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NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

DEC. 14, 2011

To follow Gospel is to follow Christ

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Following the Gospel is not adhering to a doctrine or code of ethics but entails truly following the person of Christ in one's life, Pope Benedict XVI said.

Through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, "we can turn with trust to God our Father, confident that, in doing his will, we shall find true free-

dom and peace," he said during his weekly general audience Dec. 7.

In his audience talk to about 3,000 people in Paul VI hall, Pope Benedict continued a series of talks on Christian prayer.

Divine revelation doesn't follow earthly rules in which the powerful hold the keys to

knowledge, he said. God takes a completely different approach, choosing instead to share with "the little ones" true knowledge of the divine, he said.

Only those who are pure of heart and are open to God's will can see the face of God in Jesus, he said. People must have a simple heart,

like a child, free of any self-assured presumptions that they can live their own life without any help from anyone, not even God, the pope said.

"But we need God, we need to meet him, listen to him and talk to him," and only through him will people find peace, he said.

Bishop continues Rome report

Last week, Bishop LaValley wrote about his experience meeting Pope Benedict XVI during his Nov. 22- Dec. 2 *ad limina* visit to Rome.

This week, he writes about other features of the trip.

Bishop LaValley and the other bishops of New York State met with some of the staff (Congregations or Dicasteries and Councils) at the Vatican.

And, the third element of the "pilgrimage to the threshold of the Apostles," he said, was the celebration of Mass at the four basilicas of Rome.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

Seton Catholic remembers

Plattsburgh Catholic high school holds memorial service to honor two international students who were killed.

FULL STORIES, PAGE 4 & 16

THE REASON FOR THE SEASON



PHOTO SUPPLIED

The Knights of Columbus of Plattsburgh spread the good news at St. John's Church. Shown are Sherman Luck on the ladder and Tom Rennell.

AMERICAN SAINT?

News about Kateri expected



CNS PHOTO/BOB ROLLER

According to Catholic News Service, there have been reports that an announcement will be made in mid-December about the approval of a second miracle attributed to Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha's intercession, which would clear the way for her canonization. In other news about U.S. sainthood causes, the path to sainthood for Syracuse native Blessed Marianne Cope of Molokai has been cleared after a Vatican congregation Dec. 6 confirmed a second miracle attributed to her intercession.

FULL STORY, PAGE 11

GIFT OF A LIFETIME: There's still time to join pilgrimage to Italy, p. 13

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The Fourth Candle

When I was a kid, it was always a thrill to see the altar boy light that fourth candle on the Advent wreath!

The countdown to Christmas was finally in high gear.

Trees were up everywhere - even in our house where my dad thought Dec. 20th was quite soon enough.

As an adult, the excitement is still there, but tempered - with just a little panic.

There's always too much left to do.

But that panic is tempered too... with a little more wisdom than I had in my younger days.

With every year that passes I'm more confident that all the best parts of Christmas will happen even if I don't spend another dime, bake a single cookie or send a card.

This year, because Christmas falls on a Sunday, our fourth week of Advent is a full seven days.

If we plan it right, these can be seven days of grace.

The "Merry Christmas" greetings will be flying everywhere, in offices, "city side-

walks" and grocery stores.

We'll be making final preparations to show the most important people of our lives how much we love them.

Traditional music and holiday movies will fill the airwaves, reminding us at every turn that this week is different.

And, most importantly, those four candles will be there to remind us of the Reason for all our celebrating.

Our preparations for Christmas would not be complete if we weren't preparing for Jesus.

And, how better could we do that than to "be Jesus?"

He told us how: "feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the ill and visit those in prison."

Certainly our efforts in any of these areas would bring Christmas to the world in a way that carols and cookies couldn't begin to accomplish.

Your 'to-do' list might expand but not nearly so much as your Christmas spirit!

Mary Lou
Kilian

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

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CHURCH: A FAMILY OF FAITH

A Dwelling Place for God

4th Sunday of Advent - Dec. 17-18

By Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ

Director of Evangelization

Glory to God! Isn't this what all of the readings are inviting us to today as we draw near to the celebration of Christmas.

King David wanted to build a house for God in thanksgiving for the gifts he had received. St. Paul marvels at God's mysterious saving plan that was hidden for so many ages and he gives glory to God.

It was Mary, who's "Yes" to the angel made possible the power of the Holy Spirit to "pitch His tent in our midst."

Mary becomes the first tabernacle, the first dwelling place, of the presence of the Incarnate Word. It is in her complete trust in God that she makes possible the working of the power of the Holy Spirit in her life. She is the model disciple we are called to mirror in our own response of faith.

The messianic promise could now be fulfilled in her womb. The Kingdom that God promised would last forever. But God did not script for Mary how this promise would be fulfilled.

Her witness of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection did not mean that she would not suffer; or that the promise would not be fulfilled. God simply promised that He would always be with us—"Emmanuel"—God with us! That promise is still with us, but not yet complete.

How does Mary help us prepare our hearts for the coming of the Messiah and all the events in our own lives? The power of the Holy Spirit did overshadow Mary. The Holy Spirit will also be with us. We have to trust and to believe.

The promise of God's dwelling place is continued in us, the Body of Christ, who goes forth to be a Family of Faith for others.

We are the beneficiaries of God's promise and we are to go forth carrying that promise forward by sharing the Good News and our faith stories to everyone we meet.

As we share our faith stories, we listen to the heartbeat of God's indwelling presence within us to understand a little more the mystery of God and His plan for us.

He desires and wants to give an image of Himself as gift and life if only we open our hearts to Him.

Our prayer becomes the response from Psalm 89: "Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord." We pray that we may bring the light of Christmas to someone who needs to see the real meaning of Christmas.

Let us decorate our hearts with love and kindnesses, reaching out to those whose hearts are heavy, bringing hope out of despair, joy out of disappointment, and love out of hatred.

Like Mary, how can we model her discipleship and let it influence our own lives and the lives of our family?

Our actions show and give glory to God. Let us sing the goodness of the Lord!



CNS PHOTO/LISA A. JOHNSTON

FOLLOW ME



CNS PHOTO/PAUL HARING
U.S. bishops from the state of New York on their "ad limina" visits to the Vatican concelebrate Mass at the

tomb of Blessed John Paul II in St. Peter's Basilica Nov. 29. Bishop Robert J. Cunningham is shown in the front row, fourth from left, and Bishop Terry R. LaValley is pictured fifth from the right.

Powerful and inspiring moments in Rome

By Bishop Terry R. LaValley

In addition to the graced opportunity to meet and speak about our particular dioceses with the Holy Father, a second important element of a bishop's *ad limina* visit to Rome concerns his meetings with some of the staff (Congregations or Dicasteries and Councils) that assist the Holy Father in ministry to the Church Universal.

Among some of the Pope's curia that we visited were: Congregations for Bishops, Clergy, Institutes of Consecrated Life, Catholic Education, and Divine Worship.

We met with the Pontifical Councils for the Laity, for Promoting New Evangelization, and for the Family.

We, also, had the opportunity to meet with officials from the Supreme Tribunal of the Apostolic Signatura.

These meetings provided opportunities for the bishops of New York State to make brief presentations about areas of particular concern for our local churches.

Not surprisingly, most of the concerns voiced by one bishop were the same for others. We could speak of

the vitality of the faith of our parishioners and of the real challenges that lie ahead.

Ad Limina Apostolarum (2)

The third element of my pilgrimage to the threshold of the Apostles was the celebration of Mass at the four basilicas of Rome.

