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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 78 Number 3

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

APRIL 17, 2024

Follow Me: Update on reorganization

In this installment of "Follow Me," Bishop Terry R. LaValley shares an update on the diocesan reorganization.

"I hope you had a fruitful Lent and a Blessed Easter. I wish to update you on the status of the Diocesan reorganization case. The Diocese continues to carry on our mission in the ordinary course. Parishes also continue their programs and activities.

As you know, all State court lawsuits against the diocese, parishes, schools and other Catholic entities are stayed. This gives us the opportunity to settle the lawsuits on a global basis.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

MISSIONARY SISTERS



PHOTO BY JESSE SOVIE/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church recently arrived from Ghana to serve at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg. Pictured with Bishop Terry R. LaValley are, from left, Sister Joyce Frances Nfodzo, Sister Martha Duawome and Sister Justine Agbeko. Full story on Page 6.

REMEMBERING FATHER KEEFE



Father Paul J. Kelly assists Father Daniel T. Keefe in vesting for Mass on April 2 at Elderwood of Uihlein at Lake Placid, where Father Keefe had been residing. Father Keefe died April 11 at the nursing home. Father Keefe had celebrated his 95th birthday in late February and was preparing to celebrate the 70th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood in May. He is remembered for his sense of humor, compassion and humility, as well as his love of the Lord.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

Pope Francis: Live with courage

By Matthew Santucci
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis on April 3 dedicated his general audience catechesis to the virtue of fortitude, observing that it consists of the ability to live with courage and to confront the inner - and outer - turmoils of life.

"A Christian without courage, who does not turn his own strength to good, who does not bother anyone, is a useless Christian," the pope declared during the general audience held in St. Peter's Square.

The pope opened his reflection by chronicling the develop-

ment of fortitude, pointing to its philosophical roots in antiquity as well as its development in the Christian tradition.

"Ancient thought did not imagine a man without passions; he would be a stone," the pope said. The pope linked this idea to Christ, noting that he is not a "diaphanous" or "ascetic" God but instead expressed the full range of human emotions.

Yet the pope cautioned that passions, while "not necessarily the residue of a sin," need to be tempered, or "educated, channeled, purified with the water of baptism, or better with the fire of the Holy Spirit."

The pope noted that fortitude develops in a twofold manner, being composed of both an inner, or passive, dimension as well as an active, or outer, orientation that allows humans to respond to adversity.

"Fortitude is first and foremost a victory against ourselves," the pope said. "Most of the fears that arise within us are unrealistic and do not come true at all."

"It is better, then, to invoke the Holy Spirit and face everything with patient fortitude: one problem at a time, as we are able, but not alone!" the Holy Father said. "The Lord is with us, if we trust

in him and sincerely seek the good. Then in every situation we can count on God's providence to shield and armor us."

Reflecting on the second, or passive, characteristic of fortitude, the pope noted that there are also external tribulations to overcome, such as "persecutions" and "external enemies." "Fortitude is a fundamental virtue because it takes the challenge of evil in the world seriously. Some pretend it does not exist, that everything is going fine, that human will is not sometimes blind, that dark forces that bring death do not lurk in history."

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It wasn't just a Tuesday

While most people don't spend many of their days interviewing people about their ministries, for me, that's basically just Tuesday (or any other day of the week). I do it all the time.

Without question, conducting such interviews is my favorite part of my job, but it's pretty ordinary for me.

Until it isn't.

On April 2, I traveled to Elderwood of Uihlein at Lake Placid, a nursing home in that community, to interview

Father Daniel T. Keefe, who had just celebrated his 95th birthday and was preparing to celebrate the

**Darcy L.
Fargo**

70th anniversary of his ordination in May. I planned to write and publish the article either later this month or in early May, closer to the anniversary date.

The quotes I typed during that interview are now being used for a much different

purpose, as Father Dan died April 11, only 9 days after that interview.

God made that ordi-

nary day something I'll likely remember for the rest of my life; God made it extraordinary. I had the privilege of hearing Father Dan, through the struggles associated with age, reminisce about his nearly 70 years as a priest. I was blessed to hear him tell parts of his story as, unbeknownst to any of us involved, the final paragraphs of that story were being written by our loving God. I was blessed to attend Mass with him.

In my 25 years serving as a reporter in at least some capacity, I've written probably around a

hundred stories about people dying. I've never been able to include new, never published quotes from the individual who died in such an article. It was like writing a death story for the first time. I had to throw out my usual formula.

I have no doubt God orchestrated the interview and the timing of it. I think God wanted Father Dan to share himself one more time before he ended his ministry here on earth.

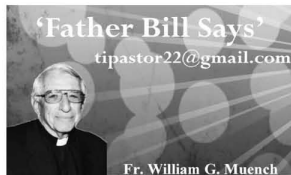
Please join me in praying for Father Dan's soul, and praying for those who loved him.

On the road to Emmaus

The Easter Season is when each Sunday there is a resurrection story, the Gospel at Mass. The first reading at Mass each day during the Easter Season is a reading from the Acts of the Apostles. We read the book chapter by chapter until Pentecost. This book of the Acts of the Apostles tells the story of the initial Christian missionary efforts of the first apostles, as well as the story of the conversion and the missionary journeys of St. Paul.

The Gospel stories of the resurrection of Jesus are all familiar to you. I am certain that each of us has our favorite. I love them all. These stories strengthen our faith each year in Jesus' resurrection. We are a resurrection people.

Personally, my favorite resurrection story is the Emmaus story. This story from Luke's Gospel is the source of meditation for me all year long. The Emmaus story is a story in which I can find a place for myself - a place in the



story of the Resurrection of Jesus. This year, the Emmaus story is not read at a Sunday Mass during the Easter Season. So, let me share this story with you again.

As you may remember, this story begins with two of Jesus' disciples walking home from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a nearby city. It is the third day after Jesus' crucifixion. We are told the name of one of them, Cleopas. The other person, I think, is his wife. In meditation, I often think of the other person as me. We are told that they are conversing about all the things that have recently occurred.

Jesus, himself, comes along, however, we are told that they were prevented from recognizing him. They think it is a stranger. Jesus asks them

what they were discussing. They are surprised, but they explain, telling them about what has happened to Jesus who they believe is a prophet mighty in deed. They explain that he was handed over to the chief priests and rulers and was crucified and died. They were certain that he was to be the one to redeem Israel. They mention that some of their party had visited the Lord's tomb, but it was empty. Now, they have heard of a vision of angels who announced that Jesus was alive.

Then, Jesus, who they still do not recognize, walks along with them. He proceeds to interpret for them the Scriptures, beginning with Moses and the prophets, telling that the Christ should suffer these things and enter his glory. In meditation, I think of myself walking with them, listening to Jesus as he interprets the Scriptures. Obviously, it is quite a Scripture class!

When they arrive at Emmaus, Jesus agrees to stay

with them. Jesus joins them at table. He takes bread, breaks it, blessed it, and gives it to them. In that moment, they recognize that this is Jesus. Then, Jesus disappears.

As I read this story, I firmly believe that Jesus does often walk with us - that he is present with us as we pray or are Mass. Jesus is there to support us and teach us, helping to realize of God's great love for us all. These are times when we are like those two on the road to Emmaus. When we participate at Mass, we are there at that table with Jesus and those two disciples. Jesus continues to break bread with us. We ought to recognize the presence of Jesus with us.

I truly love this Resurrection story. I see myself in this story. I hope you can find yourself there also. Jesus walks with us on our journey; we are constantly being taught by Jesus himself. Each time I celebrate Mass, I know that Jesus is there at the altar breaking bread with us all.

FOLLOW ME

Update on diocesan reorganization

Dear Friends,

I hope you had a fruitful Lent and a Blessed Easter. I wish to update you on the status of the Diocesan reorganization case. The Diocese continues to carry on our mission in the ordinary course. Parishes also continue their programs and activities.

As you know, all State court lawsuits against the diocese, parishes, schools and other Catholic entities are stayed. This gives us the opportunity to settle the lawsuits on a global basis. As I previously reported to you, the bankruptcy judge has ordered that all contested issues, including the CYA lawsuits pending, be resolved through mediations.

Judge Christopher Sontchi has been appointed mediator, due to the withdrawal of Judge Zive for personal reasons. We met with Judge Sontchi on February 20, 2024 to deal with preliminary matters. Mediations resumed April 9 and 10. The bar date has past, we are currently facing 123 unique claims of abuse. In our negotiations we desire to fairly compensate survivors of abuse and to continue our mission as a diocese. We ask you to pray for timely and fair compensation to survivors and our continued ministry to the people of the North Country.

