By Tracy Leonard
NCC contributing Writer

Have you ever experienced an intense passion or longing for something—a strong, persistent yearning or desire that is accompanied by confident expectation of its fulfillment?

Perhaps this desire and search is the reason or source of hope for a future good.

This thing we yearn for may be difficult, but not impossible to obtain if we depend on God.

This longing, anticipation and hope are possibly a familiar feeling in your heart this Christmas season as you anxiously and expectantly await the birth of our humble Savior Jesus Christ; priest, prophet and king.

What are you doing to prepare for Him?

Let us decorate not just our homes, but our lives with works of charity and designated time of contemplation and prayer.

Let us write letters to those we love.

Help us, Lord, to see Santa Claus as one who embodies the spirit of giving and unselfish love.

Take time. Reflect within.

Are you like Elizabeth’s baby in the womb who leaps for joy at the sound of Mary’s greeting?

Are you like the shepherds crossing the field, bringing your poverty, humility and simple openness for the joy of the Lord?

Are you like the wise, knowledgeable and wealthy magi bringing your gifts of unselfish love to the king?

Whether you are like John the Baptist in Elizabeth’s womb, a shepherd, or magi, you are called to follow Gabriel’s command—“do not be afraid!”

Find hope and joy in this Christmas season which tells us that the Christ child would be a light to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32).

This was one of the first indications that Jesus came for all people, of all nations, of all races, and that the work of God in the world would not be limited to only a few.

This is your command—follow Him this Christmas season and be a light to the world which so desperately needs His love.
The Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Inc.
The Society for the Propagation of the Faith
The Holy See's Agency for the Missions Abroad

The Diocese of Ogdensburg, North Country Catholic
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(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296

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Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, 43 Willow Street, Ogdensburg, NY, 13617.

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I am thinking of this today as I prepare an Advent prayer service for the regular Confirmation classes. I am realizing that my focus should be on the Advent prayer service for the regular Confirmation classes. I am aware of this must all be God through the grace of the Holy Spirit and the Sacrament of Confirmation. I am aware of this absolute necessity for all of us to come to the Lord in prayer and study about the Lord and his teachings during this time of year.

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DIOCESAN EVENTS

FESTIVALS OF LESSONS AND CAROLS
• Dec. 23 at 3:00 pm at St. Agnes Church
• Dec. 21 at 7:30 pm at Notre Dame

FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY
• Dec. 21 at 10:30 am in St. Murphy Family Room

FESTIVE FISH FRIDAYS
• Dec. 7 at 10:30 am at St. Joseph's Family Room

FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS
• Dec. 22 at 7:30 pm at St. Peter Church
• Dec. 25 at 8:00 pm at St. Agnes Church
• Dec. 25 at 5:00 pm at St. Mary's Family Room

NORTH CATHOLIC

DIOCESAN LIFE

FOLLOW ME

Peace is God’s gift to us

Startling message, vinegar and wine, God’s gift: a patient heart.

Yes, our risen Lord who bled for us, now intersects with the world of his Plan. The Priests’ Retirement Fund is designed to serve both present and future priests.

Peace is a fruit of faith. Peace is communion with God. Through our own earnest efforts to grow in our relationship with Christ during this Year of Faith, and through the support and prayers of others, we can help to make peace in the world.

IVY RIVER

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Peace Be with You!

These words of greeting that we hear at every Mass are the first words that Jesus spoke to the disciples and was later spoken to them after his resurrection from the dead (Luke 24:33). Let us use these words to greet one another this Christmas. May our greeting be filled with meaning and love.

Bishop LaVallee’s message for Christmas 2012

Priests retirement plan benefits provide

The 36 retired priests of the diocese currently receiving pensions have a combined annual income of approximately $400,000. These retired priests are no longer active in active ministry. Both the Priests’ Retirement Fund and the Priests’ Welfare Endowment Fund help to support these men in their retirement. Nineteen priests, or 52 percent of the full-time permanent priests, have pensions.

Five retired priests and the annual income of approximately $17,000 is used to fund the Priests’ Welfare Endowment Fund.

One hundred percent of the proceeds from the Christmas Collection proceed to each parish is contributed to the Priests’ Retirement Fund.