On Black Friday, we celebrated Mass in St. Peter's Basilica at the Altar of the Tomb of St. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles. A most powerful and inspiring moment of that Mass took place when all of the successors of the Apostles present (the New York State Bishops) prayed the ancient Apostles Creed together.

The next day we celebrated Mass at the Basilica dedicated to the Apostle to

the Gentiles at St. Paul Outside the Walls.

We also celebrated Eucharist at the Basilica of Mary Major and at St. John Lateran.

You will remember that John Lateran is the Cathedral Church for the Bishop of Rome. Providentially, we celebrated Mass here on the Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle, November 30th.

The Gospel scene for this Feast Day is at the Sea of Galilee where Jesus beckoned Peter and Andrew: "Follow Me."

This was the Scripture story Archbishop Siambi shared with me just before he told me that Pope Benedict XVI had selected me to be the new Bishop of Ogdensburg.

These words that comprise my Episcopal Motto

rang loud and clear in my heart as I heard the Gospel proclaimed in that ancient basilica that last Wednesday in November 2011.

Given the fact that Andrew is my Confirmation name as well as the name of my grandfather, it was a moment in which I felt so humbled and proud to be your bishop, in the line of Peter, Andrew and Paul.

The schedule allowed for

some beautiful sight-seeing in the city. I'm grateful to my fellow traveler and trusted collaborator in ministry, Monsignor John Murphy, for joining me on this pilgrimage.

We didn't resist invitations to partake of the pasta at some of Rome's finest.

After all, it is truly right and just that when one is in Rome, one should do as the Romans do!

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Two international students remembered, mourned at Seton Catholic

In honor of Chu 'Allen' and Dat

By Shan Moore
Staff Writer

PLATTSBURGH - Except for foot-falls on the bleachers, the gym was almost completely silent.

By the door, students handed out white flowers crafted from tissue paper; they helped one another put on black armbands.

Those already seated looked out at an altar of sorts on the gym floor with large photos of Chu "Allen" Xiong and Dat Thanh Ong on easels, a collection of plants and many white candles, flames flickering.

In silence and in tears, those assembled watched Chu's parents, his mother's face stricken, cross in front of the bleachers to take their seats.

"You honor us," Principal Cathy Russell told them. "We thank you for allowing us to share your grief.

"It is our prayer that we can in some small way today express to you what Dat and Chu, 'Allen,' meant to us here at Seton."

Just a week earlier, Chu, 18, and Dat, 17, were walking along Peasleeve Road in Peru when they were struck by a car and killed. The two teens in the car also died.

It isn't known what caused the car to leave the road.

"It's been pretty quiet," sophomore Joe Templin said before the memorial service as he set up a video camera to film the event for Dat and Chu's parents. "The first day after the accident, people (at



PHOTO SUPPLIED

Members of the Seton Catholic Central community in Plattsburgh offer consolation to the parents of Chu "Allen" Xiong of China after a memorial service for Allen and his friend Dat Thanh Ong, two international students killed in a Nov. 15 car accident.

school) were really sad and distracted.

"It's been kind of surreal."

The memorial service was for both international students, though Dat's family, who traveled from Vietnam, could not be there, as they were in Burlington at a service for their son.

"In our Christian rite of burial, there is a phrase for the faithful," Sister Ellen Rose, superintendent of schools of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, told those assembled. "At death, life is not ended, but changed."

Bishop Terry LaValley could not be at Seton for the service, she said, because he

was in Rome. But later in the week he would celebrate Mass with Pope Benedict.

"His special intention of that Mass will be for all of you," she said.

The silence in the stands lifted as, softly, reverently, all recited an opening prayer from the Buddhist tradition.

"Sacred one, may I be filled with loving kindness, may I be well.

"May I be peaceful and at ease, may I be happy and free from suffering ..."

"What I see in front of me today is a body of people, a family," said Derek Payne, director of International Students at Seton.

Chu, from China, and Dat, from Vietnam, had been at Seton only since September, yet they had found their place in that school family.

Dat, Mr. Payne said, was always a jokester. But he also had firm convictions and wouldn't hesitate to offer them.

"But they were always conveyed with the utmost respect."

As for Chu, who was Allen

to his Seton friends, "when he walked into a room, the mood was lifted.

"He was one of the most kindhearted people I ever met," Mr. Payne said.

Almost every day, Chu practiced martial arts, which," he said with a smile, "he would insist that everyone call kung fu."

And Chu kept in shape running.

Mr. Payne paused, overcome by emotion.

"He would make peace with himself before going on his run."

Mr. Payne gave Chu's mother a stuffed bear made from a gray-and-white striped shirt that had been her son's.

"I hope it brings comfort to you," he said.

"In every land and every culture," said

Msgr. Dennis Duprey, pastor of St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh, "human beings have something, someone beyond themselves. Especially in our most horrific tragedies, we look to the Divine, we look to the light."

"The traditions of the East and West are very complicated, often different," he continued. "But love is consistent."

Students honored the two who died by reading some of the messages they had written on paper taped up along the hallways of the school after the tragedy.

"Allen, you were in all of my classes, and it hurts me not to see you every day."

"Please watch over us."

"You were such bright spirits and now may your spirits fly free to the heavens."

Chu's father, Xiong Ze, speaking through a student interpreter, thanked everyone for the tribute to his son.

"He loved his school; he loved the teachers here, and he loved the students," he said, pain etched on his features.

Chu's mother, Huang Ke, very much wanted the students and staff to help release her son's spirit.

Outside, the still silent crowd gathered around as the Xiongs opened a white, heart-shaped basket to let two white doves soar into the sky.

As if one, Chu's family, including his uncle, Huang Jian; his host family, students, staff and others followed the birds as they circled overhead once, twice then flew out of sight.

Chu is buried in St. Peter's Cemetery.

His father chose to lay him to rest there, Russell said, "because he was so happy here." Seton will care for the grave.

"It has a Christmas wreath on it now," the principal said.

Seton students have vowed their friends Chu and Dat will not be forgotten.

The Seton Catholic Student Council is planning a memory garden in their honor, and donations are welcome. Make out checks to Seton Catholic Student Council and mail them to the school at: 206 New York Road, Plattsburgh NY 12903.

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Embracing a new Missal... one more time

By Kevin Mastellon
Staff Writer

I was an Altar Boy in the 1960's. I remember the surprise the day I arrived to serve for Mass at my church in Queens, New York and found the rail was gone.

The Latin I had worked so hard to learn, was abandoned. I no longer had to genuflect and bow and walk up the steps to move the Missal from the Epistle side to the Gospel side.

I was instructed the world would not end if I spilled wax on my surplus. Father was actually going to face the people and speak in English.

I still had to ring bells and lift his chasuble at the elevation and in a very awkward way assist at the distribution of communion. It was a truly new experience.

If you were not around for that change in the 1960's, the changes in the Mass on the first Sunday of Advent this year might have been awkward.

For those of us old enough to remember, it was not so bad.

What a wonderfully different transition this has been.

Our Diocese and our parishes have offered us opportunities to prepare for the transition to the new Missal.

The "change" that occurred in the 1960's was not orchestrated well. These changes have come with instruction, pew cards, presentations on the biblical and theological significance of our Eucharistic celebration.

Our priests have responded to the challenge of new texts. Our liturgists, musicians and ministers have all responded quite calmly. The most important reaction though has been in the pew. The people are, to fall back on a '60s phrase, "rolling with the flow."

The Church has provided us with a new body of prayer rich in tradition. The prayers are an honest reflection of the words of Christ and marvelously meditative.

This transition to a new Missal is the opportunity for we people of faith to refresh the prayer we offer in community.

