Pope: families need fathers

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Every family needs a father - a father who shares in his family’s joy and pain, hands down wisdom to his children and offers them firm guidance and love, Pope Francis said.

Being a father is not easy since it takes lots of patience and grace, he said. “But what consolation, what a reward one receives when the children honor this legacy. “It is a joy that more than makes up for the hard work, that overcomes every misunderstanding and heals every wound,” the pope said at his general audience Feb. 4. In a series of talks on the family, the pope continued the second part of his reflection on the role of fathers. While his last audience talk looked at the risks and problems caused by fathers who are absent or fail their family, the day’s talk focused on the importance and dignity of fatherhood.

Speaking to some 7,000 people gathered in the Paul VI audience hall, the pope spelled out the essential, but demanding, things it takes to be a good father.

“The most important is being present, first by being by his wife’s side “to share everything, joy and pain, hard work and hope” and by being there for his children as they grow, Pope Francis said.

Rest in Peace
Fr. Robert L. Cotter, 92

Snow fun in Massena!

School Photo
Trinity Catholic’s fifth grade students Ben Rogers, Brendan Finnegan, Jack Violi and Colby Loran embrace the cold weather and built-up snow, burying each other for recess fun!

Young Catholics: Photos of faith and fun in February.... p. 12
Rest in peace, Father ‘Bobby’ Cotter

This week we bid a sad farewell to one of the priests of our diocese, Father Robert Cotter, who along with his twin, Father Lawrence, and their younger brother Father Charles provided decades of priestly service to people in the North Country.

Bishop LaValley and priests from across the diocese gathered at the Cotter’s home parish of St. Mary’s in Canton Feb. 5 to commend their brother to the Lord.

In his homily, Father Jay Seymour remembered “Father Bobby” for his keen intellect, humility and love for his parishioners.

Excerpts from the homily follow:

We are here this afternoon to commend to the Lord one of our brother priests and the brother of one of our brother priests. As we gather in faith to worship our God celebrating Christ’s victory over death we are acknowledging one of His favored ones; one of the “blessed” who Jesus refers to in the Beatitudes. It is not hard to place Father Bobby into Christ’s framework of discipleship which He outlines in the Beatitudes. A couple of the verses almost jump out at you:

• Blessed/ Happy/ are the meek, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
• Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.
• Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

When Jesus commends the “meek” he is not referring to weakness (Certainly Father Larry and the Sisters too were well aware that Father Bobby could be strong willed at times) but rather when Jesus refers to meek He is referring to a humble soul and there is no doubt that was Father Bobby. We should not confuse the “meek” and humble nature either, for being a mental lightweight. He had a keen intellect and memory that helped to make him not only a gentleman but a scholar.

Bobby was also “clean of heart”. He had integrity of all of his wealth and he never held anything against him. His motives were pure even if sometimes they seemed confused leading to humorous interpretations. He had his idiosyncrasies but we all have our idiosyncrasies... except you and me, of course. Perhaps the Beatitude that most characterizes Bobby, though, is “poor in spirit”. His great faith manifested itself in a humble dependence upon God. He also depended a great deal on the Sisters of St. Joseph these past few years (and we can thank the Sisters enough for all that they do for our priests) but that is God working through them.

Bobby’s poverty of spirit manifested itself in the way he conducted his whole life with such humility. This was particularly evident in his ministry as a priest. The wisdom of Sirach instructs us: “Conduct your affairs with humility and you will be loved more that a giver of gifts.” That certainly seemed to be true of Bobby.

Wherever he served as a priest, he was loved by his... CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Power of silence: it can be transformative

Today is windy, snowy and cold. January has rushed into February. Christmas, with its joy and fun, is gone and forgotten. Time for Lent.

Lent, developed by our Church as a time of joy and celebration, gives us all an opportunity to draw closer to our Lord. Its Lenten reflection invites us to consider our own lives. Such silence rids our hearts and minds of noise and clutter – noise and clutter that invades who I am. What a challenge!

This decision for silence can and does bring Christ’s presence into my life. Such times of silence can be so good for us. I have personally experienced such times of silent prayer as gift. They gave me new and stronger control over my own life.

I have learned from many very saintly people the value of silence. I am not talking about monks – although monks do show us the power of silence. I do know many people for whom silence has been transformative. Their lives are changed. They develop a deep peace, a deeper friendship with God. God has a rare opportunity to catch up with us.

A Blessing Prayer from Father Ed Hayes:

_Blessed are you, Lord our God, who gives to us nourishment in times of silence and solitude. These times of quiet heal us, within and without, replenish our spirit with new strength and prepare us to meet the constant struggle of daily life with renewed hope and joy._

Like Your Son, Jesus, who climbed mountains at night, who retreated deep into the desert to find you in stillness, may we, after this silent-solitary communion with You, allow our lives to reveal Your glory and grace.
The World Day of the Sick

On February 11, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Church celebrates World Day of the Sick. The theme for Pope Francis’ message this year is: “I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame.” (Job 29:15)

As I make pastoral visits around our Diocese, it is abundantly clear to me that our parishes have taken these words of Job to heart. The concern that Christ showed for the bodily and spiritual welfare of those who are ill is continued by the Church of Ogdensburg in its devoted ministry to the suffering.

Our pastoral outreach to the sick is extensive, reflecting our deep compassion and care for our sisters and brothers who are hurting. For instance, many of our parishes have prayer lines that are activated when word is received that a loved one is in need of healing and prayers.

