for the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Estimated pension payments in this fiscal year amount to approximately \$1 million. In addition, 100% of the cost of health insurance for retired priests is funded through the Plan. The 2023-24 fiscal year estimate for this benefit is \$250,000.

Retired priests of the diocese receive pensions from the Social Security Administration. Because priests' income is typically modest, their Social Security benefits are not large, and most priests rely heavily on their diocesan pension for a good portion of their fi-

nancial support.

The value of investments in the Priests' Retirement Fund decreased over a one-year period from \$9,260,721 on June 30, 2022, to \$8,753,850 on June 30, 2023. The diocese's Investment Advisory Committee, diocesan administration, and the investment portfolio's investment managers closely monitor monies invested in support of the Plan.

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

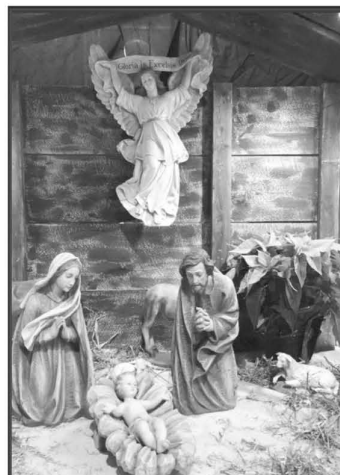
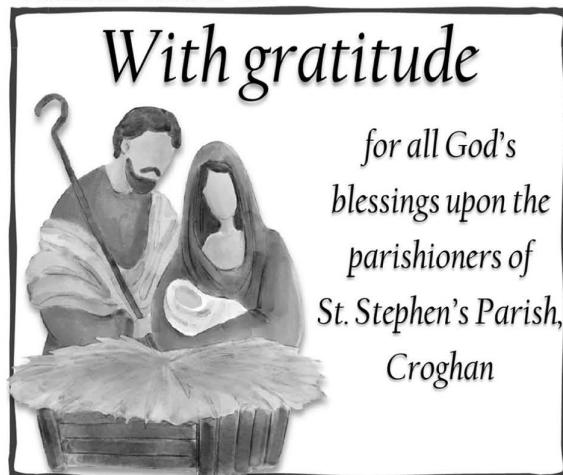
benefit the Priests' Retirement Fund is available from the diocese's Executive Director of the Development Office, Scott Lalone. Scott can be reached in Ogdensburg at (315) 393-2920 or by email at info@rcdony.org.

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



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

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



The mystery of Christmas
"loves to hide within what is
infinitely small..."
(Pope Francis-"Christmas at the Nativity")

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

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

*Provide for our priests through a
generous gift to your parish*

Christmas Collection



Photo taken by Jesse Sovie at the 2023 Chrism Mass

*A gift to the Christmas Collection in your parish
helps to support our 50 retired priests.*

CALLED TO SERVE

He rules the world with truth and grace

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

*ior reigns
Let all their songs employ
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains*

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

Pope Francis started his 2015 encyclical on care for our common home, earth, with words from St. Francis of Assisi, a deacon, "Laudato Si, mi signore." The Pope continued, "Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us. Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruit with colored flowers and herbs".

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

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

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

Merry Christmas from the the deacon community, ordained men, their wives and widows.

"God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love."

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



Deacon Kevin Mastellon

An online encyclopedia reports "Joy to the World" is an English

Christmas carol written in 1719 by the English minister and hymnwriter Isaac Watts. The lyrics are an interpretation of Psalm 98 celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.

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

Joy to the Earth, the Sav-



MERRY CHRISTMAS



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

Prayers & Blessings to you and yours
during this Holy Christmas season & always!
Merry Christmas from
Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ and Alexis Michael
in the Mission Office!

MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

The ethics of neuroimplants

Neuralink, a company run by Elon Musk, announced in September that it had received approval to implant wireless brain-computer interfaces (BCI) into human volunteers.

A BCI is a neural device that translates a person's brain activity into external responses, enabling, for example, the movement of a prosthetic limb via brain signals.

The goal of Musk's study is to enable people with paralysis to use their thoughts to control external devices, especially computers, through the BCI.

While this end is clearly worthwhile, some future uses of BCI technology will probably not be equally praiseworthy, and some foreseeable applications of this technology will likely be unethical.

