Forgiving others requires help

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - Forgiving those who have caused pain or offense is not easy, Pope Francis said. "It is a grace that we have to ask for," because the peace offered by Christ cannot take root in a heart that is incapable of living in fraternity with others and incapable of rebuilding those bonds after being wounded, the pope said at his weekly general audience at the Vatican March 14.

The pope continued his series of talks on the Mass, focusing on the Communion rite, which begins with the assembly’s recitation of the Lord’s Prayer. The Lord’s Prayer is not just any Christian prayer, he said, “but is the prayer of God’s children. It is the great prayer that Jesus taught us” because it was the very same prayer he used with God.

“it’s so beautiful to pray like Jesus” prayed, the pope added. Calling God "our father" like Jesus did underlines how the faithful have been reborn and “regenerated” as God’s children through baptism and the Holy Spirit, the pope said.

The dignity of work, workers

NCC Lenten series on Catholic social teaching, “Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace,” continues

Celebrating St. Joseph with SSJ’s

Bishop Terry R. LaValley joined the Sisters of St. Joseph at their motherhouse in Watertown this past weekend to celebrate their patron saint.

In his homily, the bishop talked about St. Joseph as a protector and urged the religious women to be protectors as well: “to protect one another’s good name; to safeguard the physical well-being of your sisters; to safeguard one another's faith and vocation; and to protect, safeguard your charism, staying focused on the mission.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

‘UNDER FOUR FLAGS’

Bishop LaValley congratulates St. Joseph Sister Mary Christine Taylor, an Ogdensburg native who now lives in Bombay and serves at St. Regis Mission, on the publication of her revised history of the city of Ogdensburg.

“Under Four Flags” is a 732-page documentary history of the See City. Full story on page 4.

FULL STORY, PAGE 7

FIVE YEARS AS POPE

Strives to lead a church that ‘goes out’

CNS PHOTO/PAUL HARING

Pope Francis blesses a prisoner as he visits the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia in this Sept. 27, 2015, file photo. In Washington the pope visited the White House and made history as the first pope to address Congress; in New York he spoke at the U.N. and visited ground zero; in Philadelphia he led the World Meeting of Families. Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected pope just a few days after telling the College of Cardinals that the Catholic Church faced a clear choice between being a church that “goes out” or a church focused on its internal affairs.

After the cardinal from Buenos Aires, Argentina, was elected March 13, 2013, and chose the name Francis, he made “go out,” “periphery” and “throwaway culture” standard phrases in the papal vocabulary.

PHOTO BY DEACON JAMES CROWLEY

Bishop LaValley congratulates St. Joseph Sister Mary Christine Taylor, an Ogdensburg native who now lives in Bombay and serves at St. Regis Mission, on the publication of her revised history of the city of Ogdensburg. “Under Four Flags” is a 732-page documentary history of the See City. Full story on page 4.
Happy anniversary, Holy Father

I still remember where I was on March 13, 2013, when I heard that our newest pope would be a Latin American cardinal who would take the name Francis.

I also remember where I was when I heard about Popes John Paul I, John Paul II and Benedict — yes, I'm a bit of a geeks like that!

The first couple of weeks of Francis’ pontificate were great fun for those of us in the Catholic news business. Remember how he paid his own hotel bill, drove himself around in a Ford and refused to move to the papal palace?

Throughout the five years of this remarkable pontificate, we have been inspired, challenged and often amused by his charming turns of phrase.

No one was let off the hook.

He urged the world’s priests to be “shepherds living with the smell of sheep” by living with and among the people in order to share Christ with them.

He had a message for married couples: “Perhaps you were mad, perhaps plates flew but please remember this: never let the sun go down without making peace”.

And, he admonished “armchair Catholics,” who “don’t let the Holy Spirit lead their lives. They would rather stay put, safely reciting a ‘cold morality’ without letting the Spirit push them out of the house to bring Jesus to others.

Many times over the past five years, we heard Pope Francis call for a “the church that is a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds.”

The last thing he wanted was “the babysitter church,” a parish that doesn’t encourage active evangelizers but only worries about keeping parishioners inside, out of trouble.

But, no group has had to take more heat from Pope Francis that one of which I am a proud member.

“We all know the perfect family does not exist,” he said, during a 2014 Valentine’s Day gathering in Rome. “The perfect husband does not exist and the perfect wife does not exist,” he said. Then, after pausing as if for comic effect, he added: “Let’s not even talk about perfect mothers-in-law.” Happy anniversary anyway, Pope Francis.

The holiest week of the year begins

I would like to share with you some ideas about the liturgy for Palm Sunday.

Each year, priests throughout our diocese carefully plan, with their liturgy committees, a proper liturgy for Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday, of course, begins the most important week of our Church year. This week is called holy – Holy Week – the holiest week of the year.

During Holy Week, our Catholic Church celebrates our salvation through the sufferings, the death and the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus.

Each day of Holy Week is special: on Holy Thursday, we remember the Last Supper of Jesus with his apostles, on Good Friday, we celebrate the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus and, on Holy Saturday, we celebrate the Easter Vigil, a powerful ceremony during which we joyfully celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus.

To begin Holy Week properly, we need a liturgy like Palm Sunday. In many ways, this liturgy is emotionally challenging. We begin this liturgy by rejoicing with Jesus as we remember his triumphant entrance into the city of Jerusalem.

Then during the Mass we sadly read the Gospel of the Passion and Death of Jesus.

The Palm Sunday liturgy begins with a procession to remind us of Jesus’ entrance into the city. We rejoice as we stand with the people on that first Palm Sunday as they praise Jesus. At that time, it was Passover. This was a time when large numbers of people came from all over the world to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem.

To find a place to stay over, many would set up camping facilities on the outskirts of the city. Jesus entered the city riding on a donkey passing through these crowds of people. Realizing that it was Jesus, they welcomed him with singing and carrying palm branches to celebrate his presence.

In our liturgy, after listening to the Gospel story of Jesus’ entrance, we process to the Church, walking with Jesus, singing and carrying palm branches to celebrate his presence. In some places, the people carry branches from the local trees.

Our procession is a joyful moment – a time for us to express our love and faith in our Savior, Jesus Christ. In the Church, we begin our Mass and the tone of the liturgy changes – our attention turns to our Lord’s crucifixion.

The Gospel reading for this Mass is the reading of Christ’s Passion. Each of the Gospel writers wrote a large, detailed section of several chapters, telling the story of Jesus’ sufferings. Each year we read from a different evangelist. We listen again this year to the sufferings that Jesus endured and the details of the crucifixion.

As we listen we are walking again with the Lord and standing at his cross.

Each year the question that hounds me is why. Why did our Jesus have to suffer so much? I have had the answer described to me often so I know the answer, but it still saddens me. I realize that the Passion demonstrates to all God’s great love for us. God loves us – unconditionally – despite our sinfulness. God loves us passionately. God chooses to love us – we are God’s sons and daughters. Jesus came to be with us and die for us to demonstrate God’s love.

Then, our liturgy proceeds to the Eucharist as we express our gratitude to God. Our Eucharist celebrates our gratitude for Jesus’ incarnation, he lived among us and died for us.

Our Holy Week leads us to the joy of the resurrection of the Lord as we move to Easter. The ceremonies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter make us aware of God’s great love for us. Jesus loved and dedicated himself to care for us. We become more aware of how grateful we much be.

Palm Sunday is the beginning. Holy Week is a journey; we will walk with Jesus on his way to Calvary so that we can rise with him to a new life in the Resurrection. Easter Sunday is such a joyful time for us all.
**The protection of St. Joseph**

Bishop LaValley homily for the Feast of St. Joseph at the SSJ Motherhouse

“He remained behind…but His parents did not know it…”

“Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.” (cf. Luke 2:41-51)

Could we spend a few minutes this morning reflecting on Joseph, as protector?