Parish organizations such as the Catholic Daughters, Legion of Mary, Knights of Columbus, as well as parish Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and other parish volunteers visit regularly the hospitalized, homebound and those residing in nursing homes.

We ask our parish family to pray for the sick as we include intercessions for them at our Masses. Many parishes list the names of the sick in the parish bulletins.

Some parishes hold Communal Anointing Services, particularly in the nursing homes, and others celebrate Healing Masses. Our priests are always available to celebrate the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Yes, our parishes minister to the sick in our midst so beautifully and faithfully. But...there is always more to do.

As every parish begins its parish-wide census, parish visitors may meet for the first time individuals who are unable to attend Mass because of health reasons. The visitors' words of concern and promise of prayers and future visits by parishioners will assure them that their parish family is their companion in the midst of their suffering.

In addition to the physical pain endured by those in poor health, there is also the emotional anguish felt by many who feel all alone in the midst of the hurt.

In his message, Pope Francis comments on an attitude in our hurry-up world where we “forget about giving ourselves freely, taking care of others.” Behind this attitude, the Holy Father writes, “there is often a lukewarm faith which has forgotten the Lord's words: "you did it unto me." (Mt. 25:40) We of all family members, including children and youth, spend time with the sick, they bring a reassuring sense that one isn’t forgotten or all alone, but is a vital member of the family.

Let us all remember to the needs of the sick and suffering and ever generous with our presence to them.

This World Day of the Sick is also a good occasion for you and me to thank all those in the health care profession, emergency personnel and all those devoted to caring for them.

The Lord Himself showed great concern for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the sick and commanded His followers to do likewise. This is clear from His teaching and His own public ministry.

One measure of the vitality and vibrancy of a parish family is its Christ-like attentiveness to the sick and hurting in its midst.

I thank God that our parish families are so caring and vibrant. If you have a suffering family member or a friend or know of someone in need of prayers, please be sure to inform your pastor so that the prayers and support of the local family of faith may be a source of peace and hope for them.

Rites held Feb. 4 for Fr. Robert L. Cotter, 92

CANTON – A Mass of Christian Burial for Father Robert Leo Cotter, 92, was held Feb. 4 at St. Mary’s in Canton. Bishop Terry R. LaValley presided with the priests of the diocese concelebrating and Father James W. Seymour serving as homilist.

Father Cotter died Feb. 1 at the Samaritan Medical Center in Watertown. Burial will be in the spring at St. Mary’s Cemetery, Canton.

Father Cotter was born Nov. 10, 1922 in Canton, the twin son of the late Edward and Margaret Clark Cotter. He graduated from Canton High School and began seminary studies at Wadhams Hall in 1939.

He completed his advanced studies at St. Bernard’s Seminary in Rochester and was ordained on June 14, 1947 by Bishop Bryan McIntegart at St. Mary’s, Ogdensburg.

Following his ordination, Father Cotter was appointed assistant pastor at St. Peter’s, Lowville, chaplain at Mercy Hospital in 1951, and assistant pastor at St. Paul’s, Black River and St. Rita’s, Deferiet. In 1955, he was named pastor of St. Brendan’s in Keene, later as pastor in St. Francis Xavier, Redwood, then pastor in St. Mary’s, Constableville in 1968.

He was appointed Pro-Synodal Judge in 1974 for five years, then pastor of St. Mary’s, Copenhagen, and New Boston; in 1993 he was administrator of Star Lake.

Father Cotter retired in 1997, and then in 2000, was appointed administrator of St. Mary’s Nativity in West Leyden and Sts. Peter and Paul, Fish Creek. After that, he retired to Glenfield.

In May, 2009, in poor health, he moved to the Sisters of St. Joseph infirmary in Watertown.

Father Cotter is survived by his twin brother Father Lawrence Cotter, who resides in United Helpers, Ogdensburg, a brother, Maurice Cotter, who resides in St. Joseph’s Nursing Home and a cousin, Lauren Stiles.

He was predeceased by his brother Father Charles Cotter.

(Reflected on the life and ministry of Father Cotter appears on page 2.)
Committee charged with implementing a plan to meet the pastoral needs of the diocese

Building Parishes with Living Stones

By Father Jay Seymour
Chair, Living Stones Planning Committee

It has been almost a year now since Bishop LaValley issued and proclaimed our mutually shared vision for the Diocese with his Pastoral Letter, “Find Your Home in Christ.” Although sometimes quietly, since its official proclamation the priorities and goals set forth within the diocesan vision have been and continue to be actively addressed.

One of the priorities highlighted in the Bishop’s letter was “Building Parishes with Living Stones” and one of the goals set for this priority was to establish a “Living Stones Planning Committee.”

Committee members

That goal has been realized with the new committee having recently completed its second meeting in January. Members of the committee are: Father Jay Seymour (Chairperson), Dr. William Amorelli, Daughter of Charity Sister Mary Frances Barnes, St. Joseph Sister Mary Ellen Brett, Deacon Patrick Donahue, Kelly Donnelly, Msgr. Dennis Duprey, Patrick Jank, Father Thomas Kornmeyer, Father Joseph Morgan, Father Kevin O’Brien, Frank Palumbo, Cathy Romano, Shelly Rosteck, Maria Stitt, Father Howard Venette, Deacon James Chaufy, and Father Thomas Higman.