In an MIT Technology Review article, Professor John Donoghue at Brown University mentions how as a child he spent time in a wheelchair, which later motivated him to try to help individuals who were paralyzed.

One time after he delivered a speech at Google, he was surprised to encounter an engineer who was an avid gamer

who wanted to know if it would be possible to have a "third thumb."

"That's taking things to an extreme," commented Donoghue. "I don't want to implant electrodes into people so they can be better gamers. I always challenge all of these ideas because I don't see what it gets you. But I don't dismiss it, either... that is what is driving people. It's the cool factor, that you

could have this new interface."

Restoring lost function offers an obvious benefit, but enhancing people's abilities beyond their typical talents raises ethical concerns.

When it comes to "therapies" vs. "enhancements," the former will generally be OK, but the latter will often be problematic.

Yet such a distinction, for all its usefulness, still falls short.

For example, consider a hypothetical device that, when implanted into the brain of a person with advanced dementia, would improve his or her ability to remember and recall facts at a level similar

to pre-dementia times. Suppose further that in a healthy person, the same device would confer a new ability, the power of a photographic memory.

Would this mean it would be ethical to use it for the dementia patient, but not for the healthy one?

Suppose there were a BCI that not only improved hand-to-eye coordination and motor control for Parkinson's patients having movement deficits, but also improved the acuity and coordination of healthy athletes, so a professional pitcher could now throw a baseball even more accurately.

Would it be OK to use the BCI for the Parkinson's patient but not for the athlete?

What if the therapeutic implant for the Parkinson's patient not only restored his ability to move in a coordinated way, but also gave him the ability to play baseball essentially as a professional, something he had never been able to do at any point prior in his life?

The apparent blurring of the distinction between therapy and enhancement by BCIs can become complicated to sort out.

As BCIs become more sophisticated, they may be able to capture and interpret more and more intimate aspects of a person's thoughts.

When it comes to the collection of brain data

from sensors, it seems fitting to require that such data be protected like other medical information.

The confidentiality of our neurodata will need to be assured, even as we seek to safeguard and expand the notion of mental privacy.

What if students in the future had BCIs that allowed for the monitoring of the pupils' attention in class by scanning or recording their brain activity? What if workers in a factory could be monitored in this way for lapses of attention? Could BCIs enable the modulation of sleep patterns, so employees could be made to put in extra hours of work time?

It seems that coercive scenarios involving BCIs might arise relatively easily.

What about the non-voluntary implantation of BCIs, enabling control of some individuals by others without their consent?

One could envision forced implantation of chips to "neuter" a criminal's bad behavior, for example.

Furthermore, the degree to which a neuro-implant would interfere with human autonomy would be vital to assessing its morality.

A BCI might serve to increase or decrease human autonomy.

If someone addicted to drugs, for example, received a brain implant that generated specific stimulation patterns to break his addiction, this could be therapeutic and help-

ful.

But what if the setting were adjusted, and it instead became possible to dial in an electrically-induced "high" that provided an experience far more intense than any illegal drug?

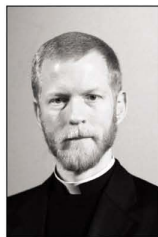
Using BCIs to mimic the effects of recreational drugs, or to pursue more intense erotic experiences, for example, by directed neural stimulation, could contribute to the enslaving of future generations through novel addictive behaviors, generating a raft of new concerns.

Moral objections invariably arise any time men and women experience a loss of freedom or "personal agency" on account of addictions or other compulsive behaviors.

In sum, while BCIs could offer important medical and therapeutic uses in the future, they also are poised for dubious or clearly immoral uses.

Careful ethical discernment around selective deployment of this technology, therefore, will be essential going forward.

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 Senior Ethicist at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See www.ncbcenter.org and www.fathertad.com.



Father Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D.

BARSTOW

AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION BUICK PONTIAC GMC SUBARU
WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE

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

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

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

Critics: Death stats in Canada, U.S. states hide assisted suicide numbers

By Jonah McKeown
Catholic News Agency

The method used by the Canadian government and several U.S. states to record assisted suicide deaths leads to incomplete statistics and less accountability, anti-euthanasia advocates said this week.

