Maturity in Relationships and Prayer

By Ron Rolheiser, OMI

Several years ago, a friend shared this story with me: Raised a Roman Catholic, he essentially began going to church and in trying to live an honest sexual life, he began himself, in his mid-thirties, plagued by doubts, unable to pray, and unable (when he was honest with himself) to actually believe in the existence of God.

Sit in humility and silence long enough so that you can begin to hear someone else, not yourself.

Annoyed at this and looking for spiritual guidance, he went to see a Jesuit priest who had a reputation as a spiritual director.

He anticipated the usual counsel about dark nights of the soul and how these are given to us to purify our faith and, already familiar with that literature, he wasn’t expecting much.

Certainly he wasn’t expecting the advice he received.

His Jesuit guide didn’t try to convince him, but instead, like Elisha to Naaman, he gave my friend a challenge he received.

“Just do it!”

The Jesuit persisted: “Just do it! Sit in humility and silence long enough so that you can begin to hear someone else, not yourself.

We have easy words about prayer, but prayer works in the same way. Initially when we first begin to pray, like someone young and in love, we tend to have a period of fervor, of passion, a time when our emotions and our imaginations help give us a sense that God exists and that God hears our prayers.

But as we grow deeper and more mature about our relationship to God, not just as in a relationship to someone we love, but as a relationship to an illusion, it’s not that we become diabolically evil or good, but rather that we come to realize that so many of the thrills and passion, the feelings we believed were about God were really about ourselves.

Disillusionment is a good thing, it’s the disspelling of an illusion. What we thought was prayer was partly a spell of enchantment about ourselves.

When that disillusionment sets in, and this a maturing moment in our lives, it is easy to believe that we were deluded about the other, the person we had fallen in love with or, in this case of prayer, God.

The easy response then is to back away from, to see the whole thing as having an illusion, a false start, in the spiritual life, that’s usually when we stop praying.

But the opposition is called for. What we need to do then is to show up, just as we did before, minus the warm thoughts and feelings, hallowed,สรรุดน์, and stripped of our enchantment about ourselves.

The deeper we go in relationships and prayer, the more unsure of ourselves we become, and this is the beginning of maturity.

It’s when I say, I don’t know how to love and I don’t know how to pray, that I first begin to understand what love and prayer actually are. Hence, there is no better advice than that given by this Jesuit priest to my friend who thought himself an atheist: Just show up! Sit in humility and silence long enough so that you can begin to hear someone else, not yourself.

Oblate Father Ron Bullishe, theol ogian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.rosshealtilhe.net.

Families: Become What You Are...

The second installment in a four part series featuring Bishop Terry Cavanaugh’s message to families is featured this week. The articles are adapted from his Oct. 30 presentation at the Family Life Forum in Carthage.

Ripe to Bear

Bishop Cavanaugh continues his reflections on families as “communities of love.”

The series will continue in the Dec. 15 issue with his words on families as “communities of holiness” and conclude December with families “as communities of care.”

Share in the Care this weekend... pages 7-10

Families

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In this week's North Country Catholic, continue our focus on "family" with the second installment of Bishop LaValley's message for Catholic families for the Diocese of Ogdensburg. This week's bishop writes about how to make the promises of Jesus mean something to the people of our communities of faith.

Jim was also called to be a priest, in fact I think that he was born a priest. He was a good example of what a priest should be. He certainly lived what the reading of the Mass said today. He did walk humbly with his God. He held a deep compassion for one man. He could never say no to anyone.

In these past days I have heard from so many who told me that they could not have made it without him. They told me that he was the one who brought them out of the darkness. Like the Apostles he was called to serve, called to heal, called to serve. Jim took all the assignments asked of him, no matter what or how difficult. He told the bishop at one of our meetings that he was not interested to make sure he had a quiet prayer time for his rectory bath.