The committee, which reflects broad representation from across the diocese with a mix of clergy, religious, and laity, has been charged with a clear mission. Its primary responsibility is to develop and implement a plan to meet the present and future pastoral needs of the people of the Diocese.

To review data, current strategies

In the development of this plan the committee will: review relevant data and existing strategies for planning both from within and outside the diocese, look to ways of increasing lay leadership, research and review best practices for ministry and develop a financial plan to support the planning process.

Prior to presenting a plan to Bishop LaValley, which will include recommendations for placement of pastors or other personnel and the consequent merger, linkage and/or closure of certain parishes, it is expected that there will be adequate and active consultation with pastors and parishioners.

Once the plan is completed and implemented, it will be necessary to make some adjustments as needs are made known and conditions change and it will be the responsibility of the committee members to monitor such input and do further consultation so as to keep the bishop informed about on-going planning issues prior to any decision-making.

Although it is still early in the process, the Living Stones Planning Committee is off to a good start. In our first meeting Father Kevin O’Brien helped us to get to know each other a little better with a team building exercise indicating our individual leadership styles.

In ten years: 35 priests

At that first meeting Information was also provided pertaining to the recent history of pastoral planning in the diocese while introducing members to terminology and data that could prove helpful as we move forward.

Among other things, the committee looked at the Catholic population of the diocese, at the number of parishes and the number of priests. Regarding the latter statistic, it is eye-opening to realize that in 2001 we had 104 active diocesan priests. Today we have 59 active diocesan priests and, according to current projections, within ten years we expect to have only 35. The historical background and the data which was provided helped to ground the committee in the current reality of the church in the North Country highlighting the need for a planning group such as ours.

Some encouraging signs

Regarding some of the previously cited data, although some may find the priest numbers unsettling, there are also some very encouraging numbers and signs that give us great hope for the future of the Church of Ogdensburg. For example, currently there are approximately 1,100 Commissioned Lay Ministers in the Diocese. Not all are active but a great many are and they are proving to be a tremendous help to parishes.

Because the needs of the Diocese are quite different than when the lay ministry program first started, Deacon Patrick Donahue, Coordinator of the Formation for Ministry Program, and Sister Jennifer Votraw, Coordinator of Ministry to Lay Pastoral Leaders, are now collaborating to offer formation to a select group beyond the current two year program with an eye toward developing a pool of candidates who might serve as pastoral associates or even as Parish Life Coordinators in the Diocese.

Parishes are about people

As I mentioned in a previous article on planning, parishes are not primarily about buildings and boundaries but about people. Looking to the future of our church we are now seeing the need not only to be formed as Christians but to be formed as true Christian disciples and leaders. This was a point found in one of the books recommended to the committee members, Forming Intentional Disciples by Sherry Weddell.

The author of this book and we too are aware that our church is changing. It always has because church is a living reality meant to reflect the living, vibrant Body of Christ.

Although change is sometimes difficult and some can find it unsettling, change also means growth and that means we have exciting and hopeful times ahead of us.

Continuing to rely on the Holy Spirit as guide and our Blessed Mother for support, let us do our part to realize this grand, “mutually shared vision” which our Bishop has set before us.
Support the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe

Please Give Generously
Ash Wednesday - February 18, 2015

Restore the Church
Build the Future

Your donations help strengthen the Church of this region through grants to Catholic organizations that help those in need receive food, shelter, medicine, pastoral care, and compassion through the light of Christ.
Rest

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

parishioners. I think that was true because they knew how much they were loved by him. He was there to serve them and be present to them and he did not want to let them down, whenever or wherever he was called upon.

One of the endearing stories about Bobby was when the phone rang and he went to answer. Nothing unusual about that except that the phone was in the sacristy and Bobby was in the middle of the Mass. (It’s a good Bobby. It also may have been St. Vincent de Paul. What did he say: “It is our duty to prefer service to the poor to everything else and to offer such service as quickly as possible. If a needy person requires medicine or other help during prayer time, do whatever has to be done with peace of mind. Offer the deed to God as your prayer. Do not become upset or feel guilty because you interrupted your prayer to serve the poor.”

I’m not sure St. Vincent had the Mass in mind when he was speaking of interrupting your prayer but who knows. We do know that Bobby’s heart was in the right place. He was clean of heart and those like him are destined to see God. For our part, for those of us who remain, it is our duty to follow the framework for living that Jesus set before us in the Beatitudes; to live as St. Paul urges us to live in his letter to the Ephesians ... “in a manner worthy of our calling ... with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace.” In this way, we too might achieve that poverty of spirit, that meekness, that purity of heart so that we too may see God and belong to His kingdom.

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact:

Victims Assistance Coordinator, Terri-anne Yanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, PO Box 2446, Plattsburgh, NY, 12901; e-mail: terrianeyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: 518-483-3261; or Father James Seymour, Vicar for Counseling Services of Northern New York, 12901; 315-393-2920, ext. 1440.

Upcoming programs:
Feb. 10 - 6 p.m., Sacred Heart Church, Chazy

Environmental Stewardship

What Color is Your Lent?
The traditional liturgical color during Lent is purple; this color symbolizes the call to prayer, penance and almsgiving during this Season that calls us to new life. These are tools that Jesus gives us (Mt. 6:1-6, 16-18) - Ash Wed.) to help us become our true selves made in the image of God. What would happen if we added some ‘green’ practices to our Lenten resolutions? To make any changes to our daily routines will definitely require prayer, penance and almsgiving.