The issue was thrown into sharp relief late last month when, in a Nov. 28 X post, the official account for Statistics Canada - Canada's national statistical agency - responded to a query from a user about why euthanasia and assisted suicide deaths were not listed among the top 10 official causes of death in the agency's 2022 statistics, despite accounting for more than 13,000 deaths that year. (In Canada, euthanasia and assisted suicide are commonly referred to as medical aid in dying, or MAID.)

"MAID deaths are coded to the underlying condition for which MAID was requested," the agency account wrote, saying it uses World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines to code the deaths. As of November, the WHO guidelines do not include a coding standard for assisted suicide and euthanasia.

"In the case of a disability or mental health condition, deaths are coded to the underlying disability or mental health issue that MAID was granted for," the agency continued, answering a question from a user about how assisted suicide deaths for people suffering from non-terminal mental illness will be coded when Canada expands the practice to the mentally ill in 2024.

In the database, the underlying cause of death is defined as the disease or injury that initiated the train of morbid events leading directly to death. As such, MAID deaths are coded to the underlying condition for which MAID was requested.

"Deaths are coded using the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD). In the case of a disability, deaths are coded to the underlying disability or mental health issue that MAID was granted for," Statistics Canada said in a post on X, formerly Twitter. "As a result of this

framework for counting MAID deaths, a Canadian person who avails himself or herself of assisted suicide because of a cancer diagnosis is listed as officially dying of cancer and not of the lethal drugs they were prescribed and ingested."

The agency's response drew consternation and confusion from some social media users, in part because the counting mechanism means that MAID does not appear in a top 10 list of causes of death in Canada that Statistics Canada shared, despite comprising the sixth leading cause of death according to separate government statistics. Those statistics show that there were 13,241 "MAID provisions" reported in Canada in 2022 - accounting for 4.1% of all deaths in Canada.

Assisted suicide is not the same as euthanasia, although the two phrases are often used interchangeably. Assisted suicide is the act of making the means of suicide - such as a lethal dose of medication - available to the patient, who subsequently acts on his or her own. Euthanasia, in contrast, refers to the practice of a medical professional or other person directly acting to end the life of a patient, a practice that remains illegal across the entire U.S. despite nearly a quarter of U.S. states legalizing assisted suicide.

Alex Schadenberg, executive director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, an international organization with headquarters in Ontario, told CNA that in practice, assisted suicide deaths are counted the same way in each of the 10 U.S. states that offer it. On a patient's death certificate, assisted suicide is not listed as the cause of death but rather the medical condition that the patient was suffering with.

All but two states - Oregon and Vermont - explicitly require by law that assisted suicide deaths be counted this way. In Oregon, the state "recommends" recording deaths this way on the patient's death certificate in order to "balance the confidentiality of patients and their families, while ensuring that we have complete information for statistical purposes" by, according to the Oregon Health Authority website, later doing a follow-up report to find out how the patient actually died.

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

U.S. bishops seek security funds for houses of worship

(CNA) - The U.S. bishops are asking Congress to provide at least \$200 million in federal funds for grants to improve security for houses of worship and other nonprofit organizations. In a letter to congressional leaders, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) urged lawmakers to include additional funding for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program (NSGP) in a package that provides security assistance to Israel. The federal government says that the NSGP "provides funding support for target hardening and other physical security enhancements and activities to nonprofit organizations that are at high risk of terrorist attack." New York archbishop Cardinal Timothy Dolan, chair of the USCCB's Committee for Religious Liberty, said in the letter that the grants "enable vulnerable communities to gather for worship, prayer, and service without fear of being attacked." Dolan in the letter stated that "the Jewish community is especially vulnerable," citing reports of sharp rises in antisemitic incidents.

U.S. Supreme Court to consider abortion pill case

(CNA) - The United States Supreme Court has announced it will once again consider an abortion pill case. The outcome of the case, *Hippocratic Medicine v. Food and Drug Administration*, could reinstate safeguards that would prohibit sending the abortion drugs by mail. The court will review a Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling which determined a "Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy" - also known as REMS - should be reinstated to require that women know the facts about Mifepristone ahead of consumption. The Justice Department and drug manufacturer Danco Laboratories appealed the decision. In 2022, several pro-life groups and individuals, represented by the Alliance Defending Freedom sued the FDA arguing that the administration failed to use the proper channels and hurriedly approve the drug in 2000, without weighing its severe risks to women, which include heavy bleeding, loss of future fertility and even death.