Our attorneys have

worked hard to get us to the negotiation table. Their work has brought all the necessary parties into the negotiations, including the diocese, parishes, schools, other Catholic entities, and our insurers. Although parishes, schools and other Catholic entities are not part of the reorganization case directly, they will

be required to contribute to the settlement with the abuse survivors. Our resolution with abuse survivors will include settlement of CYA lawsuits faced by the parish, schools and other Catholic entities and afford them protection against liability

for any claims that exist prior to the filing of the reorganization case.

I again ask your prayers as we draw closer to a just and expeditious resolution of all these matters.

We are committed to compensating victims of sexual abuse. We need to keep them uppermost in our thoughts and prayers. As you know, we celebrated a special Healing Mass at St. Mary's Church in Potsdam on Divine Mercy Sunday, April 7. We

are also committed to continuing our mission as a diocese and meeting the needs of our people throughout the North Country. Thank you for your prayerful support. May God bless you, I am

Faithfully yours in Christ,



Most Reverend
Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg



Bishop Terry R. LaValley

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'I enjoyed being a priest from day one'

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

"Father Herbert Hanan was the first Catholic priest to be principal at St. John's (Academy in Plattsburgh) ... He put the idea in my head. I'd imagine being a priest, but I didn't think so. It was too grandiose a calling. I could never imagine the good Lord would call me for such a vocation."

Those lines were delivered by Father Daniel T. Keefe, reflecting on his call to the priesthood as he prepared to celebrate the 70th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood this May.

Father Keefe didn't get to see that anniversary. He died Thursday, April 11, 2024, at Elderwood of Uihlein at Lake Placid. He was 95.

Despite his initial impressions, the Lord did call Father Keefe to a priesthood that spanned nearly seven decades.

Asked what he loved most about his priesthood, Father Keefe sat silent for a few seconds before smiling coyly.

"The job description," he said. "We're always called to be for the people and to bring them the message. Be available for people for the sacraments. We're a sacramental church. Serve people, serve the Lord. It's a privilege. I enjoyed being a priest from day one."

Father Keefe noted that he felt it was a privilege to experience the full human experience with those to whom he ministered.

"You're there for the happy and sad times,"



An undated NCC file photo shows Father Daniel T. Keefe, center, ministering to SUNY Plattsburgh students during his time serving as pastor at the John XXIII College Community Center

he said. "Flexible - you have to be flexible. No matter who it is. It doesn't mean you don't care what's good and bad. You just help. It's a privilege to be a priest, to be able to help people, and at the same time, they're helping you, helping you grow your faith."

One portion of Father Keefe's ministry that stood out to him was his time working with young adults at Newman Centers in Potsdam and Plattsburgh.

"Think back to your own days when you were fresh on campus, ready to tackle the world," he said. "There was a lot of life and kindness."

Father Keefe said he considered his faith in the Lord to be a beautiful gift, given to him by God with the help of his parents.

"They've not canonized my parents yet, but they were good people," he said. "(Faith) is a gift. Some people struggle with faith and wish they had faith. It's a privilege to have faith and believe in God and know he's

our friend and he wants to know us. We're blessed. I just wonder how it would be with no faith. Share with other people the faith you have.

"It's a privilege helping at times, serving and supporting people in their faith."

His privilege was a gift to others.

"He had a love of humanity," said Sherry Gaspar, a longtime friend of Father Keefe's. "He had a non-judgmental approach to everyone, no matter what age, race, creed, or other barrier they might have. He would just say, 'we don't know what goes on in a person's heart, therefore we need to embrace everybody.' And he surely did."

Gaspar said she became friends with Father Keefe when he became pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Malone in 1984.

"We just started to chat and became friends," she said. "I was in charge of altar servers, so we worked together because of that. There were a group of us that became friends.

Mass of Christian Burial planned for April 19

A Mass of Christian Burial for Father Daniel T. Keefe will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Friday, April 19, 2024, at St. John's Church in Plattsburgh. Bishop Terry R. LaValley will be principal celebrant, and Msgr. Leeward J. Poissant will be the homilist.

The Reception of the Body will be at 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 18, at the church, with Msgr. Dennis J. Duprey, dean of the Clinton Deanery, presiding. Calling hours will follow from 6 to 8 p.m., concluding with Night Prayer at 8 p.m. Additional calling hours will be held at the church from 9 to 10:30 a.m. on April 19.

Burial will follow in Mount Carmel Cemetery, Plattsburgh.

Father Keefe died April 11, 2024, at Elderwood of Uihlein at Lake Placid, where he had been a resident. He was 95.

A complete obituary will appear in next week's edition.

He referred to us as 'the Malone mafia.' Even after he left Malone, we would all get together for dinner, socialize and have good times."

Gaspar said Father Keefe aided her brother in a personal matter before helping her through the end of her first marriage and subsequent annulment of that marriage.

"He helped me with the annulment, and he arranged for counseling for me," she said. "We've been through trials together. He was a good person with a good heart."

Gaspar said Father Keefe quickly became friends with nearly everyone he met, partly because of his kindness and humility and partly because of his wit.

"I would describe his personality as a true Irishman with a wonderful sense of humor who loved God above all and communicated that love to anyone he met,"

she said. "But that Irish sense of humor was outstanding. He always had a comeback or a quick response. But he was a humble person. He continued to be that his entire life. I think that was a character trait that drew people to him. He didn't aspire to anything more than what he was as a parish priest, tending to his flock. I think he typified what we all wish to have in our priests."

And those friendships were lasting ones.

"The Malone mafia" went down for his 95th birthday (in February)," she said. "He drew his strength from being with people and forging friendships. Even in the nursing home this week, when he wasn't out of his room interacting with people on Monday and Tuesday, everyone was concerned. Even at 95, he was interacting and social. I think there are a lot of sad people today."

APRIL 17, 2024

'To seek forgiveness and to pray for healing'

By Darcy Fargo
Editor

"This Divine Mercy Sunday, we gather to seek forgiveness and to pray for healing for all those victimized by the sinful behavior of Church leaders and others in our Church," said Bishop Terry R. LaValley in his homily at a Mass held April 7 at St. Mary's Church in Potsdam.

The Mass was a Healing Mass for those hurt by the Church.

Bishop LaValley, referenced C.S. Lewis' book "The Screwtape Letters," in which a senior devil advises a junior devil how "souls can be brought down."

"He writes that decay of hope, discouragement, slowly wears down a person's faith," Bishop LaValley said. "Best of all, says Screwtape, is a dose of shocking reality, such as violence, persecution for one's faith or sudden death. That can make the Christian feel that all his religion has been a fantasy. In other words, such occurrences can cause people to doubt God and religion."

The bishop noted Lewis wrote about that doubt after his wife died of cancer.

"Doubt is not a rare experience," he said. "There's a lot of it about, even among faith-filled Christians. There are few of us who haven't at



Bishop Terry R. LaValley prostrates himself at the start of the Mass of Healing for those hurt by the Church held April 7, Divine Mercy Sunday, at St. Mary's Church in Potsdam.

some point questioned whether God and our faith are real or whether what we read in scriptures is true. With all the terror and persecutions of Christians today, with the egregious sins committed by Church leaders against innocent members of the Church, it's not hard to understand that a person can doubt God's goodness, even doubt God's very existence."

That doubt was discussed on the day the Gospel focused on the apostle, Thomas, who didn't believe Christ was raised from the dead until he saw and touched his wounds.

"Notice that the nail marks and the pierced

side of Jesus were mentioned three times," Bishop LaValley said of the Gospel. "Isn't it curious that Jesus, in his glorified, risen body, is still bearing those wound marks? Jesus's wounds are important because they serve to identify him, to give us our Christian identity and to remind us of the vulnerability required to live as followers of Jesus. Jesus shows his wounds to verify for the disciples his identity. Jesus reveals himself through his open wounds. The wounded Christ shows us that the afflictions that come to us in this life need not be somehow cast off or removed. They can be



John Morrison, diocesan Safe Environment director, reads the second reading at the Mass for Healing.

part of our resurrected selves. Scars remain and become part of the story of who we are."

Bishop LaValley noted that the Church, the body of Christ, is like Christ in being wounded.

"The wounds of Jesus are a scandal," he said. "The wounds inflicted on others by members of his body, the Church, are a grave scandal endured by too many. We must open wide to the power flowing from the wounded heart of Christ, who tenderly

loves and accompanies everyone who hurts in his Church."