Not only can ‘green’ practices change us physically and spiritually, but they would change the lives of others and ensure a healthier planet that can ensure a more sustainable future for all our children.

We will hear from some people in our Diocese who have undergone some small conversions in how they go about their day to day routine. They will share what caused them to change and how this small choice actually does touch the lives of their sisters and brothers, and all of creation. This simple decision can definitely be a penance, a dying to a less sustainable habit in order to bring about new life for all. For example, California’s decision to eliminate the use of plastic grocery bags definitely changed their normal pattern of shopping. Other simple actions like remembering to turn off the computer when not in use for a couple of hours, turning off the water while cleaning veggies.

Consider one simple ‘green’ practice that you feel drawn to do that will embody Christian simplicity, create a more justice world for all and enable you to grow in the image of Christ who gave his life for us.

For the Synod on the Family

Anyone wishing to respond to the questions for the Synod on the Family to be held in Fall 2015, may do so by going the diocesan website (www.rcdony.org) and clicking on the banner “The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and in the Contemporary World” and following the instructions.

Bishop’s Schedule

Feb. 10 – 12, USCCB in Washington, D.C.
Feb. 15 – 11 a.m., Mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral
4:30 p.m., Clinton Deanery Clergy Gathering, St. Joseph’s Church, West Chazy

Protecting God’s Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God’s Children for Adults. Pre-registration online is required in order to participate. Participants may pre-register at www.virtus.org by selecting the registration button and following the directions. All employees and volunteers who participate in church sponsored activities with minor are required to participate in this training. Further information is available from Atonement Sister Ellen Donahue, 315-393-2920, ext. 1440.

Upcoming programs:
Feb. 10 - 6 p.m., Sacred Heart Church, Chazy

Rest in Peace

This week marks the anniversary of the deaths of the following clergymen who have served in the Diocese of Ogdensburg
Feb. 15 – Msgr. James H. Driscoll, 1928

For a New or Used Car
MORT BACKUS & SONS
On Canton-Ogdensburg Rd.
Phone 315-393-5899

ST. MARY’S RAFFLE
GRAND PRIZE: $10,000

Enter for your chance to win $10,000 CASH!
(Winner pays NYS sales tax) Drawing will be held April 5, 2015.
2 Mini prizes of $100 will be drawn on Feb. 8th and March 8th
All proceeds to benefit St. Mary’s Church in Canton and its ministries.
Call the parish office at 315-386-2543 or fill out the form below for tickets.

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NAME ____________________________
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Telephone ____________________________

Number of Tickets ______ Amount of check $ ______

$10 EACH or 6 for $50

TRUCK NEEDED!

The North Country Mission of Hope is in need of a truck to transport 24 hospital beds and mattresses from Watertown to Plattsburgh.

Anyone who may be able to assist can call:
Sr. Debbie Blow at 518-561-2599 or 518-570-5443
e-mail: dshope2@charter.net
CATHOLIC WORLD

AT A GLANCE

House Speaker Boehner announces pope will address Congress
WASHINGTON (CNS) -- House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, announced Feb. 5 that Pope Francis will address a joint meeting of Congress Sept. 24. The pontiff's "historic visit" would make him the "first leader of the Holy See to address a joint meeting of Congress," Boehner said in a statement, adding that he was "truly grateful that Pope Francis has accepted our invitation." Boehner noted that "in a time of global upheaval, the Holy Father's message of compassion and human dignity has moved people of all faiths and backgrounds. His teachings, prayers, and very example bring us back to the blessings of simple things and our obligations to one another. We look forward to warmly welcoming Pope Francis to our Capitol and hearing his address on behalf of the American people."

Vatican makeover: Restrooms offer showers, barbershop for homeless
VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Hot showers, a soapy shave and spiffy haircuts are available for free for those whom the Vatican calls "our homeless pilgrims." Thanks to charitable contributions from Pope Francis and private donors, the Vatican has finished remodeling and expanding a public bathroom a few steps from Bernini's Colonnade, surrounding St. Peter's Square. The Vatican announced Feb. 6 that the construction work was finished and that the updated bathrooms now include three showers and a barber's chair. Free haircuts will be offered every Monday by the Dominican Friars of the Secular Franciscan Order. Volunteer barbers and students graduating from hairstylist school. Most barbershops and hair salons are closed on Mondays in Italy, making it the one day of the week hair stylists are easily available to volunteer their services. The showers will be open every day except Wednesdays -- general audience day -- and days when other large events are planned in St. Peter's Square or the basilica, the Vatican said. "Our pilgrims without a home will receive, along with a shower, a complete change of underwear and a kit with a towel, soap, toothpaste, razor, shaving cream and deodorant, according to different individual needs," the Vatican said in a communiqué.

Pope orders cooperation in preventing sexual abuse, caring for victims
VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- The leaders of the world's bishops' conferences and religious orders must ensure they are doing everything possible to protect children and vulnerable adults from abuse and are offering appropriate care for victims and their families, Pope Francis said. "Priority must be given to any other kind of concern, whatever its nature, such as the desire to avoid scandal, since there is absolutely no place in ministry for those who abuse minors," he said in a written letter. The letter, dated Feb. 2, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord, was sent to the presidents of national bishops' conferences worldwide and to the superiors of religious orders. The Vatican released a copy of the letter Feb. 5, feast of St. Agatha, an early martyr who was abused and assaulted as a young woman. In his letter the pope said, "Families need to know that the church is making every effort to protect their children. They should also know that they have every right to turn to church with full confidence, for it is a safe and secure home." With protecting minors as a top priority, the pope said he wants to encourage and promote the church's commitment to protection and care "at every level -- episcopal conferences, dioceses, institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life -- to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure the protection of minors and vulnerable adults and to respond to their needs with fairness and mercy."