Gene-editing therapy gets thumbs up from bioethicist

(CNA) - A new gene-editing therapy called Casgevy, which is designed to help treat patients suffering from sickle cell disease, has been endorsed by the National Catholic Bioethics Center and its president, Dr. Joseph Meaney. Casgevy is a new gene therapy developed by Vertex Pharmaceuticals that uses CRISPR, a genome-editing technology, to modify a patient's blood cells and reverse the problems caused by sickle cell disease. In an interview with "EWTN News Nightly" anchorwoman Tracy Sabol, Meaney called the new therapy, which is the first of its kind to receive FDA approval, "groundbreaking" and said that from a Catholic perspective it "is a very licit therapy" that "hopefully will be effective." "The Church has said since *Donum Vitae* really that gene therapies can be acceptable as long as they're strictly therapeutic. That is to say that gene therapy is used to treat a genetic disease," Meaney explained.

VIRTUAL EVENTS

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: Jan. 28, Feb. 11, Feb. 25, Mar. 10, Mar. 24, Apr. 14, Apr. 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

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Tupper Lake - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks is recruiting new volunteers and has scheduled a Friendship Volunteer Training Program.

Date: Jan. 18

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

Features: New Volunteers will join Mercy Care's more than 100 Friendship Volunteers from Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake and surrounding areas who are helping their elder neighbors stay connected to their communities and helping to make their lives a little easier and happier. Volunteers of all faiths are encouraged and invited to participate. Complementary lunch will be provided.

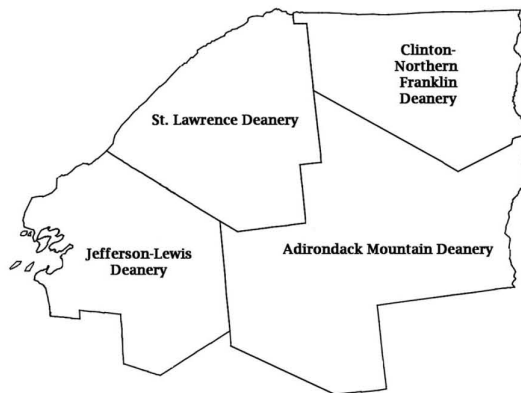
Contact: There is no cost for the training but registration is required. To register for the training, please visit Mercy Care's website at www.adkmercy.org or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Mercy Care's Program Director, at abevilacqua@adkmercy.org or call Lexi for more information at 518-523-5446.

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

ADORATION

Plattsburgh - Adoration to be held weekly.

Date: Wednesdays, Thursdays



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.

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.

DEVOTION AND HOLY HOUR

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

Date: First Saturday of the Month

Time: Following the 4:30 anticipated Mass

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

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. Training will be provided on the history of the House of Prayer, its mission, and ways to carry out this ministry of hospitality for those seeking time 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, please call Sarah Anderson at 518-534-9976.

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

POLISH CHRISTMAS WAFER

Houseville - The Polish Christmas Wafer or OPLATEK is available.

Cost: \$3 per package plus shipping and handling

Features: The Christmas wafer or POLATEK, is part of a Polish, Lithuanian and Slovak custom that is observed during the Vigil of Christmas (Wigilia.) After the first star is visible, family and friends gather around the dinner table to share the OPLATEK which symbolizes the presence of Christ,

the Newborn Child. The OPLATEK is sent and shared with family and friends all over the world as a symbol of love, unity and forgiveness.

Contact: To order please call 315-348-6260

HOLY HOUR & DIVINE MERCY

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

Date: Jan. 7

Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass

Place: St. Hedwig's Church

Contact: 315-348-6260

SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER

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

Date: Jan. 13

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

ST. LAWRENCE

WOMENS RETREAT

Potsdam - Women's retreat to be held on Discipleship.

Date: Jan. 6

Time: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's downstairs community room

Features: Presenter Marika Donders discusses discipleship in three stories from Marks' gospel, and a reflection on the woman at the well. Retreat includes a Holy Hour and a simple lunch. The retreat is free.

