Multi-location event focuses on forgiveness

God loves us and forgives us. During this Lenten season, the Diocese of Ogdensburg’s Department of Education will offer a powerful presentation – titled “Forgiven” – which explores the healing power of the sacrament of reconciliation.

For many Catholics, confession is a freeing and life-giving experience, but for others, it is often scary and misunderstood. This event is intended to help parishioners overcome those fears and misunderstandings. Maybe you are afraid to confront your sins, concerned what your priest might think of you or perhaps unsure how to make a good confession. All of this will be addressed.

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

Pope: Artistic beauty makes God's love known

VATICAN CITY (CNS) - The beauty that emanates from art, poetry and music can overcome obstacles and bring people closer to God, Pope Francis said.

“Art is capable of creating communion, because it unites God, humanity and creation in a single symphony; because it joins the past, the present and the future; because it draws different people and distant people into the same place and involves them in the same gaze,” he said.

Among those present were the Lefèvre family – Gabriel, Anne and their six children – who were the season 15 winners of "France's Got Talent."

In his address, the pope congratulated the movement on its 10th anniversary and said the work of artists completes "the beauty of creation and, when inspired by faith, it more clearly reveals the divine love that is at its origin."

Authentic art, he added, can show God’s goodness to others and is "capable of speaking about God better than anyone."

Recalling St. John Paul II’s 1999 letter to artists, the pope said the church needs art "in order to transmit the message entrusted to her by Christ."
It’s about time

The time disappeared. No, this isn’t a commentary on the passage of time. I mean that literally. The time disappeared.

I recently had some work done on my vehicle. The work required that the battery be disconnected for an extended period. As a result, when I retrieved my repaired Jeep, some of my settings on my clock/radio had been reset. Prior to the repairs, if I powered off my radio, the clock would remain visible on the otherwise blank display screen. After the repairs, powering off the radio resulted in a completely black screen. The time disappeared.

I’ve tried to make spending time in silence part of my morning commute at least a few times a week, so I power off my radio fairly frequently. At first, not having the clock displayed bothered me. “I won’t know if I’m running late,” I thought. “I won’t know if I have time to stop and grab some Dunkin!”

After two or three commutes with those thoughts running through my mind, I pulled into the work parking lot one day and started flipping through the menu on my clock/radio looking for the screen that would allow me to restore the clock to the blank screen.

I stopped myself.

“What am I doing?” I asked myself. “What’s the big deal about knowing the time. If I’m running late, it’s not like I can magically teleport myself ahead of the other traffic or make traffic go faster.”

While not knowing the time bothered me, I recognized that it was yet another time when I was trying to convince myself I had some measure of control in this life. Newsflash... I don’t.

I left the settings on my clock/radio as they were and left the screen blank.

When I instinctively look at that screen expecting to see the time, the emptiness reminds me that time, and control over it, isn’t mine. God is in control.

As Lent rapidly approaches, I’m reminded that it’s a time to focus on growing our relationships with the Lord. To truly do that, I need to surrender my life to His will. I need to surrender my control. I need to empty myself – much like vehicle repairs emptied my clock screen – to make room for the Lord to work.

I also need to surrender my time.

Preparing for Lent

Can you believe it? It’s almost Lent again. I am always surprised when I suddenly notice it is time again for Ash Wednesday and it is Lent. So, I thought I would share a few things with you today about Lent.

Ages ago, I would have had no trouble remembering when Lent and Ash Wednesday were coming. You see in those days, the days when I was still skiing, we priests, always scheduled a Mardi Gras ski trip – sort of a preparation of ourselves for Lent. So, we regularly planned two days of skiing at Mont Tremblant in Canada. We always had a great place to stay, and we had good friends, religious brothers, who operated a retreat center right on the north side of the Mont Tremblant ski area. Nothing like two great days of skiing to get into the mood for Lent.

So, on the Sunday before Ash Wednesday after the Sunday Masses, several of us priests headed north. We would return on Tuesday afternoon ready for the Ash Wednesday Masses.

Let’s talk a bit about Ash Wednesday. It is such an interesting feast day, isn’t it? However, Ash Wednesday is a perfect celebration to begin the Lenten journey. This is a time of prayer and retreat. Ashes are a perfect symbol – a wonderful way to dedicate ourselves to a time of retreat, and to prayer and repentance. It’s perfect for a journey to prepare to celebrate again our salvation as we celebrate the events of the Lord’s Holy Week, the Lord’s Crucifixion and Resurrection.

I must tell you how I have often taught children why we use ashes on Ash Wednesday to begin Lent. I would begin by telling them we use ashes because they are dirty. We put dirty ashes on our foreheads as a perfect reminder that we have made a decision. This will be a time for Lent, a time for retreat, prayer and reconciliation. The ashes are our constant reminder. Actually, we should leave the mark of the ashes on our foreheads for the whole seven weeks of Lent so that we would not forget that we have made this decision that this time of Lent will be our time for prayer and repentance.

You know what Lent is all about, I am certain of that. I want you to think of Lent as a time of retreat. Usually, when we think of a retreat, we think of going away to a retreat house with some sort of program. Lent is our retreat, something we add to our daily lives. This Lenten retreat is our yearly journey, a journey that leads us to walk with the Lord, to carry our cross and to stand at the foot of the crucified Savior on Gethsemane. It’s a time to discover the risen Lord’s resurrection.

I would like to encourage you to make your retreat, your Lenten journey, more meaningful by dedicating your time of prayer to a special intention. It might be praying for someone who is in need or praying for something that is important for you now. This transforms Lent. Lent becomes a special time with intentions that mean a great deal to us, a time that brings us into a deeper relationship with Our Lord and Savior.