Pope Francis wrote that St. Joseph is “a protector because he is able to hear God’s voice and be guided by His will, and for this reason he is all the more sensitive to the persons entrusted to his safekeeping.” That protection was very much at risk in the familiar scene in the temple from today’s Gospel passage from Luke. It would seem to have been almost a protection break-down. They lost their son! Joseph, were he entrusted to protect the Christ Child in this 21st century, would have needed to issue an Amber Alert. The young 12-year old was missing!

Sisters of St. Joseph, you reflect Joseph’s great concern for Jesus, in your concern and sensitivity for one another. It would seem to me that, in a unique way, you who live the vowed religious life in community under the patronage of St. Joseph, are entrusted to the safekeeping, yes, even protection, of one another.

That safekeeping has many dimensions, all require sensitivity and concern for the other person. For instance, protecting one’s good name. There’s a breakdown in such protection, for example, when we use words that tear down or even gossip (a favorite preeve of the Holy Father), and any non-verbal judgmental communication we might express, even while our hands are piously folded.

It’s no secret, we are all guilty of such laxity in protecting the good name of another. The toxic effects of put-downs can subtly, and sometimes not so subtly, undermine efforts to strengthen unity in the Body of Christ.

It would seem to me that another responsibility you bear is to safeguard the physical well-being of another. I know of your devoted attentiveness to sisters who are hurting—those who drive others to doctor’s appointments, spending time at the bedside of a sister who is ailing, either in the hospital or here at the Motherhouse.

Oftentimes it means real sacrifice on your part, but your desire to serve your sister when her body or mind needs special care and attention, is a sharing from your own spiritual wellness. Again, here you reflect Joseph’s concern for Jesus’ well-being.

A third dimension of protection, as I see it: you also have the responsibility of doing your part in safeguarding one another’s faith. By that, I mean providing a joy-filled, affirming place to call home where every person has the opportunity to live and grow in holiness, helping to protect one another’s vocation, call to holiness.

Of course, that’s best accomplished by responding to God’s personal call to be holy yourselves—live like you believe and the fallout ripples into this community with astounding grace-filled implications.

Naturally, this will lead to a fourth dimension of protection, the safeguarding of the charism, the mission of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Watertown.

How do the Sisters of St. Joseph, how do you, allow yourself to be moved, carried, by God’s Spirit Who is constantly at work in our world, indeed, at work in this beloved community of sisters? God’s Spirit is alive and well in this community! But it doesn’t just happen.

It seems to me that the best way to safeguard your charism is to surrender yourself, to allow yourself to be molded, changed, transformed, by God’s life-given Spirit. If I stay stuck, comfortable where I’m at, God’s Spirit will not force Himself on me.

Making myself vulnerable, abandoning myself to the Spirit takes a whole lot of trust and faith. But isn’t that precisely what keeps mission moving forward? Isn’t that the story of Abraham and the Old Testament prophets, the story of Joseph and Mary? “Let it be done unto me according to your word.” Dear Sisters, because like Joseph, you hear God’s voice and desire to be guided by His will, your legacy of faith and love continues.

Back in 2013, Pope Francis wrote that “In the Gospels, St. Joseph appears as a strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love. We must not be afraid of goodness, of tenderness!”

Again, look to Joseph and find great tenderness, a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others. Aren’t these valuable, no—essential, elements of community living?

There’s a powerful tendency in human nature to drift from God-reliance to self-reliance. Self-reliance turns a deaf ear and hardens one’s heart. Joseph, the devout Jew, changed what he had planned for the pregnant Mary (divorce her quietly). He heard God’s voice and responded to what was revealed to him in the dream. His journey would rely on God’s will, not his.

Each of us is fragile, each of us must be treated tenderly. While we know the Lord looks over us, particularly as a consecrated community, we can still lose Jesus. We can be about our personal journeys, joining the great caravan of life, tending to worldly concerns, getting so caught up in doing our own will, that we lose Jesus. Yup, we can lose Him even within hallowed walls such as these.

Like Joseph, because you hear God’s voice and desire to do His will, you ask for His grace: to protect one another’s good name; to safeguard the physical well-being of your sisters; to safeguard one another’s faith and vocation; and to protect, safeguard your charism, staying focused on the mission.

Do it all with the tenderness and care of a vulnerable heart determined never to lose Jesus. Good St. Joseph, protect us all.

Happy Feast Day, Sisters and Associates!
**Under Four Flags: Iroquois, La Presentation, Fort Oswegatchie, Ogdensburg**

**See City is focus of revised history**

By Mary Lou Kilian

**Ogdensburg** - More than four decades have passed since St. Joseph Sister Mary Christine Taylor accepted the challenge to write a revised history of the city of Ogdensburg.

With the publication of "Under Four Flags" this past November, the renowned local historian has realized a goal set back in the early 1970's.

"After the publication of the "Centennial History of the Diocese of Ogdensburg" (in 1972) I was asked to update Monsignor P.S. Garand's History of the City," she told the North Country Catholic. "Msgr. Anthony A. Milia, Dr. Maurice M. Rosenbaum, and Frank A. Augsburger were most eager to have a revised history.

But Sister Mary Christine, who has published three other history books, knew that historical research is a time-consuming endeavor.

"I agreed to begin the work as long as no time limit was placed on me," she said. "History would be secondary to my primary religious commitment as a Sister of St. Joseph.

"The ultimate wisdom of living a religious life is to glorify God in the service of Christ - especially the poor, the undereducated, the sick, the elderly," she said. "I do the ministry at Mater Dei College, Wadhams Hall Seminary-College, and St. Regis..."

**TO ORDER THE BOOK**

Only a limited number of copies of "Under Four Flags" could be printed due to the cost. Contact Sister Mary Christine Taylor, SSJ, 1817 NYS Route 95, Apt. 8, Bombay, NY 12914 or the Diocese of Ogdensburg Chancery Office, P.O. Box 369, Ogdensburg, NY 13669.

"Ogdensburg is the See of the diocese that spans eight northern counties in New York State," she said. "Ogdensburg is the only United States city on the great St. Lawrence River and is the Northern Gate of the Empire State.

"On a main artery of trade for the Iroquois Natives, the port at the junction of the St. Lawrence and Oswegatchie Rivers was important in international wars - the French and Indian War, the American Revolution, the War of 1812, the Patriotic War," she said. And, "especially unique were the poor immigrants who built the city: Yankees like Nathan Ford and Louis Hasbrouck, Germans like George Parish and Frank Augsburger, Belgians like John Rossel, Irish like John Hanan and Thomas Spratt, Hebrews like Mayer Sperling and Nathan Frank, Canadians like the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa.

Sister Christine said that she remains hopeful for the future of a city that has seen a decline in population and wealth in recent years.

"Over the centuries, Ogdensburg's fine families have sent forth talented youth to build up American society," she said. "Unfortunately, the city lacked employment opportunities to keep such talent at home.

"The city's economy suffered from the demise of railroads, ferryboats, excursion boats, grain vessels, brass and shade-roller factories, and locally-owned enterprises," Sister Christine said. "The expected impact on city trade due to the St. Lawrence Seaway never materialized.

"An arterial highway bypassed the center of the city where locally-owned stores used to thrive," she said. "Urban renewal projects demolished historic buildings and happy gatherings at the Busy Corner. Parochial schools could not survive in local parishes. Faith-filled churches gave way to decreasing religious observance throughout the city.

"Despite so many setbacks, there is always hope for the future," Sister Christine said. "Ogdensburg continues to have outstanding religious, educational, and business leaders who generously give their time to works of charity and community programs," she said. "We still have families who nourish faith and charity in their children. The People of God can make a difference. 'Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.'"