Contact: Kathy Burns burnsdesignstudio@earthlink.net

ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

Ogdensburg - The Legion of Mary will pray the rosary with devotions for First Saturday.

Date: Jan. 6

Time: 8 a.m.

Place: Notre Dame Church, Ogdensburg

Features: Rosary with devo-

tions

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

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

Date: Jan. 6

Time: 3:15 p.m.

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

MEN'S PRAYER GROUP

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

Date: Jan. 6

Time: 9 a.m.

Place: Sacred Heart Church

MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

Date: Jan. 14 (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 Gonther 315-212-5166.

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 formationstp@gmail.com

HOLY HOUR

Canton - Holy Hour for Vocations to be held.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

YouTube restores channel, documentary

By **Andres Henriquez**
Catholic News Agency

The Home of the Mother congregation's YouTube channel HM Television was restored after being deleted on Nov. 3, the sisters reported in a video.

"This month of cancellation of HM Television English channel has indeed caused inconveniences, but this situation has also allowed us to see the appreciation of our work by so many people and, in particular, of the person of Sister Clare Crockett," the Home of the Mother said in a YouTube news brief.

"We thank you from the bottom of our heart for your concern and your diffusion [getting the word out about] of the cancellation of the HM Television English channel, which has permitted its restoration," the narrator added.

The channel, which had been canceled by YouTube, has thousands of subscribers and features the famous documentary "All or Nothing," the story of Sister Clare Crockett, a member of the congregation from Northern Ireland who died in Ecuador during a 2016 earthquake.

The documentary has 2.6 million views and thousands of comments that the congregation feared it had lost, especially because of the spiritual good it had done for many people who shared their testimonies with them every day.

"Daily people sent testimonies, both written and oral, of the great spiritual good received

through this documentary. Conversions, young people who discover or accept their vocation to the consecrated life or to the priesthood, vocations 'saved' in a moment of crisis, graces received, and many lives changed by Sister Clare's witness of conversion and dedication to God," the congregation stated when it announced the censorship.

YouTube told the EUK Mamie Foundation, a digital evangelism tool run by the congregation, that "after taking another look, we can confirm that it does not violate our terms of service." In addition, YouTube apologized "for any inconvenience or frustration" caused by the "mistakes" it made by shutting down the channel.

The causes given for the channel's removal in early November were "spam, deceptive practices, and scams." The Home of the Mother noted that YouTube usually gives three notices over a period of 90 days before closing the channel permanently so that the

owner can appeal the decision, which did not happen in this case.

At that time, Sister Kristen Gardner, a nun from the congregation, told CNA that "the sisters were especially saddened by the elimination of the documentary."

"The Sister Clare documentary was doing much good," Gardner said, adding that it was "helping to bring many people back to the Catholic faith and also to pull people out of mediocrity in their living out the faith."

To learn more about the Home of the Mother and its various initiatives and apostolates, you can visit this link.

This story was first published by ACI Prensa, CNA's Spanish-language news partner. It has been translated and adapted by CNA.



*May the Hope of Christmas
shine brightly on you and
your loved ones.*

*And may the wonder,
love and peace of our savior
Jesus Christ,
be with you this season
and all year through.*

*Merry Christmas
from
St. Peter's Parish, Massena!*



Visit our website
www.northcountrycatholic.org

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

Find us on Facebook!



**An Adirondack
Christmas at
St. Bartholomew's in
Old Forge**

A Solemn Christmas Mass
with Blessing of Creche

Midnight December 25
Carol singing at 11:30 pm

103 Crosby Blvd., Old Forge NY

Merry Christmas!

From the
Diocesan Fiscal
Office Staff

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

A day 'for lights and for laughter'

Editor's note: Msgr. Paul E. Whitmore died on Dec. 7, 2023. The North Country Catholic will continue running his Scripture Reflections through the end of the year in his honor and memory. Please pray for his soul and for his loved ones.



Monsignor Paul E. Whitmore

Everyone wants to be home for Christmas. There will be plenty of tears shed on Christmas eve in army bunks overseas and in orphan and refugee shelters in Africa and Asia. Airports and railroad terminals can be desperate places on Christmas Eve when flights are cancelled. And the homeless? And those who have no husband, no wife, no children?

