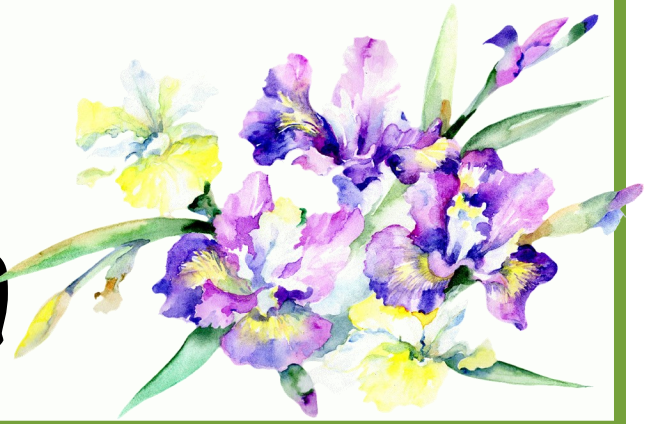


May/June 2023

# In Touch



***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**



Phone: 315-393-2920



**Diocese  
of  
Ogdensburg**

*"I will call to mind the deeds of the Lord;  
yes, I will remember your wonders of old"  
(Ps. 77:11).*

In his homily for Corpus Christi in 2020, Pope Francis reflects on the importance of memory. In the Old Testament, Moses reminds the people not to forget God and all He has done for His people. Fathers are commanded to pass on the memory of God's action in the lives of the Chosen People to their descendants.

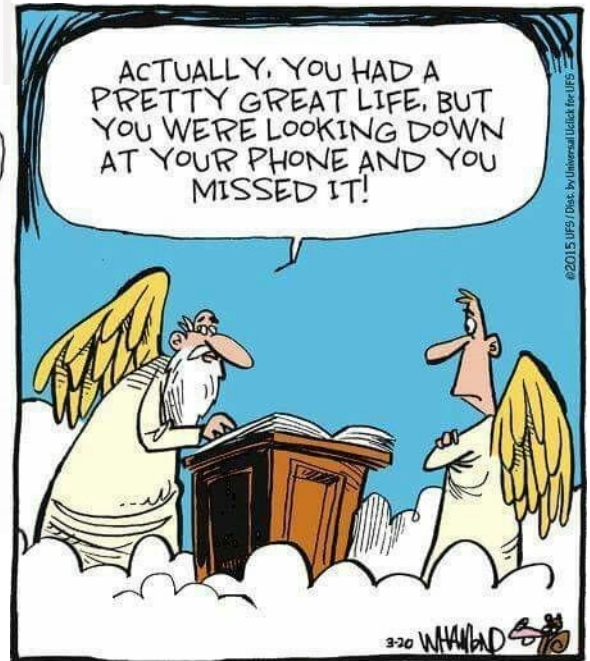
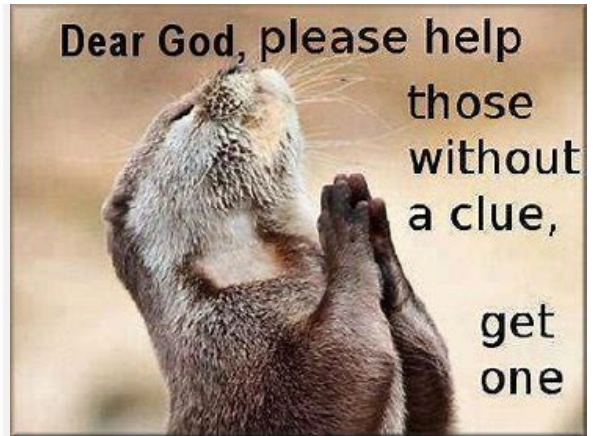
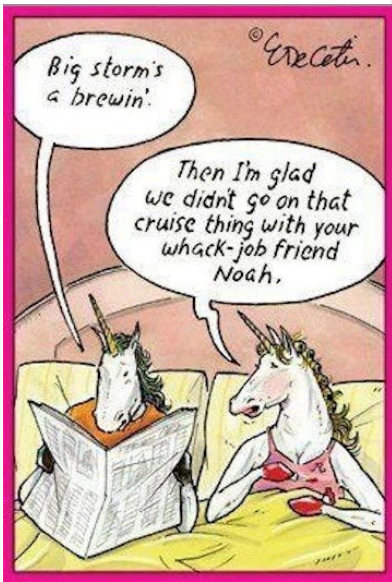
But, the transmission of memories can be interrupted. What then? Pope Francis goes on to say:

God knows how difficult it is, he knows how weak our memory is, and he has done something remarkable: he left us a memorial. He did not just leave us words, for it is easy to forget what we hear. He did not just leave us the Scriptures, for it is easy to forget what we read. He did not just leave us signs, for we can forget even what we see. He gave us Food, for it is not easy to forget something we have actually tasted. He left us Bread in which he is truly present, alive and true, with all the flavor of his love. Receiving Him we can say: "He is the Lord; he remembers me!"

"Memory is not something private; it is the path that unites us to God and to others." Later in this newsletter, you will find a reflection written by Sr. Debbie Blow and Sr. Stephanie Frenette in which they share with us a powerful moment in their lives and in so doing strengthen and unite us all as we journey together remembering all that God has done and continues to do for each of us.

*Happy Easter! Happy Pentecost!! Happy Summer!!!*

# A Touch of Inspiration...A Bit of Humor



Q. What did the cat say after eating two robins lying in the sun?



A. I just love baskin' robins!

GreatCleanJokes.com



## Prayer

(based on Psalm 113)

The mother bent down and picked up her little one  
nursing him, loving him, affirming him;  
the father bends down and lifts his son  
into his wheelchair and pushes him out  
to experience the wind and the sun and the beauty that  
he so often misses;  
a woman bends low  
because age and infirmity means she can do no other;  
and the old man bends low to pick up a penny from the  
pavement  
in the forlorn hope that a meal could cost so little.