Jim was sick of his last hospital, in fact there was a question whether to ordain him or not. As it turned out his view of himself as a priest was strengthened.

\[\text{Mary LaValley} \\
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\text{One year:} \\
\text{Monday;} \\
\text{December 8, 2010} \]

\[\text{Christmas greetings from Quito, Ecuador} \]

\[\text{By Virgil Yellow} \]

\[\text{The Society For the Propagation of The Faith} \\
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\text{622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669} \]

\[\text{Diocese of Ogdensburg} \]

\[\text{Catholic Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, De-} \\
\text{funeral services Dec. 4, 2010 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.} \]

\[\text{Marianne J. Clark} \\
\text{622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669} \]

\[\text{Diocese of Ogdensburg} \]

\[\text{Catholic Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery, De-} \\
\text{funeral services Nov. 29, 2010 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.} \]

\[\text{John R. LeRoux} \\
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\[\text{Diocese of Ogdensburg} \]

\[\text{Catholic Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.} \]

\[\text{Ferry B. Bittner} \\
\text{622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669} \]

\[\text{Diocese of Ogdensburg} \]

\[\text{Catholic Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.} \]
**Faith**

**Edna F. Hara**

Mattituck—A prayer vigil will start the first Sunday of the winter months.

Place: St. Mary’s Chapel

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

Feature: Danica Devers Marie will join us at 7:45 a.m., encouraging us to reflect on Mary, the Eucharist, and the hope and promise of the season. Bring your Bible and a journal. Lunch provided.

**Father Donald Robinson,**

your Bible and a journal. Lunch provided.

**Lunch prayer vigil**

**SJOHN SADORA**

johnsadoration@aol.com

**ST. LAWRENCE**

**HOLIDAY TOUR OF HOMES**

Fest Brum — There will be a Holiday Tour of Homes.

Date: Dec 12

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

Place: Tour will be at the Timbers Community Center and at Lochye Manor.

Cost: $5 per person. Includes all entry to each location including an apartment at the Timbers, the home of the Lochye Manor and the home of Louis O鉴定.

**GREEN**

**WINTER'S GRACE**

All are invited to attend the first annual Christmas Concert entitled Winter’s Grace.

Date: Dec 12

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: St. Anthony’s Church

Cost: $15 per person. Includes entrance to the concert and reception.

**LIFEGTHT MEETING**

Sister Jennifer DeLor is now meeting her monthly sessions on the Third Wednesday of the Month.

Time: 9 a.m.

Place: 1325 Deveren St.

Feature: Knit for your local elderly

**SCHIFFF**

**NORTHERN STAR**

Contact: (518) 788-4884 www.beyondcancer.org

**OF C. BRUNIA**

North — The Knights of Columbus will be opening a branch.

Date: Dec 12

Time: 3 p.m.

Place: St. John’s Church

**NOVEMBER FOR VICTORY**

Our Lady of Peace Church is holding a monthly meeting for all those who want to pray for the safety of our military personnel.

Date: 4th Thursday

Time: 6 p.m.

Place: St. James School in Roht

**SPONSORS**

**K OF C BRUNCH**

Date: Dec 12

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

Place: Tour will be at the Timbers Community Center and at Lochye Manor.

Cost: $15 per person. Includes entrance to the concert and reception.

**SMKD**

**SPOTLIGHT AND MAXIMAIL DINNER**

Great Mills — there will be a quilting and bread-making dinner to benefit the battalion of Columbia.

Date: Dec 11

Time: 4 p.m.

Place: St. Mary’s Parish Center

Cost: Adults, $5; seniors, $3; children under 12, $2.

**MARRIAGE**

**LIFE FOR THE UNBORN**

On one hand, there is no reason for alarm or panic. We love our local food pantries is invited to follow.

**K OF C CHAPEL**

The Second Vatican Council tells us that family life is the foundation and building block of society, the family is the first and vital cell of society.

**COMMUNITY**

The family has organic links with society and the family and in a broader theocracy there is no admission charge at St. John’s Grace.

**FAMILY**

Worse... it will strive to

But, you and I do not follow Him as isolated individuals. We follow Jesus as fellow companions on the journey.

We help each other get to know members of the same Body of Christ, as a family of faith.

Pope Benedict, in a recent presentation at the Family Life Forum in carriage.

**JUST FOR KIDS**

**LIFE FOR THE UNBORN**

Sensitizing our conscience . . . When the sacrament is also an education in love. For me, the image of all

the family begins with the life of husband and wife. Nowhere is this more apparent.

The family is led by a husband and a wife, and a great respect of others.

When children are born, they are brought up in an atmosphere of faith, prayer, and the sacraments. Only by praying together can we respond to a call of service.

As sons and daughters of God, to worship Him and to serve Him as isolated individuals.

But, you and I do not follow Him as isolated individuals. We follow Jesus as fellow companions on the journey.