One more thing to add today: Lent is meant to be a time of gratitude. We do Lent to discover who we are, all the blessings that have been given to us by the Lord and all that has transformed us. For this we must be grateful. Our Lord suffered and died for us, and he rose again to new life for us. For this we are most grateful.
It’s all about conversations driven by the Holy Spirit, and those conversations are still happening.

In October, Bishop Terry R. LaValley celebrated a Mass officially opening the diocesan portion of the Synod on Synodality, a synod opened earlier that month by Pope Francis. The Holy Father described the synod as “an exercise of mutual listening, conducted at all levels of the Church and involving the entire People of God.”

Since that October opening, parish delegates have been appointed, and synodal conversations have been ongoing.

“Every parish has at least one delegate,” explained Marika Donders, diocesan director of Evangelization and chairperson of the diocesan participation. “Conversations have been taking place around the diocese.”

In November, delegates gathered in sessions held around the diocese to experience and learn about the synodal process. The process was divided into three phases, though the phases can overlap.

“In many cases, the conversations are starting with what we’re referring to as the ‘insider groups,’” Donders said. “That may be a parish council, the local Knights of Columbus, catechists or some other existing group. The next group is parishioners who may not be part of those insider groups – people who attend Mass on Sunday. The last group is people who may be beyond the church doors – people who used to attend Mass but don’t anymore, people who attend other denominations or people who don’t practice any faith or have any faith background. If you’re not seeing activity in your parish, it’s possible that they’re starting with another phase. Feel free to talk to your pastor and ask about the parish’s participation in the synod.”

Donders also noted that anyone can participate in the synod by reflecting on and discussing the central question: “A synodal Church, in announcing the Gospel, ‘journeys together.’ How is this ‘journeying together’ happening today in your local Church? What steps does the Spirit invite us to take in order to grow in our ‘journeying together’?”

“Anybody can have a conversation and give feedback,” she said. “It doesn’t have to be a formal event. It can be just friends talking in the local diner or in the parking lot after Mass. This may also be one way to reach people who have drifted away from the practice of the faith. Is there anything they miss? Is there anything that would draw them back? Is there anything we can do to accompany them on their journey?”

Anyone can file a report about their conversation and participate in the process. Feedback forms can be found at rcdony.org/150/synod#feedback or can simply be emailed to synod@rcdony.org.

“The purpose of the synod is to learn how to be synodal. The theme is ‘Mission, Communication and Participation.’ The objectives are to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church and how we are to walk forward together in mission. It’s an invitation of the Holy Spirit for us to go on pilgrimage together, in a sense, as a church and to see who we will encounter and how we will encounter Christ on this journey and how he’ll walk with us.”

After conversations are held, reports outlining the discussions can be submitted at that same website. Discussion notes can also be submitted by emailing synod@rcdony.org.

### What is a Foster Grandparent?

Foster Grandparents are role models, mentors, and friends to children with exceptional needs. The program provides a way for volunteers age 55 and over to stay active by serving children and youth in their communities. They are placed in a classroom setting with a child or children who are in need of emotional support, development of basic learning skills, friendship, companionship, encouragement, individual attention, and unhurried help. The program currently has 40 volunteers and serves more than 100 kids per year.

The Foster Grandparent Program is hosted by the Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg and supported by AmeriCorps Seniors, a federally funded agency responsible for building volunteer based programs for over 50 years and counting.

### Am I Qualified to be a Foster Grandparent?

All you need to join is the ability to give the kind of comfort and love that sets a child on the path toward a successful future. If you’re 55 or older and want to share your experience and compassion, you have what it takes to be a Foster Grandparent.

You’ll also receive a small bi-weekly, non-taxable stipend that cannot be held against any current benefits you may already have as well as paid mileage for your travel. Additionally, you receive paid holidays, vacations, sick and personal leave.

### What benefits do Foster Grandparents receive?

- **Stipend:** A small bi-weekly stipend that cannot be held against any current benefits you may already have.
- **Mileage:** Paid mileage for your travel.
- **Vacations:** Paid vacations.
- **Sick Leave:** Paid sick leave.
- **Personal Leave:** Paid personal leave.

### How to apply

To apply, please contact Melissa Howard, Volunteer Coordinator at (518)359-7688 or email mhoward@charities.org.

**Address:**
80 Park Street, Suite 2
PO Box 701
Tupper Lake, NY 12986
‘Forgiven’ event focuses on God’s love, mercy

By Jessica Hargrave
Contributing Writer

God loves us and forgives us. During this Lenten season, the Diocese of Ogdensburg’s Department of Education will offer a powerful presentation – titled “Forgiven” – which explores the healing power of the sacrament of reconciliation.

For many Catholics, confession is a freeing and life-giving experience, but for others, it is often scary and misunderstood. This event is intended to help parishioners overcome those fears and misunderstandings. Maybe you are afraid to confront your sins, concerned what your priest might think of you or perhaps unsure how to make a good confession. All of this will be addressed.

“Forgiven” is a continuation of Bishop Terry R. LaValley’s initiative focusing on the significance of the Eucharist given the vital connection between the two sacraments. Think about it. If I live in darkness, how can I welcome the light? In confession, we admit our sin that holds us back from being our true selves and loving fully which includes Christ who comes to us in the Eucharist and in others.

The presentation will be held in seven locations around the diocese on Saturday, March 26 from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Locations include St. Mary’s Parish Center in Clayton, Dostie Hall in Watertown, St. Peter’s Church in Lowville, Father Amyot Parish Center in Norfolk, St. Edmund’s Parish Center in Ellenburg, St. Peter’s Church’s Emmanuel Room in Plattsburgh, and Holy Ghost Parish Center in Tupper Lake.

“Forgiven” is free and available for all who wish to attend.

There will be time for sharing and discussion. Light refreshments will be served, however attendees must bring their own lunch.

