

MARCH 2020

InTouch



***Christ led,
Christ fed,
Hope filled!***

Priority One

Creating a Culture of
Vocations

Priority Two

Strengthening Faith
Formation in Family Life

Priority Three

Building Parishes with Living
Stones

**Renew Faith,
Nurture Hope,
Discover Love**

**EPISCOPAL DELEGATE
FOR RELIGIOUS**

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Dear Sisters, Brothers, Fathers,

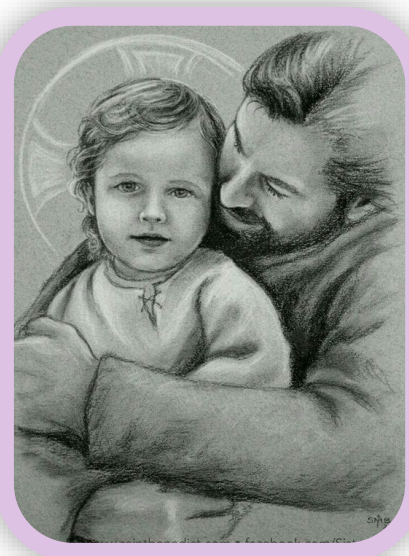
I want to thank the sisters who responded to my plea for the "Musings" pages. I am sure you will find their reflections food for thought. I look forward to hearing from more of you. Please don't hesitate to share your 'musings' with all of us. If you don't see your thoughts reflected in this issue, they will make the next one!

As we move through these days of Lent, we certainly don't have to look far to find ways to sacrifice. With COVID-19 on our doorsteps, it's good to remember that God is there as well.

On a more positive note, with the sound of geese flying overhead, green sprouts shooting up from under dead leaves, and the warm sun shining down (now and then!), I am reminded that life is renewing itself. God is working his spring miracles once again even amid the chaos of COVID-19.

Just in case I am not in the office and you want to get in touch with me, my home email is bcollinsssj@yahoo.com and my home phone number is 315-393-6511.

Blessings and prayers!



*Do not lose hope;
St. Joseph also experienced
moments of difficulty,
but he never lost faith
and was able to overcome them,
in the certainty that
God never abandons us.*

-Pope Francis



**Diocese of
Ogdensburg**



Musings

One of my favorite sayings is: "FATHER FORGIVE THEM FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY ARE DOING" I pray this often during Mass.



-Sr. Barbara Langlois, OP

"We strive to witness to Mercy when we reverence the dignity of each person, create a spirit of hospitality and pursue integrity of word and deed in our lives." Sisters of Mercy Constitutions.

-Sr. Catherine Cummings, RSM



In a few days, those of us who are Christians, will begin a journey through Ash Wednesday and Lent. I'd like to share a slightly different reflection with that in mind. Yes, it's about desire, a desire to strive to be "more than we are at this given moment- as individuals, as community, as country, as world, as part of all creation". To do that, I invite you to consider the following....

Desire....A strong feeling for something that is wished for or needed or wanted....

Desiderata..... a word from the Latin of the 17th Century meaning Desire.

Desiderata.....a word which means "something that is needed or wanted".

Desiderata....a poem that has inspired so many of us over the years to be the best we can be, while reminding us to have faith in ourselves, to be kind to others and so much more.

Desiderata..... a blueprint for human relationships, in ordinary as well as extraordinary moments of our lives.

Desiderata..... a guide for one's belief in God - a Divine being- and whoever that is for each of us.

Many years ago, a beloved mentor and friend of mine sent me a parchment with the words of The Desiderata, which was written by Max Ehrmann, and which holds many of the ideals that I believe in. She sent it to me at a moment of deep self reflection and decision making in my own life. Her intent, which she voiced to me quite clearly, was to emphasize that I am a beloved child, with a right to be here! The Desiderata is probably not new to most of us and no matter how many times I read and reflect it, it always is timely and takes on nuances of meaning as I live each day. I hope it does the same for you.

Yes, the poem is lengthy but then, how do you sum up life in a couple words?