Referencing the start of the Gospel reading, Bishop LaValley also noted that "inner peace is the first gift resurrected Jesus offers to his disciples, who are hiding in terror, who thought all had been lost."

"We, full of anxieties, pain, anger and disappointment are offered the same gift," he said.

Lectors for the Mass were Hattie Taylor, pastoral associate at St. Mary's in Potsdam and St. Patrick's in Colton and campus minister at the Potsdam and Canton colleges, and John Morrison, diocesan Safe Environment director.

Bishop LaValley celebrated the Mass with Father Joseph W. Giroux, pastor of St. Mary's in Potsdam and St. Patrick's in Colton, and Msgr. John R. Murphy, a retired priest of the diocese.

Deacon Richard Burns assisted.

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Sisters bring 'lively' faith from Ghana

By Keith Benman
Contributing Writer

Three missionaries from the West African nation of Ghana are bringing their experience caring for the elderly to Ogdensburg along with a very positive attitude - even when it comes to the weather.

"The snow, that is different," said Sister Joyce Frances Nfodzo, SMMC, as a snowstorm swirled outside diocesan offices in early April. "When we see that, we praise God. We see God is wonderful when it drops from the sky."

Sister Joyce, along with Sister Martha Duawome and Sister Justine Agbeko, came here in mid-March from the Diocese of Ho, in Ghana. The West African nation is near the equator and has tropical weather year-round.

Their order, the Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church, has nearly 100 sisters and was formed 54 years ago. It is part of the rapid growth the Catholic religion and its religious orders are seeing on the African continent.

The order is based in Ho, but the sisters work



PHOTO BY KEITH BENMAN/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Sisters (from left) Justine Agbeko, Joyce Frances Nfodzo, and Martha Duawome, stand in the library of the diocesan education center in early April. The three are members of the Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church and have come from Ghana to work with the residents at St. Joseph's Home, in Ogdensburg.

around the nation of Ghana. They also established a small mission in New York City a few years ago.

Sister Bernadette Collins, the diocese's episcopal delegate for religious, said one of the sisters in New York City described the order's mission as: "Any kind of work a mother might do for her children."

Sisters Joyce, Martha and Justine are looking forward to getting to work at St. Joseph's

Home, the nursing home on Linden Street, in Ogdensburg. The home "exists to express the Roman Catholic Church's concern for the elderly in need of care and those chronically ill," according to its mission statement.

The sisters say they know the culture and language are different here. But one thing will remain the same.

"When one is sick, one wants someone to care for them," said Sister

Joyce. "It's the same in Ghana as here."

The three will be providing basic resident and spiritual care at the nursing home. They are also looking forward to learning about how health care is done here.

"Here you have all the facilities and all the equipment," Sister Martha said. "Over there, in Ghana, we don't have a lot of the equipment. So that will be a big difference."

Sister Martha is a trained nurse but would have to wait to get licensing before providing higher levels of care here. Sister Justine is trained as a nutritionist and Sister Joyce is an educator.

It was about a year ago that Bishop Terry LaValley got a letter from the Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church inquiring if the diocese was in need of missionaries, said Sister Bernadette. The lack of sisters is sorely felt here, so after making inquiries bishop LaValley

eagerly accepted the offer.

"It was exciting," Sister Bernadette said. "It's really nice to have sisters coming in and from different cultures. It's good for the Church. They bring a different perspective to things."

The three Ghanaian sisters already have created a bit of a stir in the hamlet of Lisbon, where they have established a convent in the parish house of Ss. Philip and James Church.

It's not everyday three women from Ghana wearing religious habits are seen in the small rural hamlet. They get a lot of questions. The most asked question is: "How do you like the weather here?" That's followed by: "What's the temperature in Ghana?"

Since arriving in mid-March they have attended Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral during the week and on Sundays at Ss. Philip and James. They already have enjoyed an evening out at the Knights of Columbus Friday night fish fry in Ogdensburg.

The three realize they are now taking part in a kind of role reversal that is sweeping global Catholicism. Whereas a century or two ago missionaries were sent from Europe and the United States to Africa, the flow is now going the other way.

Sister Joyce said there is great enthusiasm for Christianity among the young in Ghana.

"It's the faith of the people that sustains the church," she said. "The background of our religion is it's a lively religion. When you become a Christian, the lively aspect is still in Christianity."

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Celebrating Divine Mercy

By Michelle Beagle
Contributing Writer

On April 7, people from far and wide gathered at St. Hedwig's Church in Houseville, to hear the message given to St. Faustina and the promises of Divine Mercy.

Father Severinus Torwoe provided the homily.

Deacon James Chaufy assisted. Father Douglas Decker and Father Daniel Chapin heard confessions. There was an opportunity to attend confession, silent prayer in adoration, view a movie, The Miracle Box, recitation of the Chaplet, benediction, blessing of holy cards and petitions, adoration of the Divine Mercy Image followed by a reception in the church hall.

"Mercy is a running stream, the source of a river, a spring that flows every day and is there for us to dip ourselves into," Father Torwoe said. "The river of peace, hope, healing. A special moment of Divine Mercy, of grace, an hour to unite ourselves with this flowing river. Not just a river, but blood and water that flowed from Jesus' side. A moment of suffering, difficulties connecting us to the Passion. His mercy is always consistent and unceasing. We must pray the Divine Mercy every day. His mercy is constantly flowing."

Father Torwoe encouraged consistent prayer of the Divine Mercy chaplet.

"It's a mystery - when the end comes," he said. "Only God knows. Be prepared every day. Say the Divine Mercy chap-



PHOTO BY MICHELLE BEAGLE/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Father Severinus Torwoe delivers a homily at the Divine Mercy Mass held April 7 at St. Hedwig's Church in Houseville.

let. It is a blessing. Very powerful. It is one of the many devotions in the church. Pray with your whole heart and mind, 'Jesus I trust in you.' Sometimes, life is like a desert. Very dry. No water. But the river of Divine Mercy (blood and water) flows gently, inviting us to touch the water."

Father Torwoe also encouraged those in attendance to carry and pray with a blessed rosary.

"The rosary is a powerful weapon," he said. "We use it to recite the Chaplet and the beautiful meditation of the most holy Rosary. The rosary is a weapon against the enemy; everyone should carry one - a blessed one. It is so important to have

your rosary blessed. It is a powerful, powerful weapon."

Father shared a story of his trials while trying to enter the priesthood. His order in Africa had a lot of priests and wanted him to stay a Brother. He prayed, wrote a letter, and received a message saying no to his request. He had also taken a copy of his letter and placed it at the foot of the Divine Mercy image. He put his trust in God and left his wish to be ordained to his Divine Mercy. Though many obstacles were presented, his wish became a reality.

Near completion of the celebration, Father sang, "Jesus, Jesus is passing by," while the congregation spontaneously sang in reply.

message of mercy and forgiveness. It reminds us of His incredible love for all. Father's testament of trust in being able to enter the priesthood touched my heart. It struck me, thinking of the holy Rosary as a weapon against evil and how it must be blessed and kept close; otherwise, it is just beads."

"I am thankful for all the hard times and struggles I've encountered, which have helped form who I am today," added Worth. "When I place my complete trust in Jesus, I can make it. I can forgive those who have hurt me, especially after hearing today's message."

"It is so uplifting, the message of forgiveness, letting go," said Hutchins. The enemy, Satan, puts stumbling blocks in front of us to separate us from Jesus. They crop up everywhere, and we can overcome them with Jesus's Divine Mercy."

JOB OPENING

**Secretary for Regional Faith Formation Offices,
Formation for Ministry and Vocations Coordinator**

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg has an immediate opening for the full-time position of **Secretary for Regional Faith Formation Offices, Formation for Ministry and Vocations Coordinator**. The Secretary is responsible for supporting the work of the Regional Assistant Directors of Faith Formation, the daily operation of the Western Faith Formation office as well as duties assigned by the Eastern Faith Formation Director. The secretary also supports the work of the Formation for Ministry Office and the Vocations Office. The Secretary must possess strong secretarial and computer skills. Knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel is required. Strong interpersonal skills and good oral and written communication skills are also required. Pay Rate: \$17.04/hour - \$17.63/hour.

Submit letter of interest, resume and three professional references to: Human Resources Office
Diocese of Ogdensburg,
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or e-mail to: ksnover@rcdony.org.

Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled.

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A GROWING VOICE

On the hunt

Life is like a scavenger hunt. This thought came to me while participating in a scavenger hunt for a youth retreat in Schroon Lake last week.