It may take a few weeks but I suspect we will all become comfortable with the changes in due course. The nervous tension of change will give way to thoughtful prayer.



Deacon Kevin Mastellon of St. Patrick's Church in Watertown reflects on the Mass changes he experienced as an altar boy in the 1960's and those he is experiencing as a deacon today.

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Bishop LaValley's Schedule

Dec. 15 – 8:30 a.m., Mass and Visit at St. James School in Gouverneur.

Dec. 16 – 10:50 a.m., Mass at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg.

Dec. 18 – 8:00 a.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg; 2:00 p.m., Christmas Concert at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

Dec. 20 – 12 p.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg; 3p.m., Episcopal Council Meeting at the Bishop's Residence in Ogdensburg.

Dec. 21 – 12:00 p.m., Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg.

Rest in Peace

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

Dec. 14 – Rev. P.M. O'Shea, O.S.A., 1942

Dec. 15 – Rev. Leon Pierre Cochard, 1915; Deacon Joseph H. Gilbert II, 2010

Dec. 16 – Rev. J. F. McGowen, O.S.A., 1935; Rev. Frederick Cummings Horton, 1975

Dec. 17 – Rev. John Orrin Senecal, 1980

Dec. 18 – Msgr. Narcisse Lorrain, 1915; Rev. Laurent Legoff, O.M.I., 1932; Rev. Louis Kopp, M.S.C., 1946; Msgr. Harold J. Skelly, 1980; Rev. George A. Fortaine, 1990

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

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Victims Assistance Coordinator, Terri-
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Making the Church Greener

By J. Milburn Thompson

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"The American Catholic"

Pope Benedict XVI is being called "the Green Pope" and rightly so. Not only has he spoken out about Christian responsibility to care for the environment, but in this case the Vatican's example may be more effective than its statements. I want to suggest, however, that there is room for improvement, both in word and deed.

Recent statements by Pope Benedict have contributed to the development of a distinctively Catholic voice on the environment.

Pope Benedict expands on the principles of Catholic social teaching in developing his environmental ethic in his 2009 social encyclical, "Charity in Truth" (#48-51), and his 2010 World Day of Peace Message, "If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation."

The foundation of the church's contemporary environmental ethic is that creation is a gift of God entrusted to humanity to take care of and cultivate. Human beings, created in God's image, are seen as co-creators with God and as stewards of Earth and its resources.

Thus the church's environmental ethic is clearly and consciously human-centered or anthropocentric.

Pope Benedict steers a middle course between the extremes of an Earth-centered approach (biocentrism or ecocentrism espoused by deep ecologists and others) and the total human domination of the earth, which has characterized the Christian West.

He takes a "stewardship" approach.

Pope Benedict develops the church's environmental ethic by drawing on and expanding the principles that form the core of Catholic social teaching. He extends to future generations the principles of integral human de-

velopment, the option for the poor, the universal destiny of created goods and the common good.

He includes a healthy environment in what the American church has called the consistent ethic of life. Like Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict expands human rights to include a right to a healthy environment.

An Environmental Ethic

The church calls both for a change in lifestyle and for structural change. The greed, selfishness and exploitation of a consumerist mentality have resulted in environmental and economic crises and in human suffering and inequity; simplicity, sacrifice and justice are the ways forward.

An environmental ethic of human stewardship for the natural world is theologically defensible and environmentally helpful.

Genesis is clear that God created the world and remains in charge of it. The "dominion" given to human beings can persuasively be understood in terms of responsibility rather than authority. Humans are to care for and cultivate the earth so that the human community can flourish. Wise environmental practices are in the enlightened self-interest of humanity.

A stewardship ethic can justify and motivate important changes in human behavior and significant social transformations.

The church has made great strides in its attitude toward nature. It has gone from an attitude of disregard and domination to an ethic of responsible stewardship and care for creation.

Many commentators, however, think that the church needs to go a step further in the development of the conceptual foundation for its ecological theology.

An anthropocentric ethic does not logically give intrinsic value to the earth or

to other creatures. Nature has only the instrumental value of being used for and by humanity. What difference does this make?

One of the issues Pope Benedict lists as part of the environmental crisis is the loss of biodiversity—the depletion of species of plants, insects and animals. Species become endangered or extinct when their habitats are altered or destroyed through, for example, human encroachment or global warming.

Species naturally come and go, but human activity is accelerating the pace of extinctions at a rate thousands of times faster than the natural pace of evolution. This reduction of the genetic heritage of Earth may well be harming human interests (perhaps the cure for cancer has vanished in the Amazon forest), but it may also be true that humans can flourish without the polar bear or the spotted owl or the timber rattlesnake.

Unless flora and fauna are seen as fellows and the web of life is valued in itself, humanity has little incentive to protect them.

Moreover, this anthropocentric view does not account adequately for the whole scientific or theological truth. Scientifically, humans are not so much above nature as part of nature, derivative from it and dependent on it. The human species has become prolific and powerful, but humans were not present for most of the earth's 4.6 billion years, and should humanity go the way of the dinosaurs, the earth will continue on for some time.

Humans are more dependent on the earth than the earth is on humans. Human consciousness gives humanity a special role and responsibility in the web of life, but it is not only about us. Theology reinforces this case for human humility and interdependence in regard to nature. Scripture is



CNS PHOTO/PAUL HARING.

In this CNS file photo, Pope Benedict XVI prays during Mass on the feast of Mary Mother of God in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Jan. 1, 2010. The pope observed World Peace Day, saying that true respect for the environment requires seeing all of creation as a reflection of God, the creator. In this essay, the author asserts that Pope Benedict has earned the title "the Green Pope" in word and deed and calls for more leadership by the Catholic church towards the greening of the church and society.

neither anthropocentric nor ecocentric, but theocentric. Thus many theologians have moved toward a Franciscan creation-centered view, what theologian John Hart calls a creatiocentric consciousness.

The focus on creation acknowledges that God created the universe that all of creation is "very good," and that humans are in relationship with God, each other and all of creation.

St. Francis of Assisi realized the kinship that characterizes the web of life. Thus he treated all of creation — sun and wind, birds and wolves, lepers and popes — as companions, as a Thou, not an It. Francis provides a model for a creation-centered rethinking of the human-nature relationship.

A creation-centered approach gives the world a sacred quality that can be perceived by a sacramental vision, and it puts nature and humanity in relationship with each other.

A creatiocentric consciousness does not yield

easy answers, but it does change the nature of the questions and of the conversation. It would be a more fruitful foundation for the church's environmental ethic.

Beyond what he has been saying, however, Pope Benedict has been setting a good example in Vatican City. Through the installation of solar panels on the football field-sized roof of the Paul VI Audience Hall, plans to plant trees to create a forest in Hungary to offset carbon dioxide emissions and other green measures, Vatican City has become the first carbon neutral state in the world. Admittedly Vatican City is also the world's smallest independent state at 0.17 square mile, but this effort demonstrates a willingness of the church to practice what it preaches regarding the environment.

There are numerous other efforts on the part of Catholic institutions throughout the world to go green.

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WASHINGTON LETTER

Economic hardship hits individuals and nations

By Mark Pattison
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON (CNS) - It's not new, but it's still news: The economy remains in a funk. Not just in the United States, but it has spread to many nations around the world.

Although the "Great Recession," which officially started in December 2007, was declared over in June 2009, U.S. unemployment numbers were staying stubbornly around 9 percent. In December, the figure dipped to 8.6 percent, the lowest it's been since the second full month of Barack Obama's presidency, but that was because nearly three times as many people quit looking for work as found jobs. The number of poor Americans has grown to roughly 49 million, or close to one in six overall.