[<https://www.desiderata.com/desiderata.html> - too long to copy here]

In a very adept way, I believe the author of the Desiderata touches on the heart of the Gospel truths: Desiderata speaks of faith in God and love of neighbor and self.

It teaches us about the ideals of living a good life. In a time when we are surrounded by just how awful humans can be toward each other, we must dare to stand up, to stand in HOPE, faith and love.



Desiderata reveals what is needed to be at peace and to be truly happy: Respect of others, living by the principles of humility and trust, and loving with a sincere heart - all which beckon us to be "whole" and "holy".

It invites us to be compassionate people, to be kind to others and gentle with self, to walk in justice and honor everyone with human dignity, and to live in HOPE, knowing that there is a rhythm and rhyme in the unfolding of the universe which we are called to respect. Each line is a guide to living and a guide to being healthy, happy and holy.

That's what I believe Desiderata is about...a desire to be the best reflection of the Divine that we can be, a desire to be rooted in listening... and to respond in goodness... and to be a transforming source of HOPE to all.

Live and be HOPE this week...and Blessed Lent to all.

-Sr. Debbie Blow, OP



Friends,

During Lent, we apprentice to Jesus in his forty-day sojourn in the desert. We stubbornly stay with him, doing what he did there, facing what he faced there.

The desert is the place of clarification. When we have been stripped of the relatively trivial desires that preoccupy us, we can see, with a somewhat disturbing clarity, who we essentially are and what most pressingly matters. Blaise Pascal said that most of us spend our lives seeing *divertissements* (distractions), for we cannot bear the weight of the great questions. We play, gossip, eat and drink, seek the most banal entertainment—so that we don't have to face the truth about ourselves, the reality of death, and the demands of God. The Spirit drives holy people into the desert because it is the place where the *divertissements* disappear: "He fasted for forty days and forty nights."

At the end of the Lord's fast, the tempter arrives—because decision follows clarification. How often in the Scripture the theme of decision arises. Jesus himself provokes the stark choice: "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

And then Jesus is ready for mission; immediately after the temptations, he gathers his disciples around him and commences the ministry that will reach its culmination only on the cross.

So this Lent, let us resolve to rid ourselves of *divertissements*, going a bit hungry and thirsty, purposely running on empty—so that the great questions may be asked with clarity. Let us allow the devil to come, tempting us with the love of pleasure, the ego, and power—for in temptation comes decision. And in the desert with Jesus the Master, let us realize that we too are people on mission—because in decision comes identity.

Peace,

-Sr. Deepali Bankar, SCC



Thursday, April 2 - Chrism Mass

Meeting with Bishop LaValley in Watertown at the SSJ Motherhouse for all Religious

SUNDAY CELEBRATION IN ABSENCE OF A PRIEST (SCAP) WORKSHOPS

- Lowville (St. Peter's Church Hall), Wednesday, April 22 at 7PM
- Champlain (St. Mary's new Parish Center), Thursday, April 23 at 1030 AM
- Lake Placid (St. Agnes School), Wednesday, April 29 at 7PM
- Morristown (St. John's Parish Center), Monday, May 4 at 2PM

SAFETY AND AWARENESS PRESENTATIONS

Thursday, April 30th from 2:30-3:30pm, Brzana Hall at St. Mary's Cathedral
Wednesday, May 6th from 1:00-2:00pm, the Emmaus Room at St. Peter's Church in Plattsburgh.

Prayers for...

- Sr. Stephanie Frenette, OP who has been ill and in the hospital
- 4 new Sisters of the Cross who are preparing to come to our Diocese. They will be working in Ogdensburg at St. Joseph's Home
- Sr. Jackie, SCC whose parents are both seriously ill in India—and for her parents!
- Bishop LaValley on his birthday (March 26th)
- all our sick and infirmed who are more at risk for COVID-19

CHECK THE DIOCESAN WEBSITE before planning to attend any of the above gatherings.



Sister Donna Jean Tavernier, GNSH died Feb 13th. She was a native of Ogdensburg and served for 33 years in our Diocese.