Bishop Barbarito recovering from surgery to remove benign brain tumor
PALM BEACH, FLA. (CNS) - Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito of Palm Beach was recovering at a Miami hospital after undergoing a seven-hour surgery Feb. 2 to have a benign tumor removed from his brain.
"We are pleased to report that the surgery was a success. Praise God!" the diocese said in a statement issued once the bishop was out of surgery and in the recovery room. "Thank you all for your prayers. They are very much appreciated. We ask for your continued prayers for Bishop Barbarito's speedy and full recovery.
Bishop Barbarito, who turned 65 Jan. 4, has headed the Palm Beach Diocese since 2003. Previously, he served as Bishop of Ogdensburg from 2000 to 2003.
"This is a difficult time, it would keep the Catholic community informed about the bishop's condition with updates posted on its website, www.diocesepb.org.
In a Jan. 30 personal note to all in the diocese, the bishop described how doctors had discovered he had a brain tumor.
"A brief period of vertigo episodes in November," he said, prompted "a whole series of tests of the inner ear which proved negative."
"My doctor then sent me for an MRI of the brain just to be safe and to rule out any other possibility for the vertigo," he said. "The MRI revealed a moderately large meningioma - benign brain tumor - in an area which could eventually be a serious problem for the future.
"Luckily, it is not causing any problems or symptoms now but, left unresolved, will. It has nothing to do with the vertigo, which has completely disappeared. Go figure!" he wrote.
He said he consulted with "a number of top neurosurgeons, who gave me the same opinion which is that the meningioma should be removed now before serious problems arise," Bishop Barbarito said. "Unlike the theologians, I could not find a contrary opinion as much as I tried.
"He expected he would have to have "a little recovery time" after the surgery but planned "to resume my schedule as quickly."
He said he would cancel public functions for a brief period.
Bishop Barbarito noted that originally he was to have had surgery Jan. 28, but he "came down with some type of 'bug' and the surgery had to be canceled and rescheduled for Feb. 2."
"I want to assure you that all is well," he said, adding that he looked forward to resuming his schedule "after this brief 'vacation,'" which was "not quite a cruise to the Bahamas."
"Obviously, I ask for your prayers upon which I always rely," he said. "These are very important to me."
He called the surgery and recovery period "an inconvenience," but said he felt "fortunate and consider it providential that the meningioma was found when it was!"

Martyrdom is not a thing of the past, pope says at Mass
VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Reading the Gospel account of St. John the Baptist's death on the feast of St. Paul Miki and other Japanese martyrs, Pope Francis said his thoughts naturally turn to Christians being persecuted and killed today because of their faith.
"I think of our martyrs, the martyrs of today, those men, women and children who are persecuted, hated, chased from their homes, tortured and massacred," he said.
"This is not something from the past; it is happening today. Our martyrs are ending their lives under the corrupt authority of people who hate Jesus Christ."
Pope Francis said it is important to remember the modern martyrs and those facing persecution. Feb. 6 is the feast of St. Paul Miki and his 25 companions, who were killed in Japan in 1597, the pope said. The stunning thing is that such persecution continues "in 2015!"
The pope said that the Gospel passage also reminds him that everyone is on the same path toward "the ground, where we all will end up."
"I, too, will meet my end," he said, according to Vatican Radio. "No one can 'buy' life. Whether we want to or not, we all are on the path toward the existential end of our lives. This, at least for me, makes me pray that at the end I will resemble, as closely as possible, Jesus Christ and his end."
Learning how to exercise mercy in our lives

Today's readings provide guidelines for the way we should exercise mercy in our lives.

The Mosaic law called for the exclusion of lepers from normal society. They were to shout out, "Unclean, unclean" when someone approached them. Their humiliation and loneliness of life were harder for them to bear than even their deformed bodies.

In today's Gospel, the people who were listening to Jesus' teaching must have been indignant at the leper who dared come physically close to Jesus, and beg Him for a cure.

They must have been horrified that Jesus actually reached out and touched this outcast. That made Jesus Himself legally unclean.

What a powerful lesson Jesus' action taught that day! He was obviously compassionate, generously sacrificing His own social status by healing the man.

Jesus must have sensed the great longing in that outcast to be again accepted by those seeking a similar cure.

While the leper returns to society, Jesus is forced out!

After this incident, Jesus' listeners knew they should never fear to approach the Master because of their past sins or social standing.

He would understand and show compassion. To the "dark side" in each of us, Jesus brings light and healing to those who trust and believe.

What is holding me back today from approaching Jesus for healing or just for His friendship? There's no such thing as an "outsider" in Jesus' book. All are welcome who seek His loving touch.

Another question: who are the lepers in my life? Do I avoid those who are repulsive to me? Do I shun those with whom I disagree, or those I just don't like?

We can all learn from one another.

Remember Jesus' words, "I will reject no one who comes to me". We can at least follow the advice of today's second reading and "avoid giving offense".

A smile, a welcoming word, patiently listening and then giving a loving response is not going to kill us!

By doing so, we will receive much more than we give.
The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

With the arrival of the genial sequel "The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water" (Paramount), self-proclaimed "nautical nonsense" is once again the order of the day.