I wonder if Jesus felt a pang of fear as he looked around that manger bed? This was a far cry from the heaven He had left! How long did it take him to feel at home there?

How many people feel a searing emptiness whenever they hear *I'll be Home for Christmas* or *White Christmas*? Because Christmas is all about family... the Holy Family. It's all about a God who found no other way of convincing us humans how much He loved us except by becoming a little frail, weak baby... like us! No wonder Christmas is for children, and if we can't force ourselves to see the world as a child, we'll miss the wonder

December 25

Christmas

READINGS

At the Vigil Mass

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

Matthew 1:1-25

Mass at Midnight

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

Mass at Dawn

Isaiah 62:11-12; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:15-20

Mass during the Day

Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18

and incredible joy of Christmas.

The pain comes later. But for now...it's Christ-

mas day. And we must let ourselves go and let our hearts have a holiday, and just rejoice with little children and grandparents, the very young and the very old, who understand best what Christmas is all about. It's a day in which we cancel out all darkness and all cynicism. It's a day for angels and dancing, for lights and for laughter, for Christmas trees and presents. As a child, it wasn't hard at all to believe in God's love, because he was small like I was, and because my mother and father and my brother loved me so much!

Children see Jesus just like they see themselves - as loving, expecting others to love them, and so generous in giving of their love.

"For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever; Prince of Peace."

It's not hard to believe at all! God's love and a family at home have so melted into one!

And for those who can't go home again, Christmas memories will have to do for now. Don't let the memories go. Heaven is made up of our memories.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.



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



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



From the Staff of the Development Office

Scott Lalone, Valerie Mathews & Lorraine Carney



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

Lenity Project update

Please read for a message from the Lenity Project, one of the organizations supported by our Diocesan summer appeal.

As Christmas approaches and we celebrate the birth of our Savior, we wish you, our dear friends and benefactors, a Christmas full of peace, love and much prosperity. Father John Halligan, S.J. (+) was always our inspiration, our guide and our friend, and his dream, vision and mission lives on in our everyday activities of the new Foundation Familias Trabajadoras. On this occasion of the first anniversary of his passing from this life to life eternal, in memory of him, we decided to share one of his Christmas messages with you, along with our thanks to you for your ongoing generous help. So, take it from here, Padre Juan:

Dear Folks,

“Wisdom isn’t discovered in classrooms or in the great school of experience. Wisdom comes directly from God. It’s a gift revived for Christmas every year at the season. Without it, we couldn’t handle the clear truth all year long that the Infant, Jesus, looking into all-loving eyes, says I’m part of you now and you’re part of me.

He’s with us and He’s in us. With Him everything is possible. We can become an everlasting kingdom of helping and enjoying each other.

Wherever and however we live in the ruins, gold plated or frighteningly ugly, of the paradise lost, wisdom digs out the truth that we can change ourselves. We don’t have to make believe. We can put out for others, and we can make sacrifices, one at a time for somebody in trouble, each day a little dying to the pompous way we were. The sum of all this generosity becomes more of the new life of Christ in us and in our world. Jesus arranged all this on Christmas Day.

[...] Jesus loves us, yes, we know, for the Bible tells us so.” Cheers, John J. Halligan, S.J. LOVE IS SERVICE

From the desk of Madre Cindy: Christmas is a time to think about all the gifts we have been given. We are grateful to Joe and Patricia for their loving and generous service. Family and friends too, are on top of the list. Our Family in Quito continues to grow. We could not serve these families without your help. We give thanks to each of you for helping us celebrate the mystery of Christmas year-round. Merry Christmas and many blessings for you and your family in 2024. Merry Christmas from all of us!

OBITUARIES

AuSable Forks – Robert J. Minogue, 71; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2024 at Holy Name Church.

Blue Mountain Lake – George “Hap” Georges, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 16, 2023 at St. Paul’s Church.

Champlain – Florence L. (Favreau) Cardin, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 12, 2023 at St. Mary’s Church; burial in St. Mary’s Cemetery.

Clayton – Daniel P. Ward, 53; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 16, 2023 at St. Mary’s Church; burial in Woodlawn Cemetery Sunset Mausoleum, Syracuse.