To register at a location most convenient for you, go to rcdony.org/forgiven.

Registration deadline is March 4.

Grant helps Mission tackle homelessness, poverty

By Deacon Kevin Mastellon
Contributing Writer

WATERTOWN – Over 90,000 people were homeless in New York State in 2020. The homeless number in the North Country, roughly the same as the Diocese of Ogdensburg, is slightly over 100. Any person sleeping outside or sleeping in some structure unfit for human habitation is classified as homeless.

According to the Nationwide Alliance to End Homelessness, “the nationwide Point-in-Time Count occurred in January of 2020, just a few weeks before COVID-19 was declared a national emergency. Thus, the data does not reflect any of the changes brought about by the crisis. Instead, the current report reflects the status of Homelessness in America just before a once-in-a-lifetime event interrupted the status quo.”

Another survey was conducted in January 2022, but those results have not been published yet. Dawn Cole, the executive director of the Watertown Urban Mission, has a feel for the results.

“I have to say that in terms of housing, we’re approaching a crisis situation,” she said. “As a matter of fact, we may not be approaching but we’re probably in full-blown crisis because we know that we have individuals who are homeless. We see them every day. At the Point-in-Time 2022 survey, we met 14 individuals (in Watertown) who the previous night either slept outside in their car or in an abandoned building unfit for human habitation. That’s January in the North Country. That’s a pretty tough way to survive.”

The Urban Mission was awarded two grants this year by the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation that will continue programs that target people looking for affordable housing.

One program is called BEST, building Economic Stability for Tomorrow. The second-year grant amounted to $200,000, down a bit from the first-year grant.

“We’ve put together a very robust program,” Cole said. “It provides a rental subsidy over a period of time, usually three to four months, (when) we work with individuals to help them meet some of their financial goals. We work on establishing a household budget (and look) at where we can cut expenses so that we can get our budgets into a situation where we’re self-sustaining.”

Working with local financial institutions, the Mission offers workshops on credit repair, avoiding predatory business practices and saving strategies. Programs available at the Mission dealing with food assistance, substance abuse and others are also made available to the BEST clients.

“What we’re focusing on with this program is a unique audience in that it’s people who are working or who are actively seeking employment and can’t qualify for traditional social assistance programming,” Cole said. “If you’re comparing it to homelessness, this is more of a preventative strategy. We want to make sure these folks can maintain their solid footing so they don’t find themselves in a disastrous situation.”

The other program funded for $75,000 is called Getting Ahead & Staying Ahead in the North County.

That program is aimed at individuals, largely from generational poverty environments, who over 16 weeks identify their behaviors that contribute to their poverty and look for ways to change. They also look at the community and assess the services being provided perhaps with an eye to improve or change the programs.

“I think (Getting Ahead) is particularly effective because in Human Services, a lot of times, our inclination is to sit down with someone and try to prescribe what, in our professional opinion, is the right course of action,” Cole said. “Getting Ahead allows people the space to make their own argument for change. It’s all about self-awareness and understanding what poverty really is.”

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation announced in late January that it has awarded more than 450 year-end 2021 grants totaling $140 million to support organizations and programs addressing the health-related needs of low-income residents and underserved communities across New York State in 2022.

The Mother Cabrini Health Foundation was formed after the 2018 sale of Fidelis Care, a nonprofit health insurer created by the Catholic bishops of New York State. This is the Foundation’s third annual round of grants.
Lenten series focuses on Laudato Si

By Tom Kalinowski
Faith & Ecology Member

Since the publication of Laudato Si in 2015, numerous environmental groups and social justice organizations around the world have urged the Vatican to develop a way to promote the ideas and address the challenges cited in the Holy Father’s encyclical. Last year, the Vatican unveiled a plan – or platform – which could be used to help ecologically conscious people and faith-based groups more closely align their lifestyles with basic Christian beliefs. This strategy, known as the Laudato Si Action Platform (LSAP), would, when implemented, benefit the health of the planet and the lives of the poor who have been so adversely impacted by our wasteful ways of life.

Laudato Si is a fairly lengthy papal letter that focuses on the serious consequences our modern life style, with its throw-away mentality and consumerism driven economy, is having on the health of the global environment, especially the climate. The Pope stresses that not only are record numbers of living organisms perishing daily around the world, but the poorest people of all nations are being adversely impacted by the routine actions occurring in civilized societies.

The Pope repeatedly emphasized that all forms of life throughout the cosmos are unique, were fashioned by the Creator for a specific purpose, and possess the same divine spark of life as do we. Even inanimate objects, regardless of size or shape, bear the fingerprints of God. Because everything arose from the same Heavenly Father, we are all brothers and sisters in creation. Additionally, we are all deeply interconnected in a complex web of existence that only the Creator fully comprehends. This is why harming any one of God’s works results in some form of harm to numerous other entities and eventually comes back to harm us and those we love. The Pope occasionally reflects on the increasing social upheaval and cultural disarray occurring around the world and notes that as the health of our environment deteriorates, so does the well-being of our societies.

Laudato Si is not a scientific document but rather a moral evaluation of our modern way of life. Yet, while the Pope freely exposes and critiques many of the serious problems in the world, he is quick to do so against the backdrop of a truly magnificent and infinitely compassionate and forgiving God that loves each and every one of us more than anyone could ever possibly imagine. The Creator knows that none of us is perfect and neither are the communities and nations in which we live. However, we must try to recognize our personal and communal faults and attempt to address and correct them. We also bear the responsibility for repairing some of the damage that our actions have inflicted, either directly or indirectly to our common home and especially on the lives of the poor.