The rules of a scavenger hunt are fairly common knowledge: you start with a single clue, which then leads you to the next clue, and so on, with all the clues together leading you to your surprise or result.

Without these clues, you have effectively no chance of finding whatever it is you are looking for. Furthermore, these clues

and the scavenger hunt in its entirety could not exist unless someone set it up.

In this metaphor, God is the one who has created the scavenger hunt for each of us individually to find our way to Heaven.

Every one of us has a unique purpose, and God has a plan for each of us. Sometimes, His guidance may seem like a riddle, like we



Erin Savarie

no idea what He is trying to tell us. Sometimes, He has hidden our 'clues' in hard-to-reach crevices, and we may not want to follow and retrieve them.

However, if we follow where our 'clues' take us and do not wander aimlessly, trying to figure it out on our own, we will reach our destination, and the result will be greater than we could have ever imagined.

Therefore, just like in a scav-

enger hunt, we must trust the process and follow the clues that God has provided for us.

The journey may not always be easy, and there will be obstacles along the way, but if we remain focused and determined, we will eventually reach our destination. It may take time, effort, and patience, but the end result will be worth it.

It's important to remember that we are not alone in this journey; God is always with us, guiding us every step of the way.

OBITUARIES

Alexandria Bay – Robert P. Hedden, 87; Mass of Christian Burial April 10, 2024 at St. Cyril's Church; burial in Riverside Cemetery, Wellesley Island.

Brushton – Ruth Ethel (Smith) Russell, 88; Funeral Services April 4, 2024 at Flint Funeral Home.

Brushton – Margaret E. (Haskell) Leahy, 84; Mass of Christian Burial April 9, 2024 at St. Mary's Church.

Canton – Brenda C. (Raven) Sanderson, 82; Mass of Christian Burial April 9, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Hermon Cemetery.

Carthage – Shirley Ann (Bruno) Bowman, 88; Mass of Christian Burial April 2, 2024 at St. James Church; burial in Sunnyside Cemetery.

Carthage – Christopher L. Cole, 64; Funeral Services D.L. Calarco Funeral Home, Inc.; burial in New St. James Cemetery.

Chateaugay – Margaret E. "Peggy" (Feeny) Dwyer, 80; Mass of Christian Burial April 11, 2024 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Edwards – Helena M. "Nene" Klock, 76; Funeral Services April 11, 2024 at French Funeral Home;

burial in Fairview Cemetery.

Fort Covington – Ethel Ann (Brockway) Eldridge, 78; Memorial Mass to be held at a later date.

Hogansburg – Bernadine Elizabeth Herne, 56; Mass of Christian Burial April 9, 2024 at St. Regis Church; burial in Kateri Cemetery.

Keeseville – Donald E. LeClair, 79; Funeral Services April 3, 2024 at the Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in Immaculate Conception Cemetery.

Lowville – Lettie "Marilyn" (Tucker) Graves, 87; Funeral Services April 13, 2024 at the Isenecker Funeral Home, Inc.; burial in Brantingham Cemetery.

Lowville – Deborah Ann (Lane) Platt, 65; Funeral Services April 21, 2024 at Isenecker Funeral Home, Inc.

Lyon Mountain – Robert A. Rissetto Sr., 92; Mass of Christian Burial April 5, 2024 at St. Bernard's Church.

Malone – John H. McCarthy, 91; Funeral Services April 5, 2024 at St. Mary-Murphy-Wilcox Funeral Home; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Malone – Agnes Geraldine

(Kirnan) Murphy, 91; Mass of Christian Burial April 19, 2024 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Malone – Mary (Allen) Vincent, 65; Mass of Christian Burial July 8, 2024 at Notre Dame Church.

Massena – Mary A. (Mitchell) Bush, 89; Mass of Christian Burial April 4, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Brushton.

Massena – F. Larry Danko, 70; Funeral Services April 12, 2024 at the Phillips Memorial Home; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Morrisonville – Mary Ann (Plumadore) Foley, 81; Mass of Christian Burial April 10, 2024 at St. Alesander's Church; burial in St. Alexander's Cemetery.

Norfolk – Richard L. Bond, 96; Funeral Services April 2, 2024 at the Buck Funeral home; burial in Visitation Cemetery.

North Bangor – Harold W. French, 86; Memorial Mass April 5, 2024 at St. Augustine's Church.

Ogdensburg – Wayne L. Ashley, 74; Funeral Services April 13, 2024 at Frary Funeral Home.

Peru – Dawne (LaVoie) LaBom-

bard; Mass of Christian Burial April 5, 2024 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Christopher B. Columbe, 58; Mass of Christian Burial April 13, 2024 at St. Peter's Church.

Plattsburgh – Jeanne M. (McCambley) O'Leary, 94; Mass of Christian Burial April 12, 2024 at St. John's Church; burial in Mt. Carmel Cemetery.

Redwood – Robert L. Funda, Sr., 95; Mass of Christian Burial April 6, 2024 at St. Francis Xavier Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Rouses Point – Joseph Lawrence Proulx, 83; Mass of Christian Burial April 11, 2024 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Champlain.

Saranac Lake – Shirley Margaret (Cavill) Willette, 88; Graveside Services Summer 2024 at St. Bernard's Cemetery.

St. Regis Falls – Joyce C. (Susice) Cox, 88; Mass of Christian Burial April 11, 2024 at St. Ann's Church; burial in Sand Hill Cemetery, Dickinson Center.

Ticonderoga – Marcelle Catherine (Buckman) Frasier, 68; Funeral Services April 3, 2024 at Wilcox &

Regan Funeral Home.

Tupper Lake – Simone M. (LaChance) Vachone, 91; Mass of Christian Burial April 12, 2024 at St. Alphonsus Church.

Watertown – Debra O. (Uscio) Dennee, 69; Funeral Services April 4, 2024 at Reed & Benoit Funeral Home; burial in Adams Rural Cemetery.

Watertown – LTC Christopher E. Hornbarger, 56; Mass of Christian Burial April 5, 2024 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Watertown – Sheila M. (Corbett) Kane, 60; Mass of Christian Burial April 3, 2024 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

Westport – Jean (Carpenter) Paquette, 83; Mass of Christian Burial April 11, 2024 at St. Philip Neri Church.

Wilmington – Ted George Holzer, 64; Mass of Christian Burial April 13, 2024 at St. Margaret's Church.

Winthrop – Pamela M. "Topsy" (Sweet) McLaughlin, 69; Funeral Services April 6, 2024 at Hammill Funeral Home; burial in Mound Hill Cemetery.

April 21 is World Day of Prayer for Vocations

By Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ
Diocesan Vocations Coordinator

Pope Francis' message, "Called to Sow Seeds of Hope and To Build Peace" on World Day of Prayer for Vocations, is one of recognizing the Good Shepherd's voice and hearing His voice as He calls each of us by name to be open to the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. Pope Francis invites all of us "to participate in his loving plan and to embody the beauty of the Gospel in different states of life. Hearing that divine call, which is far from being an imposed duty - even in the name of a religious ideal - is the surest way for us to fulfil our deepest desire for happiness. Our life finds fulfilment when we discover who we are, what our gifts are, where we can make them bear fruit, and what path we can follow in order to become signs and instruments of love, generous acceptance, beauty and peace, wherever we find ourselves."

This is a day to be grateful for the many graces and blessings we have been given as children of God. All of us are called by our baptism to be holy and to be saints. This is the day to recall the many hidden sacrifices of mothers and fathers with the graces of the Sacrament of Matrimony, who in so many selfless ways, provide for their family from early childhood, to adulthood and beyond to form, nurture, educate their children to sow seeds of hope in the faith and to guide them into full maturity in order to build a world of peace and justice.

It is with the strengthening of family life that

teaches and encourages their children to listen to the voice of the Good Shepherd to be what God wants them to be. What does God want of them, not what "mom and dad want them to be!" Young people often experience and hear different voices in a culture that often sends mixed messages. Pope Francis encourages young people "especially those who feel distant or uncertain about the Church,... Let Jesus draw you to himself; bring him your important questions by reading the Gospels; let him challenge you by his presence, which always provokes in us a healthy crisis. More than anyone else, Jesus respects our freedom. He does not impose but proposes. Make room for him, and you will find the way to happiness by following him. And, should he ask it of you, by giving yourself completely to him."