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Pope Benedict, in a recent presentation at the Family Life Forum in carriage.
Sister Geraldine celebrates 60 years as a Filippini

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NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

BOOKS

North Country Catholic

Dec. 8, 2010

books offer hope to those struggling

GOOD NEWS IN BAD TIMES: DISCOVERING SPIRITUAL MEANING IN THE MIDST OF CRISIS AND UNCERTAINTY by John P. DeVirga

“Good News in Bad Times” is a collection of 120 quotations and spiritual readings by a variety of Catholic authors and religious teachers, compiled by John P. DeVirga. The quotations include inspirational material from such well-known authors as Pope John Paul II. While acknowledging the difficulties and weaknesses, the book is a sum of the faith of those who continue to love us and our goal is to help others to become more familiar with the power of God, the knowledge of which will make us strong and lead us to closer relationships with God. The book is named after the Storm” is a collection of 120 quotations and spiritual readings by a variety of Catholic authors and religious teachers, compiled by John P. DeVirga. The quotations include inspirational material from such well-known authors as Pope John Paul II. While acknowledging the difficulties and weaknesses, the book is a sum of the faith of those who continue to love us and our goal is to help others to become more familiar with the power of God, the knowledge of which will make us strong and lead us to closer relationships with God. The book is named after the...
The phenomenon of couples living together as unmarried partners has doubled in the past 20 years, and although those who choose this route are not necessarily getting a standing ovation from their elders, they are not being dismissed or condemned either.

In 1960, the share of births to unmarried women was 5 percent. In 2008, it rose to 41 percent.

We’ve been told that David’s Bridal, a national firm that rents bridesmaids’ dresses and accessories, is considering itself a recession-proof business. However, those who track national statistics for this firm reported 30,000 fewer weddings last year than the year before.

Looking behind the ‘marriage gap’ trends

The choice of partners is less central to the marriage ceremony than in the past, and the ceremony is often more of a celebration of the couple than a sacred rite.

Some couples choose to get married abroad, where the ceremony may be more relaxed and informal. Others may choose to have a civil ceremony and a separate religious ceremony.

The age gap between couples is also becoming more common, with older couples choosing to marry and younger couples delaying marriage.

Despite these changes, marriage is still considered a sacrament in the Catholic Church, and the Church continues to offer resources and support for couples who choose to marry and live in a committed relationship.

The Church also encourages couples to prepare for marriage through pre-nuptial counseling and to live together for a period of time before marriage to ensure that they are truly committed to each other.

Looking around

By Father William J. Byron, SJ

News services made much of the recently released report on the Pew Research Center on what is being called the ‘marriage gap’ in the United States. Since 1990 there has been a sharp decline in marriage and a rise in new family forms. The marriage gap, researchers say, is related to the income gap. It seems that economic security is viewed by many as a condition for marriage. If income is low or uncertain, the commitment to marriage is postponed or simply ignored.

As marriage has declined, cohabitation has increased.

In the last year, the number of couples living together without being married has increased by 20 percent. This is especially true for young people, with the percentage of cohabiting couples in their 20s now higher than in any other age group.

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Bishop LaValley’s Schedule

Dec. 8 – 12:30 p.m., Mass and Visit to Trinity Catholic School in Malone

Dec. 9 – 4:00 p.m., Advent Penance Service at Holy Cross Church in Ogdensburg

Dec. 9 – 5:00 p.m., Mass at St. Mary Church in Ogdensburg

Dec. 10 – 4:30 p.m., Advent in Ogdensburg

Dec. 13 – 1 p.m., St. Alexander’s Church, Ogdensburg

Upcoming programs:


To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected abuse please come forward. The most helpful and effective action in a situation such as this is to report the complaint to the appropriate law enforcement agency. To report abuse, because of its simplicity and widespread distribution, remains an effective way of spreading news about local diocesan events and developments.

Pope marks beginning of Advent with prayer for life

By John Lohm

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - A newly disclosed letter reveals that as early as 1988, the then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger when he was head of the Vatican’s doctrinal commission, wrote to clergymen who have served in the Diocese of Ogdensburg that the church is aware of the deaths of the following clergymen who have served in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

The Church of Ogdensburg has scheduled various events for Protecting God’s Children for Adults registration is required in order to participate. Participants are encouraged to register at www.virtus.org by selecting the registration button and following the directions. All employees and volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities with minors are required to participate in this training. On-going monitoring training is required for all employees involved in activities with minors. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to continue their training. Further information is available from Monsignor Biollet, Director of Safe Environment, 120, 010-0101, 315-650-2771.