The Holy Father noted that there are no simple answers to our current environmental and social dilemmas, and what may work in one geographic area may not be suitable for another. This is why the Vatican developed broad sets of guidelines in their LSAP to help people and groups in very different regions and cultures create plans that are best suited for their own locations. The parishes of St. Agnes in Lake Placid and St. Bernard in Saranac Lake have been working together to begin this process of developing a more sustainable lifestyle. During Lent, a series of presentations will be given after Sunday Mass.

These are designed to educate those in attendance on how the concerns raised in Laudato Si are moral issues and how they are impacting our lives, communities, societies, and planet.

The following is a list presentations during this time of reflection of the Liturgical year:

- March 6 – An Overview of Laudato Si by Gina Fiorelli
- March 13 – Ecological Education by Dr. Curt Stager and Elodie Link
- March 20 – Adopting a Simple Lifestyle/Reduce Consumerism by Katie Alexanian
- March 27 – Reconnecting Communities through Shared Participatory Actions by the Lake Placid High School Environmental Club students
- April 3 – Supporting Sustainable Development in our Communities by Caroline Dodd & Sam Baker
- April 10 – Reconnecting with Nature with Sister Bethany Fitzgerald

The presentations will last approximately 15 to 20 minutes, followed by a question and answer session, and then an informal discussion among those wanting to remain. The speakers have been gracious enough to give their talks immediately after the 8 a.m. Mass at St. Agnes and then again following the 10 a.m. Mass at St. Bernard’s. As authorities in their fields, these individuals well understand the problems confronting our planet and the dire implications to the poor and to future generations. These are moral issues from which we cannot turn away.

Along with becoming better informed, we also recognize that prayer must be a critical component to any plan. It will take a substantial spiritual effort to begin the process of healing the hearts of those who cannot see the beauty and grandeur of Our Lord in other people and in His many works of nature. For those who cannot attend these programs and wish to contribute to this effort, please consider directing more of your time in prayer toward this cause.

To paraphrase the Holy Father, we are going to have to replace consumption with sacrifice, greed with generosity, wastefulness with sharing. We must learn to give and not simply give up. As Dorothy Day once stated, ‘No one has the right to sit down and feel hopeless about the world; there is just too much to do. No one has to do everything, but everyone has to do something.’

As the Holy Father repeatedly stressed in his encyclical, everything on the planet is so very much interconnected to everything else. This is why, as the environment gets more toxic and sicker, so follows the health and well being of our society. We all need to do something before it’s too late.
Environmental Faithful Disciple!”

Journey begins with the reminder to care for ourselves, our neighbors and the earth. This anniversary year of Laudato Si: On Caring for Our Common Home, we have been given a valuable resource by the Vatican to help guide our actions. This anniversary year of Laudato Si: On Caring for Our Common Home, we have been given a valuable resource by the Vatican to help guide our actions.

Rest in Peace

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

- Rev. Leo Heinrichs, O.F.M., 1908; Rev. Edward Blanchard, 1922; Rev. André Fayette, O.M.I., 1976
- Rev. Ferdinand Grenier, O.M.I., 1872
- Rev. J. H. Tabaret, O.M.I., 1886

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, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terri-anne.yanulavich@yahoo.com; Phone: 518-651-2267 days; 518-569-0612 evenings; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; ccarrara@rcdony.org Phone: 315-393-2920 ext. 1340. If you have a complaint of suspected sexual abuse or related misconduct by the bishops, contact the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting Service at 800-276-1562 or www.ReportBishopAbuse.org.

Bishop’s Public Schedule

March 1 – Noon – Diocesan Staff Meeting at the Brzana Conference Room
March 2 – Noon – Mass at St. Mary’s Cathedral Ash Wednesday

Lent 3.0: Third Lent in pandemic offers chance for spiritual reset

WASHINGTON (CNS) – Lent, the spiritual season of prayer and sacrifice, has an extra pull to it this year because once again — and now for the third time — it will be under the cloud of the coronavirus pandemic.

And even though the third Lent in a pandemic can feel like a lot like a Jesus’ third fall on the road to Calvary, people who spoke with Catholic News Service focused more on the season’s path to Easter and how this year’s Lent also coincides with an optimism around COVID-19 cases dropping in the U.S.

“It’s a perfect storm: lower (coronavirus) numbers just as Lent approaches,” said Mary DeTurris Poust, former communications director for the Diocese of Albany, New York.

Poust, who teaches yoga, leads retreats and writes a blog called “Not Strictly Spiritual,” said that during recent virtual retreats she has led, it’s obvious how much people want to re-connect in person.

And maybe this Lent, which starts on Ash Wednesday, March 2, is the time to do just that, she said about being with the parish community: gathering for Mass, prayer services and also for the returning soup suppers and fish fries.

After the tremendous losses of the past two years, she said, this Lent could be a good time for a reset. “Lent is the perfect opportunity to recalculate the internal GPS” of where we’re going, Poust said, speaking about individuals but also more broadly about what parishes can do as they look to welcome people back.

So many Catholics like the ritual of Lent and all of its “bells and smells,” she said, which makes this season a great opportunity “to pull them back in the best way.”

Jen Sawyer, editor-in-chief of Busted Halo, a Paulist website and satellite radio program, said in times of uncertainty, people “rely on muscle memory” of traditional faith practices they are used to. But this year, she thinks Lent’s usual traditions might have a different feel.

“It seems like this is the Lent we’re most prepared for; we’ve all sacrificed so much” she said. The desert experience of Lent has already been lived out and with so many people exhausted from the past two years, she said this Lent offers new opportunities to find peace, community and faith.

Paulist Father Larry Rice, campus chaplain for Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, agreed, saying the church is more than ready for Lent 2022 and he hopes it will help people “respond to all the trauma we have been through.”

“We are living with long-term, low-grade trauma,” he said, adding that for many, the pain is just under the surface and he sees Lent as the antidote. “As Christian people, we believe our destination is not Good Friday. We go through that to get to Easter,” he said.

