Nations against nations. Rulers abusing their power. Fear, uncertainty, even despair taking hold in fragile hearts because of threats to safety abroad and at home.

The world into which Jesus was born was rife with many of the same problems our world faces today. Yet, the readings for the Epiphany of the Lord help us understand that because of Jesus’ birth, there is more light than darkness, more hope than despair.

The humble appearance of Jesus’ birth — in a manger, apart from any comfort except the love of His earthly parents — is not a reflection of weakness or hopelessness in a troubled time. Quite the contrary: Jesus’ birth reflects power and dominion that are no less potent today than they were in the stable in Bethlehem.

The shepherds knew of this power. Jesus’ birth was heralded by a “heavenly host” of angels (Lk 2:13), which they witnessed while in their fields. No minor event could possibly be worthy of such pronouncement. They had to leave everything, go, see and worship.

The Magi also knew, and they traveled a great distance at serious peril to do homage to the Christ Child.

Even before the dream that instructed them to go home “by another way” (Mt 2:12), these Wise Men must have sensed Herod’s violence-prone jealousy when he dispatched them to Bethlehem. And they bowed to another, more powerful ruler — the babe in the manger — never betraying Him, but defying Herod’s order to tell him where the child lay.

Close by, through all the visitors to the manger, Joseph stood watch and Mary “kept all these things” in her heart (Lk 2:19). Theirs were not passive but very active acknowledgements of the glory God was revealing to them and others, and to the power exercised through their lives.

First, Mary’s yes, and then Joseph’s obedience to heavenly instruction manifest how far God’s dominion extended beyond their understanding and own human will.

Beyond the stable in Bethlehem, others who did not yet know of Christ’s birth were living in the world, with worldly cares and worldly kings.

Other shepherds, not blessed with angels’ song, were lifetime social outcasts. Other wise men not attuned to God’s call either never set out on the road to Bethlehem or perhaps they gave in to manipulation by persons in power with their own agendas and went astray. Outside the stable, kings like Herod could rule with unfettered violence, and no one could stop them.

It was an utterly dark world, fraught with human injustices. But Jesus’ coming, full of love, light and the grace of salvation, changed their world.

And He continues to change ours, today. Then, as now, Jesus’ message of salvation rings true among all who will listen.

— Maureen Pratt, Catholic News Service
Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching  
St. John Vianney, S. Burlington  
7 - 8 pm  
Often called “the Church’s Best Kept Secret,” Catholic social teaching is a good and useful guide in living the Christian life and truly being a Light to the World. Join our discussions on how these ideals can help bring us more into a Christ-centered life. Theme # 3 is “The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable: St. Teresa of Calcutta and Serving the Suffering Christ.” Throughout her life and ministry, St. Teresa of Calcutta never lost sight of the fact that, in serving the poorest of the poor she was actually serving Christ Himself. In this light we look at the Church’s Preferential Option for the Poor.

Saint Albans Youth Night  
St. Mary Parish Center, St. Albans  
7:30 - 9:30 pm  
All teens in 7th – 12th grade are welcome to join us! A night of fun, fellowship and faith. Most nights begin with a good amount of fun, large group games/activities, reflection/talk, small group discussion and prayer. Join a great group of teens from the Franklin County area! All are welcome!

Padre Pio Devotions  
Holy Family, Essex Junction  
8 - 10 am  
The Padre Pio Prayer Group meets the second Saturday of each month. Rosary starts at 8 am followed by Mass, special intentions for the intercession of Saint Padre Pio. Learning about Padre Pio’s life, ministry and spiritual gifts will follow in the Holy Family Parish Hall after Mass.