NJ bishops speak out

New Jersey's Catholic bishops, in a Nov. 21 statement, called on Americans to "address the critical needs of the poor who live among us. ... We cannot ignore children who go to bed hungry, parents who are jobless, families who are homeless, the sick who suffer without medical care, or the elderly who live in in-

festated or unsafe housing."

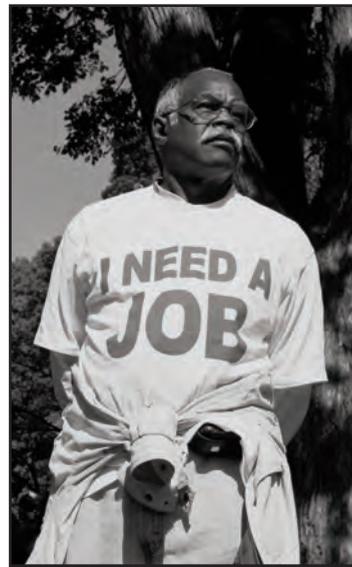
Most leading economic indicators show little change. And working Americans -- in terms of "consumer confidence" -- still seem wary over the prospect of losing their job or the possibility of a second recession.

Deficit cutting might not have been all the rage in 2011, but efforts to cut deficits spurred lots of rage from various segments of the population.

When new Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker tried to force through a "budget repair" bill to solve a projected \$117 million budget deficit, some Democratic state senators fled the state to delay the vote, which ultimately went Walker's way. Thousands of Wisconsinites rallied outside, and inside, the state Capitol in Madison for weeks to protest the move, and a recall-Walker petition drive was under way.

In the early days of the protests over the bill, which hiked state workers' health care and pension contributions while limiting their bargaining rights, Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome E. ListECKI said, "Hard times do not nullify the moral obligation each of us has to respect the legitimate rights of workers."

Nationally, the usually



CNS PHOTO/JASON REED, REUTERS
Mervin Sealy from Hickory, N.C., one of millions of unemployed Americans, takes part in a protest outside the Capitol in Washington Oct. 5.

routine request by the president for Congress to increase the nation's debt ceiling met with stiff resistance by the new Republican majority in the House. Initial rounds of cuts earlier in 2011 brought only temporary relief -- along with continued sniping at one another from both sides of the aisle. Only a last-minute deal brokered in August averted a possible U.S. default on its debt obligation.

The deal included the formation of a bipartisan, joint House-Senate deficit reduction commission dubbed the "supercommittee." However, it failed to reach agreement on a longer-lasting solution to curb deficit spending, thus triggering automatic cuts in 2012.

One aspect of the supercommittee's work was revenues -- taxes, to be precise.

Social justice leaders seek reform

"We really need tax reform," said Sister Marge Clark, a domestic-issues lobbyist for Network, the Catholic social justice lobby. "There's a big difference between Network's view and a lot of other people," added the Sister of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, "in that tax reform has to be rev-

enue-positive, because we simply don't have enough money" to pay the nation's bills.

"All kinds of tax reform is needed. The whole structure has become convoluted, it's become topsy-turvy," Sister Marge said. "I think the tax code has grown the way an awful lot of other legislation has grown. They pass some things, and realize that it doesn't work or it doesn't do these things (originally touted), and they put a patch on it."

"Then there's another little piece where it becomes obvious that it's not working, so they do it again."

But she's not optimistic about substantive change happening soon. "Probably not before the lame-duck (session following the 2012 presidential election), if you want to be really blunt," Sister Marge said.

In the midst of the ongoing financial struggles, the Occupy movement sprang up in much the same way as the tea party movement arose two years before -- with a sense of unease with and distrust of those who manipulate the levers of power. Initially conceived as Occupy Wall Street with its chant "Banks got bailed out, we got sold out," the movement spread to cities across the United States.

In line with Occupy's "we are the 99 percent" slogan, congressional Democrats want to pay for an extension of the payroll tax cut with a surtax on the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans.

"The payroll tax cut, we've estimated, created about a million jobs over the last year," said David Cooper, an economic analyst with the Economic Policy Institute, which also estimates that another 500,000 jobs are threatened if unemployment benefits aren't extended.

The news was not much better across the ocean. The European Union has been trying to plug leaks in its

member nations' deficit dikes for months. Greece was the first nation to rail against EU-mandated budget cuts. Ireland, Italy and Belgium have all undertaken austerity measures, with the specter of financial implosion threatening to pull the euro zone in its undertow. England, a prime trading partner with EU nations, faced its first nationwide strike in a generation Nov. 30 as workers protested an austerity program.

Pontifical Council document

In October, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace issued an 18-page document, "Toward Reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems in the Context of Global Public Authority," which called for the gradual creation of a world political authority with broad powers to regulate financial markets and rein in the "inequalities and distortions of capitalist development" to counter the "selfishness, collective greed and the hoarding of goods on a great scale" discovered in the global financial crisis.

The document also called for taxes on financial transactions, with revenues contributing to the creation of a "world reserve fund" to support the economies of countries hit by crisis. Some U.S. Democrats have called for a financial transactions tax, although its chances for passage are slim.

Noting that U.S. income inequality has grown in the past 30 years, Cooper said, "I can't speak specifically to the Catholic Church's influence in this discussion, but anyone who is trying to highlight the issues of extreme poverty that we're seeing, the growth in child poverty, the inequality issues like the Occupy movement that's sprung up -- all of those issues have come to the front of the public line, and that's a good thing."

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CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

Roman Missal voted top news story of 2011; Pope top newsmaker

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The introduction of the English translation of the Roman Missal topped the religious news stories of 2011, and Pope Benedict XVI was again the top newsmaker, according to the annual poll conducted by Catholic News Service. The continued effect of the global economic downturn was second among the 30 news stories on the ballot, the democracy movement in the Middle East dubbed the Arab spring took third place. Among the 24 newsmakers on the ballot, Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan of New York, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, was second and U.S. President Barack Obama was third. The poll was the 50th annual survey conducted by CNS. This year's ballots were distributed Dec. 2 and the deadline for returns was Dec. 8. When the editors' poll was first conducted in 1962, the overwhelming choice for top story was the opening of the Second Vatican Council. Last year, editors chose the recovery and rebuilding effort that followed the devastating January earthquake in Haiti as the top religious story of the year and Pope Benedict as the top newsmaker. Editors were asked to vote for the top 10 news stories from a list of 30, and the top five newsmakers from a list of 24. Votes were weighted by the rankings editors gave -- 10 points for a first-place vote, nine points for second, etc., and five points for top newsmaker, four for second, etc. With 29 editors and CNS staff members submitting ballots, the maximum points a story could have received was 290. The most a newsmaker could receive on the five-point scale was 145. Rounding out the top five for religious news stories were the Irish church's sex abuse scandal and the issue of religious freedom. Pope Benedict, who has been the top religious newsmaker in the CNS poll every year since 2006, took first place this year for his travels to Croatia, Benin, Germany and Spain; his declaration of the upcoming Year of Faith; and his meetings with U.S. bishops, which were to continue into 2012.