He also said this year has the added hope that “by the time we get to Easter, the pandemic we’re experiencing will look different.” And with wisdom acquired in the past two years, he also added: “There are no guarantees; there could be new (coronavirus) variants.”

The past two Lents did not have that same thread of hope.

Lent 2020 started off without a hitch with just a small number of COVID-19 cases in the country but by the second week of Lent, in early March, some dioceses urged parishes to curtail handshaking at the sign of peace and Communion from the chalice. By the third week of Lent, many dioceses lifted Sunday Mass obligations and stopped public Masses and Lenten services such as Stations of the Cross, prayer services and fish fries.

Last year during Lent, more churches were open — although many were limiting congregation sizes and requiring parishioners to sign up for Masses. Fish fries were back, as carry-out events, and in many dioceses, ashes were sprinkled over heads on Ash Wednesday.

This year, parishes are open — with differing mask regulations and social distancing in place — and the beloved fish fries are back with both in-person or carry-out options.
Pope Francis advanced the sainthood cause of Argentine Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, the prelate who organized and oversaw the first six international celebrations of World Youth Day. The pope also approved a decree recognizing a miracle attributed to the intercession of Capuchin Poor Clare Sister Maria Costanza Panas of the Italian monastery of Fabriano. She was born Jan. 5, 1896, and died May 28, 1963. In addition to recognizing the miracle that clears the way for her beatification, the pope approved decrees recognizing that four candidates for sainthood heroically lived the Christian virtues; the decrees were signed during an audience Feb. 18 with Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, prefect of the Congregation for Saints’ Causes. The four candidates, who are now “venerable,” included Cardinal Pironio, who had served in numerous offices in the Roman Curia from 1975 until his retirement in 1996. St. Paul VI called him to Rome as pro-prefect of the Vatican congregation for religious. When St. John Paul II named him to head the Pontifical Council for the Laity in 1984, the late pope instituted the annual celebration of World Youth Day.

**Pope decrees warmongering, prays for Eastern Catholics**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS) —** Humanity seems to be a “champion in making war,” which should “make us all ashamed,” Pope Francis said.

Meeting leaders of the Eastern Catholic churches — many from countries at war, facing the threat of war or dealing with the destruction left by war — the pope said human beings seem to be “attached to wars, and this is tragic.”

Pope Francis made his comments and offered his encouragement and condolences Feb. 18 during a meeting with members of the Congregation for Eastern Churches, most of which are based in the Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Europe, including Ukraine.

“Humanity still seems to be groping in the dark,” the pope said. “We have witnessed the massacres of the conflicts in the Middle East, in Syria and Iraq; those in the Ethiopian region of Tigray; and threatening winds are still blowing in the steppes of Eastern Europe, lighting the fuses and blasts of weapons and leaving the hearts of the poor and the innocent freezing.”

At the same time, he said, “the drama of Lebanon continues, leaving many people without bread; young people and adults have lost hope and are leaving those lands.”

Pope Francis noted that the Congregation for Eastern Churches was established by Pope Benedict XV, who died 100 years ago. “He denounced the incivility of war as a ‘useless slaughter,’” but “his warning went unheeded by the leaders of the nations involved in the First World War. Just as St. John Paul II’s appeal to avert the conflict in Iraq went unheeded.”

“At this moment, when there are so many wars everywhere, this appeal both of the popes and of men and women of goodwill is unheard,” he said, adding that it seems that the greatest prize for peace should be given to wars: a contradiction!”

People love to talk about how humanity has made so much progress in science, technology, knowledge and “so many beautiful things,” but it is “going backwards in weaving peace,” he said. “We must pray and ask forgiveness for this attitude.”

**Statistics show imbalance in ratio of Catholics per priest**

**VATICAN CITY (CNS) —** The number of Catholics and of Catholic men and women who devote their lives to serving them continues to grow in Africa and Asia, Vatican statistics show, but pastoral ministry is still much more readily available to Catholics in Europe.

At the end of 2020, the number of Catholics in the world reached 1.36 billion, an increase of 16 million over the previous year, according to the Vatican’s Central Office of Church Statistics.

While Catholics remained about 17.7% of the world’s population, their numbers grew in Africa by about 2.1% and in Asia by 1.8% while in Europe the increase was just 0.3%, said the summary, which was based on numbers reported Dec. 31, 2020.

And while just over 20% of the world’s Catholics live in Europe, 40% of the world’s priests minister there. The Americas have 48% of the world’s Catholics, but only 29.3% of the world’s priests. The Vatican reported that 18.9% of the world’s Catholics live in Africa and are served by 12.3% of the world’s priests; 11% of Catholics live in Asia served by 17.3% of the world’s priests; and just under 1% of the global Catholic population lives in Oceania where 1.1% of the world’s priests live.

The Catholic Church also had 5,363 bishops at the end of 2020 with 13.4% of them ministering in Africa. The total number of diocesan and religious-priest orders decreased globally to 410,219, the Vatican office said. But the decrease was due to falling numbers in Europe, North America and Oceania. The number of priests increased in Africa and Asia.

The statistical office noted an “obvious imbalance” in the ratio of Catholics per priest in different regions. Globally there is one priest for every 3,314 Catholics in the world. But the ratio is one priest for 1,746 Catholics in Europe, 2,086 per priest in the Americas and 5,089 per priest in Africa.

The number of religious brothers rose in 2020 to 50,569, the office said, with the numbers going up in Africa, Asia and Europe. And while the number of women religious in Africa and Asia increased, the total was not enough to offset the declines in Europe, and the Americas. The total number of professed women was 619,546.
The North County Catholic welcomes contributions to “Around the Diocese.” Parishioners are invited to send information about activities to: North Country Catholic, PO Box 326, Ogdensburg, NY 13669; fax, 1-866-314-7296; e-mail news@northcountrycatholic.org.