We wish a card, a phone call, a complaint registered. Otherwise a church is powerless to protect children from abuse. The church knows that people need the full truth brought by Christ. “The purpose of the church prepares to celebrate the liturgical period in which the church during the final weeks of 2010. Citing earlier statements by both Pope Benedict XVI and the bishops’ conference, Bishop Howard called notification of the clergy about critical “because it is a modest step toward a world with greater respect for human life.” Bishop Howard and the U.S. bishops have made welcoming the unborn, which was signed April 23, 1982 in Rome by Pope John Paul II, President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. As well, keep standing strong for our church for the clarification of its development.

The pope cited the early church author Tertullian, who reasoned that abortion was murder, and said the framers of the Constitution wrote, “It is man, who is to a man” The pope added that “there is no reason not to think of a young person who is a mother’s of abandoned, hungry, poverty, disease, abuse, violence and exploitation. Faced with “this sad panorama of injustices” before and after birth, the church calls everyone to responsibility, he said. He urged faithful in polities, economics and communications to do everything possible to promote a culture that respects human life and to establish a network of services that support human life. On Nov. 28, the first Sunday of Advent, the pope spoke to bishops from his apartment window about the importance of “expectant waiting” in the period before Christmas and in people’s thinking on all ethical and social questions.” The pope said the printed newspaper “is not a question of a collection of biological material, but of a new being living, dynamic and manifestly ordered, a new individual of the human species,” the pope said.

“The way a child is Jesus in Mary’s womb: this is how each of us, in our mother’s womb,” he said.

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RELIGIOUS RETIREMENT COLLECTION is December 11th and 12th

FACTS

• Less than five percent of the religious institutes in the National Religious Retirement Office database are adequately funded for retirement.
• More than 5,000 religious require skilled care.
• The average annual Social Security benefit for a religious is approximately $4,500.

Amount Enclosed: $ __________
Name __________________________
Address __________________________
City __________ State __________ Zip __________

Make your tax-deductible check payable to your parish.
Write Retirement Fund for Religious on the memo line and give it to your parish collection.

Religious institutes are financially autonomous and responsible for the support of their members.
Income sources include compensated ministry, government benefits, and investment return.
The average Social Security benefit for religious women and men is approximately one-third that paid to the average U.S. beneficiary.

Sister Mary Christine Taylor, SSU, and Native friends at the Fallen Leaves Celebration, St. Regis Mission, Akwesasne. There is no way to describe the love and energy Sister has for the Native people. Pictured left to right are: Nola DeJung, Isabella DeJung, Sr. Mary Christine Taylor, SSU, Caroline Tartell, and Justin DeJung. Also attending were Jennifer DeJung, Corly Phillips and Vicky Phillips.

Sister Mary Halahan, OSU, conducting a Eucharistic Service for the assisted-living facility at Farrar Home. Many Sisters are able to continue their ministries through contributed services of their communities.

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Sister Elizabeth Ann Brown, SNBH, shown here teaching at St. Mary’s in Portadown, is now retired and living at the Motherhouse in Tyrone, PA.

This is only one of the thirty-three Congregations that serve or have served in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Some of you may have attended the schools in Malone administered by the Ursuline Community: St. Joseph’s Elementary School, St. Joseph’s Academy, or the Notre Dame school. In addition to this ministry, the Ursuline Sisters assisted many parishes in their religious education and pastoral needs.

In 1943, seven Sisters of Mercy from the Baggot Street Foundation in Ireland arrived in the United States, traveled to Pittsburg, and opened a hospital. The Sisters of Mercy are among the religious congregations who between 1529 and 1990 founded a total of 869 hospitals in the U.S., many of which are still open and receiving patients today. (“Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America” Exhibit)

You may have experienced the presence of the Sisters of Mercy administering healthcare in Watertown, Lake Placid, Tupper Lake, or Gabriels. We were and are blessed to have them in the diocese in education and health-care.

We have highlighted from the Exhibit, “Women & Spirit”, two of the eighteen Congregations who still live and serve in our diocese. We have included in this article pictures of other members of Congregations who served in the past or are serving presently in our diocese.