**Did you know.....**

In the course of her research, Sister Christine learned some surprising facts about her native city of Ogdensburg:

- Ogdensburg was named after Samuel Ogden who did little but purchase the land. Nathan Ford was the real village father.
- Ogdensburg was once a great port. The 1928 U.S. Customs Report listed Ogdensburg as the sixth most important port in the U.S. after New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and San Francisco! It was filled daily with Canadian and American ships from the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. Hackett's and Barr's Hardware stores carried naval goods needed by the ships.
- The New York Central and Rutland Railroads, as well as a Marine Railway connecting to the Canadian Pacific lines had daily runs. Plumb's ferryboats from Prescott arrived every hour with visitors and traders.
- The city had lumber and flour mills, tanners, foundries, silk mills, shade-roller, brass, match and cigar factories.
- Joseph Leyare's talented boat craftsmen designed airplanes for Huff-Daland Aero Corporation that won government army contracts in the 1920's and were fore-runners of Delta Air.
- It was surprising that impoverished immigrants -- Jewish junk peddlers, Irish and French-Canadian farmers, New England traders, Italian fruit dealers-- could build a city of great stores, schools, hotels, banks, and mansions by sheer hard work and communitarian effort. Depending only on Divine Providence, the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa (Grey Nuns) led the people of Ogdensburg to build two Catholic hospitals, an orphanage, a nursing home, and six parochial schools with no government aid.
- It was noteworthy that St. Lawrence State Hospital, a major employer of the city, could provide good care for some three thousand patients annually, and could feed them with produce of its own farm.
- There was outstanding harmony among all the religious denominations in Ogdensburg as they erected fine churches and institutions despite the poverty of their members.
- Most surprising was the influence natives of Ogdensburg had in law, medicine, business, art, education, politics, and religion in all sections of the United States.
**IN SOLIDARITY AND PRAYER**

High school students of Immaculate Heart Central in Watertown stand in solidarity to remember the 17 lives lost at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. The students prayed for the innocent lives lost, the wounded, their families and friends, and the Parkland, Florida community. Although they did not participate in the nationwide walkout Feb. 14, a group of students read a note about each student killed.

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**Registration for family life conference is open**

**MASSENA -** Registration is open for a day-long workshop on marriage and family life April 14 at Trinity Catholic School and Sacred Heart Church.

The workshop “Marriage: God Calls, We Respond,” will be presented by the diocesan Department of Family Life, in conjunction with the Offices of Vocations and Evangelization.

The keynote speakers for the conference will be Dr. Gregory and Lisa Popcak. They are directors of the Pastoral Solutions Institute, an organization dedicated to helping Catholics find faith-filled solutions to tough marriage, family, and personal problems.

Stephen Tartaglia, director of the Department of Family Life, said that “This conference aims to build up marriage and family life in the North Country and help married couples and those thinking of marriage understand the importance of the vocation of marriage as a path to holiness for themselves, their spouse and their children.

“The family is the basic building block of society, and as such, strengthening family life through strong and resilient marriages, helps build up a culture of love and stability,” Tartaglia said.

He said that the conference is aimed at:
- Anyone interested in better understanding and/or promoting the Catholic view of marriage, especially Commissioned Lay Ministers, those working with engaged couples, marriage counseling, struggling marriages;
- Married couples, whether longtime married or newlyweds who want a deeper insight into married life and how to live it better;
- Young adults considering marriage and older teens, mature enough to hear what the sacrament of matrimony is all about.

Registration may be made at www.rcdony.org/marriage or by contacting the Family Life office at 315-393-2920, ext. 1420. The cost for the day is $20.

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**JOB OPENING**

**Communications Director**

The Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg is seeking a Communications Director.

The Communications Director assists the Bishop in advancing the mission of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ogdensburg through strategic communications and media relations using print, audio, video and digital media.

The Communications Director, as Newspaper Editor, directs and implements the North Country Catholic’s mission, editorial content, news operations, product development, and business affairs. The Communication Director oversees and coordinates the digital media currently in use by the Diocese and devises a strategic plan to expand the use of digital media in the distribution of a unified message.

Applicants should be a practicing Catholic with the ability to demonstrate a vision of the newspaper’s mission. The applicant must have a mastery of journalism, grammar, communication skills and general news operation. Applicants must have a bachelor’s degree in communications or related field. Submit letter of interest, resume and three professional references to:

Submit letter of interest, resume and three professional references to:
Human Resources Office
Diocese of Ogdensburg
P.O. Box 369, Ogdensburg, NY 13669.
Deadline for application is March 29, 2018.

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**Chrism Mass to be livestreamed**

**OGDENSBURG -** Bishop Terry R. LaValley will preside at the annual Chrism Mass March 22 at 11 a.m. at St. Mary’s Cathedral.

The liturgy will feature the annual renewal of priestly commitment, the blessing of holy oils and consecration of the sacred chrism for use in all churches of the diocese.

The Chrism Mass will be livestreamed from the Cathedral on the Diocesan YouTube Channel. To watch the livestream, go to YouTube and type RCDONY CHRISM MASS 2018 in the search box.

The link will also be available from the diocesan home page (www.rcdony.org) by clicking on the Chrism Mass banner.

The video will remain available for viewing after the event.

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Sharing pro-life views is more important than ever

By Colleen Miner
Director, Respect Life Ministry

Just a few weeks ago, hundreds of thousands of us came together in defense of human life at the March for Life. Now, inspired and energized, we need to make our voices heard closer to home before pending legislation in New York further diminishes the rights of the unborn.

Today 76% of Americans support some limitations on abortion. Despite more and more states enacting sensible limitations on abortions, New York State is doing the opposite.

On January 16, 2018, Governor Cuomo introduced his budget bill, S.7511. In the bill, he included an abortion expansion proposal. If the budget passes, virtually all limitations on abortion will be lifted. This is particularly dangerous, because the law requires a budget to be passed by April 1.

The Governor’s bill would align New York with the most liberal abortion laws in the world.

- The bill would remove our current law’s limit and allow abortions after 24 weeks. Studies show that a fetus experiences pain at 20 weeks.
- 5-10% of babies are born alive after a late-term abortion procedure, and those infants are currently protected. This bill would eliminate the law that requires that a baby born alive after an abortion be given adequate health care.
- This bill would permit non-doctors to do abortions - the state government could grant a license to perform abortions to anyone.
- The bill would eliminate all criminal penalties for abortions - so even if an abortion was against a mother’s will (involuntary or coerced), or if an unborn child is deliberately targeted for an act of violence, it could not be prosecuted.

What can we do about this?

The Action Center of the New York State Catholic Conference has made it very easy for us to oppose this proposal through their website. The following steps will allow you to electronically sign your name to a pre-written letter that will route to your senator:

1. Go to: www.nyscatholic.org
2. Search for: Abortion Expansion
3. Follow the small red link on the top left side “Take action now.”
4. You can also go there by typing this into your browser:
   www.nyscatholic.org/nys-catholic-conference-action-center, and look for the action that says, “Oppose Abortion Expansion in State Budget”
4. Enter your information
5. Select “Send Message”

Protecting God’s Children

The Diocese of Ogdensburg has scheduled sessions for Protecting God’s Children for Adults. Pre-registration is required in order to participate. Preregister at www.virtus.org by selecting the registration button and following the directions. Further information is available from Jill Lawrence, 315-393-2920, ext. 1440

Upcoming sessions:
March 21 – 6 p.m., St. Patrick’s Church, Chateaugay
March 23 – 6:30 p.m., Sacred Heart Church, Massena
March 28 – 9 a.m., diocesan offices, Ogdensburg

Rest in Peace

This week marks the anniversary of the deaths of the following clergymen who have served in the Diocese of Ogdensburg
March 25 – Rev. Michael D. Charbonneau, 1909