HHS secretary says girls under 17 must consult doctors to get Plan B

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The U.S. bishops' pro-life spokeswoman said she was relieved that the Obama administration has decided not to allow the Plan B One-Step "morning-after pill" to be sold without a prescription to those under 17. "Luckily, things did not go from bad to even worse," Deirdre McQuade, assistant director for policy and communications at the USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities, told Catholic News Service Dec. 8. "We're pleased that they did not expand access to this very powerful drug." McQuade said Plan B One-Step, known generically as levonorgestrel, "is 40 times more potent than comparable progestin-only birth control pills for which a prescription is required" even for adult women. Announcing the decision Dec. 7, Kathleen Sebelius, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, said the drug manufacturer, Teva Women's Health, had not proven that those under 17 were sufficiently mature to use Plan B One-Step properly. "There are significant cognitive and behavioral differences between older adolescent girls and the youngest girls of reproductive age," who could be as young as 11, Sebelius said. Although "science has confirmed the drug to be safe and effective with appropriate use," she said, "the switch from prescription to over-the-counter for this product requires that we have enough evidence to show that those who use this medicine can understand the label and use the product appropriately." "I do not believe that Teva's application met that standard," Sebelius said. "The label comprehension and actual use studies did not contain data for all ages for which this product would be available for use."

U.S. sainthood causes are moving forward

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (CNS) -- The path to sainthood for Blessed Marianne Cope of Molokai has been cleared after a Vatican congregation Dec. 6 confirmed a second miracle attributed to her intercession.

Blessed Marianne Cope miracle is confirmed; news about Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha is expected

The final step for her canonization is approval by Pope Benedict XVI.

The Vatican decision was announced Dec. 6 by the sister's religious community, the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities in Syracuse, N.Y., and by Honolulu Bishop Larry Silva.

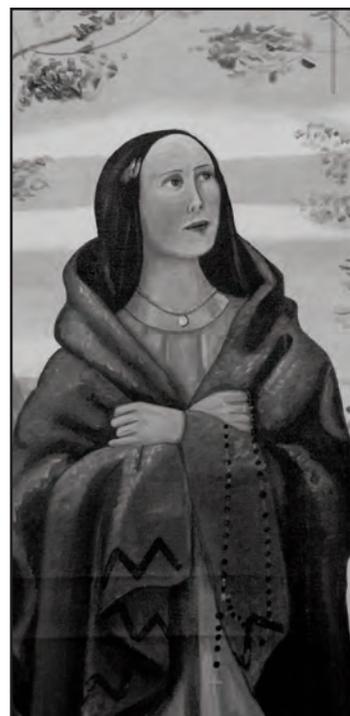
Mother Marianne, who worked as a teacher and hospital administrator in New York, spent the last 30 years of her life ministering on the Hawaiian island of Molokai to those with leprosy. She died on the island in 1918 at age 80.

In other news about U.S. sainthood causes, there have been reports that an announcement will be made in mid December about the approval of a second miracle attributed to Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha's intercession, which would clear the way for her canonization.

Catholic News Service contacted the Tekakwitha Conference in Great Falls, Mont., for confirmation, but officials there said they could not confirm the reports.

Blessed Kateri, known as "the Lily of the Mohawks," was born to a Christian Algonquin mother and a Mohawk father in 1656 in upstate New York along the Hudson River. She was baptized by a Jesuit missionary in 1676 when she was 20 and she died four years later.

Her sainthood cause opened in 1932, and she was declared venerable in 1943. In June 1980, she became the



CNS PHOTO/BOB ROLLER

An image of Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha is seen at St. Anne Mission Church in Acoma, N.M., on the Acoma Indian reservation Oct. 25. According to Catholic News Service, there have been reports that an announcement will be made in mid December about the approval of a second miracle attributed to Blessed Kateri Tekakwitha's intercession, which would clear the way for her canonization.

first Native American to be beatified.

The Dec. 6 ruling by the Vatican Congregation for Saints' Causes about Blessed Marianne confirmed recent decisions by a medical board and a group of theologians declaring that a second miracle could be attributed to Mother Marianne's intercession.

The first miracle required for her beatification was the medically unexplainable recovery of a New York girl who recovered from near death from multiple organ failure after prayers were said to Mother Marianne. The miracle was approved in 2004 by a medical board and a group of theologians. At the end of the year, Pope John Paul II affirmed the case. She was beatified in St.

Peter's Basilica at the Vatican May 14, 2005.

The only known detail about the second miracle is that a woman's healing was declared inexplicable since doctors had expected her to die and were amazed at her survival. The Sisters of St. Francis will not disclose details of the second miracle until after the pope's proclamation of Mother Marianne's sainthood.

The announcement confirming the second miracle could be attributed to Mother Marianne's intercession was "too good to be true," said Sister Patricia Burkard, general minister of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities.

She told Catholic News Service Dec. 7 that in the 24 hours since receiving the news, she not only rejoiced with fellow sisters but gave countless interviews about Mother Marianne.

Sister Patricia said the sisters see Mother Marianne as a "guide for our own dedication and ministry" and they also know they share her with many in Hawaii "where she is beloved."

Honolulu's Bishop Silva said in his statement that the Vatican announcement caused particular joy in Hawaii because of Mother Marianne's work there but also because her "example of selfless love can soon be an inspiration to all the world. She was a woman who brought hope and joy to people who had good reason to lose hope and to lament their condition in life."

"At this time when so many people are losing hope because of our economy and the increased unrest throughout the world, Blessed Marianne inspires us to work simply for the good of others and to allow God to work miracles through the simple things we do. We look forward to honoring this holy woman in our celebrations."

SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

God thinks of everything!

In the first reading today, God scolds David for trying to build Him a house of gold, when for years, God says he has been perfectly satisfied to live in a tent.

This tent called the Ark of the Covenant had poles attached so that it could be easily carried from place to place.

When the Israelites went into battle, the Ark of the Covenant was carried by Levites, Israelites of the House of Levi who were studying to become priests, much like seminarians in the Catholic Church.

In later times, it rested in the Holy of Holies in the Temple that David's son, Solomon, built. But that was later.

In today's readings, God

says, "Not yet!" Through the prophet, Nathan, God tells the King that He'll let Solomon do the building of a Temple. As we know,

there were actually two temples after that - one called the Temple of Zerubbabel and then the Temple in Jesus' time that was being built by Herod.

But the point in this first reading is that God is going to do something truly awesome. He is going to send His Son Jesus, and

Jesus will chose for His Temple, a human person who is full of grace, obedience, and love. Mary will be God's Temple.

How can this fulfill God's promise to David that He will place His Son, Jesus, someday on David's throne?

Through the fact that Mary herself is a descendant of the House of David.

God thinks of everything. God will come into the world through His Son, Jesus. He will be born in a stable, die on a cross, and only then find His permanent throne in that heaven from which He came!

The details are beautifully told in today's Gospel.

God sends His Angel, Gabriel, to ask Mary if it will be all right with her.

After a discreet inquiry as to how all of this will come about, she simply says "Yes". Mary, queen that she is, returns a regal, simple, incredible one-word answer, "Yes". Then she adds on another sentence, "Let it be done to me according to your Word. Fiat voluntas tua". May your will be done, God. She doesn't worry any more about the "how", because the angel has assured

DEC. 18

Fourth Sunday of Advent

READINGS

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38



Monsignor
Paul E.
Whitmore

her that nothing is impossible with God, and, as a matter of fact, God will be on location the whole time.

The meaning of Christmas is summed up in His name- Emmanuel - God is with us to destroy our fears and make us ambassadors of the Light.

Advent, has been all about waiting. And now we know what the waiting was all about- to live our lives, consoled in the midst of our frustration with war and corruption, as well as with our own personal failures.

For God is with us, making sense of all the suffer-

ing, all the misery, helping us believe that we are in a much larger plan-- waiting for Love to be born for the last time when all those prophecies we heard read to us in the last few weeks are brought to fulfillment.

It's a question of that mysterious presence in our hearts that call forth from us faith and hope and love.