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December 5, 2010

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

The annual appeal for the Retirement Fund for Religious will be conducted in our parishes the weekend of December 11 and 12. The readings at Mass for the Third Sunday of Advent spoke of the radical transformations that occur in our lives if we have the faith and hope needed to await them. Despite countless challenges and sacrifices, religious sisters and brothers have been witnesses to Christ. With few resources, they have helped to bring about radical transformations in our society. For instance, they have helped to build our Catholic schools, hospitals, and social service agencies. We are heirs of their efforts.

Though a number of elderly continue to serve, others are frail and in need of assistance. For generations, the religious congregations cared for their elderly members. In recent decades, however, elderly religious began to outnumber these earning stipends. Those religious who receive social security benefits today receive only about one-third of that received by the average recipient.

Ninety percent of the proceeds from this collection will be distributed by the Diocese of Ogdensburg to benefit the religious communities that serve here today and those who have served in the past. The remaining ten percent is sent to the National Religious Retirement Office for national distribution. Last year’s collections were distributed among thirty-one communities of women and men.

Many of our families struggle financially today and numerous worthy causes seek our assistance. I ask you to consider offering what you are able to the care of the women and men who have made such enormous contributions to our Church. As St. Paul tells us, “Let us do good to all, but especially to those who belong to the family of faith” (Galatians 6:10). Thank you for your generous assistance to these cherished members of our family.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

R. Louis Goggin
Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley
Bishop of Ogdensburg

Orders Serving In The Diocese

Brothers of Christian Instruction
Franciscan Friars of the Atonement
Maristines of the Sacred Heart
New York Province of the Society of Jesus
Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul
Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
Dominican Sisters of Hope
Franciscan Sisters of the Atonement
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Servants of Mary
Sisters of Charity of St. Louise
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas Mid-Atlantic Community
Sisters of the Cross of Chalcedon
Sisters of the Precious Blood
Sisters of St. Joseph
Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet
Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Mary
Universe Sisters of the Eastern Province

Diocesan Council of Religious
Mass for the Diocesan Council of Religious is celebrated monthly at the Church of the Transfiguration in Ogdensburg. The Council consists of 47 religious men and women from 26 diocesan congregations.

December 8, 2010

Bishop Terry R. LaValley at the Religious Jubilee

Pictured with the Bishop front row left to right are: Sister Catherine LaBoune Gooch, SSJ; Sister Norma Bryant, SSJ; Sister Mary William Argy, SSJ; and Sister Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ. Back row left to right are: Chairperson, Sister Barbara St. Andrews, CCL; Sister Janet Peters, RSM; Sister Anne Boyer, GSNH; Sister Ellen Donovan, SA; Episcopal Delegate for Religious, and Minam Najmy, DHA, President of Council for Religious.

Brothers of the Congregation of Holy Cross
Eastern Province, New Rochelle, NY

Be as generous as you can for the Religious Retirement Collection on December 11th and 12th.

Please be as generous as you can for the Religious Retirement Collection on December 11th and 12th.

National Statistics

- Approximately 35,000 religious men and women are 70 years of age or older.
- For most of their lives, older women and men religious worked for small stipends that were reinvested in ministry.
- The income of younger members of religious institutes helps to support the care of older members, but it is not sufficient to cover escalating health care costs.

We are aware of the difficulties our people face in light of the economic challenges that we face. We appreciate any contribution you are able to make for the care of our elderly religious.

Sister Ellen Donahue, SA
Episcopal Delegate for Religious

Sister Mary Elizabeth Looby, GSNH, conducting a “Why Catholic” session, continues to live and work in our diocese standing on the shoulders of the many religious of the Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart who worked in our schools, hospitals, and religious education programs.

Through the efforts of others, children immigrant children entered the mainstream of American life, and educational opportunities that were rare in these days were open to girls and women. Pictured above is Sister Jerome Kolthar, SA, who left Vancouver, B.C. with the displaced Japanese families and went to live with them in the internment camp in Clearwood, B.C. during the war. She helped educate the Japanese children in elementary and higher education during wartimes. These were not the only immigrants sister worked with. She worked tediously with the Puerto Rican community in Spanish Harlem in New York City, teaching in the kindergarten and nursery programs. Sometimes you promote justice just by standing with people who are suffering discrimination. Sister also worked in our diocese at the mission in Hogansburg, NY.