Bishop’s Schedule

March 21 – 7 p.m., Mass at St. Mary’s Church in Brushton for the Parish Lenten Mission
March 22 – 11 a.m., Chrism Mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral
March 23 – 10:50 a.m., Mass at St. Joseph’s Home in Ogdensburg 3:30 P.M., Opening Ceremony for the Ogdensburg Boys and Girls Club Expo at the OFA Golden Dome in Ogdensburg
March 24 – 4 p.m., Mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral
March 25 – 8 a.m., Mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral 1 p.m., Lenten Penance Service at St. Mary’s Cathedral
March 26 – 12 p.m., Mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral
March 27 – 12 p.m., Mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral
March 28 – 9 a.m., St. Joseph’s Home Board of Managers Meeting at St. Joseph’s Home in Ogdensburg 12 p.m., Mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral

To Report Abuse

If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victims Assistance Coordinator, Terrianea Vanulavich, Adult & Youth Counseling Services of Northern New York, 618 Lake Rd, Chateaugay, NY 12920; terrianeaunulavich@yahoo.com Phone: Day: 518-651-2267, Night: 518-569-0612; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Personnel at 315-393-2920

Environmental Stewardship

‘Crossing the Bridge to Justice’

According to our Catholic teachings rooted in Scripture, Christian service has two feet.

One ‘foot’ is direct service by individual acts of charity that helps people survive their present problems.

The other ‘foot’ looks at social change and our political responsibility to remove the causes of the problems.

In his own words “I work to develop a discipline of almsgiving so that my life can be good news to the poor. I recognize that my charity is so desperately needed because there is so little justice in the world. I know the world is fractured by sin, and I cannot create a perfect world. . . but surely I can do something to help create a better one. This is a bridge for me to cross.”

I’d much rather deal directly with the poor who are part of my life or whom I hear about because of special needs. But I need to cross that bridge and try to address society’s systems and structures...at least to get the poor placed higher on our local and national agendas.” (Permission given by Little Books of the Diocese of Saginaw, Inc.)

Catholics’ social teachings begin with the need to respect the life and dignity of the human person and move to recognition of the responsibility to make a decent life possible for others. To accomplish this goal, it becomes necessary to look at the social structures in our society to ensure that the rights of workers and the care for our common home, the earth, are respected.

It may take a long time to ‘cross the bridge’ but using both ‘feet’ we can truly make the world a little better each day.

Where am I on the journey from charity and justice?

Visit our website

www.northcountrycatholic.org

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

Find us on Facebook!
The dignity of work and the rights of workers

By Marika Donders
Director of Evangelization

Sixth in a series

The nature of work is often misunderstood. We think of work as a burden or, otherwise, as a way to amass wealth, or power. But work is a gift that allows us to make the world a better place and allows us to be co-creators with God as we support our families.

We often forget that, as St. John Paul II reminded us in his document “On Human Work” that Jesus “became like us in all things devoted most of his life on earth to manual work at the carpenter’s bench... The value of human work is not primarily the kind of work being done but the fact that the one who is doing it is a person. The sources of the dignity of work are to be sought primarily in the subjective dimension, not in the objective one.” (On Human Work #6).

Another way of looking at it is that work exists for the person, not the person for work.

One thing that has always stayed with me was when I started my undergraduate degree in Architecture at Georgia Tech. During our orientation, the Dean of the College of Architecture spoke to us about the usual requirements and expectations. But then he called forward an older gentleman wearing overalls. The Dean introduced him as the lead janitor of the Architecture Building and then explained to us that he was one of the senior janitors on campus who had CHOSEN to work in the Architecture building. This building was open 24 hours a day, and most janitors who had a choice rather worked in other buildings that were less difficult to keep clean.

We were told in no uncertain terms that we would treat him with respect because his work was important.

If the Dean was out a week, all that would happen was that paper would pile up on his desk. If the Janitor was out for a week, you wouldn’t be able to walk through the building because of all the paper and cardboard that would pile up on the floor.

All work is important and worthy of respect because the inherent dignity of the person who works.

Because of the dignity of the person who works (and because work exists for the worker, not the other way around), the worker has certain rights that need to be protected such as the right to a just and livable wage, safe working conditions, and the right of the worker to benefit from his work. There is a right to leisure and retirement, and a right of the workers to unionize in solidarity with each other if they so choose in order to protect, bargain for and ensure these rights.

At the same time, those of us who work also have a responsibility to those who are unemployed, underemployed, or unable to work. We have a responsibility to care for them and work to help them back on their feet and find meaningful work.

In our globalized world, we also have to protect the rights of workers around the globe, not just those in our backyard. We have to think about and consider the work involved with those things we purchase and consume.

Think of something as simple as chocolate and the work that goes into making that candy bar: the workers who harvest the cocoa beans, those who process the beans, those who load the ships and the shippers who send the beans to be processed into cocoa, and then ship the cocoa to the chocolate factory where workers combine the cocoa and sugar and other ingredients to make that candy-bar you might have given up for lent but you will be purchasing for your Easter baskets.

We have a responsibility, to think of the workers and purchase, where possible fair trade or those items that do not have unfair labor or slave labor in their manufacturing process. Every purchasing decision we make is a moral decision.

Some things to consider this week:
• How does your work allow you use your gifts to provide for your community and family?
• How does your work contribute to your wellbeing and happiness?
• How do you live in solidarity with workers in your community and around the globe?

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Adult Children of Alcoholics
Weekly meeting - Wednesdays at 7:30 PM
St. Peter’s Church, Plattsburgh
Upstairs Room

Adult Children of Alcoholics is a recovery program for adults whose lives were affected as a result of being raised in an alcoholic or other dysfunctional family. It is based on the success of Alcoholics Anonymous and employs its version of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

For more information on ACA, go to www.adultchildren.org
Little Flowers bloom at St. James

By Mary Lou Kilian
Editor

CARTHAGE - Sixth grader Bethane Motes is a one of the original members of the Little Flowers Girls Club at St. James Parish and loves being part of the group.

Along with the craft projects, she enjoys the chance to “help the younger kids with everything they need help with at Little Flowers.”

One of the little ones, Kelly Carey, a second grader, said “I like being a Little Flower because we get to do really fun crafts, we decorate cookies and we do a lot of fun things with saints. All the saints helped in different ways. My favorite one to learn about was the story of Fatima.”

Bethane and Kelly are among 19 current members of the parish girls’ group started three years ago by Talitha Workman and Mary Bracy.

“Little Flowers is a club for Catholic girls that teaches virtues by focusing on female saints,” Mrs. Workman said. “Girls are able to learn in a club-like atmosphere with friends while engaging in fun activities and community service.”

In the beginning

“I personally was involved with another Little Flowers Club with my oldest daughter when we lived in Germany and we both really enjoyed the experience,” she said. “Mary Bracy has a sister who also organized a club with her parish in Potsdam so she was also somewhat familiar with the club.

“Mary and I met and became friends while two of our daughters were in preschool together,” Mrs. Workman said. “She and I had been considering starting a club for a long time because we feel that it would be very beneficial to our own daughters and also the other young girls of our parish.

“We must have discerned the call to start a club for two years,” she said. “Finally we felt that the time was right in 2015.”

At that time, two of Mrs. Workman’s daughters and two of Mrs. Bracy’s daughters were at the ages to participate (K-8th grade).

“We both felt that a Catholic girls club would be a wonderful opportunity for the girls of our parish to learn about our church’s faith and traditions, develop strong virtues, and learn about female saints, all while building self-esteem, gaining friendships, and having fun,” Mrs. Workman said.

Saint of the month

During the first year, the girls learned about one female saint each month, focusing on that saint’s life and a virtue which that saint demonstrated.