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

Training Manager at abevilacqua@adkmerry.org or by phone at 518-523-5446.

CLINTON

40 DAYS FOR LIFE
Plattsburgh - You’re invited to join other Christians for 40 Days for Life — 40 days of prayer and fasting for an end to abortion.
Date: March 2 to April 10
Time: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Place: Outside Planned Parenthood
Features: Stand and peacefully pray during a 40-day vigil in the public right-of-way outside Planned Parenthood of the North Country.
Contact: Nancy Belzile at 518-593-6024 or email nancy_s6@hotmail.com for more information.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
Ellenburg Center — Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will take place on the Fridays during Lent.
Date: March 4th to April 8th
Time: Noon to 3 p.m.
Place: Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer.
Contact: Deacon Ken Lushia 518-493-6671 or Sarah Anderson, OFS 518-534-9976

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST: JESUS PRESENT AND HOW TO SHARE IT
Plattsburgh — As a continuation of the Eucharist Initiative a presentation to be held on the Liturgy of the Eucharist: Jesus Present and how to share it.
Date: March 12
Time: 9:30 a.m. to Noon
Place: Holy Cross Parish Center
Speaker: Father Tojo Chacko, HGN
Features: Cost is free. Please bring a bagged lunch for food and conversation afterwards.
Contact: To register for a location go to: www.rcdony.org/liturgyeucharist

ST. LAWRENCE

LENTEN MASS
Port Henry — Extraordinary Form Latin Mass to be held each Sunday.
Schedule: 1 p.m. on Sundays
Place: St. Patrick’s Church
Features: The traditional Latin Mass celebrated according to the 1962 Missal of St. John the XXIII.

DEVOTION AND HOLY HOUR
St. Regis Falls — All are invited to the monthly first Saturday Devotion and Holy Hour for Vocations.
Date: First Saturday of the Month
Time: Following the 4:30 anticipated Mass
Place: St. Ann’s Church

CHICKEN AND BISCUIT DINNER
North Bangor — The communities of St. Augustine and St. Mary’s will sponsor a takeaway chicken and biscuit dinner.
Date: Feb. 26
Time: 3 p.m. till all are served
Place: St. Augustine’s Parish Center, 2472 State Route 11, North Bangor
Menu includes chicken and biscuits, mashed potatoes, vegetable, cranberry sauce and dessert.
Cost: $11 per dinner.
Contact: Pre-order on Feb. 25 from 9 a.m. to noon or 8 a.m. on Feb. 26 until all are served by calling 518-483-6674.

JEFFERSON-LEWIS

HOLY HOUR AND DIVINE MERCY
Houseville — A Holy Hour of Adoration with the Divine Mercy Chaplet will be observed the first Sunday of the month.
Date: March 6
Time: Following 11 a.m. Mass
Place: St. Hedwig’s Church
Contact: 315-348-6260

PRAYER AND ADORATION
Massena — Commissioned Lay Ministers are invited to gather for Adoration and Rosary.
Date: Every third Wednesday of the month (March 16)
Time: 6:30 to 7 p.m.
Place: Sacred Heart Church

SURVIVING DIVORCE
The Family Life Office is offering the Surviving Divorce Program, beginning mid-February in Watertown, Gouverneur, Canton and Potsdam.
Dates: To be determined (will be held once a week)
Time: 2-3 hours
Cost: $25
Features: This program helps participants find personal healing and hope by working through the emotional upheaval of separation and divorce.
Contact: Register online at www.rcdony.org/survivingdivorce.
For more information contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920 or startaglia@rcdony.org.

LOVING AUTHENTICALLY
Commissioned Lay Ministers and candidates are invited to this program that is designed to strengthen the participant’s conviction about the truth, beauty and importance of church teaching on natural law and sexual morality and to give participants a basic understanding of the ethical

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9
NEW YORK (CNS) – In 2017, Channing Tatum and Reid Carolin were among the executive producers of the HBO documentary “War Dog: A Soldier’s Best Friend.”

The film explored the U.S. military’s post-9/11 deployment of canines trained for use in special operations as well as the deep affection that often developed between these animals and their human partners.

Now, the duo has co-directed a fictional riff on the subject, and the result is the quirky, good-natured – but not family-friendly – road movie “Dog” (MGM). Along with collaborating at the helm, Carolin wrote the script while Tatum stars as ex-Army Ranger Jackson Briggs.

In exchange for the promise of a much-needed professional recommendation from his former commander, Briggs reluctantly agrees to transport Lulu, a formidable Belgian Malinois psychologically scarred by exposure to combat, to the funeral of her handler. Once a popular favorite with Briggs and his comrades, Lulu is now dangerously unstable and must be kept muzzled much of the time.

The duo’s long journey from Tacoma, Washington, to Nogales, Arizona, turns out to be rich in comic incidents. But it also showcases for the audience brain-injured Briggs’ physical suffering and social marginalization.

Naturally, the two wounded veterans bond over time. But, if that process follows a predictable course, it is nonetheless an enduring development to watch, one that gains a little gritty traction from the macho gruffness Briggs displays in his initial determination to show unruly Lulu who’s in charge.

Some of the humorous situations in which Briggs finds himself, however, preclude endorsement of his story for any but grown viewers. These include his hapless efforts to pick up women in a bar, the sudden prospect of bedding down with two practitioners of tantric yoga he comes across, and a run-in with a marijuana farmer who takes him for a spy dispatched by rival growers.

A note of farce pervades these interactions, and the upshot is basically that the American West abounds in eccentrics. But Briggs shows a ready willingness to go astray in various ways, if given the opportunity. He’s also not above playing on the public’s sympathy for injured servicemen, though he does so in an essentially harmless, if slyly fraudulent, way.