The Church of Ogdensburg has been blessed with the voice of our shepherd, Bishop Terry R. LaValley as our bishop, who has spoken with gratitude of the diverse charisms and vocations in the diocese. There are active priests and retired priests who continually serve the people of God in the parishes, bringing to them the sacraments that unite us as the Body of Christ. They travel as pilgrims of hope encouraging their people to be united in faith and love as living stones of the Body of Christ, the Church.

Consecrated religious men and women in different parts of the diocese are bringing seeds of hope to the sick in hospitals, homes, nursing homes, teaching and ministering among

the poor, the migrants, homeless, and more.

On this day of prayer for vocations, let us implore the Good Shepherd to send laborers into His harvest (Luke 10:2). It is listening to the voice of the Shepherd more than talking about Him. By our prayer, we give access to the voice of the Shepherd to open our door so that with His

grace, we become seeds of hope to building a place of peace in a world so desperately in need of God's love.

Let us be pilgrims of hope and builders of peace with effort of God's grace, even when we falter. The seeds of God's grace picks us up to continue the journey. No matter what our vocation is, married, single,

priest, or consecrated life, we are graced to be what the Good Shepherd calls us to be, women and men of hope. To the young people, as Pope Francis said in Lisbon, "Rise Up! Have the courage to commit." As Mary was a pilgrim of hope for Elizabeth, let us be messengers of hope and joy bringing peace to the world.

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Environmental Stewardship

Through the lens of faith

You may recall the story of Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, who was a great man in the view of his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant warrior, but afflicted with leprosy. Then, a little slave Israelite girl told his wife if he went to the prophet in Samaria, he would be healed. Naaman is finally convinced to go to the prophet, Elisha. He is told by the prophet to bathe seven times in the River Jordan. Naaman goes away angry, expecting the prophet to do something spectacular not just tell him to bathe in the river. Then, one of his men convinces him to go back and do this simple act and he is cured. What if Naaman had not gone back and done the simple act suggested?

Have you ever felt overwhelmed by the "sickness" happening to the earth that is causing dis-ease for all on the planet? What if the simple actions that we are told would help to promote our health and the health of the plant, like Naaman, we dismiss them as not significant enough to bother doing?

What if, however, I saw this challenge to help heal the "sickness" we have caused as an integral part of our Catholic faith? Pope Benedict XVI asked us to recognize that the natural environment has been gravely damaged by our irresponsible behavior. "The misuse of creation begins when we no longer recognize any higher instance than ourselves, when we see nothing else but ourselves."

This year's theme for Earth Day, April 22, is Planet vs. Plastics, and the web page offers ideas for action to all ages. What if, out of loving concern and respect for the health of ourselves and others, we found one single-use plastic practice that we are willing to eliminate by finding a substitute? Suggestion: start with something simple like plastics straws, cups, plastic bags/containers etc. (374)

Deacon John Murray died April 8

A Mass of Christian Burial for Deacon John R. Murray will be celebrated at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, April 17, at St. Mary's Church in Clayton.

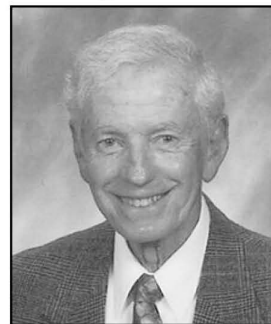
Burial will follow in the parish cemetery.

Deacon Murray, 89, of Clayton, passed away April 8, 2024, at St. Joseph's Home, Ogdensburg where he had resided for four years.

He was born in Syracuse on February 11, 1935, the son of Frank

B. and Elizabeth (O'Hara) Murray, and graduated from St. Anthony's School, Syracuse. On October 22, 1955, he married Beverly J. McCloy at St. Anthony's Church, Syracuse.

He was a relay tester for Niagara Mohawk, Syracuse for 27 years, retiring in November 1994. However, Deacon Murray's true passion was the Catholic Church, and his proudest achievement was being ordained a deacon on August 8, 1987. He served as a dea-



Deacon John R. Murray

con for 32 years, including at St. Anne's Church, Manlius, and St. Patrick's Church, Chittenango. While in Syracuse, he was a member of the Bernie Schmidt Singers, Pieta Prayer Group in Liverpool, and Divine Mercy

Prayer Group, and he volunteered at Community Hospital. John also was a member of the Third Order of Franciscans.

Upon retirement, John and Beverly moved to Clayton and their home on the river in 1997. John served as a Deacon at St. Anthony's Church, Watertown, and was a communicant at St. Mary's Church, Clayton.

Deacon Murray volunteered for Meals on Wheels, the Clayton Opera House, and the Antique Boat Museum. In 2012, he was Jefferson County Volunteer of the Year.

Deacon Murray is survived by his wife of 69 years, Beverly, of Ogdensburg; one daughter, Linda Stagnitta (partner Tom Booth), Alexandria Bay; and six sons, John R. Murray, Jr., Chittenango, William P. (Hazel) Murray, Nicaragua, David A. Murray, Chandler, Arizona, Daniel J. (Elizabeth) Murray, Clayton, Scott A. Murray, Syracuse, and Christopher J. (Jessica) Murray, Clayton; eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren; a brother Thomas M. (Linda) Murray, Houston, Texas; and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

He was predeceased by his son, Steven F. Murray, on March 2, 1996, and by his brother, Francis H. Murray, in 2008.

Arrangements are entrusted with Cummings Funeral Service, Inc., Clayton and online condolences to John's family may be posted at www.cummingsfuneral.com. The family would like to thank the staff at St. Joseph's Nursing Home for their care and devotion to John and in lieu of flowers, please make donations to St. Joseph's Foundation at 950 Linden St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669.

Rest in Peace

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

April 10 – Rev. Maurice Morin, M.S.C., 1976

April 11 – Rev. John P. Whalen, O.S.A., 1947

April 13 – Rev. Callistus Scheid, O.F.M. Conv., 1854; Rev. Emil Krancewicz, O.F.M. Conv., 1974; Deacon Richard Warner Sr., 2018

April 14 – Msgr. Richard F. Pierce, 1935; Rev. Alfred Valiquette, O.S.A., 1949

April 15 – Msgr. Peter O. LaRose, 1918; Rev. Alfred J. Chevalier, 1996

April 16 – Deacon Vernon J. Chamberlain, 1993

April 17 – Rev. Peter J. Devlin, 1915; Rev. Vernon L. Doe, 1975; Rev. C. Albert Richardson, 1988; Msgr. Joseph G. Bailey, 2000

April 19 – Rev. William S. Kelly, 1908; Rev. Edward C. Laramee, 1932; Rev. William P. Fraser, 1961

April 20 – Rev. James Igo, 2007

April 21 – Msgr. Michael E. Fogarty, 1936

April 22 – Rev. Daniel M. Sullivan, 1933

April 23 – Rev. L. Victor Petit, O.M.I., 1898; Most Rev. Henry Gabriels, 1921

Bishop's Public Schedule

April 17 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

April 18 – 9:45 a.m. – Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence followed by Lunch 1:30 p.m. – Meeting with the Deans of the Diocese of Ogdensburg at Bishop's Residence

5:30 p.m. – Mass at St. Anthony's Church in Watertown followed by a Presentation for the Commissioned Lay Ministers in the Jefferson-Lewis Deanery

April 19 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

April 20 – 11 a.m. – Diocesan Youth Rally at Trinity Catholic School in Massena followed by Mass at St. Peter's Parish (at Sacred Heart Church)

April 21 – 10:30 a.m. – Confirmation at The Roman Catholic Community of St. Alexander and St. Joseph in Morrisonville with St. James Church in Cadyville and St. Augustine's Church in Peru

April 22 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

April 23 – 5 p.m. – Hors d'oeuvres followed by Dinner with the Newly Ordained and New Priests to the Diocese at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

April 24 – 11:45 a.m. – Mass at Elderwood of Uihlein in Lake Placid

Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration is required. Preregister at www.virtus.org. Upcoming sessions: **April 24** – 6 p.m. – Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Watertown

To Report Abuse

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

Pope decries abortion of 'unborn with disabilities'

By Courtney Mares
Catholic News Agency

Pope Francis decried how "the unborn with disabilities are aborted" in a speech on Thursday to a Vatican conference on disability inclusion.

The pope warned that "the throwaway culture" turns into "a culture of death" when people "presume to be able to establish, on the basis of utilitarian and functional criteria, when a life has value and is worth being lived."

He pointed out that we see this today especially on the two extremes of the spectrum of life - "the unborn with disabilities are aborted and the elderly close to the end are administered an 'easy death' by euthanasia."