“We introduced the girls to these virtues and taught them how important these virtues are in our Catholic faith and ways that they can emulate the saints by practicing the virtues,” Mrs. Workman said. “Badges or petals were earned for each virtue, including truthfulness, industry, faith, and piety, just to name a few. As petals are earned they are sewn onto their sash to make up a flower wreath.”

Mrs. Workman said that the “best part about Little Flowers is that the girls learned all these different virtues during the course of the years, all while having fun in a club-like atmosphere with friends.”

“They sing together, pray together, do crafts, read stories, and play games,” she said.

Also, over the course of the year the girls participated in several community service projects. They made patriotic thank-you cards to be distributed at the local VFW on Veteran’s Day. They also organized a trip to Country Manor Nursing facility in Carthage in December of that year to carol and give residents handmade Christmas ornaments as they completed their work toward earning their ‘Love of Neighbor’ petal.

Learning about Fatima

Now in its third year, the club is providing different opportunities for the girls.

Behold Publishing offered a special badge that the girls are eligible to earn this year to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of Fatima. Earning this badge required the girls to become experts about the story of Fatima.

“We spent our first three meetings of this year focusing on Fatima, the visionaries, the messages,” Mrs. Workman said. “They were all very excited to participate in learning this information and enjoyed a trivia/jeopardy type game testing their knowledge at the last Fatima meeting.

Since then, the girls have earned one patch per month focusing on patron saints, including St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music, in December and St. Bernadette, the patron saint of embroidery in January.

“With a generous donation of supplies from one of our parishioners, the girls were able to learn some basic embroidery stitches and complete a small embroidery project,” Mrs. Workman said. “I was amazed at how well the girls did with this; all of the girls were so enthusiastic about learning this handcraft.”

For the remainder of this year the Little Flowers will learn about one saint per month and will do activities or learn a skill associated with, for example, the patron saints of cooking and knitting.

The club has become very popular and something that we all enjoy very much,” Mrs. Workman said. “Mary and I have really enjoyed watching these girls grow (many of the girls have been with us for all three years!) and feel blessed to get to help mold them into faith-filled young ladies.

“We plan to continue leading this group as long as we can,” she said.
Sacred Heart Parish in Chazy has started a new outreach program called Mother Mary’s Simple Supper. Volunteers gather at the parish center to make homemade soup, rolls, and cookies to be delivered to people in the community who are either shut in, disabled, alone, or who have experienced a recent loss. On the first delivery, parishioners brought a simple supper to 17 households. Later in the Spring, they hope to invite, and transport those who need a ride, to enjoy a little social time and meal served at the parish center. Pictured, above, Cheryl Henry fills delivery bags; below, Lynn Trombly is shown making cookies.

I ask every Catholic family to subscribe to the North Country Catholic, our wonderful, award-winning diocesan newspaper. Those who read the NCC enjoy timely and relevant articles on prayer, scripture, Church and religious news. Please consider how important it is today to be an informed Catholic Christian and allow our diocesan newspaper to be a vehicle to help you and your families grow in faith.

–Bishop Terry R. LaValley

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Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, elected March 13, 2013, and chose the name Francisco, laid out the vision for his pontificate:

"I just had the desire to do something special with the life God gave me," the 86-year-old. Religious Sister of Mercy said of her youthful commitment.

After World War II, American classrooms swelled with baby boomers. Desperate for English-speaking sisters, some bishops turned to Ireland for help. Sister McCrohan arrived in the Diocese of Sacramento, California, in 1949, but Irish Sisters of Mercy had been working there since 1857. For more than 100 years, none returned home.

Sister McCrohan adapted to religious life, college and a new country - all at the same time. Because they lived with American and Mexican sisters, she and her four companions made an immediate adjustment.

"We couldn't talk Irish all day long and ignore everybody else," Sister McCrohan said in a phone interview from Auburn, California.

Four Irish-born priests eventually urged the Mercy sisters' superiors to permit home visits. Somehow the priests arranged for funds for four or five sisters to make the trip each summer.

When Sister McCrohan's turn came in 1963, she already had made final vows, graduated from college and become an American citizen.

"It was amazing," she said. "There was a group of about 22 at the airport to greet me."

Sister Fabian Quigley left Tipperary, Ireland, in 1949 as a 15-year-old postulant of the Sisters of the Incarnate Word. Religious vocations were common in her family.

"My father had four sisters as nuns and a brother a priest," Sister Quigley said.

In Cleveland, she graduated from an all-girls Catholic high school and started college. She didn't struggle with homesickness because there were many other Irish sisters in the community.

"What used to be a little more difficult was 'visiting Sunday' for the postulants and novices, when their families came and we had nobody coming," she recalled.

Sister Quigley received her first teaching assignment, a class of 65 sixth-graders, as soon as she completed two years of college. She then went to school on Saturdays and during the summer until she earned her degree. She was excused from work the day she and 11 other Sisters of the Incarnate Word became U.S. citizens. Sister Quigley rode the bus back to the convent, clutching her little American flag.

She returned to Ireland nine years after her departure. Trips home became more frequent for Sister Quigley and other Irish sisters in later years.

"Our community was absolutely wonderful to us," she said.

Loreto Sister Josephine O'Brien was a 31-year-old teacher when she and four other Loreto sisters arrived in Phoenix in 1954. They wore long serge habits, lived without air-conditioning and suffered in the hot weather. But Sister O'Brien remembered their happiness.

"We had great fun among ourselves," she said. "We did Irish dancing and things like that. We were still Irish."

When her students misbehaved, Sister O'Brien sometimes reprimanded them in Gaelic, a successful ploy to quiet them.

She taught for two decades in Arizona and California before encountering a quirk of American culture when she transferred to the Chicago area.

Another woman religious asked Sister O'Brien if she was a Cubs fan or a White Sox fan. Sister O'Brien was neither, and so the sister advised her to be a Sox fan like everyone else in the house.

"And so I'm a Sox fan, even though I don't know a thing about it," Sister O'Brien said.

She returned to County Offaly several times. Her doctor ruled out travel for health reasons 14 years ago. Six nephews and her brother, a missionary priest home on leave from Africa, came to America for her 60th jubilee.

Now 95, Sister O'Brien misses the sisters who came to the States with her in 1954.

"They have all gone to God," she said.

She spends St. Patrick's Day listening to Irish music alone in her room.

"I'm never not lonely on St. Patrick's Day," Sister O'Brien said. "I'm at home that day in my own mind."
Church leaders praise Hawking for contribution to dialogue

VATICAN CITY (CNS) -- Theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, who said he did not believe in God, was still an esteemed member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and fostered a fruitful dialogue between science and faith. The academy, which Pope Pius IX established in 1847, tweeted, "We are deeply saddened about the passing of our remarkable Academician Stephen #Hawking who was so faithful to our Academy. He told the 4 Popes he met that he wanted to advance the relationship between Faith and Scientific Reason. We pray the Lord to welcome him in his Glory." @CasinaPioIV, the academy, tweeted March 14. The Vatican observatory, @SpecolaVaticana, also expressed its condolences to Hawking's family. "We value the enormous scientific contribution he has made to quantum cosmology and the courage he had in facing illness," the observatory tweeted in Italian. The British-born theoretical physicist, cosmologist and popular author died March 14 at the age of 76.

Urge protections for supporters of traditional marriage

WASHINGTON (CNS) -- The chairman of two U.S. bishops' committees March 14 called the First Amendment Defense Act "a modest and important measure" because it protects those who believe marriage is "the union of one man and one woman." Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, recently reintroduced the measure in the Senate. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops "has been vocal in support of the legislation since its inception," said a joint statement by Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, chairman of the Committee for Religious Liberty, and Bishop James D. Conley of Lincoln, Nebraska, chairman of the Subcommittee for the Promotion and Defense of Marriage. In welcoming its reintroduction, they said the First Amendment Defense Act "is a modest and important measure that protects the rights of faith-based organizations and people of all faiths and of no faith who believe that marriage is the union of one man and one woman.