The Priests’ Retirement Fund is a tax-exempt control account. The Priests’ Welfare Endowment Fund is a tax-exempt permanent fund.

The Priests’ Retirement Plan is designed to provide pension benefits for retired priests. The plan is designed to provide a pension to retired priests. The plan also provides for a benefit equal to the cost of health insurance for active priests.

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With the dawning of this Love and the voice of this Calling
We shall not cease from exploration.
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

From the movie "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey"

First published in 1937, Catholic docu-fiction-r J.R.R. Tolkien's children's novel "The Hobbit" or "There and Back Again" has proved so popular in the decades since that it has never gone out of print.

With "The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey" (Warner Bros), director Peter Jackson provides movie audiences with a free screen version of the opening part of Tolkien's widely beloved work.

In this installment of a trio of prequels to "J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Hobbit" trilogy, also based on "The Lord of the Rings" (New Line Home Entertainment), Martin Freeman is reluctantly convinced by a wizard (Ian McKellen) to accompany and aid a group of dwarves (led by Richard Armitage) in their quest to recapture their ancient stronghold, a storehouse of fabulous wealth long ago conquered by a rampaging dragon.

The heroes of ordinary people and the potential for ordination or other forms of service were indicative of God moving us, and I felt this movement clearly through her

I found myself reflecting on this moment in my exa-
mun.

How do I discern what this means? I don't know yet. I just know that with the help of the examen, clearly written there on my to-do list, I will pay atten-
tion to how God may be moving me to act.
Christmas: time for joy, gratitude, sharing love

How many times have we said to a small child, “Now, close your eyes and don’t peek.” Then, as we bring out the birthday gift he has waited all year for, we say, “Now, open your eyes.”

What joy we experience as we hear his gasp of delight, and see his face sparkle and dance! How happy God must have been to hear the cry of joy from Elizabeth as she greeted her cousin Mary in today’s Gospel. Elizabeth’s joy doubled as John the Baptist leaped in her womb at the presence of the unborn Jesus.

Both Mary and Luke proclaim that, through a woman, the ‘Son of the Most High’ will be born, and the glory of the whole world will appear on earth. When Mary traveled to the hill country to aid her cousin, women, filled with the Holy Spirit, re- vealed the greatest miracle the world has ever known. Elizabeth is the very first in Scripture to announce that Mary is the Mother of the Redeemer, and she proclaims her blessed because she has believed what God’s angel said he would do in her.

And Mary, also through the Holy Spirit, sings, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord…For now will all ages call me blessed…The Mighty One has done great things for me…The third Sunday of Advent is always a happy one, and even so more this year since on Saturday evening and Sunday morning, the Liturgy begins with violet vestments. Then, on the very next day, everything changes!”

The Church puts away the violet vestments to celebrate the Christmas Vigil. There is only one proper response—joy, gratitude, and sharing love with everyone around us. Let both body and spirit sing, for God has broken into his world once more to repair the damage done by sin, to pronounce our. This Advent, I’ve found a list that I've never forgotten.

A list, not just for Christmas

I am a list maker, a devotee of the “to do” variety. Although I try not to let my list rule my life, I find it keeps me organized, setting goals and keeping them. I’m a visual person who finds it helpful to be reminded in a visual way of my goals and keeping them. I’m a little untidy, but I am a list maker.

So, for Advent, I made a list of books. I started my list with recommendations from all sorts of people, including my friends, the Ignatian Spirituality Center web site, books I have read during the year, and books in my home collection. I cross out things as I do them, or if I forget to do them.

I am not a procrastinator. I do not get down on myself if I haven’t done something. I am a doer. I do not want to write down my sins, as that would miss the mark. The examen is not so much about our sinfulness, but rather noticing God’s presence in our daily life. The examen is a prayerful reflection on my day, in which I look back and see where God moved me, where I felt God’s presence and responded, or where I may have missed an opportunity to respond whole-hartedly. What troubled me? What caused me sorrow? It becomes a way of discerning God’s will and movement in our lives.