Oddly, at one point, Briggs makes a pit stop to relieve himself and does so against the base of a roadside sign proclaiming “Thou shalt not kill” – one of a series of such placards presumably containing all Ten Commandments. Is this meant to suggest that his experience on the battlefield has made him indifferent to the taking of human life or that he is alienated from God in general?

If the latter, his thinking is contradicted by the highly generalized piety espoused by Gus (Kevin Nash), a peer he meets in a later scene. Gus is of the few characters in “Dog” we’re clearly meant to take seriously. Still, the earlier moment is an uncomfortable one for believers.

Overall, though, mature moviegoers will likely appreciate this project’s sympathetic depiction of those whose sacrificial patriotic contribution all too often goes unrewarded by society at large. They’ll also probably be inclined to wink at its protagonist’s foibles and moral shortcomings.

The film contains the sensual preliminaries of a potentially aberrant encounter, drug use, brief irreverent behavior, sexual references, a few uses of profanity, about a dozen mild oaths, at least one rough term, much crude and crass language and obscene gestures. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III – adults. The Motion Picture Association rating is PG-13 – parents strongly cautioned.

Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

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### Around the diocese

#### REFLECT AND RECONCILE

A Diocese of Ogdensburg youth Lenten retreat to be held for all young people in grades 7 to 12. **Schedule:** March 12 at St. Mary’s Cathedral Brzana Room, Ogdensburg; March 26 at St. Mary’s Parish Center, Champlain. **Time:** 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. **Features:** As we dive deeper into the sacrament of Reconciliation and the season of Lent, we should center ourselves and work to understand who we are. Join fellow youth in grades 7 to 12 as you get a chance to dive deeper, to understand more in a space that is judgment-free and supportive. Drinks and snacks included. **Contact:** Registration: rcddy.org/lententreat. For more information please contact Tom Semeraro - Office of Youth Ministry - 315-393-2920 ext. 1415 tsemeraro@rcdony.org

#### PRESENTATION OF FORGIVEN

A Continuation of the Eucharist Initiative. Explore the transforming power and the healing grace of the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. Discover the merciful way that God calls us back to Himself when we have sinned. **Date:** March 26 **Time:** 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. **Place:** St. Mary’s Parish Center, Clayton; Dostie Hall, Watertown; St. Peter’s Church, Lowville; Father Amyot Parish Center, Norfolk; St. Edmund’s Parish Center, Ellenburg; The Emmaus Room inside St. Peter’s Church, Plattsburgh; St. Bernard’s School, Saranac Lake. **Features:** There will be time for discussion during the event which is free to attend. Please bring a bagged lunch. **Contact:** Register at rcddy.org/forgiven

#### YOUTH RALLY

Saranac Lake – Diocese of Ogdensburg Youth Rally to be held. **Date:** Apr. 2 **Time:** 10:30 a.m. sign in to 6 p.m. (youth rally ends at 4:30 with Mass at St. Agnes at 5 p.m.) **Place:** High Peaks Resort **Cost:** $35 per youth **Features:** A Special Day event for you people in grades 7 to 12. Theme will be “In His House.” It will be a day filled with Faith, Friendship, Fun, and a closing Mass led by most Reverend Bishop Terry LaValley. **Contact:** Please visit rcddy.org/youth/rally or contact Tom Semeraro 315-393-2920 ext. 1415

#### CHRISM MASS

Ogdensburg - The Diocese of Ogdensburg is invited to join Bishop Terry R. LaValley in the annual Renewal of Priestly Commitment, the Blessing of the Holy Oils and the consecration of the Sacred Chrism for use in all the churches of the Diocese symbolizing that we are one family in Christ. **Date:** April 7 **Time:** 11 a.m. **Place:** St. Mary’s Cathedral

**Features:** The Chrism Mass will also be livestreamed at rcddy.org/live-mass.
Readings prepare us for start of Lent

This last Sunday in Ordinary Time before Ash Wednesday is a good preparation for the beginning of Lent this Wednesday. There are so many critical issues hanging over our heads, we really need to be a light in the darkness more than ever.

In the first reading from the book of Sirach, we are warned about our speech. “The fruit of a tree shows the care it has had; so too does one’s speech disclose the bent of one’s mind. Our faults are revealed. There is the saying that when a person is silent, he may be thought to be a a stupid fool, better than to speak and thus to remove all doubt.”

In the second reading from Corinthians, Paul tells us that when our mortality is clothed with immortality, we will achieve real victory over death. This is such a consoling truth for us.

I love today’s Gospel from Luke. “Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own?” No one should judge another unless he has made sure that he can see clearly. This is a good lesson for us to avoid hypocrisy. A good tree will produce good, honest fruit.

Our Scripture this Sunday warns us against blowing a trumpet this Lent so that everyone will admire us for fasting and almsgiving. Humility is a great start for the season.

No trumpet blasts this year boasting to everyone of our fasting and almsgiving. Humility and almsgiving are a great start to the Lenten season. And let’s help our family and friends to understand the urgency of how we spend this year’s Lent. There are so many opportunities provided by our parishes for real growth in the Spirit.

Let’s resolve now to take advantage of ones that we overlooked last year.

Practice what you preach, etc.

Social media and inspirational quotes seem to have been made for each other. People with nothing else to do spend hours producing graphics that are colorful and idioms that are thought provoking.

Classics like “live as if you will die tomorrow” or “be yourself, everyone else is taken.” I like the one I use in homiletics training, “are you the same guy in the coffee shop that you are when you preach?” It is a little long, but you get the gist, I hope.

The readings for next Sunday are jammed with great lines. In Sirach we will hear some classics. A little editorial license is required but consider, “one’s faults appear when one speaks.” This one is heavy, “tribulation is the test of the just.” We will pause to let that one rumble around your head for a minute.