Christian activists: militias target religious minorities in Syria

AMMAN, Jordan (CNS) -- Jihadists allied with Turkey are hunting down religious minorities to kill them in Syria's northwest, Christian activists warn, as Turkey and its allies have encircled the Kurdish-held town of Afrin and are relentlessly pushing through. Turkey is using hardline jihadist proxies, including Islamic State and al-Qaida militants, to eliminate the presence of Kurds and other ethnic and religious minorities along its border, the activists said. "The situation is dire. They feel desperate. They are crying out to God every hour," humanitarian Charmaine Hedding told Catholic News Service. Hedding directs the Shai Fund, a Christian aid organization that provides humanitarian supplies to Afrin's citizens. "The jihadist militants consider Yezidis 'infidels,' while there have been announcements made that if you kill Christians, you will go straight to paradise," she said. Hedding referred to her conversations on a satellite phone March 15 with Christians and Yezidis trapped in Afrin, saying cell phone service had since been cut. In New York, UNICEF said "reports from inside Afrin indicate that dozens of children have been killed and many more injured since the start of hostilities in the district.

Study of the universe 'an act of worship,' Vatican astronomer says in Troy

By Kate Blain
Catholic News Service

TROY, N.Y. (CNS)-- Jesuit Brother Guy Consolmagno, director of the Vatican Observatory, told a crowd at a Troy Catholic Church that "the study of the universe is an act of worship."

He cited Psalm 139, "O Lord, you have searched me and you know me," and added: "There are places in the universe we haven't set foot on yet, and maybe we won't, but they are 'as much a part of God's creation' as the earth.

"God is bigger than just what we see around here," Brother Consolmagno said.

Attendees were visibly moved by the photos he shared of planetary landscapes, moon craters, stars and galaxies. He was quick to note that none of the images were artist's renderings; closeup photos showed places "we have visited with our machinery and left our footprints."

The astronomer emphasized the need to see other heavenly bodies as specific places. He shared a clip from a panel discussion televised on C-SPAN after a Mars rover landing in which a mission team member described his awe at seeing photos of the red Martian landscape.

Brother Consolmagno related all of this to faith in his talk Feb. 28 at Christ Sun of Justice in Troy as part of the parish's annual weeklong Lenten speaker series.

"Wonderful. Absolutely wonderful," Father Edward Kacerguis, pastor, declared as he took in the crowd.

Father Kacerguis told The Evangelist, the newspaper of the Albany Diocese, that he had been shocked when Brother Consolmagno imme-

diately accepted his invitation to participate in Christ Sun of Justice's Lenten program.

The astronomer's presence was particularly apt because the parish is located on the campus of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where students study ground-breaking science and technology.

Brother Consolmagno had spent the day at Rensselaer, meeting with graduate students, undergrads and members of the physics department and leading a colloquium in the afternoon before delivering his evening Lenten address.

Throughout the talk, photos flashed by on the viewscreen:
• The rocky surface of Venus, captured by a Russian lander that lasted only minutes in the 700-degree, high-pressure atmosphere where sulfuric acid fills the air.
• Io, a moon of Jupiter with a yellow surface covered with erupting volcanoes.
• "Earthrise," with the earth seen from orbit, coming up from behind the moon.

Along with the pictures came quotes from St. Francis of Assisi's 'Canticle of the Sun': "Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun ... through Sister Moon and the stars ... through Brothers Wind and Air ... through Sister Water ... through Brother Fire ... through our Sister, Mother Earth."

The canticle was composed in the year 1225, but Brother Consolmagno said its spirit is just as applicable today. He pointed to "Laudato Si,'" Pope Francis' encyclical which expressed similar ideas about respect for creation.

"We are made by God and we are siblings," the astronomer said. "To exploit nature is to exploit your little sister."

Brother Consolmagno is a native of Detroit. He shared his own life story, from studying the moons of Jupiter to serving in the Peace Corps, teaching physics and, in 1993, joining the staff at the Vatican Observatory, where he has studied meteorites and asteroids and now serves as director.

Though the observatory's headquarters are in the papal summer gardens at Castel Gandolfo, south of Rome, much of its work is done on Mount Graham, northeast of Tucson, Arizona, where the Vatican Advanced Technology Telescope is located.

Brother Guy also has traveled to Antarctica to search for meteorites. He noted that the photos he took there resembled the surfaces of other planetary bodies: harsh, barren landscapes that, nevertheless, have much to reveal about creation.

Even the smallest meteorite cross section - thinner than a human hair - shows incredible crystalline structures, he said, noting "that sense of discovery, that I've seen this little thing ... it's like the voice of God behind me, saying, 'Isn't this cool?'

"This is what human beings do: You look at the sky and you say, 'Wow,'" he said. "That's why we do astronomy: because we are hungry for more than food, and we need to be fed."

After his talk, Brother Consolmagno told The Evangelist that studying the stars makes the petty problems of life insignificant. "We get so provincial in thinking our problems are the world's problems. God who created the universe is perfectly capable of taking care of us," he said.
The drama of Holy Week begins

With Palm Sunday, we enter into the most sacred week of the year, celebrating the “Paschal Mystery” of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

Latecomers to Mass this Sunday are usually embarrassed as they open the church door quietly, only to find themselves right in the middle of the action as an usher hurriedly thrusts a palm branch into their hands for the reading of the first of two Gospels.

The Holy Week drama has begun, with the singing of “Hosannas” and, usually, “All Glory Laud and Honor.”

The first reading from the 50th chapter of Isaiah speaks of the Suffering Servant with the well-polished tongue who patiently but boldly speaks the saving truth “to a weary world.” How skillfully the Church shows us that, long ago, God foretold the depths of suffering His Son would endure, setting his face “like flint,” not flinching, not turning back.

St. Paul’s second reading is all about Jesus’ “kenosis,” the emptying out of His divine glory, that He might become the humble servant, human like us in all things but sin. No wonder every knee must bow at the mention of His name! How the early Church fought to maintain the doctrine that Jesus is both God and man.

What a stupendous sacrifice for our redemption!

The Church is a master of drama in the liturgies of this week.

In the use of the Celebrant and two readers for the Passion this week, and in the congregations’ voice, we all become part of the action.

Most feel embarrassed to cry “Crucify Him!” with the palm branches still in our hands. We feel like hypocrites. Yet our sin is what placed us in that position.

March 25
Palm Sunday
READINGS
(at the Procession)
Mark 11:1-10
(at Mass)
Isaiah 50:4-7
Philippians 2:6-11
Mark 14:1-15:47

It helps drive home the crime of deicide!

St. Mark presses the question, “Who is Jesus?” all through his gospel.

As we watch the heaven’s darken and hear the thunder, we cry with that century, “Indeed this was the Son of God!” We should beat our breasts at the realization of what our sins have done!

The shock of Palm Sunday’s liturgy compresses two thousand years into this Year of Our Lord. We have no place to hide. We need to suspend all other activities, quiet our busyness, and focus on the events of this week.

It’s all in the sacred Liturgy, the local penance services, the Stations of the Cross, the Thursday night adoration and the Good Friday veneration of the Cross.

It all prepares us for the coming out of darkness into the new fire, the new light, the new saving water of the Easter Vigil—and Resurrection.

In the face of miseries... be happy anyway!

By Father John Catoir
Contributing writer

Faith hears the voice of love speaking and abiding in one’s heart. It pervades and penetrates one’s whole being.

God is always acting in our lives. He usually speaks ever so softly. The message is simple, “I have come that your joy may be full.”

He wants you to know that you can face the hardships of life and still find contentment. The knowledge of God’s love will sustain you.

He wants you to be appreciative of the fact that He is supplying you with hope, inspiration, strength, and encouragement.