In the 1960s, the Church began to hone the examen, a prayerful exercise based on St. Ignatius of Loyola’s “praying with the eyes of the soul.” The examen is a form of prayerful attentiveness, a habit that seeps down to the very roots of how we live our daily lives. It is a way of keeping God alive and at work in our daily life. It is a way of keeping God’s presence in our daily life.

May we be eager to help it grow in those around us during the New Year through prayer and action.
Funeral held Dec. 4 for Servite Sister Anne Mercier

### Death of Sister Anne Mercier

Sister Anne was born April 25, 1918, in Convent, the Servants of Mary and was held Dec. 6 at St. Anselme Quebec, St. Mary's Cemetery. She entered the Servants of Mary Motherhouse, Omaha, in 1936 from Convent, and was stationed at St. Mary's in Omaha. She was also stationed at the Cathedral in Ogdensburg, St. John the Baptist in Rome at the Generalate of the Servants of Mary Motherhouse, and at Holy Family High School from 1940 and at Holy Family School in 1946.

### Obituary

Sister Anne celebrated her 70th year in religious life on July 10, 2012, at Our Lady of Sorrows Convent in Omaha. She was fluent in French in her native language, Spanish and Italian. She was stationed in Rome at the Generalate of the Servants of Mary, in France from 1944-46 and at Holy Family High School from 1960-1971 teaching music and French. Sister Anne celebrated her 94th year in religious life is held Dec. 6 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. Her funeral held Dec. 4 for Servite Sister Anne Mercier.

### Recent Announcements

- **Home for the holidays**
  - The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled a Protecting God’s Children online session for parents and for anyone interested in learning about the program. The session will be held on Dec. 28 at 7 p.m. The Diocese of Ogdensburg will re-open for business Dec. 26 starting 12 p.m.

### Christmas Blessings

A man played the accordion and led us as we sang “The First Noel” and “Joy to the World.”

### Christmas Decorations

- “The First Noel” and “Joy to the World.”
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### Home for the holidays

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### On behalf of missionaries and the people they serve in the mission lands, we wish you a joyous Christmas!

- Sister Mary Ellen Bitt, SSJ, Director
- Molly McKee Ryan, Secretary

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### Respect Life

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### Merry Christmas!

- “A scene so peaceful in the night, the starry sky is soft and bright... As God’s Own Son has come to earth, may we behold His wondrous birth!”

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Defending religious liberty was a top priority this year for the U.S. Catholic bishops, who repeatedly spoke out against threats to its existence. Much as they did the year before, the bishops in 2012 spoke out consistently against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ mandate requiring most religious employers to provide free coverage of artificial contraception, sterilization and abortion-causing drugs in their insurance plans, even if they are morally opposed to such coverage.

The mandate, put in place in August 2011, has a narrow exemption for employers who object to providing these services on religious grounds, namely if they serve or hire people primarily of their own faith. It does not include a conscience clause for employers who object to providing coverage. The HHS issue took center stage early this year when the Obama administration announced Feb. 10 that it would leave the definition of an exempt religious entity but would shift the costs of contraceptives from the policyholders to the insurers.

But the Catholic bishops and other religious leaders rejected the change, saying it failed to ensure that Catholic individuals and institutions would not have to pay for services that they consider immoral, because many dioceses and other Catholic entities are self-insured. At a congressional hearing, now-Archbishop William E. Lori, who heads the Baltimore Archdiocese and is chairman of the bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, said the ongoing debate over the mandate demonstrated a need for enacting conscience protection into federal law.

The bishops have repeatedly said the mandate is a restriction on religious liberty because the requirement violates church teaching.

Religious liberty likely to remain big issue

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May the Spirit of Christmas be with you throughout the year!

With peace and blessings,

The pastor and parishioners of St. Mary’s, St. Theresa’s and St. Joseph’s (Evan’s Mills, Theresa & Philadelphia)

“HE WILL BE GREAT and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God has promised that his descendant the Kingdom will never end.” Luke 1:32-33

Faithful.

Fidelis means faithful.

At this special time of year, Fidelis Care wishes you and your family a Christmas filled with good health, peace, and joy.

Through all seasons, we are proud to serve our members with the highest levels of integrity, compassion, and respect.