According to the University of Notre Dame's McGrath Institute for Church Life, it's estimated that there are as many as 27,000 abortions annually due to a poor prenatal diagnosis in the United States.

"Every human being has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally. Even if they are unproductive, or were born with or develop limitations, this does not detract from their great dignity as human persons, a dignity based not on circumstances but on the intrinsic worth of their being," Pope Francis said in the Apostolic Palace's Clementine Hall on April 11.

The pope addressed this message to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, which is made up of academics and professionals in the fields of law, political science,

economics, and sociology.

The academy is meeting at the Vatican this week for its plenary session on disability inclusion.

"The plenary intends to take up the challenge and make its own contribution by identifying what ... represent the barriers that increase the disability of a society and prevent persons with disability from fully participating in social life," the plenary session's program says.

The three-day conference includes discussions on the rights of persons with disabilities, policies for greater economic inclusion, and philosophical perspectives on disability and the human condition.

In his speech to the pontifical academy, Pope Francis underlined that "vulnerability and frailty are part of the human condition and not something proper only to persons with disabilities."

He said that "combating the throwaway culture calls for promoting the culture of inclusion" by "forging and consolidating the bonds of belonging within society."

The pope added that "the bonds of belonging become even stronger when persons with disabilities are not simply passive receivers but take an active part in the life of society as agents of change."

According to the Pontifical Academy for Social Sciences, there is no exact number for the amount of people with disabilities worldwide, but international organizations estimate that 16%

of the world's population experience significant disabling conditions.

The "First World Report on Disability" found that people with some form of physical, sensory, or intellectual impairment experience multiple disadvantages compared with the rest of the population, which include barriers in accessing services, lower levels of education, poverty, and less participation in political and cultural life.

"Sadly, in various parts of the world, many persons and families continue to be isolated and forced to the margins of social life because of disabilities," Pope Francis said.

"And this not only in poorer countries, where the majority of disabled persons live and where their condition often condemns them to extreme poverty, but also in situations of greater prosperity, where, at times, handicaps are considered a 'personal tragedy' and the disabled 'hidden exiles,' treated as foreigners in society."

In the pontifical academy's concept note for the plenary session, the academy recognized the strong solidarity found in family associations that support and accompany families who care for disabled individuals, noting that this solidarity takes on a social significance.

Pope Francis highlighted that "the Church's care and concern for those with one or more disabilities concretely reflects the many encounters of Jesus with such persons, as described in the Gospels."

CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

CRS calls for 'immediate end' to violence in Gaza

Global aid organization Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is calling for an "immediate end" to violence in Gaza as workers struggle to bring critical aid to the population six months into the ongoing Israel-Hamas war. CRS is the official international Catholic relief and development agency of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. In a press release this week, the group said it was reissuing its call "for an immediate end to the violence" and "greater humanitarian access to ensure innocent civilians can access food, shelter, and medical attention." CRS also called on "protection for humanitarians and innocent civilians and the immediate release of all hostages and others unjustly detained." Jason Knapp, the Holy Land representative for the U.S.-based Catholic group, told CNA last week that while CRS is "working hard to keep our team as safe as possible," it remains "committed to doing everything we can to address the significant humanitarian needs of civilians in Gaza."

Plenary indulgence granted for Eucharistic Congress

Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio, the president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), announced April 9 the opportunity for Catholics who participate in the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and the National Eucharistic Congress to receive plenary indulgences. Broglio requested that the Apostolic Penitentiary, the office in charge of granting plenary indulgences within the Roman Curia, grant a plenary indulgence to all those who take part in the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage. It was also requested that he or another prelate be designated to impart the apostolic blessing with a plenary indulgence to the faithful present at the National Eucharistic Congress, which takes place July 17-21 in Indianapolis. "It is with gratitude to the Holy Father that we receive his apostolic blessing upon the participants in the National Eucharistic Congress and for the opportunity for Catholics in our country to obtain a plenary indulgence by participating in the events of the Eucharistic Revival," Broglio said in a statement released by the USCCB.

College association bans biological men from women's sports

The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) approved a policy on Monday that stated that biological men cannot compete in women's sports in NAIA-sponsored college sports. The NAIA includes 249 schools across the U.S. and Canada, most of which are small, private colleges. Catholic colleges such as Benedictine College in Kansas, Ave Maria University in Florida, Loyola University in New Orleans, and Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College in Indiana are members of the league. Texas A&M University-San Antonio is also a member. The decision, in a 20-0 vote, followed a December survey that found widespread support for the proposed rule among the association's members. Of the 68 schools that responded to the survey, 58 were in favor of the policy change, according to a CBS report.

SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE

Shepherd to the flock

April 21

Fourth Sunday of Easter

READINGS

Acts 4:8-12

1 John 3:1-2

John 10:11-18

*This homily is offered
courtesy of a priest of
the Diocese of Ogdensburg.*

If I started by speaking to you about Psalm 23 without being more specific, you might not know what I was talking about. But, if I said, "The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want," you would have something to grab onto, a point of reference. That psalm is often the responsorial psalm used at funerals. In Catholic images, we see Jesus represented as a good shepherd always watching out for us, always protecting and caring for us, always trying to keep us safe as a shepherd would take care of his sheep.

Yes, Jesus presents himself as the good shepherd. Remember that the Church is a continuation of Jesus in the world today. Pope Francis often speaks about the Church's role to shepherd and guide; he em-

phasizes that the shepherds are to reach out to those in need, providing guidance and direction to those who have gone astray.

Admittedly, when he speaks in this way, the Holy Father often is exhorting the leadership, the pastors of the church, to extend God's care and mercy to those who need it the most. Pastors see the great need to act as a conduit of God's mercy to all. Every pastor knows that, as a leader, he must watch out for what people need even if they don't realize or understand what they need. Using the analogy of sheep and shepherd, the shepherd may have to go after a sheep and nudge the sheep back to the fold even if the sheep is quite happy somewhere else. Likewise, a pastor seeks out people and finds a

does not necessarily mean going off the deep end. Going astray can be very slight, but the slight straying often leads to a great departure.

How can you be a shepherd? There are multiple ways. Is there someone in your life who is homebound and cannot come to church? Well, help that person contact the pastor to arrange for someone to make home visits with the Eucharist on a regular basis. Is there someone in your family whose marriage was never celebrated in the Church? Encourage that person to seek sacramental marriage. Has a Catholic relative of yours died, and the family has decided not to provide a proper Catholic funeral? You could be the shepherd's voice reminding the relatives of that person's deep devotion to

the sacraments. Do you know someone who is pregnant? In your role as shepherd, you could suggest that the person start preparing for the child's baptism even before the baby is born by attending the parish's preparation program. Is there someone in your life who has not yet returned to regular attendance at Mass after Covid. You could invite that person to come back sooner than later. All of these are very concrete ways to emulate the role of good shepherd reaching out to keep the fold intact and healthy.

Jesus is the original good shepherd. We should imitate and reflect his care and concern for those entrusted to him. Be a good shepherd to those whom you meet and steer them in the right direction. Be the shepherd. Lead the way.

CALLED TO SERVE

One more thought on the eclipse

The total eclipse was both precisely predictable and undeniably mysterious. The moon's shadow swept across the United States at a remarkable 1,500 miles per hour. At the center of that path, however briefly, the midday sun vanished entirely - the period of an eclipse known as "totality."

That's how Nicole Filbert described the eclipse experience writing for *USA Today*.

By the time you read this column, the eclipse will be "old news," "a distant memory," or as we used to say in the Broadcast Center of our print journalism friend's product, "it is now bird cage liner."

However, the reality of the eclipse remains fresh in my mind as I write, so

please put up with a next-day reflection from me and perhaps a pleasant memory or two for you.

The weekend before the eclipse, a priest friend was telling me that he often heard "end of the world" comments in the confessional. He would debunk them.

Had it been the end of the world we wouldn't care anyway, right?

The day of the eclipse, the Church celebrated the Annunciation. The commemoration of an angel telling Mary she was to be the mother of God made Man. Forgive me, but I think that announcement is more important than the three and a half minutes of cosmic coincidence experienced April 8, 2024. That's the cynic in me.

In Plattsburgh "the

crowds mostly seemed mellow as they waited in great anticipation of the celestial event. There were families, individuals, young, old, and middle-aged people of all walks of life all looking skyward with their special eclipse glasses affixed to their faces and foreheads. Wherever crowds were gathered there was a collective oooh and aaahh and loud sustained cheering when the moon totally eclipsed the sun," according to the *Press-Republican*.