Coping with the miseries of life can be challenging. If you’ve had a parent who wasn’t there for you when you were in need, you know what it is to be miserable, emotionally drained.

Nevertheless, God wants you to recover and move forward. He speaks to you. From the deep recesses of your mind the Lord whispers, “Be happy anyway.”

Perhaps you’ve experienced betrayal by a trusted friend; someone who was caught stealing from you. You were furious at first, and it turned to hurt.

Then you hear that inner voice saying, “Be happy anyway.”

Jesus came to earth that your joy may be full, and He speaks to you frequently about it.

Life is shattered time and again by broken hearts, unexpected deaths, and spiteful neighbors. Sometimes your own human weakness brings added misery.

Through it all, faith hears the voice of love speaking a language that seems foreign to our ears.

When we try to understand how God thinks, we look to Jesus for guidance. And what do we find? At the heart of God’s great love for us He finds The Way of the Cross.

“For this you have been called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving an example, so that you should follow in his steps.” 1 Peter 2:21.

Christ’s passion and death show us true love. Jesus is the way.

“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for his friends.” John 15:13.

The passion of Christ was a spiritual demonstration of how we are called to live our lives in self-giving, without counting the cost.

“The memory of the Passion of Jesus is the door which leads to intimate union with God.” St. Paul of the Cross.

By depending on God’s strength and joy we gain victory over death, and joy gradually prevails over sorrow.

By serving God and neighbor as best we can, we suffer many crosses, but joy soon follows. We hear the faint words of God, “Be happy anyway.”

How is it possible to recover from abandonment, betrayal, or the death of a loved one? In the natural order it isn’t, but by listening to our inner voice, we gain perspective.

All the miseries that surround us, gradually lose their power. We begin to pay them no mind. We only listen to the words: “Be happy anyway, my chosen one, holy and beloved; clothe yourself with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, and all will be well.” Colossians 3:12.

May the Lord be your strength and your joy.
A WRINKLE IN TIME

By John Mulderig
Catholic News Service

Director Ava DuVernay’s youth-oriented fantasy film “A Wrinkle in Time” (Disney) wants to blow your mind. Whether it succeeds will largely depend on your reaction to the sight of a giant version of Oprah Winfrey who, as a celestial guide called Mrs. Which, dispenses New Age-style bromides while dressed in an outfit suitable for a Valkyrie and sporting a makeup job that the late female impersonator Divine might have found a bit garish.

As for more substantial considerations, this adaptation of Madeleine L’Engle’s Newbery Medal-winning 1962 novel for young adults is wholesome in some respects, problematic in others. While entirely free of the negative elements that usually debar recommendation for young viewers, the movie’s underlying worldview involves an uneasy combination of secularism and magical thinking.

Standing in need of Mrs. Which’s help, and that of two of her peers, Mrs. Whatsit (Reese Witherspoon) and Mrs. Who (Mindy Kaling), is troubled middle-school student Meg Murry (Storm Reid).

Four years after the unexplained disappearance of her father Alex (Chris Pine), a NASA scientist who, together with his physicist wife, Kate (Gugu Mbatha-Raw), had developed an unorthodox method of time and space travel, Meg is still devastated by his absence.

So it comes as a pleasant surprise when the trio of women magi mysteriously manifest themselves to Meg, her adopted younger brother, Charles Wallace (Deric McCabe), an intellectual prodigy, and to her supportive would-be boyfriend Calvin (Levi Miller). With their otherworldly visitors’ assistance, the kids set off on a cosmic quest to track pop down and bring him home.

Their journey is often eye-pleasing. From the start, however, Jennifer Lee and Jeff Stockwell’s screenplay tries to force or simply assume audience sympathy with the characters, rather than earning it.

The picture’s ultimate message, that we should love ourselves even while acknowledging our faults, can be seen as promoting the Christian virtue of humility. And, though one scene incongruously suggests that Mrs. Whatsit, in the course of a shape-shift, engages in a bit of peek-a-boo exhibitionism, the youthful romance at the heart of the story is a model of innocence and positive, if not always convincing, emotional interaction.

Still, very young viewers or for teens who are not well grounded in their faith may lack the discretion to retain the script’s acceptable takeaway while jettisoning the metaphysical gobbledygook that surrounds it. A follow-up discussion with parents may, however, help those in the latter group to do so.

The film contains occasional peril and possible momentary off-screen immodesty. The Catholic News Service classification is A-II -- adults and adolescents. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG -- parental guidance suggested. Some material may not be suitable for children.

ALSO PLAYING... LOVE, SIMON

CNS PHOTO/TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

Jorge Lendeborg, Nick Robinson and Alexandra Shipp and Katherine Langford star in scene from the movie “Love, Simon.” “Love, Simon” (Fox). The movie is a good-hearted but morally misguided romantic comedy in which a closeted gay teen (Nick Robinson) strikes up a pseudonymous email exchange with a fellow student from his high school who is in the same situation, and gradually falls for his unidentified correspondent. When a callous classmate (Logan Miller) discovers his secret, and uses it to blackmail him, hoping to build up a romantic relationship with one (Alexandra Shipp) of the lad’s trio of closest friends (rounded out by Katherine Langford and Jorge Lendeborg Jr.), it further complicates his furtive life. In adapting Becky Albertalli’s 2012 novel for young adults, “Simon vs The Homo Sapiens Agenda,” director Greg Berlanti succeeds in delivering some enjoyable humor and moments of genuine pathos. But, as scripted by Elizabeth Berger and Isaac Aptaker, his film predictably fails to distinguish between the dignity to which everyone, of whatever inclination, is entitled and the acceptability of acting on urges that fall outside God’s revealed plan for human sexuality. The Catholic News Service classification is O -- morally offensive. The Motion Picture Association of America rating is PG-13 -- parents strongly cautioned.
ADIRONDACK

LENTEN FISH FRY
Bloomingdale - K of C Council 7803 Bloomingdale/Gabriels will hold their annual Lenten Fish Fry.
Date: March 23
Time: 4 p.m.
Place: St. Paul's Oratory
Cost: Adults, $10; Children 6-12, $6

CLINTON

ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT BREAKFAST
Altona – A parish breakfast is set St. Lawrence.
Date: April 8
Time: 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Place: Holy Angels Church Hall
Cost: Adults, $8; Children 6-12, $5; under 5, Free

TEA FOR TWO
Peru - The Catholic Daughters of the Americas, Court St. Monica is hosting its Annual Tea Party.
Date: April 22
Time: 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.
Place: St. Augustine's Parish Center
Cost: $10
Features: proceeds will support the Elm more SPCA. This year's theme is "Fabu lous 50's, featuring '50s music and contests for dance, hula hoop, costumes.
Contact: For more information, Jane Woods at: jane124766@yahoo.com.

CLM EVENT
Au Sable Forks — All Commissioned Lay Ministers are invited to a special event.
Date: May 12
Time: 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Place: Holy Name Church and School
Cost: $10
Speaker: Fr. Paul Kelly
Topic: The Holy Spirit Empowers Us!
Contact: Online pre-registration is encouraged. www.rcdony.org/formation/commissioned-layministers/clm-event-registration.htm
or by mail to: PO Box 106 Canajoharie, NY 13317

GUYS AND DOLLS
Plattsburgh — Seton Catholic to present Guys and Dolls, Jr.
Date: March 23 at 7 p.m.; March 24 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.
Contact: Tickets at Bob’s Music, Pearl Physical Therapy, and the Party Factory or by calling 518-561-4031 ext. 2555

GOOD FRIDAY STATIONS
Plattsburgh — Annual Good Friday Prayer Service sponsored by Champlain Valley Right to Life is planned.

The North County Catholic welcomes contributions to “Around the Diocese.” Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to:
North County Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY 13669; fax, 1-866-314-7296; e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.
Items must be received in the NCC office by the Thursday before publication.