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Religious Retirement Collection
is December 11th and 12th

FACTS

- Less than five percent of the religious institutes in the National Religious Retirement Office database are adequately funded for retirement.
- More than 5,000 religious require skilled care.
- The average annual Social Security benefit for a religious is approximately $4,500.

Religious institutes are financially autonomous and responsible for the support of their members. Income sources include compensated ministry, government benefits, and investment return. The average Social Security benefit for religious women and men is approximately one-third that paid to the average U.S. beneficiary.

Amount Enclosed: $ __________
Name __________________________
Address _________________________
City ________ State _____ Zip ______

Make your tax-deductible check payable to your parish.
Write Retirement Fund for Religious on the memo line and give it to your parish collection.

You can express your gratitude for all they’ve done and will continue to do by giving to your parish’s annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious.

OR
Send your donation directly to:
RETIREMENT FUND FOR RELIGIOUS
P.O. Box 369
Ogdensburg, NY 13669

Congregations pray daily for those who provide care and support ministries.

Sister Mary Christine Taylor, SSJ, and Native friends at the Fallen Leaves Celebration, St. Regina Mission, Akwesasne. There is no way to describe the love and energy Sister has for the Native people. Pictured left to right are Nota DeJung, Isabella DeJung, Sr. Mary Christine Taylor, SSJ, Caroline Tartwell, and Justin DeJung. Also attending were Jennifer DeJung, Cory Phillips and Vicky Phillips.

In 1727, nine Ursuline Sisters from France landed in the primitive frontier city of New Orleans. After braving a perilous ocean-crossing that included stormy seas and being chased by pirates, they almost drowned while trying to get on shore. This is how their story begins.

How Did Their Story Begin?

Undeterred by the harsh conditions, they opened an orphanage, schools, and a hospital, beginning a ministry which until Hurricane Katrina had been uninterrupted for 278 years. (Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America’ Exhibit)

This is only one of the thirty-three Congregations that serve or have served in the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Some of you may have attended the schools in Malone administered by the Ursuline Community: St. Joseph’s Elementary School, St. Joseph’s Academy, or the Notre Dame school. In addition to this ministry, the Ursuline Sisters assisted many parishes in their religious education and pastoral needs.

In 1843, seven Sisters of Mercy from the Baggott Street Foundation in Ireland arrived in the United States, traveled to Pittsburg, and opened a hospital. The Sisters of Mercy are among the religious congregations who between 1829 and 1990 founded a total of 869 hospitals in the U.S., many of which are still open and receiving patients today. (Women & Spirit: Catholic Sisters in America’ Exhibit)

You may have experienced the presence of the Sisters of Mercy administering healthcare in Watertown, Lake Placid, Tupper Lake, or Gabriels. We were and are blessed to have them in the diocese in education and health care.

We have highlighted from the Exhibit, “Women & Spirit,” two of the eighteen Congregations who still live and serve in our diocese. We have included in this article pictures of other members of Congregations who served in the past or are serving presently in our diocese.

Sister Elizabeth Ann Brown, SNBR, shown here teaching at St. Mary’s in Potadim, is now retired and living at the Motherhouse in Yadkin, PA.

Sister Mary Hallahan, OSU, conducting a Eucharistic Service for the assisted-living facility at Farrar Home. Many Sisters are able to continue their ministries through contributed services of their communities.

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Pope marks beginning of Advent with prayer for life

By Lise Yearn Catholic World News

WASHINGTON — Pope Benedict XVI welcomed the beginning of Advent with a prayer for life and a defense of the human embryo.

The pope presided over an evening prayer service at the Vatican Nov. 27, part of a worldwide pro-life vigil. He said it was an appropriate initiative to launch Advent, the liturgical period in which the church prepares to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

In a homily, he said the church’s teaching about abortion comes from its teaching about the dignity of every human life and its concern that the unborn is most vulnerable, as long as hope lives in his or her mother’s heart,” he said.