As for the suitable audience for this fast-paced exercise in silliness, kindergarten-level potty humor and some mildly frightening plot elements aside, director Paul Tibbitt's mix of animation and live action adds up to an appropriate outing for all.

Fans of the long-running Nickelodeon TV series "SpongeBob SquarePants," on which Tibbitt has worked in various capacities, have had to wait quite a while for their hero's second cinematic adventure.

After all, his big-screen debut, titled -- what else? -- "The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie," was released way back in 2004.

As SpongeBob (voice of Tom Kenny) returns to the cineplex, his seabed hometown, Bikini Bottom, is thrown into crisis when the secret formula for Krabby Patties -- the signature delicacy of the restaurant at which SpongeBob works as a short-order cook -- goes missing.

Not only does this spell potential ruin for SpongeBob's employer, miserly Mr. Krabs (voice of Clancy Brown), it threatens to tear the whole community apart around him, SpongeBob joins forces with an unlikely ally, his boss' long-standing rival Plankton (voice of Mr. Lawrence), to retrieve the vital recipe. He's also helped on his quest, with varying degrees of effectiveness, by his two best friends: dimwitted starfish Patrick (voiced by Bill Fagerbakke) and easily alarmed chipmunk Sandy (voice of Carolyn Lawrence).

Since Plankton was, as usual, plotting to steal the list of ingredients at the time of their disappearance, he naturally falls under suspicion. But, in an exemplary display of fairness and truth-telling, SpongeBob, who knows Plankton is innocent of the crime, stands up for the unpopular curmudgeon. Yet doubts remain as to Plankton's true loyalties.

This gives screenwriters Jonathan Aibel and Glenn Berger the chance simultaneously to play with and to promote the commonplace screen message that teamwork is the key to success. Good-hearted SpongeBob preaches the gospel of cooperation unreservedly, but Plankton takes a lot of convincing.

Religion enters the picture in a passing way, via Sandy's panicked avowal that Bikini Bottom's citizens must appease "the gods" in order to reclaim their meal of choice. It would take considerable interpretive effort, however, to translate her irrational, aimless paganism into even a veiled critique of revelation-based faith.

The film contains occasional menace and a few mildly scatological jokes. The Catholic News Service classification is A-1 -- general patronage. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.
ClintOn

DINNER AND TALK
Plattsburgh - St. Peter's Church will host a "Dinner and Talk" with Father Bryan Stitt on "The Eucharist in Scripture!"
Date: Feb. 17
Time: Dinner at 5:30 p.m.; Talk at 7 p.m.
Place: Emmaus Room
Cost: Dinner is $10; talk is free
Features: Father Stitt will open the parish Lenten Scripture Study with his talk on the Eucharist. Study sets from past scripture studies will be available for purchase at a discounted rate; Lenten scripture study books will be available.
Contact: Call the parish office to reserve a place at the dinner by Feb. 13.

Spaghetti Dinner
Peru - St. Augustine's Knights of Columbus 7273 will host an all you can eat spaghetti dinner.
Date: Feb. 21
Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6:30
Place: St. Augustine's Parish Center
Cost: Adults, $7.50; Children 6-12, $2.50; and under, Free; $20 per family maximum.
Features: Take-outs available. All proceeds benefit local charitable and community programs.

Spaghetti & Meatball Dinner
Plattsburgh - A spaghetti & meatball dinner to benefit Seton Catholic "40 Days of Hope" project to purchase medicines for the North Country Mission of Hope!
Date: Feb. 28
Time: 4 p.m. to 6:30
Location: Seton Academy
Cost: $8 for adults, $5 Children under 12; Take outs at no additional cost!

Run for the Roses Gala
Altona - Seton Academy will have their second annual gala.
Date: May 2
Time: 5 p.m. to Midnight
Place: Rainbow Banquet Hall
Cost: $40 per adult, or $300/table of 8
Features: To benefit Seton Academy and Seton Catholic. Dinner choices include roast beef, stuffed chicken breast, or vegetable stir fry. There will be a cash bar and cake for dessert. Program will feature a "hat" walk if you care to show off your creative side. Sign up before April 16.
Contact: 518-825-7386 to sign up.

PanCake Breakfast
Treadwell Mills - St. Alexander & St. Joseph's Church will hold an all you can eat pancake breakfast.
Date: March 1
Time: 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.
Place: St. Joseph's Parish Hall
Cost: Adults, $7; Children 6-12, $5; under 5, Free

Quilting Classes
Ellenburg Center - Upcoming Quilt Classes at The Lost Sheep Quilt Shop.
Place: Our Lady of the Adirondacks
Schedule: Home on the Range Quilt Class - Feb. 21, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Create a fun and easy quilt. Cost $25.

Healing Ministry
Morrisonville - The Catholic Community of St. Alexander's and St. Joseph's holds Living Waters Healing Ministry
Date: First Thursday of each month
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Place: St. Alexander's Church
Features: Mass, Anointing of the Sick, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Eucharistic Adoration
Plattsburgh - Eucharistic Adoration is held throughout the year every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday.
Place: St. John's "Holy Family" Adoration Chapel, downstairs
Time: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m
Contact: 518-561-5083 or email Nghnsadoration@aol.com

Dinner Theater
Brushton - The North Franklin Theater Group and St. Mary's Church presents its annual dinner theater, "Death Suite!"
Date: Feb. 14
Time: 8 a.m. to 11
Place: Wells Meal site, located directly behind the Wells Community Hall.
Cost: $6.00 per person/$4.50 children 12 and under and under 3 free.
Features: Blueberry pancakes, or plain, sausage, Gluten free available. Raffle tickets on sale for an afghan and prayer shawl, crafted and donated by Evelyn Stephens, with the drawing May 31.