If we can only say a simple, unqualified "yes" as Mary did, life could be so simple, and God would be so pleased with us.

That's why it's so important that all of us confess our sinfulness before Christmas, and be absolved of anything that could keep Jesus out of our hearts.

Advent ends this week, and Christmas is just around the corner, when Jesus will be born again in hearts that are prepared to receive Him. Will our hearts be ready?

Green Church

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

Three lay Catholics have proposed that the American Catholic Church could take a dramatic step that would have a decided impact on global warming.

Joshua Pearce, Anna Santini and Jennifer DeSilva suggest that the church should commit to putting photovoltaic cells on the roofs of its 20,000 churches (Worldviews 13 (2009), pp. 92-118). The church's bulk buying of so many solar panels would be the eco-

nomical stimulus necessary for lowering their cost and making them economically cost effective.

Thus the church could be a catalyst for the move from fossil fuels to non-polluting solar energy. The energy savings for U.S. Catholic parishes would be a side benefit. Perhaps other churches and religious institutions would join this cause.

The authors argue that the United States, with 5 percent of the world's popula-

tion using 25 percent of the world's energy, has a special responsibility and the economic resources to make this sacrifice.

They are also quite aware of the positive public relations consequences of such a commitment for a church that has suffered from the bad publicity of the pedophile priest crisis. The enactment of such a plan would set a good example indeed.

Pope Benedict XVI has earned the title "the Green

Pope" through word and deed.

The stewardship ethic he promotes, while a vast improvement on the domination of nature that has characterized Christian history, might be strengthened through the adoption of a creation-centered vision.

The exemplary efforts by the Vatican and Catholic institutions the world over might be given a significant boost by a commitment to solar energy on the part of the U.S. Catholic Church.

With a stronger foundation for its environmental ethic and more radical actions on behalf of the environment, the Catholic Church can exercise leadership toward the greening of church and society.

J. Milburn Thompson, Ph.D. is chair and professor of theology at Bellarmine University in Louisville, KY. He is the author of "Introducing Catholic Social Thought" (Orbis Books, 2010).



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AT THE MOVIES

NEW YEAR'S EVE

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

A disappointing salute to an often disappointing social event, "New Year's Eve" (Warner Bros.) wastes a talented ensemble cast on a painfully forced romantic comedy.

Reuniting for a follow-up to 2010's "Valentine's Day," director Garry Marshall and screenwriter Katherine Fugate weave a web of love stories largely free of the moral tangles that marred their earlier collaboration. A few one-liners aside, though, the humor falls flat, while the script's strained effort to transform Dec. 31st into a kind of secular High Holy Day is simply irritating.

Part of the problem may be that there are just too many thin characters on screen -- with too little time devoted to any one of them -- for viewers to form sympathetic connections.

The movie tracks the intersecting paths of Claire

(Hilary Swank), the executive in charge of the titular holiday's iconic celebration in New York's Times Square; a rock star called Jensen (Jon Bon Jovi) who's headlining the evening's entertainment there; Laura (Katherine Heigl), the up-and-coming caterer to whom the rocker was once engaged; and Elise (Lea Michele), one of Jensen's backup singers who finds herself trapped in an elevator for hours with Randy (Ashton Kutcher), a New Year's-averse slacker.

Also thrown into the mix are Robert De Niro as a dying hospital patient, Halle Berry as his faithful nurse, Michelle Pfeiffer as an inhibited middle-age office worker out for adventure and Zac Efron as the free-spirited bike messenger she enlists to help her find it. And that's not even mentioning the pair of married couples -- played by Jessica Biel, Seth Meyers, Sarah Paulson and Til Schweiger -- aggressively competing for the \$25,000 prize awarded to the first baby born after

midnight.

Yet another story line, this one revolving around the mother-and-daughter duo of Kim (Sarah Jessica Parker) and Hailey (Abigail Breslin), demonstrates the noticeable -- and welcome -- shift in tone between Marshall and Fugate's previous offering and this one.

In last year's outing, two 18-year-old high school students spent Valentine's Day plotting to relieve each other of their virginity. Here, by contrast, Hailey's rebellion against overly protective Kim is sparked by the 15-year-old's desire to obtain her first kiss from a classmate.

The innocence of Hailey's persona is more than a little undercut, however, when, during an argument with Kim, she raises her blouse in the middle of a crowded Grand Central Terminal to reveal her bra, loudly reminding her mother, as she does so, that the garment in question is not of the training variety.

Also showing that the

filmmakers have not entirely abandoned their old ways is the minor figure of a frisky grandpa. He pops up in still another plot pod, this one concerning a young record industry mogul portrayed by Josh Duhamel. As Gramps' family helps Duhamel's character return to the Big Apple after a minor car crash in the wilds, the less-than-staid patriarch evinces a prurient interest in their passenger's sex life.

The old-guy-talking-dirty gambit, needless to say, fizzles like inferior champagne. As for the attempt to celebrate year's end as an opportunity for mutual forgiveness and fresh dreaming, it's as strident as a noisemaker and achieves a similarly jarring effect.

The film contains some sexual references and humor, at least one use of the F-word as well as occasional crude language and crass slang. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III -- adults. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents

strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.



CNS PHOTO/WARNER BROS.
Michelle Pfeiffer stars in a scene from the movie "New Year's Eve."

WIN A WEEK!



Tickets to win a week in a two bedroom condo at the Emerald Beach Resort in Panama Beach, Fla., can now be purchased for \$5 at the reception desk at St. Joseph's Home, 950 Linden St., Ogdensburg. The drawing for the condo, donated by John Sansoucy, will be held on Dec. 16. Proceeds will benefit St. Joseph's Foundation. Pictured is Mr. Sansoucy with Joyce Kelso, director of Development for St. Joseph's Foundation.



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ADIRONDACK

LESSONS AND CAROLS

Lake Placid - The Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble will perform A Festival of Lessons and Carols:

Date: Dec. 18
Time: 3 p.m.
Place: St. Agnes Church
Price: \$5 suggestion donation
Contact: For more information please telephone 518-293-7613 or send a message by e-mail to hillholl@hughes.net

CLINTON

ADVENT MASS, MEDITATION

Ellenburg - Our Lady of the Adirondacks to offer day prayer and meditation.

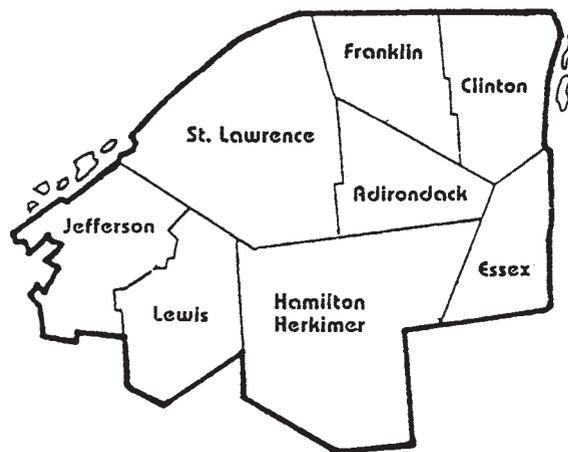
Date: Dec. 17
Time: 9 a.m.
Features: Mass and the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary. Fr. Ted Crosby will preside at Mass and Wanda Bushey, a native of Ellenburg Corners, will present the Joyful Mysteries in a very personal and prayerful way. Light lunch served at 12:30 p.m. Donations appreciated.
Contact: RSVP by Dec. 15 to olaprayerhouse@gmail.com or 594-3253.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Morrisonville - A Christmas Concert of traditional Advent and Christmas songs will be performed by German Men's Choir: from St. Bernard de Lacolle, Quebec and the Chorale Madrigal Choir: from Franklin, Quebec.
Date: Dec. 18
Time: 3 p.m.
Place: St. Alexander's Church
Cost: \$8 in advance, \$10 at the door; children under 12, Free
Features: The program will consist of selections sung in English, French, Ger