So, in Christ, God bends low  
to tell us that we are valued  
to love us towards wholeness  
to raise us up to new life.

There are times we too must bend low  
to enable others to rise.  
Amen

## Morning Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, fill me with Your fire  
So that I can be more like You.  
Open my eyes so that I may see You clearly.  
Open my ears so that I may hear You soundly.  
Open my mind so that I may understand You  
more.  
Open my heart so that I may love You fiercely.  
Open my hands so that I may give generously  
and receive humbly.  
Open my mouth so that I may speak Your truth  
boldly.  
Come Holy Spirit, fill me with Your fire  
so that I can be more like You.  
Help me. I trust You.

We don't fully understand who Jesus is until we sit down with him at the sacred, sacrificial banquet that makes present his saving cross. In the Liturgy of the Eucharist, in the breaking of the bread and the drinking of the cup, we see him in his Real Presence. Finally, having seen, we move... At the close of the liturgy, we are sent: "Go forth, the Mass is ended." Hans Urs von Balthasar said that Jesus vanished immediately after being recognized by the two Emmaus disciples because he disappears into the mission of the Church. So the Eucharistic Christ becomes our mission, our work

-Bishop Robert Barron in *Eucharist*



Two sisters from the community of Mary Mother of the Church in Ghana recently visited our Diocese. It is our hope and theirs that three of their sisters will soon join us in the Diocese. They will be ministering at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg and living in the parish house in Lisbon.

Our gifts are not the same. Some are dramatic and others are unassuming, Some may be tied to intellectual prowess and others to matters of the heart. Some—like teaching, preaching and athletic abilities—can be immediately seen. Others are more hidden, such as the gift to recognize another's pain or the patience to listen when a hurting friend needs to vent. The church is impoverished whenever we fail to use the gifts we have been given. At Pentecost, each disciple was marked with his or her individual flame. If the gospel is to spread to the ends of the earth, we must each find our particular fire and use it.

-Fr. George M. Smiga  
adapted from *The Holy Spirit in the Bible*



## How Much Love Does It Take?



Many of you have reached out to me, graciously asking how Sr. Steph and I are doing. That's a very long story, but here's a glimpse. In the past 3 months, Sr. Steph has been hospitalized twice, the latest being during Holy Week and Easter Week.

Sadly, she was very, very serious with a severe reaction to a virus called metapneumovirus—a virus that's not life threatening for most, but became so for Sr. Steph.

I spent 9 days with Sr. Steph in isolation in the hospital, while she struggled on multiple levels. On Good Friday, she deteriorating, and the doctors and nurses were encouraging me to talk to her. Suddenly, I understood much more deeply, what it means to walk with Jesus on his crucifixion walk. I was told Steph needed to eat and drink and she was becoming more and more difficult to awaken. Fear and reality closed in and surrounded me in a way I have yet to totally understand.

At one point, I asked her to please drink and I put a straw to her lips. She shook her head no and then slowly mouthed one word—"washcloth". So, I asked her if she wanted me to put a cold wet washcloth to her lips. She nodded yes without opening her eyes. And so, I did put a wet, cold washcloth to her lips. At that precise moment, I found myself reflection on the sponge thrust to Jesus' lips by the soldiers, as well as the cloth Veronica used to wipe Jesus' face. It's odd, how in what one might assume is an unholy moment filled with desperation and dread, became an opportunity to connect the walk we were on as viewed through the Gospels.

In an odd sort of way, I suddenly realized I was on the road with Steph, with Jesus and his believers on Good Friday ...and tears streamed down my face. I didn't want to be on this road. I honestly wasn't totally aware of how the situation had become because I was trying to focus on giving Steph what she needed. Suddenly and quite abruptly, it smacked in the face.

How much love does it take? Mother Teresa says, "**It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.**" No, of course I wasn't planning on writing about this experience but after a few weeks, I realized I must share, I must write, because at some point in our lives, we are all called to walk the Calvary walk with and for someone we love.

Slowly, from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, there was a change occurring in Sr. Steph. She was on the threshold of a new dimension. On Easter afternoon, she shared with me that she didn't remember anything of the week prior, only that she had a "face to face" with God about death. And she told God in those divine moments that her "mission wasn't finished yet".

The horror of Good Friday had transformed into the Easter of possibility and Resurrection.

A few days later, Steph was released. Yes, she has a long road to recovery once again, because she also had some sort of additional neurological event during those days, similar to previous strokes. But there's a newness, a difference in Steph these days. She's living in a new dimension, so to speak. There's a sense of deep peace and calm, a disposition of gratitude and an awareness that's been enriched by the personal encounter she had with God.

**"A life not lived for others is not a life."** This quote from Mother Teresa aptly summarizes where Steph is (and has always been) on her earthly journey. She is recovering at home and doing as well as can be expected. He stands on the threshold of newness, on the road to Emmaus. And just as those who walked the road to Emmaus with Jesus, Steph and I need to share with you what happened on "our" road to Emmaus. Steph now lives with an understanding, that while she may not be actively teaching children, or actively going to Nicaragua or actively traveling to Congregation meetings, or able to walk again, her mission remains the same, just with a different dimension .. She still shares HOPE with all around her. She still strives to love beyond measure. She still lives for others, she still serves ... as do I ... and as we all strive to do in our own ways, in whatever human capacity we have been blessed with. That's how much love it takes!

-Steph and Debbie