Notify our office so you don’t miss a single issue of the North Country Catholic. Call (315) 608-7556 with your winter address.
Looking around
Looking behind the 'marriage gap' trends

By Father William J. Byron, SJ

News services made much of the recently released report of the Pew Research Center on what is being called a marriage gap in the United States. Since 1970 there has been a sharp decline in marriage and a rise in new family forms. The marriage gap, researchers say, is related to the income gap. It seems that economic security is viewed by many as a condition for marriage. If income is low or uncertain, the commitment to marriage is postponed or simply ignored. As marriage has declines, cohabitation has increased.

The phenomenon of couples living together as unmarried partners has doubled in the past 20 years, and although those who choose this route are not necessarily getting married, they are not getting divorced or condemned either. In 1960, the share of births to unmarried women was 5 percent. In 2004, it rose to 41 percent.

It’s been told that David’s Bridal, a national firm that makes bridesmaids’ dresses and accessories, used to consider bridal, a national firm that makes bridesmaids’ dresses and accessories, used to consider...
Sr. Geraldine celebrates 60 years as a Filippini

Sister Geraldine Canale, 77, who resides at the Regional Catholic Diocese of Watertown's Motherhouse convent on Breen Avenue, Watertown, was recently celebrated her 60th anniversary with the order.

Sr. Geraldine completed her remaining two years of high school at the Villa Walsh Motherhouse convent and received her bachelor's degree and master's degrees at Seton Hall University, N.J. She taught first grade for 40 years "all of them in Watertown.

"More than ever in our materialistic society, kids need the assurance of religious convictions," Sister Geraldine said. "Teachers Filippini are religious teachers. They provide kids with a base in their faith and give them guidance.

Sr. Geraldine, a native of Plattsburgh, left Breen Avenue on Aug. 16, 1953, taking her vows Aug. 18, 1953. She was the2nd of ten children born to Maria and Peter Canale.

Sister Canale's sister, Anita of Ray, a Watertown resident, and her parents, when as children, were moved to Breen Avenue by their mother, who decided to try the convent life.

"My mother had to pass out smelling salts. I felt the calling to work in your vineyard," Sister Geraldine said.

All of the girls who left Breen Avenue went to the religious schools which are now closed. Sr. Geraldine is the only one of the Canale family still living in the Watertown area.

Sister Geraldine serves as archivist at the Motherhouse convent and resides there.

"The Bible says, 'The Lord calls those He desires to be holy His servants and consecrated life. He fills vessels with His gifts and gives them life.'" Sister Geraldine said.

"My religion is my life," she said. "I was brought up in a strong religious family. My mother's family is a tradition of religious women. So that is why I have become a religious.

Note: Sr. Geraldine Riordan, another of the Canale sisters, also became a religious.

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Grief is a journey of healing and transformation. It is a process that involves a complex interplay of emotional, intellectual, and physical responses. The journey of grief is unique to each individual and is influenced by a variety of factors, including the nature of the loss, the support systems available, and the personal and cultural context. The stages of grief, as described by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, are often cited as a framework for understanding this process: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. However, it is important to recognize that these stages are not strictly linear and can be experienced in different orders or simultaneously. Additionally, individuals may spend more time or less time in each stage, depending on their unique circumstances. Grief is a deeply personal experience, and it is important to allow oneself to feel and express the emotions that arise during this process. It is also important to seek support from others, whether through family, friends, or professional counseling, to navigate the complexities of grief and move towards healing. The journey of grief is a normal and necessary process that allows individuals to come to terms with loss and begin the process of healing and growth.
Our family of faith

In this week’s North Country Catholic, we continue our focus on "family" with the second installment of Bishop LaValley’s message for Catholic families of the Diocese of Ogdensburg. This week the bishop writes primarily about the importance of family communities of life.

Matters for publication should

Outside of Diocese Rate: $28

Diocese of Ogdensburg. dateline is Wednesday.

Bishop Terry

Telephone: (315) 366-8200

Services Nov. 27, 2010 at St. Henry's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

Rouses Point – Gordon F. (Fontana) Borello, 98; Funeral Services Nov. 29, 2010 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Maurice – Joseph G. (Fontana) Borello, 98; Funeral Services Nov. 30, 2010 at St. Patrick's Church, burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Catharine – John Thomas, Matthew J. and John T. Tompkins, brothers, each in their devotion to God.

Carthage – Lillian Zeler Loomis, 82; Funeral Services Dec. 4, 2010 at Sacred Heart Church, burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

Otisville – Michael D. (Leiter) Berg, 82; Mass Nov. 26, 2010 at St. Patrick's Church, burial in Calvary Cemetery.