LEWIS

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION
Lowville — St. Peter’s is sponsoring Lenten gatherings of prayer.
Dates: March 22
Time: 4 p.m. to 5.
Place: St. Peter’s Church
Features: One hour of Exposition, the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Silent Adoration, and Benediction.

ST. LAWRENCE

HOSPITALITY WORKSHOP
Massena — Event for Massena Catholics to enhance parish renewal is set.
Date: April 7
Time: 10 a.m. to Noon, then lunch
Place: Trinity Catholic School

SPRING RETREAT FOR ADULTS
Morristown — Spring Retreat for Adults to be held.
Date: May 4-6
Place: Cedarhaven
Cost: $125 (Suggested offering)
Speaker: Sister Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ
Features: Living the ‘Bookend Beatitudes’: an invitation to reflect the first and eight Beatitudes and ways to put them into practice through prayer, sharing and other spiritual practices.
Contact: 315-212-6592 or sbeth@gmail.com

SCHOOL REGISTRATION
Canton — St. Mary’s Catholic School is now accepting registrations for the 2018-19 school year, Nursery through 6th grade.
Features: St. Mary's offers a faith-based, academically rigorous education, along with a family-oriented environment. Small classes and latch-key services are additional benefits.
Contact: To register, please call the school at 315-386-3572 or email at smo ssoffice@twcny.rr.com.

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Lenten sacrifices

The Pontifical Mission Societies in the Diocese of Ogdensburg is most grateful for your Lenten sacrifices to date during our ongoing appeal. These blessings bestowed upon us will directly benefit those who serve the poor in the Mission Lands and their efforts with those who reside there.

Part of a typical day in the Missions involves local priests, Religious Sisters, Brothers and lay catechists reaching out to the suffering in Jesus’ name, offering them His love and His message of hope. They remind them that God does not abandon us, helping us to understand what it was like to be like Him. During Lent we pray.

However, throughout the world, day after day, we find suffering of all kinds. There is also the suffering that comes from not knowing the great love of our Lord. We must work to ease the suffering in Jesus’ name, offering them His love plus 1500 government taxes/airline surcharges.

This time to reflect and sacrifice. With a focus on repenting of sin, we are able to see how great God’s love for us can be. Lent can be a time for spiritual renewal. During Lent we sacrifice. These sacrifices draw us closer to God and let us understand what it was like to be like Him. During Lent we pray. During prayer, it is helpful to remember the suffering in the Mission Lands. Pray for improvements in these desperate geographies.

By your prayers, and your gifts to the Pontifical Mission Societies, you accompany those who bring this Good News to the poor and suffering.

As I ask your continuing prayers for our mission family, know that you and those you love remain in my prayers. May the Lord bless you abundantly.

Please remember “The Society for the Propagation of the Faith” when writing or changing your Will. www.dioogdensburg.org/missionoffice
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ST. LAWRENCE
MIDLANDERS FISHERS CLUB
Canton - Fishers Club, a discernment program for young men (juniors in high school and up) who are open to a possible vocation to the priesthood, will meet
Place: St. Mary's Rectory
Time: 9 a.m.
Schedule: March 14, April 18 and 22
Features: Brunch, discussion, and prayer with Fathers Douglas Lucia and Bryan Stitt.
Contact: Fr. Doug Lucia dlucia@rcdony.org /315-348-4466

GUN AND KNIFE SHOW
Brasher Falls - The Knights of Columbus will be hosting a Gun and Knife Show.
Schedule: March 24 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and March 25 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Place: Shamrock Club
Cost: $3; under 12 free
Features: Many dealers will be present with all kinds of sporting items. Concession stand open all day, breakfast served until 11 a.m. All guns must be checked in at door. Plenty of parking.
Contact: Phil Davis at 315-389-4627.

ALL DAY CONFESSION
Massena - During the week of Holy Week, all day confession to be held.
Date: March 26
Time: 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Place: Sacred Heart Church
Features: During the same hours as Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

FISH AND SHRIMP FRY
Gouverneur - Fish & Shrimp Fry to be held every Friday during Lent.
Date: Feb. 16 to March 30
Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6:15
Place: St. James School
Cost: Adults, $10; children 12 and under, $5; under 5 free
Contact: Take-outs available, call for faster service, deliveries 315-287-0130.

DIOCESAN EVENTS
ANNULMENT WORKSHOPS
The Matrimonial Tribunal of the Diocese of Ogdensburg is sponsoring informational workshops on annulments.
Schedule:
- March 27, St. Mary’s School, Canton, from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- April 9, St. Patrick’s Parish Center, Port Henry, from 6:30 p.m. to 8
- April 16, Holy Ghost Parish Center, Tupper Lake, from 6:30 p.m. to 8
Features: The workshops are designed for those who wish to explore beginning the annulment process. The tribunal staff will have the forms available to begin the process and will be on-hand to answer any individual questions.
Contact: Registration or further information is available through the tribunal office at 315-605-1087.

YOUTH RALLY
Canton - The annual diocesan youth rally to be held for young people in grades 6-12.
Date: April 28
Place: St. Mary’s
Cost: $30 (Includes lunch and a t-shirt while supplies last)
Features: The day will include keynote speaker Bob Perron, interactive park, prayer, workshops, and a closing Mass celebrated by Bishop LaValley.
Contact: Youth leaders can register their groups at www.rcdony.org/youthrally/rally

RACHEL’S VINEYARD
Saranac Lake - A Rachel’s Vineyard after-abortion healing retreat is set.
Date: June 1-3
Place: Guggenheim Lodge
Features: Father Mark Reilly will serve as the retreat chaplain. Confidential registration forms at the Respect Life website: www.rcdony.org/prolife

CAMP GUGGENHEIM
Registration for Camp Guggenheim in Saranac Lake is open. Weeks 1-5 are open to ages 12-15, and Week 6 is open to 16-18 year-olds.
Contact: Register at www.rcdony.org/camp

CATHOLIC HEART WORKCAMP
Plattsburgh - Catholic Heart Workcamp is returning to Plattsburgh.
Date: June 24 to 29
Place: Seton Catholic Central
Schedule: Daily Mass, Penance and prayer, work in the community.
Cost: $375 which includes meals, lodging, transportation to the work sites, t-shirts and snacks.
Features: Open to high school (entering 9th grade in Fall 2018) and college students. During the week, campers will volunteer at various sites throughout the Plattsburgh area during the day and participate in fun, faith-building programs in the evening.
Contact: Contact Cathy Russell at crusell@rcdony.org or slippincott@rcdony.org for more information.

OPERATION ANDREW
The Spring round of Operation Andrew to be held.
Schedule: April 5 at St. Mary’s Cathedral and April 12 at St. Bernard’s Church
Features: 5 p.m. with Holy Hours and Vespers followed by dinner and conversation with Bishop LaValley and area priests. Parents are most welcome.
Contact: Your pastor or the Vocations office to register.

MARRIAGE CONFERENCE
Massena - The Department of Family Life in conjunction with the Offices of Vocations and Evangelization, will present an all-day Life and Family Conference and workshop entitled Marriage: God Calls, We Respond.
Date: April 14
Place: Trinity Catholic School
Speakers: Dr. Gregory and Lisa Popcak
Contact: www.rcdony.org/marriage

OPERATION MIRIAM LUNCH
Watertown - A program for women of middle school age and older, to learn about consecrated life is set.
Date: April 15
Time: 11 a.m.
Place: 555 Motherhouse
Features: Prayer to know one’s vocation with benediction; Lunch With Bishop LaValley, followed by sharing of vocation stories and information about consecrated life. Parents are welcome.
Contact: Register by contacting Shayne Lippscinct at slippincott@rcdony.org or call 315-782-3620 by April 12.