We look forward to a new year of faithful commitment to our members, providers, community partners, and the residents across New York State who count on us for affordable, quality care.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from your friends at Fidelis Care.

Fidelis Care is sponsored by the Diocesan Bishops of New York State.

Call 1-888-FIDELIS (1-888-342-3547) TTY: 1-800-421-1220 fideliscare.org

Happy Birthday, Dear Jesus

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR JESUS

The children of Catholic Augustinian Academy presented their annual Christmas concert and pageant Dec. 11.Shown above, the kings visit Joseph, Mary and Jesus. From left to right are Christopher Best, Elis Benador, Manuel Velez, Alyssa Fal and lessons Gold.

St. Hedwig’s Parish in Houseville is offering an exhibit of Christmas Creches from around the world for viewing Dec. 23 and 30 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

The Roman Catholic Community of St. Alexander’s in Morrisonville and St. Joseph’s in Treadwell held a Christmas Pageant Dec. 1. A spaghetti dinner was served and the children and young at heart of the parish were encouraged to dress up and take part in the pageant. The Thirsty Bear and Sal’s Italian famous wagon ride to sing Christmas Carols throughout the town.

Students of Seton Catholic Central in Plattsburgh decorated doors for Advent for a school contest. Shown in front of a teacher’s door are, from left, Julian Breyette, Elizabeth Fisher, Jamila Willette, Brian Murray and Mitchell Door.

The Gallery 7

St. Mary’s, Fort Covington
St. Joseph’s, Bombay
St. Patrick’s, Hogansburg

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May you hold the love of Jesus in your heart, today and always.

Blessings at Christmas and throughout the New Year.

The Peace and Peacekeepers at St. Paul’s Church, Black River & St. Rita’s Church, Deforiet

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

From the Staff of the Development Office
Scott Lalone, Valerie Mathews, Renee’ Grizzuto

Catholic World December 19, 2012 North Country Catholic

A Christmas Blessing from the NCC!

A child was born and filled every heart

Respect Life Office
Diocese of Ogdensburg

Message from Pope Benedict

The Vatican released the following statement Friday night:

“The Holy Father was promptly informed of the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown and he has asked me to convey his heartfelt grief and the assurance of this closeness in prayer to the victims and their families, and to all affected by the shocking event.

“In the aftermath of this senseless tragedy he asks God, our Father, to console all those who mourn and to sustain the entire community with the spiritual strength which triumphs over violence by the power of forgiveness, hope and reconciling love.”

ST. MARY’S CAR RAFFLE

Enter for your chance to win a 2013 Toyota Corolla or $12,000 CASH!!! (Winner pays RRV as stated Below will draw by 600 pm March 11, 2013. All proceeds benefit St. Mary’s Church and the vocations/Reconciliation Center.
California pari-mutuel law applies. Call 704-336-2540 or visit the box below for tickets.

ST. MARY’S CHURCH
48 Court Street
Canastota, NY 13032

NAME
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TELEPHONE

Number of Tickets

Amount of check
$20 EACH or $100

NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

PEOPLE near school shooting quick to offer assistance

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Urging Catholics to “pick up the Bible” and read it during the Year of Faith, Pope Benedict XVI said the Scriptures recount the story of God’s love for humanity and the steps he took throughout history to save all men and women.

“Those who delight in and get great fullness from the history of the world and of the human persons are to say in the words of the prophet, ‘Be still and know that I am God’: to be astonished by the story of God’s love for humanity and the steps taken through history to save all men and women. “That which enlightens and gives great fullness to the history of the world and of the human persons is that story which we hear in the Bible and which we need to tell as Christians today,” the pope said in his keynote talk, Martin, who serves as a consultor to the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelization, said it is in that encounter where one can discover the “presence” in ancient times was used to refer to the official visit of the king or other great leader. “The pope said. With the birth of Christ, “this is the king who came down to visit this poor presence, which is a gift, and gave us the gift of his visit, assuming our flesh, becoming human like us.”

Speaker says sharing faith, watching people ‘come alive’ is ‘amazing’

FAIRFAX, Va. (CNS) -- The Catholic Church’s new evangelization effort is all about encountering Christ, then sharing that encounter with others, said Curtis Martin, president and founder of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, a grace-based campus ministry.