Support And Pray For Vocations



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, 315-394-0670; e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

man and Latin... selections from Handel's Messiah, Schubert and more.
Contact: For more information or to purchase a ticket call 561-5039 or stop by the parish office in Morrisonville Monday thru Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST
Treadwell Mills - RCC St. Alexander & St. Joseph's will hold a Pancake Breakfast (all you can eat).
Date: Jan. 8
Time: 12:30 p.m.
Place: St. Joseph's Church Hall
Cost: Adults, \$6; Children 6-12, \$3; under 5, Free

LESSON AND CAROLS
Plattsburgh - The Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble will perform A Festival of Lessons and Carols:
Date: Dec. 17
Time: 7:30 p.m.
Place: St. Peter's Church
Price: \$5 suggestion donation
Contact: For more information please telephone 518-293-7613 or send a message by e-mail to hillholl@hughes.net

'EUCHARISTIC ADORATION
Plattsburgh - Eucharistic Adoration is

held throughout the year every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.
Place: St. John's Adoration Chapel,
Time: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Contact: call 518-561-5083 or email us at Sjohnsadoration@aol.com

LAKE CHAMPLAIN BUS FOR LIFE
Plattsburgh - The "Lake Champlain 2012 Bus for Life" will offer concerned citizens an opportunity to attend the march in Washington D.C.
Date: A chartered bus will leave the parking lot of St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh Jan. 22 at 7:30 p.m. for the Jan. 23 National March For Life and return to Plattsburgh early Jan. 24.
Cost: The cost of the bus is \$25 per seat.
Contact: Betty Buffett (518) 536-6640 or Karen Smith (518) 566-6229.
Donations: If you cannot attend but would like to donate funds for someone who can attend, please send your check or money order to St. Peter's Church 114 Cornelia Street Plattsburgh, New York 12901. Make a notation on the memo line "Bus For Life Donation."

BLESSED SACRAMENT ADORATION
Keeseville - The Keeseville Altar Rosary Society to sponsor Adoration of the

Visit our re-designed website
www.northcountrycatholic.org

- Read Bishop LaValley's columns
- Search archived papers
- View diocesan events and much more

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Blessed Sacrament.
Date: Every Sunday
Time: 1 p.m. to 4

JEFFERSON

PARKINSON GROUP
Chaumont - The Parkinson Group meets every Tuesday.
Time: 11 a.m.
Place: All Saints Church
Features: Sharing new information and developments to provide hope; strengthening excises; and lunch
Contact: Sr. Anne Hogan, 315-649-2717

MYSTERY PLAYERS
Watertown - The Immaculate Heart Mystery Players will be performing this Advent Season.
Schedule is as follows:
Dec. 18: Holy Family Church, 7:15 p.m.
Information: www.ihcschools.org/webpages/mysteryplay

LIFERIGHT MEETING
Watertown - Liferight of Watertown will hold its monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of the Month.
Time: 4 p.m.
Place: 312 Sherman St.
Features: Liferight is a pro-life educational organization. The office has videos, books and educational materials which may be borrowed. Topics covered: infanticide, assisted suicide, euthanasia and chastity.
Contact: Phone 315-788-8480; website: www.liferight.org.

LEWIS

CHRISTMAS BANQUET
Lowville - St. Peter's Rosary Altar Society will its Christmas Banquet.
Date: Dec. 14
Time: 12:30 p.m.
Place: Church Hall
Cost: \$13 per dinner
Features: The Ham and Roast Pork Dinner will be catered by Joyce Hoch. Reservations need to be made with Jackie Kaban by Dec. 8 Call 376-3201 Please bring a \$5 gift to share.



ST. LAWRENCE

CATHEDRAL CONCERT
Ogdensburg - The St. Mary's Cathedral annual Christmas concert will be held.
Date: Dec. 18; snow date: Jan. 8
Time: 2 p.m.
Place: St. Mary's Cathedral
Features: This year's concert will not only feature a traditional "lessons and carols" format, but will also feature several traditional Christmas songs from around the world. A light reception will be held following the concert

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION
Massena - St. Mary's & St. Joseph's has Adoration every Friday.
Time: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Place: St. Mary's Church.
Features: First Friday of each month is preceded by Benediction.

NOVENA FOR MILITARY
Ogdensburg - Notre Dame Church is holding a weekly novena for the safety of U.S. military personnel
Date: Tuesday evenings
Time: 6:30 p.m.

HOLY HOUR FOR VOCATIONS
Ogdensburg - St. Mary's is holding a monthly Holy Hour for Vocations.
Date: Thursday before the First Friday
Time: 8 p.m. to 9
Place: Deacon Winter Chapel
Features: Nocturnal Adoration continues through the night

DIOCESAN EVENTS

FRANCISCAN MYSTERY PLAY
 The Franciscan Mystery Players group from St. Mary' Church in Clayton, is a traveling ministry spreading the love and hope of Jesus through "The Birth of Jesus: A Franciscan Christmas." The 2011 schedule follows:
Dec. 16 at St. Mary's Church, Clayton at 6:30 p.m.
Dec. 18 at St. Anthony's Church, Watertown at 6:30 p.m.
Contact: Visit www.mysteryplay.org for more information

CHARISMATIC RENEWAL
Clifton Park, NY - World renowned Catholic Lay Healers and Evangelists to offer healing and Renewal Days.
Dates: April 20-21, 2012 featuring Maria Vadia of Glory God Ministries and Oct. 12-13, 2012 featuring Bob Canton.
Place: St. Edward the Confessor, 563 Clifton Park Center Rd, Clifton Park, NY
Information: 518-237-7391 or 518-371-7911 or dcn.jmgrigaitis@aol.com



The Society For
The Propagation Of The Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director
622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 393-2920; fax (315) 394-7401
mbrett@dioogdensburg.org

Christ's light shines on the North Country

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

As the season of Advent prepares us to celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we have seen natural disaster, terrorism at work, continued war and economic trials. As we reflect upon this, we come to realize what millions of people in developing countries have endured for their lifetime.

Candles of all sizes in traditional Christmas colors are familiar decorations. We become mesmerized by their flickering flames. Candles remind us of the warmth and the love the Christmas Season brings into our lives. People caring for each other in special ways are a familiar sight throughout the Diocese of Ogdensburg which is truly letting Christ's light shine through generosity.

There is light in the darkness in the third world countries because of missionaries. Yes, missionaries like yourselves let the light of Christ shine in the lives of people in the missions as they receive your generous donations.

On behalf of missionaries and the people they serve who benefit from the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, the Holy Childhood Association and the Missionary Projects of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, I thank you for your support in bringing Christ's light into the darkness of the suffering poor in mission lands. Yet, there is so much yet to do. There is still unthinkable suffering. We always need your help and we pray for the strength and courage to do God's work. Again, thank you for your generous support.

Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.
www.dioogdensburg.org/missionoffice



OBITUARIES

Beulah Barton

BRASHER FALLS - A funeral service for Beulah A. Barton, 90, wife of the late Deacon Floyd Barton was held Dec. 1 at the Phillips Memorial Home in Massena.

A member of St. Patrick's Church, she died Nov. 26 at her home.