Cinderella Ball
Clayton - Hospice of Jefferson County along with Honorary Chairs T. Urling and Mabel Walker will host the Inaugural Cinderella Ball.
Date: Feb. 28
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 11
Place: Harbor Hotel
Cost: $75 per person; $140 for Couples; Table of 4 couples, $500; Table of 8 couples, $1000
Features: The night will include dinner, dancing and live entertainment from Fred and the Eds! This ball will serve as a fundraiser to benefit programs offered by Hospice. In conjunction with the Cinderella Ball, Hospice of Jefferson County is partnering with The Watertown Urban Mission to make the Mission's 2015 Cinderella Closet even more successful.
Contact: Nicole Paratore, 315.788.7323 or nparatore@jeffersonhospice.org

Kindergarten Registration
Watertown - Registration and screening for children who will be entering kindergarten at Immaculate Heart Central Primary School in September is to be held.
Date: March 9
Features: Anyone planning to register a kindergarten student is asked to call 315-788-7011 for an appointment. To be eligible for kindergarten next year, a child must be 5 years old on or before December 1. Parents should bring their child's birth and baptismal certificates and immunization records.

IHC Registration
Watertown - Registration for new and returning students in grades 1-6 to take place.
Date: March 17 at IHC Primary and March 18 at IHC Intermediate
Time: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Contact: If you are to the area please call (315) 788-7011 for an appointment

Holy Hours
Adams/Henderson - Holy Hours set Schedule: First Wed at St. Cecilia 6:30 p.m.; March 4, 10:30 a.m. at St. Cecilia 5 p.m. (followed by pot luck) Feb. 16; March 16;

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

LifeRight Meeting
Watertown - LifeRight of Watertown, a pro-life educational organization, meets the first Wednesday of the Month.
Time: 1 p.m.
Place: 312 Sherman St.
Contact: Phone 315-788-8480

K of C Brunch
Lyons Falls - The South Lewis Knights of Columbus will be having an all you can eat pancake brunch.
Date: Feb. 15
Time: 8 a.m. to Noon
Place: St. John's Church Hall
Cost: Adults, $7; Children 5-12, $4; under 5, Free

Spaghetti Dinner
Harrisville - All you can eat Spaghetti Dinner to be held.
Date: Feb. 11
Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6:30
Place: St. Francis Solanus Church
Cost: Adults, $8; Children 5-12, $5; under 5, Free
Features: Meatballs, rolls, salad, and homemade dessert. Take-outs available.

Ash Wednesday Fish Fry
Ogdensburg - The Knights of Columbus Council 2585 will hold a special Ash Wednesday Fish Fry.
Date: Feb. 18
Time: 4:30 p.m. to 7
Place: K of C Hall
Cost: Adults, $9.50; Seniors 65 and up, $8 Children 5-12, $5; under 5, Free
Features: Fish and shrimp fried Wednesday Fish Fry.

Fish & Shrimp Fry
Gouverneur - Fish and shrimp fry to be held every Friday during Lent.
Date: Feb. 20 – April 3
Place: St. James School
Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6:15
Cost: Adults, $10; Children 12 and under, $5; Children under 5, Free
Contact: Take-outs and delivery available, phone 287-0130 for faster service

Friday Fish Dinner
Star Lake - St. Hubert's will hold fish dinners every Friday during Lent.
Date: Starting Feb. 20
Time: 5 p.m.
Cost: Dinners, $10 kids under 10, $5
Features: Deep fried or Oven baked fish. Take-outs available
OBSERVATION

The Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Inc. (The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director) 622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669 (315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296 mbrett@ogdony.org

JOYFUL WORDS FROM ECUADOR

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

From time to time, the Mission Office is blessed to hear from our Mission friends overseas. This week, I was fortunate to hear from Father John Halligan, SJ, of the Working Boys' Center in Quito, Ecuador. Father Halligan works with the Ogdensburg Diocesan native Sister Cindy Sullivan, BVM, who visits our Diocese each summer to help raise funds and awareness for the Working Boys' Center in Quito. I want to share with you below an outtake from Father Halligan's recent correspondence.

"The Lord's peace be with you. We did it again. We celebrated without the slightest uncertainty, another birthday of Jesus our creator and redeemer into our human family. We did it with the help and inspiration of God Father and God Holy Spirit. What other great and beyond the powers around like only God used to be able to do and see so much again frighten us because Jesus in mind while trying to around us? We can even believe for them who need our heroic goodness and so much diabolical badness; and we sending the funds raised from Cindy's campaign to wake up and live every minute of it. I guess more glorious by overcoming the bad.

In our day and age of instant news reports, we can look our lives."

From Ecuador

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ
Diocesan Mission Director

We did it with the help and inspiration of God Father and want to share with you below an outtake from Father God Holy Spirit. What other great and beyond the powers around like only God used to be able to do and see so much again frighten us because Jesus in mind while trying to around us? We can even believe for them who need our heroic goodness and so much diabolical badness; and we sending the funds raised from Cindy's campaign to wake up and live every minute of it. I guess more glorious by overcoming the bad.