Here’s a keeper from Sirach. “Praise no one before he speaks.”

Jesus uses parables to speak to the crowds, even to his disciples sometimes. Luke shares some favorites this week: “Can a blind person lead a blind person?” and “Remove the wooden beam from your own eye, then you can help remove the splinter from your brother’s eye.”

How about “people do not pick figs from thornbushes”?

My current fixation with word phrases, idioms, was prompted by one I heard on the radio the other day. Mr. Announcer told me there would be a discussion shortly about the “sphere of reality.”

That was a new one for me. I was always a big fan of the window of opportunity but “sphere of reality” was catchy enough to prompt some meditation. First, I thought I should look up “sphere of reality.” Since there was going to be a discussion about it, I presume somebody has already put some “flesh on those bones.”

The sphere (of reality) is a complex and multi-dimensional experiential and learning domain that replicates a real-world space; it is essentially a self-contained repository of realistic experience and information, much like a visual library.

Uh-huh. Got it. I could not make up that definition. Meditation cancelled.

I’ll go back to some of the other phrases found in the Bible. In Numbers, Moses gets the attention of the people of Israel in the desert when he yells “listen you rebels!” Someone asked recently, “ever heard a homily start that way?” It would certainly get some in the pews to listen for a minute or two.

Paul warns us all in Corinthians when he quotes a Greek proverb: “bad company corrupts good character.” I guess that’s what Mom meant when she said I shouldn’t hang around with “that crowd.”

Words are wonderful, phrases are even better. Like the Shema prayer of Jewish tradition: “The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart.”

Now, those are words worth some meditation time.

Deacon Kevin Mastellon ministers in Watertown. He is the Director of Permanent Deacons for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

**Called to Serve**

**The Good News Foundation of Central New York Inc. is seeking applicants for the position of EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

The Good News Foundation of Central NY, Inc. seeks to replace its retiring Executive Director. The ideal candidate will be a practicing Catholic able to demonstrate a minimum of three (3) years non-profit organizational leadership overseeing programming, fund development, and facilities usage. Experience fostering relationships with Board of Directors, volunteers, religious and lay church and community leaders is also desired.

The mission and description of The Good News and a complete list of duties and qualifications, along with instructions on how to apply, visit [thegoodnewscenter.org](http://thegoodnewscenter.org).
First Station of the Cross

Instead of our regular reflections, throughout this holy season of Lent, the Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg will be featuring Stations of the Cross.

These Stations of the Cross were assembled by Maureen Crowley Heil, director of Programs and Development for the Pontifical Mission Societies and the Archdiocese of Boston.

First Station:

Leader: We adore You, O Christ, and we bless you.
All: Because by your Holy Cross, You have redeemed the world.

Reader: As the Ugandan Martyrs, pictured here, were sentenced to their own deaths because they would not give up their faith in You, they prayed and sang to your glory. Help us, Jesus, to remember that in making small sacrifices this Lent for others, we share in a part of your Kingdom with all your holy people.

OBITUARIES


Chaumont – Karl Michael Teitsch, 66; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 12, 2022 at All Saints Church.

Ellenburg – Marjorie Rose (Trombley) Matthews, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 15, 2022 at St. Edmund’s Church; burial in Immaculate Conception Cemetery, Churubusco.

Harrsville – Joy Elaine (Mulvaney) Ritz, 81; Mass of Christian Burial in the spring at St. Francis Solanus Church; burial in St. Francis Solanus Cemetery.


Lake Placid – Richard Charles Fadden, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 22, 2022 at St. Agnes Church; burial in St. Agnes Cemetery.

Lake Placid – Louise Marie (Mid-dagh) Tiblis, 94; Services to be held at a later date.


Massena – Shaun E. Balaban, 39; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 25, 2022 at Sacred Heart Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Janet M. (Gagner) Bouchez, 97; Mass of Christian Burial in spring at Sacred Heart Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

Massena – Alvina Jane (Howley) Bradish, 81; Funeral Services Feb. 14, 2022 at the Phillips Memorial Home.

Massena – Raymond A. gravel, 77; Services to be held at a later date.

Massena – Leona McGrath, 87; Private services held.

Massena – Richard Peters, 81; Funeral Services Feb. 15, 2022 at the Donaldson Funeral Home.

Moosers Forks – Douglas J. Duprey, 92; Mass of Christian Burial at St. Ann’s Church.


Ogdensburg – Pamela Jane (Jenkins) Miller, 75; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 18, 2022 at Notre Dame Cemetery.

Ogdensburg – Dalton “Shep” M. Sheppard, 89; Funeral Services Feb. 20, 2022 at the Fox & Murray Funeral Home; burial in Foxwood Memorial Park.


Peru – Jack Johnston, 92; Graveside Services in St. Augustine’s Cemetery.

Plattsburgh – Barbara J. (Prokop) Carpenter, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 17, 2022 at Our Lady of Victory Church; burial in St. Peter’s Cemetery.

Potsdam – Keith E. Hoyt, 87; Funeral Services Feb. 15, 2022 at Garner Funeral Service; burial in Bayside Cemetery.

Potsdam – Jane Hurley, 88; Funeral Services in the spring.

Rouses Point – Norman G. Lefebvre, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 12, 2022 at St. Patrick’s Church.

Rouses Point – Venita McChesney; Mass of Christian Burial March 5, 2022 at St. Patrick’s Church.


Watertown – F. Joseph Fusco, 90; Mass of Christian Burial at St. Patrick’s in the spring; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.


Waddington – Stella M. (Hamelin) Burns, 87; Funeral Services Feb. 16, 2022 at the Phillips Memorial Home; burial in White Church Cemetery, Lisbon.

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