“Evangelization is just a big long es-

Martin, president and founder of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students, a grace-based campus ministry. “We wanted everyone to feel em-
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May you hold the love of Jesus in your heart, today and always.  
Blessings at Christmas and throughout the New Year.  
The Faure and Partners of St. Paul's Church, Black River & St. Rita's Church, Deforiet

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

From the Staff of the Development Office  
Scott Lalone, Valerie Mathews, Renee Grizzuto

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**Catholic Who's Who At a Glance**

**Pope says Catholics to read Bible, recall history of God's “gathering**

A Christmas musing from the Fellowship of Catholic University Students...

**Speaker says sharing faith, watching people ‘come alive’ is ‘amazing’**

**Missionaries say their life and work is about encountering Christ, then sharing that encounter with others**

**Worshipers at the first Vatica**

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**Priests near school shooting quick to offer assistance**

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**Message from Pope Benedict**

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**From the Diocesan Fiscal Office Staff**
Religious liberty likely to remain big issue

WASHINGTON — Defending religious liberty was a top priority this year for the U.S. Catholic bishops, who repeatedly spoke out against threats to its existence.

As much as they did the year before, the bishops in 2012 spoke out consistently against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ mandate requiring most religious employers to provide free coverage of artificial contraception, sterilization and abortion-causing drugs in their insurance plans, even if they are morally opposed to such coverage.

The mandate, put in place in August 2011, has a narrow exemption for employers who object to providing these services on religious grounds, namely if they serve or hire people primarily of their own faith. It does not include a conscience clause for employers who object to providing coverage.

The HHS issue took center stage early this year when the Obama administration announced Feb. 10 that it would leave the definition of an exempt religious entity but would shift the costs of contraceptives from the policyholders to the insurers. The Catholic bishops and other religious leaders rejected the change, saying it failed to ensure that Catholic individuals and institutions would not have to pay for services that they consider immoral, because many dioceses and other Catholic entities are self-insured. At a congressional hearing, now-Archbishop William E. Lori, who heads the Baltimore Archdiocese and is chairman of the bishops’ Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, said the ongoing debate over the mandate demonstrated a need for enacting conscience protection into federal law.

The bishops have repeatedly said the mandate is a restriction on religious liberty because the requirement violates church teaching.

Happy Birthday, Dear Jesus

The children of Catholic Augustinian Academy presented their annual Christmas concert and pageant Dec. 11. Shown above, the kings visit Joseph, Mary and Jesus. From left are Christopher Olsen, Elon Beneker, Manuel Vivieros, Ellyse Suh and Ronen Gold.

St. Hedwig’s Parish in Houseville is offering an exhibit of Christmas Creches from around the world for viewing Dec. 23 and 30 and Jan. 6, after the 11 a.m. Mass and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

Students of Seton Catholic Central in Plattsburgh decorated doors for Advent for a school contest. Shown in front of a teacher’s door are, from left, Julian Breyette, Elizabeth Fisher, Jamyla Willette, Brian Murray and Mitchell Doorey.
Funeral held Dec. 4 for Servite Sister Anne Mercier

Sister Anne was born April 25, 1918 in St. Anselme Quebec, Canada. She was buried in the Servite Cemetery in Ogdensburg. Sister Anne was 94. She died Dec. 4 and was held Dec. 6 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg for Service of Northern New York, PO Box 2446, Plattsburgh, NY, 12901; e-mail: aycsnn@yahoo.com; Phone: 393-2920 or the Victims Assistance Clergy Rev, James Seymour at 315-946-7733.

Sr. Anne Mercier, OSM

Sr. Anne celebrated her 70th year in religious life on July 10, 2012 at Our Lady of Sorrows Cathedral in Ogdensburg. She was fluent in French her native languages, Spanish and Italian.

Sister Anne was stationed in Rome at the Generalate of the Servants of Mary from 1960-1961 teaching music and French. Sister Anne celebrated her 70th year in religious life on July 10, 2012 at Our Lady of Sorrows Cathedral in Ogdensburg. She was fluent in French her native languages, Spanish and Italian.