Her survivors include sons James and Theodore of Brasher Falls; Arthur, Massena; and daughter, Marie Beulah McCarthy of Saratoga, NY; sister Electa Agnes Davis of Hammond, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and great great grandchildren..

Mrs. Barton was born March 28, 1921 in Massena the daughter of Frank and Agnes LaBarge (Besaw). She married Floyd Barton on April 23, 1938 at Sacred Heart Church with the Rev. Gerald Kellogg.

Deacon Barton predeceased her Dec. 12, 1999.

AuSable Forks - Henry David Caito, 7; Funeral Services Dec. 5, 2011 at Holy Name Church.

AuSable Forks - Theresa Rose Marcoccia Caito, 75; Funeral Services Dec. 5, 2011 at Holy Name Church.

Carthage - Raymond J. DesJardins, 92; Funeral Services Dec. 3, 2011 at St. James

Church; burial in St. James Cemetery.
Colton - Sally (Tenney) Keen, 76; Funeral Services Dec. 6, 2011 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Dekalb - Vivian "Peggy" (White) Tiernan, 74; Funeral Services Dec. 7, 2011 at St. Henry's Church; burial in Hermon Cemetery.

Hogansburg - Memphis Rain Carle, 7; Funeral Services Dec. 6, 2011 at St. Regis Church; burial in Kateri Cemetery.

Lisbon - Cyprienne Saint Martin Kloza, 87; Funeral Services Dec. 9, 2011 at St. Phillips & James Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, Waddington.

Long Lake - Thomas Arthur Hutchins, 75; Funeral Services Dec. 8, 2011 at St. Henry's Church; burial in Long Lake Cemetery.

Louisville - Steven C. Williams, 43; Funeral Services Dec. 5, 2011 at St. Lawrence Church.

Massena - Dalton L. McLean, 85; Funeral Services Dec. 3, 2011 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Mooers - Henry J. Matott, 78; Funeral Services Dec. 6, 2011 at St. Joseph's Church.

Morrisonville - William P. O'Keefe, 90; Funeral Services Dec. 5, 2011 at St. Alexan-

der's Church; burial in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, Totowa, NJ

Ogdensburg - Phillip M. Dionne, 84; Funeral Services Dec. 5, 2011 at Frary Funeral Home; burial in Pine Hill Cemetery.

Ogdensburg - Carolyn L. (Stevenson) Jeneault, 64; Funeral Services Dec. 10, 2011 at St. Mary's Cathedral; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Plattsburgh - Thomas C. Bushey, 87; Funeral Services Dec. 5, 2011 at St. Peter's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Plattsburgh - Ann Marie Murphy Strong, 65; Funeral Services Dec. 9, 2011 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Fairview Cemetery, AuSable Forks.

Rouses Point - Margaret T. (Dumas) Aubrey, 84; Funeral Services Dec. 7, 2011 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

St. Regis Falls - Mary L. Wells, 66; Funeral Services Dec. 7, 2011 at St. Ann's Church; burial in St. Ann's Cemetery.

Schroon Lake - Frank Charles Wanits, 87; Funeral Dec. 6, 2011 at Our Lady of Lourdes; burial in parish cemetery.

Watertown - Robert J. "Little B" Endres, 46; Funeral Services Dec. 9, 2011 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

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YOUNG CATHOLIC VOICE

Seton: 'A family in the midst of this tragic loss'

By Andrew Lauria

Librarian, Seton Catholic Central, Plattsburgh

I was in the grocery store when I got the phone call: "Two of our International Students have been killed. They were hit by a car. We don't know anything more than that." Although it has been written many times, the old saying is true: "Nothing can prepare you for this."

And a feeling of being unprepared was true not only of the great tragedy experienced by the Seton Catholic community on November 15th, but of the even more powerful reality of love that we have experienced ever since.

In the wake of a true nightmare, nothing could have prepared me for the unceasing goodness that followed.

In reflecting about the loss of our two students, Dat and Chu (Allen), I went to my good friend and colleague Mary Anne Trombley, who was the boys' English teacher here at Seton.

I asked her what the most prominent reality was about the accident and she said this: "Seton has truly become a family amidst the tragic loss of Dat and Allen. We teachers, staff, and students have grieved the loss of two or our own in every way that family members grieve and eventually heal, even though we have been scarred."

I agreed with her completely and began to ponder the reality of healing, the reality of the power of real love.

And this made me think of the lotus flowers.

Before we left for Thanksgiving Break, Seton Catholic held a memorial service for the two boys. In support on the memorial service, one of our Chinese students began making one paper lotus flower for each person that would be attending that day.



Chu "Allen" Xiong of China, left and Dat Than Ong, of Vietnam, international students at Seton Catholic Central in Plattsburgh were killed in a Nov. 15 car accident in Peru. Here, Seton staff member Andrew Lauria reflects on the loss of the students at the school.

She started the project in study hall on her own accord, telling the other students that the flowers represented purity and rebirth. She saw it as a fitting remembrance to the two boys.

As the day went on and word about this project spread throughout the student body, everyone who heard of it began to help make flowers.

It was an act of solidarity among members of the Seton school community and stood out as an experience of love and remembrance, which starkly contrasted the fear and sadness that we had come to know.

Mary Anne brought this to my attention and I began to see what she was seeing.

"The flowers forged a bond of trust and love between our International Student community and the local community of students, faculty and staff, parents and host families all over the North Country," she said.

The idea of the lotus flowers was the beginning of an incredible spiritual experience here at Seton Catholic.

At the memorial for Dat and Allen, students and faculty honored the traditions of their native countries of Vietnam and China, respectively, and wore only black and white; there was atypical quiet in the halls; the atmosphere had become naturally somber, and everyone who entered the school that day knew that it was Holy Ground.

The memorial took place in our gym with the family of Allen in attendance as well as many community members. It was one of the more gripping experiences of my life.

If my recent World Youth Day experience taught me about the possible highs of human fulfillment, then this moment was an experience of our incredible capacity for loss.

Readings from scripture and traditional Buddhist prayers were read while incense filled the air near the pictures of the two boys that stood as the focal piece in the middle of the room.

The ceremony ended with the release of two mourning doves as a traditional Eastern symbol for the release of the boys' souls.

I felt my own soul release when the birds took flight. That moment will stay with me forever.

We, as a community, as a family, had grieved together and now had let go of our boys and sent them to the arms of our God.

They say that the older you get, the more you realize how little you know. I think this is true. But I hope that the unmistakable presence of God that we experienced here at Seton the past few weeks becomes ever-more true as we continue on in this life.

And, even more so, I hope that we come to the realization that we do not have to be prepared for a future that is not ours to own; we must simply love and this is something for which God keeps us always prepared.



The North Adirondack Vocal Ensemble, under the direction of Andrew Benware, will offer a Festival of Lessons and Carols at two diocesan churches this week: Dec. 17 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Peter's in Plattsburgh and Dec. 18 at 3 p.m. at St. Agnes in Lake Placid.

Lessons and Carols

New on the scene this season, the Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble will give two inaugural performances of A Festival of Lessons and Carols:

- Dec. 17 at 7:30 p.m. at St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh
- Dec. 18 at 3 p.m. at St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid

The Northern Adirondack Vocal Ensemble (NAVE), conducted by Andrew Benware, Director of Choral Activities at Saranac Lake High School, is a mixed chamber choir of professional and amateur singers.

Twenty members represent a cross-section of the region, hailing from points in Clinton, Essex, and Franklin Counties.

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 illuminate the narrative musically.

Admission is a \$5 suggested donation. For more information please telephone 518-293-7613 or send a message by e-mail to hillholl@hughes.net.