We are pleased to pay special atttention to our beloved religious men and women (pages 4 and 7). Thank you to our Religious members with special needs Church. And, as always, we hold the priests of our Diocesan family closely in our hearts. Today, we sadly bid farewell to Father Robert LaValley, whose funeral was held Nov. 29, 2010 at St. Mary's Church in Ogdensburg.

The end is near.

Religious members with special needs

Families continue to change this world into a better place.

We are very pleased to be able to bring this column to you each week. We have tried to write in a way that is helpful and encouraging to all who are involved in our faith communities.

In November of this year the Padre received and split the top prize at the Open Pizza. This is a prize given annually since 2004. Madison Michel and I were with the Padre for the festivities in New York at Fordham University for the award ceremonies.

As a family of faith, we have the assurance of Emmanuel—god with us as we walk with our faith through the most difficult times.

There are many calls in our life. We are called to be sons and daughters of God, we are called to be members of the Church, we are called to be united in our families; we are called to be servants of God.

This week’s NCC also highlights the award ceremony.

We have rest and peace, you have a family.

Christmas greetings from Quito, Ecuador

By Sister Cindy Sullivan

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The Society For The Propagation of The Faith

The whole good News of Matthew is summarized at the beginning and the ending of the Gospel. Matthew’s community had become disillusioned and discouraged. They did not see the disciples go to the world and make new disciples.

The difference is the weeks in the beginning of the book and the weeks in the ending of the book. The beginning and the days of Jesus have not seen the final outcome.

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In this past easter season we have heard from so many people who told us that they have never made it to the Church. We have heard about these people;

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It’s humility and silence long enough so that you can begin to hear someone else, not yourself.

Amidst this and looking for spiritual guidance, he went to see a Jesuit priest who had a reputation as a spiritual director. He anticipated the usual counsel of dark nights of the soul and how these are given to us to purify our faith and, already familiar with literature, he wasn’t expecting any surprises.

Certainly he wasn’t expecting the advice he received. His Jesuit guide didn’t try to entertain him with the usual platitudes or NASA stories. He simply told him: Make Advent wreaths.

Several years ago, a friend shared this story with me. Raised a Roman Catholic, our family essentially forbids going to church and in trying to live an honest secular life, he began himself, in his mid-forties, plagued by doubts, unable to pray, and unable (when he was honest with himself) to believe in the existence of God.

Show up and sit in silent prayer for there is a God? didn’t believe existed: How can I pray, precisely that he couldn’t pray, that he couldn’t talk to a God whom he didn’t believe existed? How can I pray, when no longer believe that there is a God?

The Jesuit persisted. “Just do it! Show up and sit in silent prayer for half an hour a day, even if you feel like you are talking to a wall. It’s the only practical advice I can give you.”

Despite his skepticism, my friend took the Jesuit’s advice and faithfully sat in silent prayer for half an hour a day for six months, and by the end of that time, his sense of God had returned, as had his sense of prayer.

This story, I believe, highlights what love and prayer actually are. What we thought was prayer was an enchantment about ourselves.

The deeper we go in relationships and our imagination.

What love and prayer actually are. What we thought was prayer was an illusion. It’s not that we become disillusioned with God, but rather that we come to realize that so many of the things we have been told we believe were about God were really about us and our current limitations.

Disillusionment is a good thing. It’s the stripping of an illusion. What we thought was prayer was partly a spell of enchantment about ourselves.

When that disillusionment sets in, and this a maturing moment in our lives, it is easy to believe that we were deluded about the other; the person we had fallen in love with or, in this case, prayed to.

The easy response is then to break away from, to see the whole thing as having been an illusion, a false start, in the spiritual life, that’s usually when we stop praying.

But it the opposite is called for. What we need to do is to show up, just as we did before, minus the warm thoughts and feelings, bored, uncertain, and stripped of our enchantment about ourselves.

The deeper we go in relationships and in prayer, the more unsure of ourselves we become, and this is the beginning of maturity: It’s when I say, Let’s not know how to love and I don’t know how to pray, that I first begin to understand what love and prayer actually are.

Hence, there is no better advice than that given by this Jesuit priest to my friend who thought himself an atheist. Just show up! Sit in humility and silence, to quit, to see the whole thing away, to quit, to see the whole thing.

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