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Christmas: time for joy, gratitude, sharing love

John the Baptist leaped in his womb at the presence of the unborn Jesus. Both Mical and Luke proclaim that, through a woman, the beauty of the redeemer will appear on earth. When Mary traveled to the little country to aid her cousin, women, filled with the Holy Spirit, receive the greatest miracle the world has ever known. Elizabeth is the very first in Scripture to announce that Mary is the Mother of the Redeemer, and she proclaims her blessed because she has believed what God said he would do in her. And Mary, also through the Holy Spirit, sings, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord…from now on will all ages call me blessed…The Mighty One has done great things for me.”

The Church puts away the violent, and does not ask gold or silver to celebrate the Christmas vigil. There is only one proper response—joy, gratitude, and sharing love with everyone around us. Let body and spirit sing, for God has broken into his world once more to repair the damage done by his enemies, to express through his love and mercy the saving grace of his Redeemer.

How many times have you said to a small child: “Now, close your eyes and don’t peek!” Then, as we bring out the birthday gift he has wanted to receive, we say, “Now, open your eyes!”

What joy we experience as we hear his gasp of delight, and see the sparkle and dance! How happy God must have been to hear the joy from Elizabeth as she greeted her cousin Mary in today’s Gospel.

Elizabeth’s joy doubled as she heard the angel’s words. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit,” he said. “This is the promise that I gave through the holy Spirit to you. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the captives and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

How happy God was when John the Baptist leaped in his mother’s womb at the sound of Mary’s voice. John was deaf and dumb, but when Mary reached for his ear, he heard. And he said, “Father, open my ears, that I may hear the voice of the Lord.”

Mary is the Mother of God, the Mother of the Redeemer, and she proclaims her blessed because she has believed what God said he would do in her. And Mary, also through the Holy Spirit, sings, “My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord…from now on will all ages call me blessed…The Mighty One has done great things for me.”

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I will be there when you need me. And know the place for the first time.

At the Movies
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey

First published in 1937, Catholic does... J.R.R. Tolkien’s children’s novel “The Hobbit” or “There and Back Again” has proved so popular in the decades since that it has never gone out of print.

With “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey” (Warner Bros.), director Peter Jackson provides movie audiences with a fresh look at the beloved classic story. The film’s three-hour running time was inspired by a version of the book that was expanded by the author himself. Other than the Hobbit himself, most of the other characterizations are quite different from the book.

The Hobbit, a diminutive dwarf, lives in a stone’s throw from the Irish church (!) – locally known as the “French” church of the Roman Catholic faith – prayers, the sacrament of Confession, that I had on my desk seemed to speak for me.

At the movies
The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey

North Freeman stars in a scene from the movie “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey.”

Almost everyday goodness to subdue evil are the primary themes of the long, combat-heavy adventure that follows. As the titular character proves his mettle, the corrupting effects of power are also showcased through his encounter with a cave dragon who is obsessed with and spiritually enslaved by a magical ring. Not for the easily fright

Unlikely, yet. I just know that with the help of the examen, I will pay attention to how God may be moving me to act.

A list

1. My friend was crying softly.
2. The very idea of such cruelty toward the mentally challenged had brought him to tears. Ignored felt tears were indicative of God moving us, and I felt this movement clearly through her tears.

I found myself reflecting on this moment in my exa-

New in 2015: A list


CNS PHOTO/WARNER BROS.
Martin Freeman stars in a scene from the movie “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey.”
Even from across the ocean, the Diocese of Ogdensburg, New York, has extended its appreciation for its parishioners’ continued support for the Priests’ Retirement Fund.

The Priests’ Retirement Fund of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, which is administered by the Priests’ Retirement Association (PRAF), provides retirement benefits for the diocesan priests. In light of the recent financial challenges, the PRAF has decided to discontinue its annual dinner and auction fundraiser, but it has sponsored a new contest to raise funds.

The contest is open to the public, and the Priests’ Retirement Fund will award a prize of $1,000 to the winner. The contest is being held from September 1, 2012, to September 30, 2012, and is available online at the PRAF website.