Craig Fox of the *Watertown Daily Times* was in Thompson Park, the highest point in the City of Watertown. He quoted

one sky watcher as saying of the eclipse, "That was incredible to see. It was cool to be in the dark and then the light came back."

I was on a deck in my daughter's backyard with members of my family. It got darker and colder as the moon crossed the bright sun's path. Occasionally the clouds blocked our view of the eclipse, but we were patient.

When the eclipse reached "totality" it was very, very quiet. The birds stopped singing; we did not hear any traffic. We had donned sweaters and blankets because the temperature had fallen by at least ten degrees.

I wondered how we would survive if this was permanent. Hmmm.

Then I thought about the creation story in Genesis. "Then God said let there be light and there was light. God saw how good the light was. God then separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day,' and the darkness he called 'night.'"

He put everything in rhythm so things like a total eclipse can be "precisely predictable." Yet for us mere mortals an eclipse and all God has created is "undeniably mysterious."

Praise God.

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



Deacon
Kevin Mastellon

APRIL 17, 2024

VIRTUAL EVENTS

PRIESTHOOD DISCERNMENT

Are you a single Catholic man who is hearing the Lord's call to the priesthood? Join others who are listening.

Date: Apr. 28

Time: 4 to 5 p.m.

Place: Online

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

Contact: Register at www.rcdony.org/priesthooddiscernment

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM

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

Date: May 15

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

Features: Lunch will be provided. Join Mercy Care's nearly 100 Friendship Volunteers from the tri-lakes and surrounding areas who are helping their elder neighbors stay connected to their communities and making their lives easier and happier.

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 Katherine Rhodes, Mercy Care's Elder Care Manager, at krhodes@adkmercy.org or call 518-523-5585

CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

COMPASSIONATE COMPANIONS VOLUNTEER TRAINING

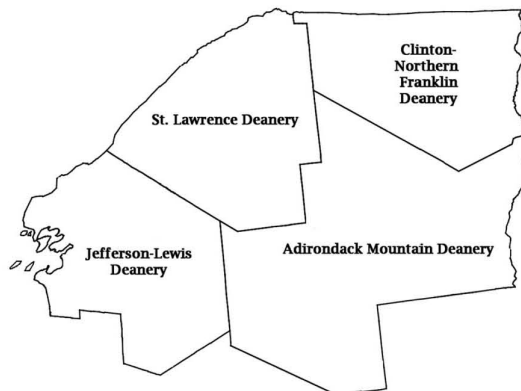
Plattsburgh - Compassion Companions of Clinton County to have a volunteer training.

Date: April 19

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

Place: St. Joseph's Community Outreach Center

Features: Compassionate Companion Trained Volunteers are kind people carrying out errands of mercy to help their neighbors



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.

age in place more successfully by providing their gifts of companionship and friendship, and enabling participation in the life of their communities.

Contact: For more information contact Starr at 518-825-0697 or Starr@stalexanders.org

LENTEN SERIES

Ellenburg - Join us for a series of Lenten Talks, Sharing and Prayer.

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Place: Adirondack House of Prayer

Schedule: April 20, Discipleship in Three Stories in Mark: come and discover the process of discipleship illustrated by three stories in the Gospel of Mark followed by a simple lunch and a Holy Hour; April 23, Eucharist and the Call to Discipleship: Come and join us for a presentation on the Eucharist and the Call to Discipleship followed by a simple lunch and a Holy Hour.

Features: Free and open to all. A donation to help cover lunch will be gratefully accepted.

Contact: For registration, contact Sarah at 518-534-9976 or Email: olaprayehouse@gmail.com

SPRING BREAKFAST

Altona - The Ladies of St. Ann will be preparing a breakfast.

Date: April 21

Time: 8 a.m. to noon

Place: Holy Angels Hall

Cost: Adults, \$12; Children

5-12, \$7; Under 5, Free

Contact: For more information call, 518-236-5632

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

CLM MASS AND PRESENTATION

Watertown - The Commissioned Lay Ministry Association of the Jefferson-Lewis Deanery presents Mass and a presentation.

Date: April 18

Time: Mass at 5:30 p.m. with dinner and presentation following.

Place: St. Anthony's Church
Cost: \$20 if attending the dinner, no charge if only coming to the program.

Features: Presentation entitled "The Eucharist and Reconciliation" by Bishop Terry LaValley.

Contact: To register go to <https://www.rcdony.org/clm-event>

SPAGHETTI DINNER

Watertown - St. Anthony's Altar and Rosary Society to have a Spaghetti Dinner.

Date: April 25

Time: 4 p.m. to 7

Place: St. Anthony's Msgr. Sechi Hall

Cost: Adult, \$10; Child, \$7

Features: Take-out available, please bring your own containers.

ST. LAWRENCE

CATHOLIC PARENTING

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

Date: April 21

Time: 12:30

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

ORGAN CONCERT

Ogdensburg - German organist and composer Paul Fey journeys to Ogdensburg as part of a U.S. Tour.

Date: April 24

Time: 7 p.m.

Place: St. Mary's Cathedral

Features: The program titled "Music from Leipzig," includes composers who have lived and worked in Leipzig, Germany, starting with the famous J.S. Bach and continuing through the centuries, including works by the artist himself. The concert is free and open to the public. A light reception will follow.

Contact: For more information, please call the parish office at 315-393-3930.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

DOVS RAFFLE

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Vocation Society (DOVS) is having a Raffle from Sunday, April 21-June 20, 2024 to support promoting the culture of vocations in the Diocese.

Cost: The cost of the tickets is \$5 or 5 tickets for \$20.

Features: 1st Prize--\$500; 2nd Prize--Quilt and Rocking Chair; 3rd Prize--\$50 gift card, \$25. Visa Gift Card, \$25 Gift Card to Walmart.

Contact: For any questions, contact Constance Randall,

coonierandall47@yahoo.com
(315) 783-0574.

LEAD EVENTS

The following is a list of LEAD (Leaders for Evangelization and Discipleship) events

Schedule: April 27, Massena, St. Mary's Social Hall, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., "Using CHOSEN as a Tool for Catechesis", <https://www.rcdony.org/Chosen1>, \$10

May 4, Plattsburgh Regional Office, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., "Fostering Holiness in Children"; No Cost

May 8, Virtual, 6 p.m. to 8, "Fostering Holiness in Children"; No Cost

Features: All involved in parish ministries are invited to attend LEAD events. If there is a cost associated with the event, parishes may receive a bill.

Contact: To register go to: www.rcdony.org/certworkshops unless otherwise noted.

YOUTH RALLY

Massena - Diocesan Youth Rally to be held for grades 6-12.

Date: April 20

Time: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Place: Trinity Catholic School

Cost: \$20 per student, \$10 per chaperone

Features: Games, Music, Food, Fun, and Faith. Mass with Bishop LaValley at 4 p.m.

Contact: To register go to <http://www.rcdony.org/newsevents/youth-rally.html> or contact asoltero@rcdony.org

RACHELS VINEYARD

Saranac Lake - A Rachel's Vineyard After-Abortion Healing Retreat to be held.

Date: May 24-26

Place: Guggenheim Lodge

Features: If you or a friend are suffering after abortion loss, you are not alone. Find hope and healing at the spring Rachel's Vineyard Retreat.

Contact: Register online: www.rcdony.org/pro-life or contact The Respect Life Office for information: cminer@rcdony.org or www.rachelsvineyard.org for a list of locations.

GET THE POPCORN

“Killers of the Flower Moon”

A few weeks ago, the New York Times crossword puzzle had the clue “Popcorn container at the movies.” The answer had to be three letters. I guessed box or bag, but the ultimate answer was tub. You will need a tub of popcorn in order to have enough for the 3.5 hour viewing of “Killers of the Flower Moon,” from Martin Scorsese currently available on Paramount and Apple TV+ streaming services.

At the end of the film, the words of Psalm came to mind: “All have left the right path; depraved, every one; there is not a good man left, no, not even one.”

The three main characters interact on various human, ethical, ethnical, and moral levels. Ernest Burkhardt (Leonard DiCaprio) comes across as a veteran World War I soldier looking to build his life with the help of his uncle Bill Hale (Robert De Niro).

Ernest seems innocent, but, at first blush, Bill exudes a shadiness

that is hard to pinpoint. Bill hints at the advantage of finding an Osage Indian wife because that will be wealth to them and to their children.