In our day and age of instant news reports, we can look our lives.

OBITUARIES

Thomas E. DuPré

OGDENSBURG - A Mass of Christian Burial for Thomas E. DuPré, age 87, father of NCC editor Mary Lou Kilian and former diocesan attorney, was held Feb. 3 at St. Mary's Cathedral. Father James W. Seymour, his nephew, presided, and Deacon Thomas F. Killian, his son-in-law, served as homilist. Burial will be in the spring at St. Mary's Cemetery.

Mr. DuPré died Jan. 31, 2015 at St. Joseph's Nursing Home where he had been a resident.

He is survived by three daughters, Mary Lou (Thomas) Killian of Ogdensburg, Theresa (Richard) Sleasman, Albany and Jane (Gerald) McGrath, Brewerton; five sons, John (Colleen), Nashua, N.H., Thomas (Connie), Alexandria, Va., Peter (Diana), Ogdensburg, Edward (Corrine), Babylon and Joseph (Ellen), Pella, Iowa; a brother, Peter of Fairport; step-brother, Donald Johnson of Watertown; 21 grandchildren, five great-grandchildren; two brothers-in-law, Robert Seymour and William Seymour; sisters-in-law, Marie Morley, Ellen Bova, Rose Seymour, Clara Seymour, Barbara Seymour, Janet Seymour and Mary Killian; and many nieces and nephews.

He was pre-deceased by his sister, Jane Haddling; brothers, Paul and David; and a grandson, Thomas Michael McGrath.

Mr. DuPré was born May 27, 1927 in Ogdensburg, the son of Benjamin and Catharine Leacy DuPré. He was married to Anna L. Seymour Sept. 4, 1954 at St. Mary's Cathedral. She died Dec. 17, 2014.

A 1944 graduate of St. Mary's Academy, Mr. DuPré attended Manhattan College and the Fordham University School of Law.

In 1956, after becoming a member of the New York State Bar, he began his career as an attorney with William B. O'Connell and Robert C. McEwen. In the late 1970's, William R. Small joined Mr. DuPré in the practice of law and they established the firm of DuPré and Small, PC.

Through the years, Mr. DuPré served as special city judge for the City of Ogdensburg, school board attorney for the Ogdensburg School District and diocesan attorney for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

He was active in the community as a member of the Ogdensburg Boys and Girls Club board of directors and the Knights of Columbus.

A devout Catholic, Mr. DuPré was a daily communicant at St. Mary's Cathedral and served as a lector, announcer for the weekly radio Mass, and a member of the parish council, parish choir and funeral choir.

Memorial donations may be made to Ogdensburg Boys and Girls Club, P.O. Box 555, Ogdensburg, NY, 13669; or St. Mary’s Cathedral, 415 Hamilton St., Ogdensburg, NY, 13669.


Carthage - James P. Cassoni, Jr., 76; Funeral Services Feb. 4, 2015 at St. John’s Church; burial in St. James Cemetery.

Carthage - Thomas R. Garrett, 63; Funeral Services Feb. 3, 2015 at St. James Church; burial in Hillside Cemetery, Champion.

Elizabethtown - Theodore “Ted” Lucas Peasley, 88; Funeral Services at St. Elizabeth’s Church; burial in parish cemetery.

Gouverneur - David Lee Bulger, Sr., 75; Funeral Services Feb. 6, 2015 at St. James Church; burial in New St. James Cemetery.

Gouverneur - Blanche (Vincent) Messier, 97; Funeral Services at St. James Church.

Hogansburg - Lawrence “Junior” Marton, 88; Funeral Services Feb. 6, 2015 at St. Regis Church.
St. Stephen’s Parish in Croghan recently held its annual On+Word retreat with high school youth and young adults. The 24 hour experience included prayer in the Taize tradition, reflective workshops and fun in the snow at Beaver Camp.

Father Kevin McEwan gave a blessing of the throat to each student at St. Mary’s School in Ticonderoga on the Feast of St. Blaise, Feb. 3. The ceremonies were held at the school’s temporary facilities - SMS Middle School students in the lower level of St. Mary’s Church and the elementary students at the First United Methodist Church. Father McEwan is pictured above with the second graders.

Trinity Catholic students in Massena received a surprise visit Feb. 3, the Feast Day of St. Blase, a doctor and bishop who was martyred in the third century. Father Mark Reilly and Tojo Chacko visited TCS to bless students and teachers in the tradition of this special day. Here, Father Reilly explains to Mrs. Stewart’s Junior Kindergarten that he is going ask for the blessing of St. Blase on them while holding two consecrated candles over their throats. Traditionally, this blessing asks for the intercession of the saint in preserving all from infections of the throat, along with any other afflictions.

Eleven youths were the top shooters in the Knights of Columbus District 95 Free Throw Contest held Feb. 1 at Holy Name School in AuSable Forks. AuSable Forks Council 2301 and Morrisonville Council 6067 sponsored the contest. All the winners have been invited to compete in the Regional K of C Free Throw Competition scheduled for Feb. 28 in Massena. Pictured, from left, are Matthew LaDieu-Reiblein, (age 14), Lucas Strack (13), Regan Arnold (12), Zachery VanValkenburg (11), Braydon Allen (10), Bryce DeAngelo (9), District Deputy Allen Dixon and his helper Abbey Light, Taylor Allen (9), Lexis Denis (10), Koree Stillwell (11), Katelynn Miller (12), and Elizabeth Allen (14).

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