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Priests retirement fund benefits 46 priests

By Michael J. Tooley

The 36 retired priests of the diocese who currently receive pension benefits of $300 to $500 each month from the Priests’ Retirement Fund (PRF) are truly a blessing from God. Many are retired priests from the Diocese of Ogdensburg, while a few are retired priests from other dioceses in the United States. In all, the diocese currently supports 46 retired priests.

The Priests’ Retirement Fund of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, New York, is a non-profit organization that provides financial assistance to retired priests in the diocese. The fund was established in 1985 with the goal of providing a source of income for retired priests who are no longer able to work.

The Priests’ Retirement Fund is funded by contributions from individuals and organizations who wish to support the needs of retired priests. The fund is administered by a board of directors, which includes clergy and laypeople.

The Priests’ Retirement Fund provides pension benefits to retired priests who have contributed to the fund during their active ministry. Benefits are based on the number of years a priest has contributed, and the amount of money contributed during that time.

In addition to pension benefits, the Priests’ Retirement Fund provides other forms of assistance to retired priests, such as medical insurance and other support services.

The Priests’ Retirement Fund is an important resource for retired priests in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, and it is a testament to the generosity of those who support the fund. The Priests’ Retirement Fund plays a vital role in ensuring that retired priests have the financial means to continue living their lives in dignity and peace.

Peace is God’s gift to us

By Fr. Anthony L. Buteau

Peace is a fruit of faith. Peace is communion with God.

Peace is God’s gift to us. May the Christ child lead you and your loved ones along the path of peace. With-out sacrifice, we will gain nothing. With suffering, we will receive everything.

Peace is God’s gift to us. May we create an atmosphere of peace and love for our families and friends. Let us open our hearts to receive God’s love and grace.

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The Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Inc.
The Society for the Propagation of the Faith
P.O. Box 1347, Ogdensburg, NY 13669
(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296
622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669
THE NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC
Volume XXIX No. 15 December 15, 2012
Ogdensburg, NY 13669
FR. BILL SAYS...
The Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Inc.
Sister Cindy Sullivan, BVM, a native of Massena and mis-

nerable – complete with chicken, but our main celebration is

We have our advent wreath and explain the significance of

This is a faith that guides us to make good decisions in our

So, I'll mention the wonder of the everyday people, I have known who have accepted

This is a faith that helps us to be stronger for the
days to come, each day can give us these

We believe that we need a good relationship with God so that

The Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Inc.
Sister Cindy Sullivan, BVM, a native of Massena and mis-

letters.

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Are you ready to receive him?

By Tracy Leonard
NCC contributing Writer

Have you ever experienced an intense passion or longing for something; a strong, persistent yearning or desire that is accompanied by confident expectation of its fulfillment? Perhaps this desire and search is the reason or source of hope for a future good. This thing we yearn for may be difficult, but not impossible to obtain if we depend on God.

This longing, anticipation and hope are possibly a familiar feeling in your heart this Christmas season as you anxiously and expectantly await the birth of our humble savior Jesus Christ; priest, prophet and king. What are you doing to prepare for Him? Are you ready to receive Him? As we contemplate the incarnation, or the embodiment of God the Son in human flesh as Jesus Christ, may we openly prepare our hearts to welcome Him.

Let us decorate not just our homes, but our lives with works of charity and designated time of contemplation and prayer. Let us write letters to those we love. Help us, Lord, to see Santa Claus as one who embodies the spirit of giving and unselfish love.

Take time to reflect within. Are you like Elizabeth’s baby in the womb who leaps for joy at the sound of Mary’s greeting? Are you like the shepherds crossing the field, bringing your poverty, humility and simple openness for the joy of the Lord? Or are you like the wise, knowledgeable and wealthy magi bringing your gifts of unselfish love to the king?

Whether you are like John the Baptist in Elizabeth’s womb, a shepherd, or magi, you are called to follow Gabriel’s command—do not be afraid! Find hope and joy in this Christmas season, which tells us that the Christ child would be a light of revelation to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32).

This was one of the first indications that Jesus came for all people, of all nations, of all races, and that the work of God in the world would not be limited to only a few. This is your command—follow Him this Christmas season and be a light to the world which so desperately needs His love.