At the end of the nineteenth century, oil was miraculously, as portrayed in the movie, discovered on land owned by the Osage people. This discovery automatically delivered wealth and prosperity to the people. As the movie unfolds, one could reasonably question the true human value of this prosperity. In fact, the Osage themselves over time questioned the value in their wealth because the involvement of non-Osage in their lives has complicated and eroded their tribal values. In fact, many white men had

married Osage women to profit from the material value of those relationships.

Ernest, with encouragement from Uncle Bill, dates and eventually marries Mollie Kyle (Lily Gladstone). As the story progresses, the crassness of Uncle Bill and his evil influence on Ernest become more and more evident. Many of the Osage are afflicted with diabetes. Wisely, Molly does not trust the white-man doctors, and will only allow her husband to inject her with insulin. However, Uncle Bill uses his influence to taint the medication with other substances that will bring her to a slow death, thus accelerating Ernest’s access to the Osage inheritance



Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

more evident. Many of the Osage are afflicted with diabetes. Wisely, Molly does not trust the white-man doctors, and will only allow her husband to inject her with insulin. However, Uncle Bill uses his influence to taint the medication with other substances that will bring her to a slow death, thus accelerating Ernest’s access to the Osage inheritance

that Uncle Bill needs.

Does this sound complicated? It is, but all will be revealed as the movie rolls on. In addition, there are several untimely and unexplained and suspicious murders among the Osage. Eventually, federal investigators arrive and unearth the many insidious activities aimed at pillaging the Osage wealth and good fortune.

For those of a certain vintage, a euphemism meaning “old,” the final scenes will bring moments of nostalgia and will pull together the many pieces of the almost bottomless pit of intrigue involved in this story. These final scenes reproduce a classic radio rendition of storytelling that reveal succinctly the entire plot, stories within sto-

ries.

The movie is an adult movie with brief scenes of violence, sensuality, and unsavory language. However, the movie can remind the viewer of the evil involved in unchecked greed, lack of human respect, and forgetting our basic Christian dignity. The movie brings us to a world transformed by greed and egocentrism. Jesus restored humanity to its original beauty which we share especially through Baptism. We should never forget the greatness to which we are called. “Killers of the Flower Moon” shows the results of forgetting this all-important truth.

Next movie to be reviewed is “Oppenheimer.” You’ll need another tub of popcorn for this three-hour event.



Support And Pray
For Vocations

Step into a new day! Find hope & healing at Rachel's Vineyard After-Abortion Healing Retreat



May 24-26 Guggenheim Lodge,
Saranac Lake. Register online:
rcdony.org/pro-life. More info:
Respect Life Office 518-524-0774.

April
is Child Abuse
Prevention
Month

What will your
church do?

Blue Sunday
Day of Prayer for
Abused Children is
always on the last
Sunday of April.
April 28, 2024

How to pray for abused children on Blue Sunday

1. Pray they will be rescued.
2. Pray they are placed with caring people.
3. Pray their minds and bodies can heal.
4. Pray they find hope.
5. Pray for those who rescue them.



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

'Living stones' of the Church in Cambodia

Adult baptisms are a blessing for the Cambodian Church and represent a sign of hope for the small Catholic community of about 20,000 people in a nation of 17 million inhabitants. At the Easter Vigil on March 30, 185 catechumens of the Apostolic Vicariate of Phnom Penh will receive Baptism, along with the other sacraments of "Christian initiation," confirmation and Eucharist. As reported by Bishop Olivier Schmitthaeusler, apostolic vicar of Phnom Penh, the catechumens come from a dozen districts in the territory and have completed an itinerary of knowledge, deepening and discernment about the Christian faith.

The fact that they are young adults is an added value for the community, said Schmitthaeusler, addressing the future baptized in one of the preparation meetings held during the Lenten season. The bishop highlighted three essential aspects to be "a Christian in everyday life:" pray, love and serve.

Bishop Schmitthaeusler invited young people to "pray like Jesus, both in difficulties and in joy" and to "pray like Mary." It is important - he continued - to always keep the relationship with God and with the community alive, also by putting ourselves at service of pastoral needs, with the spirit of being "loving servants" of the community. The image that the bishop proposed to the young catechumens was taken from the letters of Saint Paul, describing them as "living stones" of the Church "by living in our community with a spirit of compassion, in prayer and service," he said.

During the "election" rite, the Apostolic Vicar of Phnom Penh called each of the candidates by name before the altar, inviting them to register their names in the diocesan registry, laying his hand on them.

In 2023, the Cambodian Church baptized a total of 397 young people during the Easter Vigil (167 in Battambang Apostolic Prefecture, 126 in Kampong Cham Prefecture, 104 adults in Phnom Penh). The constant presence of young and adult catechumens, the vicar said in conclusion, is a sign that "the work of God bears fruit in the Cambodian Church, which is alive and growing."

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

Five keys to monitoring kids' online activity

Editor's note: April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. The NCC will be featuring articles about abuse prevention throughout the month. The articles are provided by VIRTUS and are reprinted here with permission.

By Caitlin Bootsma
Virtus

Technology is here to stay. Not only is it here to stay, it's everywhere! Televisions, mobile phones, iPads, interactive video games, smart watches, you name it and it's hooked up online.

The following are five starting points for guiding kids to use the internet and technology safely and well. Each family may come up with their own limits around technology use, but every family should think through how they want to approach these areas of monitoring online activity.

Use Protective Software: One of the most foundational things you can do to manage what your kids access online is accountability and filter software on all of your online devices. Systems like Covenant Eyes, Bark Home Web Filter, Circle, and options on your router or with your internet provider can help you not only limit what sites and apps kids access and when, but also allow you to see their online activity.

Share Passwords and "Friend" or follow Your Kids' Accounts: Many parents establish some ground rules when their kids are old enough to have their own email

and social media accounts. These rules may include friending or following them so that you see what's happening on their pages and/or sharing passwords-though it's important to know that many platforms allow them to block some people from seeing everything. Other rules can include only connecting with people they know in real life and not sharing any personal information such as address, phone number, email, or banking information. You can go through their accounts with them to ensure they are as safe as possible.

Discuss Photo/Video Sharing: Photo/video sharing should only be done with people they know in real life. Let them know any images they choose to share remain online permanently, and that once they share a photo or video, they can't get it back. If anyone ever asks them to send photos or videos of a sexual nature, they should immediately inform a safe adult.

Keep Online Activity Visible: Consider only having your kids use technology in public spaces in the house. This can help reinforce the message that they should not be accessing anything inappropriate

and also make it easy for them to talk to you if they encounter anything questionable. Another option to consider is to remove access to electronic devices during bedtime hours. However, keep in mind that children may take electronic devices with them, or may use technology in places apart from your home, which means that regular conversations are important!

Regularly Talk about Online Activity: It can be easy for adults and kids to become isolated in their online activity; it can easily become their own world, separate from the family. Make technology use part of your dinner table conversation-did they hear from any friends today? Read an interesting article? See something new they want to watch? Like any other area of their lives, technology is a sphere where you can provide invaluable guidance and feedback.

As we know from our own lives as adults in the digital era, the internet has a lot to offer. It also has a number of risks, including safety, online addictions, wasting time, and more. We have the opportunity to help guide our kids how to use the internet safely and well!

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FACES OF FAITH



Seminarian Kevin McCullouch received the Rite of Candidacy on March 10 at St. Patrick's Church, part of Blessed Sacrament Parish in Watertown. McCullouch is pictured with Bishop Terry R. LaValley, who celebrated the rite, and his family. Kevin is the son of Gary and Laura McCullouch.



Diocesan seminarians Venes Laine and Dennis Ombongi recently received a visit from Bishop Terry R. LaValley and Father Christopher C. Carrara, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and director of Seminarians, at Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio.



Bishop Terry R. LaValley and Father Christopher C. Carrara, Episcopal Vicar for Clergy and director of Seminarians, recently visited administrators and diocesan seminarians Kevin McCullouch and Tyler Fitzgerald at Saint Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, Pennsylvania. Pictured are, from left, Father Carrara, McCullouch, Bishop LaValley, Fitzgerald and Father John-Mary Tompkins, OSB, vice rector and director of Human Formation at the seminary. Very Rev. Edward Mazich, OSB, rector of the seminary, is missing from the photo.



Knights from St. Joseph's/ Assumption of Mary Council # 2166 in Dannemora and Redford, and other parishioners hosted a spaghetti meal and silent auction in late January to assist a needy family in the community. The event raised funds to assist the family with funeral expenses for a beloved family member following a long battle with illness.