Dannemora – Iris (Eldridge) Stow, 80; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 12, 2023 at St. Joseph’s Church; burial in St. George’s Cemetery, Burke.

Harrisville – Mary V. (LaDuc) Bond, 94; Graveside Services at St. Francis Solanus Cemetery.

Lisbon – Mary (Driscoll) Cadrette, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 15, 2023 at St. Philip and James Church; burial in St. Mary’s Cemetery, Canton.

Massena – Paul J. Bronchetti, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 15, 2023 at St. Mary’s Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Kevin J. Ghostlaw, 64; Mass of Christian Burial Dec.

14, 2023 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Old St. Mary’s Cemetery, Fort Covington.

Morrisonville – William Light, Sr., 81; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 15, 2023 at St. Alexander’s Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Morrisonville – Janice A. (Sorrell) Rock, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 11, 2023 at St. Alexander’s Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Norfolk – Jean (LaRue) LaPlante, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 15, 2023 at Church of the Visitation; burial in Visitation Cemetery.

North Bangor – George G. Martin, 58; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 9, 2023 at St. Augustine’s Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Peru – Josephine Anne (Brelia) Howard, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 28, 2023 at St. Augustine’s Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Shirley (Kilcup) Beriau, 95; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 16, 2023 at St. John’s Church; burial in St. Mary’s of the Lake Cemetery, Cumberland Head.

Port Henry – Catherine A. (Connors) Corbo, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 16, 2023 at St. Patrick’s Church; burial in St. Patrick’s Cemetery.

Potsdam – Eleanor (Converse)

Barr, 98; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 12, 2023 at St. Mary’s Church; burial in Sanfordville Cemetery.

Ticonderoga – Arthur Richard Ryan, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 12, 2023 at St. Mary’s Church; burial in St. Mary’s Cemetery.

Watertown – James Leonard Coullier, 70; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 16, 2023 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – James DiStefano Jr., 74; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 12, 2023 at St. Patrick’s Church; burial in Brookside Cemetery.

Watertown – Mary Jane “MJ” Fadden, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 12, 2023 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Robert A. Fields, 76; Funeral Services at D.L. Calarco Funeral Home, Inc.; burial in N. Watertown Cemetery.

Watertown – Ida M. “Ada” Guardino, 94; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 13, 2023 at St. Anthony’s Church; burial in Glenwood Mausoleum.

Watertown – Roger D. Szurek, 73; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 18, 2023 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Date: Every Tuesday

Time: 4:10 p.m.

Place: St. Mary’s Church

Features: Holy hour followed by Mass at 5:15 p.m. and confessions at 5:45 p.m.

ROSARY FOR LIFE

Canton – Rosary for life to be held.

Date: Every Sunday

Time: 4:25 p.m. preceding the 5 p.m. evening Mass

Place: St. Mary’s Church

Holy Family Church, Watertown.

ADORATION

Norwood – St. Andrew’s Church to offer Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Friday.

Time: After 8:30 a.m. Mass until Noon

DIOCESAN EVENTS

ADVENT MYSTERY PLAYERS

The Advent Mystery Players to perform.

Schedule: Dec. 17, 7:15 p.m. at

HEALING MASS

FOR ABUSE SURVIVOR

Potsdam – Bishop LaValley has scheduled a Healing Mass for those who have Suffered Abuse by Church Leadership or Others, on Divine Mercy Sunday.

Date: April 7

Time: 2:30 p.m.

Place: St. Mary’s Church, Potsdam



Project Compassion

Are You or a Loved One Seriously ill?

There is a wide range of practical videos to support patients receiving palliative care and their families.

Resources for Patients and Families

There is a wide range of practical and spiritual videos to support patients receiving palliative care and their families.

Pastoral Care Training

For Pastoral Care Ministers, Eucharistic ministers and others who visit the sick, the website also provides a 5-video pastoral care training program.

End-of-Life Moral Medical Issues

To assist those making end-of-life moral decisions, the website offers a video that is an overview of Catholic End-of-Life moral teaching.

Resources for Professionals

To support those who care for the seriously ill patient, the website includes video resources, such as,
A Physician's Perspective on Providing Primary Palliative Care

For more information, visit us online
www.compassionandcope.org



Resources for
Patients and Families

Project Compassion was funded by a grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation