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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 69, Number 31

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

DEC. 24, 2014

## CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS



(CNS/BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY)

**Nativity at Night** by Italian Baroque painter Guido Reni depicts the birth of Christ in a Bethlehem manger. The feast of the Nativity of Christ, a holy day of obligation, is celebrated Dec. 25.

## Pope: tree, cheche inspire all to love

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - God did not come to the world with arrogance to impose his might; he offered his powerful love through a fragile child, Pope Francis said.

The Christmas tree and Nativity scene are reminders of this mystery of the Incarnation and they both carry "a message of light, hope and love," the pope said Dec. 19, meeting the people who donated the centerpieces of the Vatican Christmas decorations.

The pope highlighted the

importance of the Christmas creche and tree for Christians, as they are a sign of how "God made man to save us and the light that Jesus brought to the world with his birth."

But the Nativity scene and Christmas tree touch the hearts of everyone, "even those who do not believe because they speak of fraternity, intimacy and friendship, calling all people of our time to rediscover the beauty of simplicity, sharing and solidarity," he said.

### BISHOP ON PILGRIMAGE

Bishop LaValley, Father Douglas Lucia and Father Jay Seymour took part in an Advent pilgrimage to the Holy Land Nov. 30 to Dec. 11. The bishop writes about the experience in this week's "Follow Me" column

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

## A joy-filled retired monsignor



As Catholics in the Diocese of Ogdensburg prepare to donate to the Priests' Retirement Fund through their parish Christmas collections, Msgr. Joseph Aucoin reflected on the joy he has known during his 59 years of priesthood.

### No paper next week

The next issue of the *North Country Catholic* will be dated Jan. 7, 2015. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the *NCC*

### Around the Diocese

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NORTH  
COUNTRY  
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## BISHOP LAVALLEY'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

## Rejoice that God has come into our world

*"How beautiful upon the mountains  
Are the feet of the messenger who announces peace,  
Who brings good news,  
Who announces salvation,  
Who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.'" (Isaiah 52:7)*

**Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:**

We join the watchmen of ancient Israel and sing for joy at our Savior's coming. Today we celebrate our belief that, because God took on human flesh, every person is made holy. In that stable in Bethlehem, the sacred and the profane have come together. Through God's physical entrance into our time and world, even time itself and everything on earth are made holy, are sanctified.

The Church of Ogdensburg has embarked upon a focused journey of holiness. We have encountered the God-Child in the stable and, like the watchmen and then the shepherds of that holiest of nights, we now go out into the streets and onto our country roads, with a message like none other, a message our troubled hearts and fractured world yearns to hear: Find your home in Christ: Renew Faith, Nurture Hope, Discover Love.

Especially on Christmas, we shouldn't forget that too many families are homeless. Many do not know Christ. For some, faith, hope, love--holiness are pipedreams. But we insist that everything has changed! We rejoice that God has come into our world,

in human flesh, and that has made all the difference. The Christmas message we proclaim is born of a vision that sees Christ in every person: particularly the poor and suffering, the persecuted and forgotten.

Christmas is the festival of God's infinite love and mercy, the festival of tomorrow's possibilities, the festival of our salvation--truly a time of hope for all people. Today, in spite of the darkness that envelops so much of our world, we are not resigned to hopelessness or despair. No. Proof of God's hope for the world can be found in the One who wore swaddling clothes in a manger and later a loin cloth on a cross. God has rescued us from the power of darkness. That's the message for every ear to hear and every heart to embrace.

This Christmas, may the Christ Child bring you and your loved ones the Gift of Love, the Blessing of Hope and the Promise of Peace. A blessed Christmas and joy-filled New Year!

Faithfully yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley  
Bishop of Ogdensburg

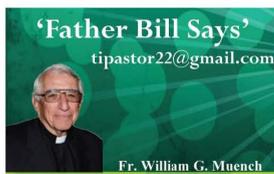
## My Christmas story: the story of William

My Christmas story never changes. I have told it so often yet, I never get tired of it. When I think of the Birth of Christ each year, I think of the day I was at William's birth. It was truly the most exciting day of my life. It was 17 year ago, but seems like yesterday.

I was so pleased when Susan and Paul, my niece and nephew, invited me to be with them at the birth of their second child. I was then at St. Mary's, Ticonderoga, and when I received the call that something was happening in Syracuse, I took right off. I probably set a new record in getting there but I wasn't going to miss this day.

I got there before they had left for the hospital. As it turned out, I was to be their only escort that night as the grandparents were not able to be there. We sat around for a while and finally, Susan said it was time. I noticed during the evening that definitely the mother was always in charge.

Off we went to St. Joseph's Hospital and they checked in. I did overhear one of the nurses commenting to another -- "Why they've brought their



own priest." I did let her know that I was simply a spectator.

Susan decided to take a walk and then announced it was time. The doctor and nurses got busy preparing everything. I was parked over to the side -- a nurse did come over to stand by me. She said she would guide me through what was happening. Actually, I was certain she wanted to make certain I didn't do anything outrageous. I was so caught up in the moment -- I simply didn't move at all.

All sorts of activity began to happen but there was a real spirit of love that filled that room. I was truly transformed watching this young woman with her husband at her side bringing this child into the world. I must admit I don't remember any of the details as I was so absorbed in all that was happening.

Someone asked me if I was saying prayers and I must admit that I was so absorbed that I didn't think of any prayers to say. I just watched. I think God knew I was trusting him to take care that good things were happening.

After the baby was born and the nurses did all they were to do, I was allowed to hold this child now a tall high school senior. At that time, I did remember to offer a blessing and prayer for his future. I remember well that it was a special moment listening to this little heart beating and feeling the deep breaths as this child joined us in this world. It was a special moment for me -- as I think back it was an exciting moment in this priest's life.

After Susan was settled in a room, Paul and I headed home. It was a good time for a late night cup of coffee at one of those all night places. This became a fascinating time for me -- listening and talking about hopes and dreams.

So each year as I reparer to celebrate Christmas, the Birth of the Savior, I remember and celebrate William's birth. I remember well holding that new

born baby almost in the palm of my hand. As I think of the Christ Child, I recall that Jesus came to this world to be our Lord and Savior -- to save this human race -- was as tiny at his birth as this new born baby that I held that night of William's birth. Jesus came to experience being part of our human race, even experience that vulnerable moment of being a tiny new born.

Christmas is a more meaningful experience for me because I was allowed to be with Susan and Paul that night. I understand so much more the Incarnation of Our Lord. Truly the amazing moment of birth -- a child coming into the joy and peace and love of a family.

So, this is my Christmas story. I have told it over and over again but it always seems new to me. It give me that feeling I know so much more of what that first Christmas was like. My sincere wishes to you all -- and to your families -- for a Happy and Peaceful Christmas. As you remember the Birth of the Christ Child may your family be filled with the peace and joy that Jesus brought to our world.

FOLLOW ME

# Where faith has its deepest roots

By Bishop Terry R. LaValley

I always considered myself somewhat of a homebody. I enjoy familiar surroundings, spending time with family and friends. I'm not excited about air travel.

So, when I decided to participate in a pilgrimage to the Holy Land this Advent, I knew that I was stepping out of my personal comfort zone.

Our tour guide, Christopher Cross, a native of Ausable Forks, led two of my sisters, their husbands, Father Doug Lucia, Father Jay Seymour, myself and a dozen other pilgrims on a journey of a lifetime.

I went to the Holy Land because it is the place where my faith has its deepest roots. Here were the places where God Himself was born, lived, suffered, died, and rose again.

I had spoken to many priests, religious, and faithful lay women and men who have made this journey. Its impact on them was profound. I wanted to share in that experience because, as Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have insisted: faith is not about concepts but about a personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

Since my return, many have asked: "What was your favorite part of the pilgrimage?"

Every location spoke to my heart in a new and uniquely powerful way. I find it very difficult to select one location over the other. However, as I reflected on the pilgrimage as a whole, I was touched by the great devotion of the Muslim people to Allah as throughout the day we heard the call to prayer echo throughout the cities and villages.

We saw beautiful mosques and experienced a wonderful friendliness with the Palestinians whom we met. (They even convinced this



PHOTO SUPPLIED

Bishop LaValley, Father Douglas Lucia and Father Jay Seymour celebrate Mass at the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth Dec. 6 during their Advent pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The bishop said, "I went to the Holy Land because it is the place where my faith has its deepest roots. Here were the places where God Himself was born, lived, suffered, died, and rose again."

shepherd to ride a camel! My two priest companions were less convinced that this was a good idea.)

In the Jewish people I witnessed a tremendous seriousness and discipline about their faith—whether it was on the airplane, at the Wailing Wall or on the streets.

The phylacteries, strapped arms, prayer shawls, dietary laws and strict Sabbath observance spoke loudly of their faithfulness to the Torah and their identification as the Chosen People.

Among the Christian pilgrims, we saw many of the faithful participating in early morning (5:30, 6:00, and 6:30am) Masses. The pilgrims were prostrate, knelt on and kissed centuries-old sacred places in veneration of the Divine presence. Young and old, Eastern, Orthodox and Latin Catholics, chanted, lit can-

dles and praised God.

We visited an orphanage in Jerusalem which was home for some 500 individuals: young children (including 99 from Ethiopia), youth and adults.

Six Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul operated this loving Christian outreach to these beautiful and most vulnerable children of God. These sisters were beaming with joy when we visited them on the last day of our pilgrimage—what an appropriate way to conclude our travels.

These sisters exuded for all to see their own personal encounter with Christ.

While the Holy Land boasts no geographic borders, for thousands of years, it has been considered sacred ground to these three major monotheistic faiths of the world: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

Suspicion, terror, and violence have been no stranger

pers of three gods.

We saw new Jewish settlements being built that continue to squeeze Palestinians out of their homes and livelihoods.

We stood beside signs that warned us of minefields just a step away. We frequently heard popping sounds over the ancient city of Jerusalem. We were told that they were not gunshots or bombs, but the sound of firecrackers thrown by Palestinians at Israeli soldiers.

We saw balloons carrying cameras floating over Jerusalem keeping an eye on East Jerusalem.

As it has for thousands of years, this place where the Prince of Peace dwelt among us continues to experience unease and tension.

I don't pretend to comprehend all the historical complexities of the troubling relations among some Christians, Jews and Moslems. However, as I return to the United States and the Diocese of Ogdensburg, this pilgrim is grateful for the peace we take so much for granted and am convinced that as we each encounter Jesus even more closely through prayer, acts of charity and works of justice, we become more hopeful because the Prince of Peace leads and feeds us.

I know that my fellow pilgrims and I have had our comfort zones stretched and our faith strengthened profoundly.

Yes, our world yearns for the Peace that was born in that part of our world that blessed night so long ago.

Our fractured world yearns to hear: "Find your home in Christ: Renew Faith, Nurture Hope, Discover Love."

to this part of the world since the time records have been kept.

Here, in the very cradle of these great religions, instead of peace and tolerance, division and tension was sadly evident.

For instance, a Christian who stepped over a particular line in the worship space at the Holy Sepulchre or who sang at Mass at that Holy Site could cause a major incident with another Christian of another rite.

The division among Christians continues to scandalize the world.

We saw a two-story high banner in a town square in Nazareth that attacked the Christian creed and charged Christians as being worship-

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## PREPARING FOR THE PAGEANT



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The first graders at St. Mary's School in Ticonderoga are shown during dress rehearsal for the school's annual

Christmas program. The program will be presented at First United Methodist Church in Ticonderoga this year, due to the fire that destroyed the school in September.

## A NORTH COUNTRY VOICE OF FAITH

# The Spirit of Christmas: the spirit of giving

By Lenka Walldroff

Parishioner, St. John the Evangelist Church, LaFargeville

What has always astounded me about the Christmas season is how one event can be celebrated in so many different ways around the world.

While in the United States we celebrate the birth of Christ with presents delivered by Santa Claus on Christmas Day, children in the Netherlands are given gifts by Saint Nicholas on December 5.

In Greece and Cyprus, it is Saint Basil who delivers presents on January 1. In Spain, children exchange presents with the Three

Wise Men on January 6.

In Southern Italy it is not a saint at all, but a witch named Befana who distributes presents to children. According to legend, Befana was told of Christ's birth and in her haste to Bethlehem, lost sight of the Shepherd's star. Ever since, she has wandered in search of the baby Jesus and leaves a present with each sleeping child on Christmas night in case the child is Christ.

My favorite international Christmas tradition, however, comes from the Czech Republic where it is the baby Jesus who delivers presents to children and families on Christmas Eve.

The idea of Jesus delivering presents to the world

gently brings the reality of the Christmas season back home.

The Spirit of Christmas is the spirit of giving. Our ever-increasing secular and commercial culture interprets this giving to mean the giving of physical gifts.

There has been much said in recent years about the commercialization of Christmas, specifically how we have allowed presents- once merely a symbol of the spirit of Christmas- to become the season's main attraction.

My parish priest delivered a wonderful homily recently on the subject of spiritual poverty, and one of his insights was that a symptom of spiritual poverty is blindness and deafness.

Spiritually poor people walk through the world not seeing or hearing what is real, because they believe in the farce of commercialism

and the glamour of materialism. A glum prognosis, indeed, but the good news is that Christ has been known to heal those kinds of afflictions.

Greater than the latest gadget, diamond jewelry, or whatever other gift ideas advertising executives can dream up, nothing beats the gift of Christ.

Jesus was not only God's gift to us, but a gift that spent His human life giving in turn.

Christ's life was surrounded by generosity from the very beginning: God was generous when He gave us His only Son, the Three Wise Men gave generous gifts to Christ and Christ's generosity abounded as he walked the earth healing people, loving the unlovable, distributing forgiveness and hope of reconciliation with God, and ultimately, redemption.

Even while He was dying on the cross, Jesus was ministering and giving.

It is this giving that we are called to emulate as followers of Christ. We are asked to give not only of our material possessions during

Christmas, but also of ourselves – and not just during Christmas, but every day.

That is what the season means to me.

As we embark into a new liturgical cycle and calendar year with the celebration of Christ's birth, I'll be looking for opportunities to grow and to become a little more Christ-like; to assess my life and see in what areas I can become a little more like Jesus.

Where can I be more generous?

Where can I be more loving?

The Christmas Season inspires the world with the spirit of giving; the goal is to carry that inspiration with us throughout the year, helping those in need and doing good- long after the Christmas cookies have been eaten and the last of the decorations packed away.

Christmas is an invitation to give of ourselves, to grow in love, and to grow in God.

Merry Christmas to all, and may God bless you and your family abundantly with good health and joy in the coming year!

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*Msgr. Joseph G. Aubin looks back on 59 years of priesthood*

# A life of great joy

By Shan Moore  
Staff Writer

## PLATTSBURGH - Joy.

Msgr. Joseph Aubin uses the word often, describing the many gifts given to him in his long life.

Among the first was St. Boniface Parish in Rochester, where he made his first sacraments, and where, he said, "it was almost expected you would become a priest."

The monsignor was among seven ordained priests in just two years from the German parish.

"And we all grew up together," he said, sitting in his comfortable apartment in St. Peter's Church Rectory in Plattsburgh.

## Family

The family of parish and priesthood counted much to the young man, who at age five lost his father to a car accident and then, two decades later, his mother in the same way, just weeks before his ordination.

"(But) a priest is never without a family," he said.

He chuckled over how, some 60 years later, that hasn't changed.

A recent fall in the church left Msgr. Aubin with a broken right hand, which, he noted, impeded both writing and holding a coffee cup.

St. Peter's pastor, Msgr. Dennis Duprey, he said, "makes sure I don't do anything I'm not supposed to do."

## Stability

Except for a couple of years at St. Alphonsus in Tupper Lake when he was first ordained, Msgr. Aubin has served only in Clinton County — for a total 58 years.

That's an accomplishment that also brings a twinkle to his eye, for, to one superior early on, he didn't have an auspicious start.

Msgr. Aubin had entered a religious order but stayed just eight weeks before asking the bishop of Rochester if he could go to seminary.

"To go from one thing to another," he remembers the bishop telling him, "is a sign of instability."

The young man was allowed to attend seminary there for two years, however, then completed his studies in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

"I think I've proved my stability," Msgr. Aubin noted.

## Christmas collection - for retired priests

Proceeds from the Christmas collection in parishes of the diocese help to support the retired priests of the North Country. Currently the Priests Retirement Fund provides benefits for 46 priests of the diocese.



PHOTO BY SHAN MOORE

Msgr. Joseph Aubin at home in his private apartment at St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh. Retired for 15 years, he still assists however he can at the parish.

## So much faith

Msgr. Aubin was assistant pastor and later pastor at Our Lady of Victory in Plattsburgh, pastor at St. Louis of France in Sciota, St. Alexander's in Morrisonville, and, before his retirement, St. John the Baptist Church and the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Keeseville for 11 years.

That posting brought his greatest joy as pastor. "I've never seen a community with such faith," he said.

The first Mass he celebrated was a daily one, and he assumed the large crowd that showed up was just curious about the new pastor.

"The next day, it was the same," he said. "Every day, there was always a good group of people — 40, 50.

"And all the societies were so active.

"I was there long enough to really absorb the spirit of that town."

And he welcomed invitations to fill in on weekends after he retired.

## 170 babies

The first time the monsignor was assigned to Our Lady of Victory, he was given a task he was not sure he was qualified to take on — setting up and directing the Catholic Charities office in Plattsburgh.

He voiced his concerns, he said, but was told: "When the bishop asks you to do something ..."

His work on the adoption side of the agency, which opened in 1958, became a source of tremendous joy.

"I placed 170 children," said Msgr. Aubin, who was Catholic Charities director for 11 years.

"There was a great stigma of being an unwed mother. Our job was to care for them in dignity and safety and complete secrecy."

The young women were sent to centers where they delivered their babies, and the monsignor and Catholic Charities staff labored over placement of the infants.

"It was always a shared decision," he said. "We got together, and we prayed over it."

And when the time arrived to give a baby over to the new parents, he said, "it was a great day of festivity in the office."

The counseling side of the agency was expertly handled by Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, he said.

## Keeping active

In his retirement years, Msgr. Aubin serves in whatever capacity he is needed.

For the first decade, he filled in for parish priests on 20 weekends or more a year — often at St. Patrick's in Rouses Point, St. Joseph's in Coopersville and St. Elizabeth's in Elizabethtown; he even traveled as far as Old Forge from time to time.

Now, with less mobility than in his younger years, he helps out at St. Peter's, hearing confessions, celebrating Masses.

Also living at the rectory in retirement is Father Patrick Mundy, who later directed Catholic Charities in Plattsburgh, Msgr. Aubin noted.

"You keep yourself busy, active, but not have the responsibility of the parish," he summed up his life these days. "That's the joy of retirement."

# Bishop names dean for Essex Deanery

Bishop Terry R. LaValley has appointed Father Albert J. Hauser, pastor of the Catholic Community of Moriah, dean of Essex Deanery.



Father Hauser

He replaces Father Richard S. Sturtz who retired as pastor of Schroon Lake and Ogdensburg and moved to Ogdensburg.

Father Hauser, a Rochester native, was born July 5, 1953. He graduated from LeMoyné College in Syracuse and studied for the priesthood at Christ the King Seminary in East Aurora, NY.

He was ordained to the priesthood May 2, 1981 by Bishop Stanislaus J. Brzana. Father Hauser has been a parochial vicar at St. Patrick's in Watertown and Notre Dame in Ogdensburg. He also served as associate chancellor and bishop's sec-

retary from 1983 until 1988 when he went to Rome for advances studies in biblical theology.

He was a member of the faculty of Wadhams Hall Seminary College from 1990 to 2002 and vice-president at the time of its closing.

He served as associate pastor and pastor of St. Lawrence Church in Louisville from 1992 through 1995.

From 2002 to 2006, he was pastor of Our Lady of Victory in Plattsburgh and St. Mary's of the Lake in Cumberland Head. He was also been pastor in Morristown, Hammond and Rossie from 2002 to 2006 and again from 2010 to 2012.

Father Hauser has also served the diocese as director of the Department of Worship.

## THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

PRAYER SUGGESTION

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

(With ecclesiastical approval)

Mass  
Rosary  
Fasting  
Day Offering  
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Offering of Sufferings  
Divine Mercy Chaplet

Or whatever the Lord inspires you to offer Him



DIOCESE OF OGDENSBURG, NY JANUARY 2015

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A donation to help support THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS will be appreciated.

The Monthly Prayer Request for Priests is graciously underwritten by: Diocese of Ogdensburg MyVocation Society www.myvocation.net

### Bishop's Schedule

- Dec. 24 – 4 p.m. Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
- Dec. 25 – 12 a.m., Christmas Vigil Midnight Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral 9 a.m., Christmas Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
- Dec. 28 – 8 a.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
- Dec. 30 – 12:00 p.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral followed by lunch with the Seminarians of the Diocese of Ogdensburg at the Bishop's Residence in Ogdensburg
- Dec. 31 – 4 p.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
- Jan. 2 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral
- Jan. 4 – 11am, Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Diocesan Central Offices will be closed in observance of Christmas beginning 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 23 and will re-open for business on Friday, Dec. 26 at 8:15 am.

### To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terriane Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, PO Box 2446, Plattsburgh, NY, 12901; e-mail: terrianeyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: 518-483-3261; or Father James Seymour, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy at 315-393-2920, ext. 1340

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### Rest in Peace

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

- Dec. 25 – Rev. Patrick Lyons, 1911; Rev. Oswald L. Bentley, 1940
- Dec. 26 – Rev. Aloysius Hyacinth McMahon, 1936
- Dec. 27 – Rev. Hollis David Burns, 1936; Rev. Henry Gilbeau, O.F.M.Conv., 1978; Rev. Wilfred L. DeRoche, 2013
- Dec. 28 – Rev. Nicolaus Burtin, O.M.L., 1902; Msgr. John M. Waterhouse, 1995; Rev. Eugene J. Beaudet, 2004; Rev. Howard P. McCasland, 2010
- Dec. 29 – Rev. John A. Mullen, 1887
- Dec. 30 – Rev. Jean Baptiste Lemercier, 1863; Rev. Sam D'Angelo, O.S.A., 1961; Deacon Victor Demers, 2003
- Dec. 31 – Rev. Joseph Butler, 1894; Rev. Benedict Granottier, 1930; Msgr. Clarence A. Kitts, 1949
- Jan. 1 – Rev. Earl Leo Taylor, 1974
- Jan. 2 – Rev. Henry William McFadden, 1978; Deacon Robert J. LeClair, 2009
- Jan. 3 – Rev. A. J. M. Viau, 1966; Rev. Hilary Neal, O.P., 1986
- Jan. 4 – Rev. James Edwin O'Haire, 1877; Rev. Michael Walsh, M.S.C., 1977; Rev. Charles E. Chase, 2011
- Jan. 5 – Rev. Louis Lebreton, O.M.I., 1903; Msgr. Dennis E. Lynch, 1979; Rev. Raoul J. Poirier, M.Afr., 1997
- Jan. 6 – Rev. James Dennis Phalon, 1974; Deacon George W. Carroll, 1994; Rev. Benoit Dostie, M.S.C., 2007

### Protecting God's Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration online is required in order to participate. Participants may pre-register at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org) by selecting the registration button and following the directions. All employees and volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities with minor are required to participate in this training. Further information is available from Atonement Sister Ellen Donahue, 315-393-2920, ext. 1440. Upcoming programs: Jan. 22- 8 p.m., SUNY Potsdam

### Environmental Stewardship

#### Joy to the Earth

"Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ; While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains, repeat the sounding joy..."

Joy to the World (Vs. 2)

"O holy night, the stars are brightly shining..."

O Holy Night

O morning stars, together proclaim the holy birth, and praises sing to God the King, and peace to men on earth."

O Little Town of Bethlehem

Even in our Christmas carols the very elements of creation from which the Child Jesus was made in the presence of their Creator made flesh. As we contemplate this Mystery, we begin to see this presence and peace of the Divine everywhere.

"By his incarnation" (the Christ) inserted himself not just into our humanity, but into the universe which supports humanity. The presence of the Incarnate Word... shines at the heart of all things." Teilhard de Chardin) We care for the earth because we are part of it and because God's presence makes it sacred. Humans are not on earth but are of earth, inseparably part of it.

As we listen to the Words of Sacred Scripture this Christmas and sing our Christmas carols, let us be amazed at the wonders of Creation that share in this Feast... the brilliant stars, the gentle snowflakes, the crisp air as well as the people who have seen a great light...

Lord, help us to be mindful of Your Divine love that dwells within us and that invites us to give birth to Your love in new ways so that Your peace and joy may extend to the human community and the earth community as well.

### NO PAPER NEXT WEEK

The next issue of the North Country Catholic Will be dated Jan. 7, 2015. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all our readers.

*A Child is Born For Us!*



*Christmas blessings to all in our diocesan family*



From the NFP Office



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Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

*"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, *"Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."*

LUKE 2:13-15

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year  
 Matrimonial Tribunal, Office of Canonical Affairs



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# Conserving energy seen as way to live faith

**WATERTOWN** - The Watertown Faith & Ecology Group hosted a workshop on the topic "Conserving Energy A Means of Living Our Faith" Nov. 18 at the Motherhouse of the Sisters of St. Joseph

The Rev. Dr. Jerry Loch, D. Min, an energy auditor and Outreach Coordinator with a background in Christian Ethics, was the presenter.

Dr. Loch spoke about how

we can live the Christian life and care for creation without losing our identity as followers of God in Christ.

The goal, he explained, is energy efficiency, that is, doing the same everyday things but using less energy in our homes/churches' by using more energy efficient heating systems, windows, light bulbs, shower heads, refrigerators and cold water laundry detergents.

Rev. Loch urged consumers to request a free home performance audit to identify ways to conserve energy.

He also mentioned several churches in the diocese where he conducted energy audits, including St. Patrick's in Watertown, Notre Dame in Malone, St. Augustine's in Peru, St. Vincent of Paul Church, Cape Vincent, among others.

These audits assessment often resulted in discovering significant losses in heat and energy and offered multiple ways to remedy these losses and to reduce considerably the energy bills. If any group is interested in having Rev. Dr. Loch speak to a group on the value of conservation as

a means of living the Catholic social teaching "caring for the creation, you may

contact him at JECKL@twcnv.rr.com or 315-771-1932



During a presentation on "Conserving Energy A Means of Living Our Faith, Rev. Dr. Jerry Loch with the assistance of Veronica Lambert, a participant from Holy Family parish, demonstrates the significantly more energy used by conventional Christmas tree lights than by LED lights.

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 be a story in our all  
 our hearts.*

*St. Mary of the Fort, Fort Covington  
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 St. Joseph's Church, Bombay*

**SAVIOR**

# NAVE to perform Festival of Lessons & Carols

The Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble will give two performances of a Festival of Lessons and Carols. Anthems, carols, and hymns illuminate the Christmas story along with community readers and congregational singing in the tradition of King's College, Cambridge:

- Dec. 27 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh
- Dec. 28 at 4:00 p.m. at St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid

NAVE, under the musical direction of Andrew M. Benware, is a mixed chamber choir of professional and amateur singers who perform choral music from a variety of periods and styles with harmonies of four to eight parts.

NAVE's membership is indicative of its nomenclature, "Northern Adirondack," being comprised of membership from points in Clinton, Essex, and Franklin counties. Distinct from other choral groups in the region, NAVE is essentially an a cappella chamber choir focusing on the rich and historical repertoire composed specifically for chamber choir unaccompanied by instruments.

NAVE's Festival of Lessons and Carols follows the traditional model of those performed annually on Christmas Eve (since 1928) at King's College Chapel in Cambridge, England.

The customary format is built around nine short Bible readings from the Old and New Testaments that trace the story of the fall of humanity and the promise of a Messiah to the birth of Jesus. Anthems, carols, and hymns are liberally interspersed throughout to musically illuminate the narrative.

Community members will

read the texts, which include passages from Genesis and the Gospels, as well as a contemporary poem, "Annunciation," by Denise Levertov.

The audience is invited to join with the choir in congregational singing accompanied by University of Notre Dame organist and Potsdam native Benjamin A. Stone.

Admission is a suggested donation of \$10. Further information is available on Facebook or from

[drew.benware@gmail.com](mailto:drew.benware@gmail.com).

Benware is currently the Director of Choral Activities at Saranac Lake High School, where he conducts the Festival Chorus, Concert Choir, Men's Ensemble, Women's Ensemble, and teaches small group vocal instruction.

Additionally, Benware has served as Lecturer in the field of Music Education at the Ithaca College School of Music in Ithaca, where he taught summer graduate courses in Band Methods as well as conducting the Summer Graduate Choir and Band.

Benware is active as a lecturer and clinician, having recently presented at the NYSSMA Winter Conference in Rochester, and is in demand as a guest conductor for honors ensembles throughout New York State.

He is also active as a performer, taking part in the Upstate New York Chorus (UNYC) and as a church musician, holding positions at both St. Bernard's and St. Agnes Catholic Churches in Saranac Lake and Lake Placid, respectively.

He holds both a Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education with a concentration on the Trumpet and a Master of Music degree in Choral Conducting from the Ithaca College School of Music.



Andrew Benware

## HOLIDAY IN BETHLEHEM



SCHOOL PHOTO

The students at Seton Academy performed the musical "Holiday in Bethlehem" on Wednesday, December 17. It is the story of innkeepers who had no room for Mary and Joseph on that first Christmas. Shown in the picture: (front row) Yamuna Turco as manager of the No Trust Inn, Olivia Kenney as Mary, Edward Bleeker as the Infant Jesus, and Gabriella Cote as manager of the Status Quo Inn. (Back Row) Emelia Lemza as narrator, Gillian Boule as manager of the Care Less Inn, Maddy Lemza as manager of the Too Busy Inn, Olivia Barnett as manager of the Good Life Inn, Christina Maglione as manager of the Procrastination Inn, and Ally Germain as manager of the Last Chance Inn. Acknowledging something of ourselves in all these make-believe characters can awaken in all of us the need to change and understand anew the real nature of Christ's coming to earth. This is our challenge!



From the Mission lands of Mongolia to your local street corner,  
let there be Peace be on Earth and Good Will toward man.



~Merry Christmas from the Pontifical Mission Societies, Inc.~

Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director & Molly McKee Ryan, Secretary



# U.S. religious find report affirms their ministry

By Dennis Sadowski  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) - U.S. women religious welcomed the conciliatory tone of a Vatican report on religious life and appreciated acknowledgment of the important ministry that they practice day in and day out in the life of the church.

They also said the report, released Dec. 16, opens a new beginning for women religious, who have continued their work despite the questions about the status of religious life in the U.S. that were raised by the apostolic visitation process that ran from 2009 to 2012.

"The positive tone and the clear affirmation found in the document gives us new energy to move on in our critical role for the sake of the mission of the church in the United States," said Sister Mary Johnson, a member of the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur who is professor of sociology and religious studies at Trinity Washington

University.

"I see great good coming out of this in that through the media, the laity and clergy and bishops will now have heightened understanding of our way of life in the church and hopefully will help us respond to the yearnings of women who are interested in religious life," she told Catholic News Service.

Sister Nancy Conway, president of the Congregation of St. Joseph, said she found the report offered "without negative judgment" and called it a "welcome ending" to the visitation.

"Look at the use of the verbs in the report: We ask, we invite, we encourage, we urge," she said from Cleveland. "I perceive this as a great shift in tone, for which I am very grateful.

"I'm heartened by the tone. That's how colleagues work; we recognize each other's gifts," Sister Nancy added.

Two organizations representing women religious in the U.S. also welcomed the report, both saying that it reflected positively on the dif-

ferent roles their members have assumed in the church.

**The positive tone and the clear affirmation found in the document gives us new energy to move on in our critical role for the sake of the mission of the church in the United States**

A statement from the Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious cited the words of Pope Francis in saying that the apostolic visitation "offered us a tangible opportunity to 'feel' along with the church," in ministry to others as well as in unity with the magisterium.

"The final report acknowledges the fact of the 'widely diversified expressions of apostolic religious life' in the United States," and shows that "apostolic religious life is not dying in the United States," said the council, which represents about 20 percent of the 51,000 U.S. women religious.

"There is reason for hope. The same voice of love which called women to courageously and selflessly tend the poor, weak and young in the past is still calling young women today. It is the voice of Jesus, and the experience of his personal love continues to lead young women to our doors."

The Leadership Conference of Women Religious said in a statement that the organization was "pleased that the data, as well as the experiences, hopes and dreams shared during the onsite visits resulted in an accurate report of both the blessings of U.S. women's religious life as well as its challenges."

The statement said the report conveys "a good understanding of the transitions that have occurred in religious life since the Second Vatican Council" and was offered "without negative judgment or any facile solutions. Instead, the synthesis of data resulted in a realistic and appreciative account of women's religious life."

The report from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life did not reference the findings of the doctrinal assessment of LWCR. After that assessment, the Vatican announced in 2012 a major reform of that organization to ensure its fidelity to Catholic teaching in areas including abortion, euthanasia, women's ordination and homosexuality.

Cardinal Franc Rode, former prefect of the congregation for religious, ordered the visitation in December 2008, saying its aim would be to study the community, prayer and apostolic life of the orders to learn why the number of religious women in the United States had declined so sharply since the 1960s.

A year into the study, Cardinal Rode told Vatican Radio that the investigation was a response to concerns -- including some expressed by an unnamed "important representative of the U.S. church" -- regarding "some ir-

regularities or omissions in American religious life. Most of all, you could say, it involves a certain secular mentality that has spread in these religious families and, perhaps, also a certain 'feminist' spirit."

The visitation involved hundreds of visits with individual religious communities and offered them the opportunity to explain various facets of religious life -- including prayer, community, service and ministry.

For U.S. religious congregations, the visitation process allowed members to examine prayer life, community life, ministry, vocation recruitment, formation practices and finances. The process, though, also caused many congregations to wonder what prompted the visitation, especially because many felt they were living up to the vision of Vatican II.

"At the onset of the visitation, there was a great level of pain and frustration," Sister Barb Smith, a U.S. member of the general council of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ, told CNS in Rome. "We found ourselves questioning why religious life would be at this threshold with the church when we believed that we were faithful to our congregational history and the call of Vatican II."

Sister Barb said the wounded feelings remain.

"I believe that we as religious women were willing to face the struggles and the unknown path we were walking. We were and are convinced that through it all we would not be diminished by this time of darkness but would remain credible witnesses of the Gospel," she said.

"At the end of the visitation, as we reflected on our lived reality, it became clearer for us that we have responded to our charisms, to the signs of the times and to the many needs of God's 'anawim' who live in the periphery of much of society's awareness. This is the grace that has come forth from these dark and painful times."



The Catholic people of  
the **Church of the Visitation**, Norfolk,  
**St. Raymond's Church**, Raymondville,  
& **St. Andrew's Church**, Norwood  
together with **Msgr. John Murphy**  
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**Christmas Greetings**  
to our brothers and  
sisters in faith  
throughout the diocese.

Through the grace of God may  
this season bring new joy,  
renewed hope, and the Peace  
of Christ for which we all long!

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Pope Francis credited for urging U.S., Cuba to normalize relations

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- Pope Francis personally appealed to President Barack Obama and Cuban President Raul Castro this year to encourage both leaders to normalize diplomatic relations, a senior Obama administration official said. Speaking on background, the official told reporters Dec. 17 that the pope followed up the personal appeals with letters to the U.S. and Cuban leaders, encouraging them to move forward on efforts to improve relations between the two countries. The pope's actions were part of a major diplomatic effort by the Vatican, which hosted direct talks between American and Cuban officials, the administration official said. "That (letter) gave greater impetus and momentum for us to move forward," the administration official said. Castro and Obama acknowledged in simultaneous addresses to their respective nations the role Pope Francis played in the talks. Pope Francis congratulated both governments for agreeing to establish diplomatic relations "with the aim of overcoming, in the interest of the citizens of both countries, the difficulties which have marked their recent history."

## Immigrants must be treated with mercy, says Archbishop Chaput

PHILADELPHIA (CNS) -- Americans must treat all those in this country illegally "with the mercy and justice we expect for ourselves," said Philadelphia Archbishop Charles J. Chaput. "On this day that we honor Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of all of us who share this continent, we need to remember that the Holy Family too was once a family of immigrants and refugees," he wrote in a Dec. 12 column for the archdiocese's news website, Catholic Philly.com. He was among several prelates who took the occasion of the feast day to connect the image of Mary with immigrants. Archbishop Chaput said Mary's special place in the heart of the church, as "theotokos, the 'God-bearer,' and a 'witness of courage, humility and grace'" has rightfully led to her being honored in many ways and by many titles, including Our Lady of Guadalupe, "patroness of America, one continent north and south."

## Cardinal cuts ties with Priests for Life, says reforms in group needed

NEW YORK (CNS) -- New York Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan said he wants "nothing further to do" with Priests for Life, which has its headquarters on Staten Island, which is in the New York Archdiocese. Cardinal Dolan said he had been asked by the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy to assist its national director, Father Frank A. Pavone, with "several necessary reforms," but he said the priest has not cooperated. The changes have mostly to do with an audit and the need to establish an independent board "to provide oversight and accountability," according to Religion News Service and Catholic World News. Cardinal Dolan made the comments in a letter to his fellow U.S. bishops dated Nov. 20. The letter was not made public. But Catholic World News obtained a copy and reported on it in a story posted on CatholicCulture.org. "Although Father Pavone initially assured me of his support, he did not cooperate," Cardinal Dolan wrote. In a statement sent to Catholic News Service Dec. 16, Priests for Life said it is "working with the Vatican to fully implement all the church's expectations. The Vatican has been consistently supportive and favorable toward Priests for Life, which is an international private association of the faithful." It also said the issue was "about control," "not financial accountability. Priests for Life was founded in California in 1991 "to train, motivate and encourage priests to effectively advance the Gospel of life."

# Christmas is a sign that God works in history to save people, pope says

By Cindy Wooden  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - God acts in history to save his people, at times even testing them, rather than simply making them in a petri dish and saving them "aseptically, in a laboratory," Pope Francis said.

"If we aren't clear on this, we will never understand Christmas, we will never understand the incarnation of the Word. Never," he said Dec. 18 during the early morning Mass in the chapel of his residence.

Throughout history, the pope said, God has chosen special people to lead others to him, people like Abraham, Moses and Elijah. Being chosen, he said, was not always the nicest thing that could happen to a person, because it brought "dark moments, uncomfortable moments, moments that annoyed them."

Like them, "the Lord bothers us to make history. He often makes us follow paths that we don't want to follow," the pope said, according to a Vatican Radio report.

But while different people

are chosen at different points in history, he said, the truth remains that God walks with people, challenges them, helps them face their problems and continues to save them through his son.

The day's Gospel reading from St. Matthew recounts "another difficult moment in the history of salvation," that of Joseph who discovers that Mary is pregnant, the pope said. "He suffers. He sees the women of the village gossiping in the market."

At the same time, the pope said, Joseph knows that Mary is a good woman, a godly woman, one incapable of infidelity.

In the difficult moments, he said, the special people chosen by God know they must "take the problem on their shoulders without understanding," and that is what Joseph does.

The Gospel recounts how an angel appears to Joseph in a dream and explains what

has happened. "Perhaps psychoanalysts would say this is a dream prompted by anxiety that needs released -- let them say what they want!"

"What did Joseph do? After the dream, he took 'his wife into his home,'" the pope said. Joseph thought to himself, "I don't understand anything, but the Lord told me this and (the baby) will be like my son."

Pope Francis told those at the Mass that Christians always must remember that while God may test people, he also helps them overcome trials and saves them.

"Always remember with trust -- even in the worst moments, even in sickness, even when we realize that we must ask for extreme unction because there's no way out -- to say: 'Lord, history did not begin with me and it will not end with me. You keep going, I'm ready.' And put yourself in the Lord's hands," the pope said.

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## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

# Having faith and trust in God's plan for families

Every year, the Feast of the Holy Family falls on the Sunday following Christmas. This year, the readings show us that, just as the power of God Himself was responsible for the birth of Abraham's son, Isaac, and Mary's son, Jesus, so every father and mother must have faith and trust in God's plan for their family.

The first and second readings today focus on Abraham, the trail-blazer of our Judeo-Christian roots, to whom God made the promise of heaven—to Abraham "and his descendants".

When Abraham was about 75 years old, he complained to God that he had no offspring. Childlessness

was considered a curse.

God brought him out from his tent, and made him look up into the sky and try to count the stars! "More numerous than the stars shall be your children", he says to Abraham.

It must have seemed an impossible promise, but Abraham placed his faith and trust in that pledge. When

Isaac is born, Sarah who had once laughed in scorn, now laughs in joy.

In the Gospel reading, Mary and Joseph, following the Law, bring Jesus to the Temple where Simeon and Anna both prophecy to the future career of this child for which God has destined him. Simeon says that he

will bring about "the rise and fall of many".

He also proclaims that a "sword shall pierce" Mary's heart—just one of the seven sorrows Mary would experience in her lifetime.

What would have happened to all of us if Sarah had replied, "Sorry, it's too late", or if Mary had said "No" to the angel Gabriel?

We may never know until Judgment Day what great plans of God were frustrated because married couples have failed to trust enough to bring a child into the world?

Only God knows the answer to that question.

Today, we need to pray for all families who sacrifice so much in bringing children into the world, in loving and nurturing them in a hundred different ways every day.



Monsignor  
Paul E.  
Whitmore

DEC. 28

## The Feast of the Holy Family

READINGS

Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3  
Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19  
Luke 2:22-40

Especially, do we pray that fathers and mothers will give their children the experience of eating together at a family meal, of praying together in a way that imitates the peace and leisure that the Holy Family models for them.

Granted, it's a very different world in which we live, but only a family that teaches their children how to solve the tensions of living together through patient love and a generous habit of forgiving one another, can

ever expect that their children will form their own healthy, faith-filled, happy families later in life. Every family needs to pray each night, "Lord, help us to do what you want of us!"

For those mothers and fathers whose marriage is threatened or even broken, may they know that God's power can still help them to mend the fragments with forgiveness and new hope. God will show the way for separated spouses to protect their children from destructive anger and hurt.

Most Catholics remember Father Peyton's famous advice, "The family that prays together, stays together."

On this Feast, may we all thank God for the faith and sacrifice that our own parents made, and ask God's continued support for all families.

## OUR READERS WRITE

### Thank you to Father Scott

When it's time for us to leave this world the only thing we can take with us is our faith. All the money saved and things bought are useless when it comes to leaving the physical world.

Recently our mother Shirley was dying of kidney failure and staying in the hospital would not extend her life nor would it be comfortable for her. So with the help of Hospice and family and friends we were able to care for her at home until her death.

She was lucky to be able to come home to her favorite chair, eat a Sunday dinner with all her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren in the home all at one time and to end her earthly journey in her own bedroom. Everyone should be so lucky.

It meant a great deal to Shirley to have Father Scott Seymour stop by almost every day to say hello and to say prayers. It was also a great support to us as caretakers to have Fathers frequent visits.

The day before Shirley died she was not able to get out of bed, she was not responding, not talking nor taking anything orally. We knew that the time was coming when she would be leaving us. Father Scott stopped by Saturday evening and when Shirley heard his voice she called out his name clearly, the only thing she had said all day. It was very clear that she knew he was there and that she appreciated it as we did also. With prayers said at her bedside, she was then ready to go. She passed the next morning.

Thank you Father Scott for all you do for your parishioners. No matter what day of the week or time of day you are there giving comfort and support to those who need it.

RESPECTFULLY YOURS,  
BRUCE AND ROBIN LABARGE  
SUZANNE AND KEN GADWAY  
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## AT THE MOVIES

# THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES

By John Mulderig  
Catholic News Service

With "The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies" (Warner Bros.), director Peter Jackson's trilogy of films based on Catholic writer J.R.R. Tolkien's 1937 fantasy novel "The Hobbit, or There and Back Again" reaches a rousing finale.

Mixed opinions have been generated by Jackson's transformation of a single, relatively slim volume into a trio of longish movies. But few will deny that this concluding screen chapter progresses at a steady clip and successfully engages viewers' interest-- even if newcomers to the story are not offered much in the way of explanation or exposition.

On a deeper level, the climactic struggle of Jackson's wrap-up chronicles between the forces of good and evil, both within and surrounding its characters, offers valuable lessons for those moviegoers mature enough to endure the narrative's many armed confrontations.

An early example of these frequent clashes pits heroic human warrior Bard (Luke Evans) against the fearsome

dragon Smaug (voice of Benedict Cumberbatch), the bane of many in Tolkien's imaginary world of Middle-earth.

As those well-versed in their Hobbit lore will know, it was Smaug who long ago exiled the hearty but stubborn Dwarves from their ancestral mountain bastion of Erebor.

After Bard takes advantage of a hidden vulnerability to slay Smaug, accordingly, the Dwarves' quest to reclaim their fabled citadel -- a mission on which they've been skillfully aided by the formerly fainthearted Hobbit Bilbo Baggins (Martin Freeman) -- reaches a successful culmination.

But no sooner have the Dwarves recovered their stronghold than the untold wealth stored up there begins to obsess their king, Thorin Oakenshield (Richard Armitage). It's a particularly inopportune moment for Thorin to be plagued by the hopeless greed and paranoia that are symptomatic of "dragon sickness," since a vast army of evil Orcs, led by their odious chief, Azog (Manu Bennett), is on the march against Erebor.

With their natural opponents on the verge of war with each other over Thorin's refusal to recognize anyone else's claim -- however just -- to a portion of Erebor's treasures, the Orcs' malignant plan to reestablish the dominance they once exercised over the whole of Middle-earth looks likely to succeed. All the more so once the dire warnings of Bilbo's wizard mentor, Gandalf (Ian McKellen), appear to fall on grievance-deafened ears.

The script for this combat-heavy parable -- on which Jackson collaborated with Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens and Guillermo del Toro -- poises the warping effects of avarice against the redeeming consequences of heroic selflessness. Teens and grown-ups alike will



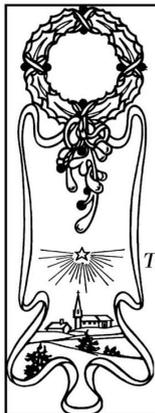
CNS PHOTO/MARK POKORNY, WARNER BROS. PICTURES

Martin Freeman and Ken Stott star in a scene from the movie "The Hobbit: The Battle of The Five Armies."

profit from seeing these contrary traits weighed in the balance, even as they enjoy the picturesque adventure that provides the backdrop for such affirmative moral reckoning.

The film contains pervasive, sometimes harsh bat-

tle violence with minimal gore and a couple of crass expressions. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned.



*We Wish You All  
A glad and peaceful  
Christmastide  
With all its memories sweet;  
May hope and love and  
joy be yours  
With kindly friends to greet;  
The echo of the angel's song,  
The star's clear guiding light,  
The Christ child in your heart and home,  
To make this  
Christmas bright.*

St. Mary's Church  
Waddington



*Wishing you Christmas Joy throughout the whole year!*

The Catholic Churches of the Mountains and Lakes  
St. Bernard's Church, Saranac Lake; St. John in the Wilderness, Lake Clear;  
St. Paul's Church, Bloomingdale; Church of the Assumption, Gabriels

## ADIRONDACK

## FESTIVAL OF LESSONS, CAROLS

**Lake Placid** - The Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble (NAVE) will perform a Festival of Lessons and Carols.

**Date:** Dec. 28

**Time:** 4 p.m.

**Place:** St. Agnes Church

**Features:** Anthems, carols, and hymns illuminate the Christmas story along with community readers and congregational singing in the tradition of King's College, Cambridge. NAVE, under the musical direction of Andrew M. Benware, is a mixed chamber choir of professional and amateur singers that perform choral music from a variety of periods and styles in four to eight parts.

**Cost:** \$10 suggested donation

**Contact:** drew.benware@gmail.com

## CLINTON

## MARCH FOR LIFE

**Plattsburgh** - The annual March for life to be held.

**Date:** Jan. 18

**Time:** 1 p.m. to 3:30

**Place:** The march begins at St. John the 23rd Newman Center and concludes at St. John the Baptist Church.

**Speaker:** Rev. Jason J. McGuire, Director of New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms and President of the New Yorker's Family Research Foundation. All are welcome to take part in the march and / or attend Rev. McGuire's presentation scheduled for 2pm.

## PANCAKE BREAKFAST

**Treadwell Mills** - St. Alexander & St. Joseph's Church will hold an all you can eat pancake breakfast.

**Date:** Jan. 4

**Time:** 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.

**Place:** St. Joseph's Parish Hall

## LESSONS AND CAROLS BY NAVE

**Plattsburgh** - The Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble (NAVE) will perform a Festival of Lessons and Carols.

**Date:** Dec. 27

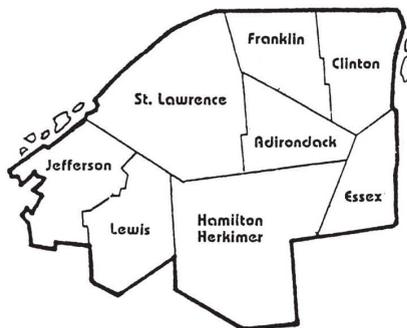
**Time:** 7:30 p.m.

**Place:** St. Peter's Church

**Features:** Anthems, carols, and hymns illuminate the Christmas story along with community readers and congregational singing. NAVE, under the musical direction of Andrew M. Benware, is a mixed chamber choir of professional and amateur singers that perform choral music from a variety of periods and styles in four to eight parts.

**Cost:** \$10 suggested donation

**Contact:** drew.benware@gmail.com



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

Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:

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

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

## QUILTING CLASSES

**Ellenburg Center** - Upcoming Quilt Classes at The Lost Sheep Quilt Shop.

**Place:** Our Lady of the Adirondacks

**Schedule:**

- **Beginners Quilting Class** - Jan. 10, 9:30 a.m. to 3p.m. We'll be making a lap size quilt and you'll learn all the basics of quilting level quilting. Cost \$20.

- **Star Quilt or Winter Star** - Jan. 24, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Your choice of two quilt designs. Can be made table topper up to crib size. Cost \$20.

- **Home on the Range Quilt Class** - Feb. 21, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This fun and easy quilt uses fat quarter blocks along with easy machine applique. Cost \$25.

## CHAMPLAIN BUS FOR LIFE

**Plattsburgh** - Time to sign up for the 2015 Lake Champlain Bus for Life.

**Schedule:** Meet at St. Peter's Church in on Jan. 21 at 7:15 p.m. for the Jan. 22 March For Life. Arrive in Washington, D.C. early Jan. 22; Free Time in the morning. Rally and March at noon on National Mall; Meet at St. Peter's Church in D.C. at 4:45pm for the trip home.

**Cost:** \$25

**Contact:** Karen Smith at 518-566-6229 or Betty Buffett at (518) 536-6640. To sign up for the bus or make a donation, mail your check to St. Peter's Church 114 Cornelia Street Plattsburgh, NY 12901. Note on the memo line: "Bus for Life."

## EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

**Plattsburgh** - Eucharistic Adoration is held throughout the year every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.

**Place:** St. John's "Holy Family" Adoration Chapel, downstairs

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

**Contact:** call 518-561-5083 or email Sjohnsadoration@aol.com

## FRANKLIN

## DEVOTION AND HOLY HOUR

**St. Regis Falls** - First Saturday Devotion and Holy Hour to be held.

**Date:** First Saturday of each month.

**Time:** immediately following the 4:30 anticipated Mass.

**Place:** St. Ann's Church

**Contact:** 518-856-9656

## LATIN MASS

**Constable** - A Tridentine (Latin) Mass is celebrated each Friday at 5:30 p.m. with Fr. Howard Venette as the celebrant. Mass will also be celebrated every first Saturday at 9 a.m.

**Place:** St. Francis of Assisi Church.

## JEFFERSON

## HOLY HOURS

**Adams/Henderson** - Holy Hours to be held.

**Schedule:** First Wed. at St. Cecilia 6:30 p.m.; Jan. 7; Feb. 4; March 4; Third Monday at St. Cecilia 5 p.m. (followed by pot luck) Jan. 19; Feb. 16; March 16; Thursday at Queen of Heaven 5:30 p.m.; Dec. 18; Jan. 22

**Features:** adoration following the 10:30 a.m. Mass on Wed.

## HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS

**Watertown** - Holy Hour for vocations to be held.

**Date:** Mon.-Fri.

**Time:** 9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

**Place:** Holy Family Church

**Features:** Eucharistic Adoration & personal prayer

**Contact:** 315-782-2468

## LIFERIGHT MEETING

**Watertown** - Liferight of Watertown, a pro-life educational organization, meets the first Wednesday of the Month.

**Time:** 1 p.m.

**Place:** 312 Sherman St.

**Contact:** Phone 315-788-8480

## LEWIS

## DIVINE MERCY DEVOTIONS

**Houseville** - Divine Mercy Devotions for the month of January will be held.

**Date:** Jan. 4

**Time:** 3 p.m.

**Place:** St. Hedwig's Church

**Features:** The program includes: Vespers (Evening Prayer), Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament, The Divine Mercy Chaplet and Benediction.

**Contact:** 348-6260.

## INTERNATIONAL CRÊCHES

**Houseville** - An international exhibit of Christmas Crèches-Nativitys Will be on display, free and open to the public

**Place:** St. Hedwig's Church.

**Schedule:** The display may be seen on the following Sundays: Dec. 14, 21, 28 and Jan. 4 (2015). The display may be viewed after the 11 a.m. Mass or from 1 p.m. to 3 on the above dates, or by appointment.

**Contact:** 348-6260.

## POLISH CHRISTMAS WAFER

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

**Cost:** \$3 per package plus postage.

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

**Contact:** 348-6260.

## ST. LAWRENCE

## HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS

**Ogdensburg** - St. Mary's is holding a monthly Holy Hour for Vocations.

**Date:** Thursday before the First Friday

**Time:** 7 p.m. concluding with Benediction at 8 p.m.

**Place:** Deacon Winter Chapel

## NOVENA FOR MILITARY

**Ogdensburg** - Notre Dame Church is holding a Weekly novena for the safety of U.S. military personnel at a new time.

**Date:** Tuesday afternoons

**Time:** 1:30 p.m.

## LATIN MASS

**Potsdam** - A Tridentine (Latin) Mass is celebrated each Sunday

**Time:** 12:30 p.m.

**Place:** St. Mary's Church

**Celebrant:** Msgr. Robert H. Aucoin

## EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

**Massena** - St. Mary's & St. Joseph's hold Benediction and Adoration every Friday

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 10

**Place:** St. Mary's Family Room

## BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

**Massena** - Sacred Heart/St. Lawrence holds a Bereavement Support Group last Tuesday of each month.

**Time:** 2 p.m.

**Place:** Sacred Heart Convent

**Contact:** 315-769-3137

## COMMUNITY FREE LUNCH

**Ogdensburg** - The K of Council 258 is starting up its Community Free Lunch

**Date:** Wednesdays

**Time:** Noon

**Place:** K of C Club

**Contact:** Club Rooms 393-7990 after 4 p.m. any day or on Wednesday's after 10:30 a.m.

## NEIGHBORING DIOCESES

## SILENT RETREAT

**Syracuse** - A silent directed retreat to be held.

**Date:** Jan. 2 at 6p.m. to Jan. 4, 12 p.m.

**Place:** Spiritual Renewal Center

**Cost:** \$250

**Contact:** spiritualrenewalcenter.com; Phone: 315-472-6546; Email: mail@spiritualrenewalcenter.com

## 24 HOUR RETREAT

**Syracuse** - A 24 hour retreat to be held.

**Schedule:** From March 13 at 7 p.m. to March 14 at 7 p.m.

**Place:** Spiritual Renewal Center

**Cost:** \$140

**Contact:** spiritualrenewalcenter.com, phone: 315-472-6546 Email: mail@spiritualrenewalcenter.com



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

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

# Christmas Reflections

From the Director's Desk  
Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ,  
Diocesan Mission Director

My Christmas reflections draw me to the Responsorial Psalm for Mass at Dawn: A light will shine on us this day: the Lord is born for us. (Psalm: 97: 1, 6, 11-12)

A total house fire for a family is a tragedy for an entire community. Recently I experienced this, when parishioners lost everything as a raging fire took their house and family treasures. While the state of shock hovered, family and friends thanked God that no lives were lost which in retrospect could instantly have happened.

The community reached out in loving compassion to find a temporary home, groceries, toiletries, sizes for clothes and the other amenities that we take so much for granted. Reaching out as did people to the family who suffered a need, is that not what the people of the North Country do in prayer and financial sacrifices to people in developing countries?

At St. Martin de Porras Parish, Mollendo, Peru the small van which for over twenty years has transported children and adults from the mountains to Mass and church activities is no longer in service.

Your generosity had made this priority possible to let Christ's light shine upon them as they were transported to church to hear the word of God. I now dream of the parish someday having a vehicle like those traveling our roads. St. Martin de Porras parish need is only one of the many which you have supported so missionaries can spread the good news of Christ's love.

God's light truly shines on us all when we assist others in local tragedies. Likewise God's light shines with many blessings upon us when we share in mission appeals with the generosity with which we have been blessed. My prayer for you is that the Lord's light shine upon you abundantly for your generosity to the Pontifical Mission Societies, Missionary Projects for the Diocese of Ogdensburg and Missionary Cooperative Appeals as you have supported more than 1500 mission dioceses in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Pacific Islands and Latin America.

*A Blessed Christmas to you and your loved ones from Molly Ryan and me!*

Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.

## OBITUARIES

**Bombay** - Nellie L. (Reddle) Foley, 81; Funeral Services Dec. 19, 2014 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in St. Lawrence Cemetery, North Lawrence.

**Brasher Falls** - John P. Sienkiewicz, 91; Funeral Services Dec. 18, 2014 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery, Massena.

**Canton** - Michael M. Mace, 67; Funeral Services Dec. 12, 2014 at the O'Leary Funeral Home; burial in Brick Chapel Cemetery.

**Carthage** - Warren G. Gamble, 95; Funeral Services Dec. 14, 2014 at the Bezailla-McGraw Funeral Home; burial in Swinburne Cemetery, Deer River.

**Carthage** - Francis W. Nortz, 94; Funeral Services Dec. 19, 2014 at St. James Church; burial in St. Stephens Cemetery, Croghan.

**Champlain** - Donald R. "Smitty" Smith, 81; Funeral Services Dec. 15, 2014 at St. Mary's Church.

**Croghan** - Jill E. (Lehman) Boliver, 59; Funeral Services Dec. 17, 2014 at St. Stephen's Church; burial in St. Stephen's Cemetery.

**Cumberland Head** - Robert "Bob" W. Frechette, 78; Funeral Services Dec. 20, 2014 at St. Mary's of the Lake; burial in parish cemetery.

**Ellenburg** - Kenneth F. LaValley, 85; Funeral Services Dec. 19, 2014 at St. Edmund's Church.

**Keeseville** - Judith C. "Judy" (Bentley) Rule, 79; Funeral Services Dec. 16, 2014 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Lyon Mountain** - Joyce Ann (King) LaVigne, 84; Funeral Services Dec. 16, 2014 at St. Bernard's Church.

**Madrid** - Ronald W. Tiernan, 72; Funeral Services Dec. 20, 2014 at St. John the

Baptist Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Malone** - Arlea R. "Susie" (Griffin) Lawrence, 85; Funeral Dec. 19, 2014 at the Bruso-Desnoyers Funeral Home; burial in St. George's Cemetery, Burke.

**Malone** - Leon "Jack" J. Trombley, 89; Funeral Services Dec. 18, 2014 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

**Massena** - Robert J. "Bobbie" Compo, 64; Funeral Services Dec. 20, 2014 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Massena** - Harry A. Hammill, 47; Funeral Services Dec. 15, 2014 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** - Linda M. (Ramsey) Dufore, 66; Funeral Services Dec. 16, 2014 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** - Arthur H. Parker III, 53; Funeral Services Dec. 15, 2014 at St. Joseph's Nursing Home Chapel.

**Ogdensburg** - Geneva L. (Culy) Smith, 83; Funeral Services Dec. 19, 2014 at Frary Funeral Home.

**Peru** - Timothy Charles Carte, 57; Funeral Services Dec. 18, 2014 at the Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

**Peru** - Carlton G. Liberty, 77; Funeral Services Dec. 20, 2014 at St. Augustine's Church; burial in Whispering Maples Memorial Columbarium.

**Plattsburgh** - Frances Eleanor (Mayette) Bousquet, 81; Funeral Services Dec. 18, 2014 at the Brown Funeral Home; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** - Wanda M. Martin, 85; Funeral Services Dec. 17, 2014 at St. Peter's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Watertown** - Viola M. (Collins) Bowman, 90; Funeral Services Dec. 18, 2014 at the Reed & Benoit Funeral Home; burial in North Watertown Cemetery.

**Watertown** - Mary E. (Geno) Carlo, 89; Funeral Services Dec. 20, 2014 at St. Anthony's Church; burial in Glenwood Mausoleum.

**Watertown** - John H. Nickerson, 57; Funeral Services Dec. 15, 2014 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church; burial in Brookside Cemetery.



As he opens series of weekly talks on the family

# Pope Francis extols Mary, St. Joseph

By Francis X. Rocca  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- At his last weekly public audience of 2014, Pope Francis started a series of talks on the family with a reflection on the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph as a model for all Christian families.

The pope spoke Dec. 17 after getting cheers, balloons and even a birthday cake as he arrived for the audience that coincided with his 78th birthday. He said his remarks were first of a series in

preparation for the October 2015 Synod of Bishops on the family, which he described as the conclusion of a process begun at the October extraordinary synod on the same subject.

"I have decided to reflect with you, in this year, on the very subject of the family, on this great gift that the Lord has given the world from the start, when he gave Adam and Eve the mission of multiplying and filling the earth," the pope said.

The series of talks, which the pope announced at the previous week's audience,

Dec. 10, could amount to the most extensive papal teaching on the subject since St. John Paul II gave more than 120 audience talks on human sexuality, later compiled as his "theology of the body."

If the first installment of Pope Francis' talks is indicative, they will be in his usual conversational and folksy style, in contrast to the philosophical meditations of St. John Paul.

In the talk, delivered a week before Christmas Eve, Pope Francis reflected that God chose to become man

not "spectacularly, or as a warrior, an emperor" but as the son of a "pious and hard-working Israelite family" in a "forlorn village on the periphery of the Roman empire."

**The pope spoke Dec. 17 after getting cheers, balloons and even a birthday cake as he arrived for the audience that coincided with his 78th birthday**

Noting that the Gospels offer no details on Jesus' youth and upbringing, the pope imagined the Holy Family's daily life: "The mother cooked, kept house, ironed the shirts, did all the work of a mom. The dad, a carpenter, worked, taught his son to work."

"It is not difficult to imagine how much moms could learn from Mary's care for that son, and how much dads could benefit from the example of Joseph, a just man, who devoted his life to supporting and defending

his child and wife, his family, in difficult periods. Not to speak of how much the adolescent Jesus might encourage kids to understand the necessity and beauty of cultivating their deepest vocation, and of dreaming big dreams," Pope Francis said.

"The family of Nazareth calls on us to rediscover the vocation of the family, of every family," the pope said: "to make love normal instead of hate, to make mutual assistance a common thing, rather than indifference or enmity."

"This is the great mission of the family: to make a place for Jesus when he comes, to welcome Jesus in the family, in the form of children, husband, wife, grandparents," he said. "Jesus is there. Welcome him there, that he might grow spiritually in that family."

Thousands of tango dancers, mostly from Italy, flocked to St. Peter's Square to wave their white scarves that said "A Tango for Pope Francis" and cheer along with tens of thousands of other people at the audience.



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



From the Staff of the Development Office

Scott Lalone, Valerie Mathews, Renee' Grizzuto



CNS PHOTO/PAUL HARING  
Balloons and a sign wish Pope Francis happy birthday as he arrives to lead his general audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican Dec. 17, the pope's 78th birthday.