Heresies Hiding in Plain Sight and How to Combat Them  
Immaculate Heart of Mary, Williston  
8 - 10:30 am  
Presenter is Fr. Matthew Rensch. Refreshments provided.  
Sponsored by the KOC Rosary Council #4684  
FOR MORE INFO: goodrensch.vt@gmail.com or (802) 872-8063

Youth Ministry Training — Contemporary Moral Issues  
Christ the King, Rutland  
6:30 - 8:30 pm  
This Youth Ministry training workshop will include ‘hot topic’ issues in the world today, including abortion, euthanasia and same sex marriage and how to effectively transmit the Church’s teachings on these subjects. Presented by Father Matthew Rensch, parochial vicar at Christ the King in Rutland. This presentation is part of ongoing Youth Ministry training happening throughout Vermont this year.  
FOR MORE INFO: or RSVP, wgavin@vermontcatholic.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

01|08 TUESDAY  
Seven Themes of Catholic Social Teaching  
St. John Vianney, S. Burlington  
7 - 8 pm  
Often called “the Church’s Best Kept Secret,” Catholic social teaching is a good and useful guide in living the Christian life and truly being a Light to the World. Join our discussions on how these ideals can help bring us more into a Christ-centered life. Theme # 3 is “The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable: St. Teresa of Calcutta and Serving the Suffering Christ.” Throughout her life and ministry, St. Teresa of Calcutta never lost sight of the fact that, in serving the poorest of the poor she was actually serving Christ Himself. In this light we look at the Church’s Preferential Option for the Poor.

01|11 FRIDAY  
Saint Albans Youth Night  
St. Mary Parish Center, St. Albans  
7:30 - 9:30 pm  
All teens in 7th – 12th grade are welcome to join us! A night of fun, fellowship and faith. Most nights begin with a good amount of fun, large group games/activities, reflection/talk, small group discussion and prayer. Join a great group of teens from the Franklin County area! All are welcome!

01|12 SATURDAY  
Padre Pio Devotions  
Holy Family, Essex Junction  
8 - 10 am  
The Padre Pio Prayer Group meets the second Saturday of each month. Rosary starts at 8 am followed by Mass, special intentions for the intercession of Saint Padre Pio. Learning about Padre Pio’s life, ministry and spiritual gifts will follow in the Holy Family Parish Hall after Mass.

01|12 SATURDAY  
Heresies Hiding in Plain Sight and How to Combat Them  
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FOR MORE INFO: goodrensch.vt@gmail.com or (802) 872-8063

01|16 WEDNESDAY  
Vermont Catholic Professionals Networking Breakfast  
St. Michael’s College, Colchester  
8 - 9:30 pm  
We are proud to welcome our guest speaker, Mark Redmond, Executive Director of Spectrum Youth and Family Services. All are welcome! We welcome individuals of all faiths who share our values and are professionals (entrepreneurs, medical, education, corporate, hospitality, etc) looking for networking and professional development opportunities.

01|17-20 THURSDAY – SUNDAY  
Life is Precious Trip  
Washington, DC  
Our second “Life is Precious Trip” is scheduled for Jan. 17-20, 2019. Bus departs from Burlington at roughly 7 pm. Arrive in Washington D.C. Jan. 18. Return to Vermont late afternoon of Jan. 20. Participate in the Annual March for Life, elderly outreach, visiting shrines, monuments and museums, fellowship with other local youth and homeless outreach. Come live and experience why ALL human life is precious in God’s eyes. This trip is greatly backed and supported by the Knights of Columbus and the Bishops Appeal.  
FOR MORE INFO: vermontcatholic.org/event/life-is-precious-trip/

01|26 SATURDAY  
Annual Diocesan Respect Life Mass  
St. Augustine Parish-Montpelier  
9:30 am - 2:30 pm  
Mass at 9:30 am with Bishop Coyne, followed by refreshments in the church hall. At 10:45 am attendees are invited prayerfully walk with Vermont Right to Life to the State House for a group photo on State House stairs. Vermont Right to Life will host a program inside the State House featuring prayer, announcements and guest speaker: Ann McElhinney. The event concludes with refreshments and ends by 2:30 pm.

02|01, 02 FRIDAY - SUNDAY  
3-day Retreat for Students, Young Adult Professionals  
Saint Paul d’Abbotsford, Quebec  
8 am - 5 pm  
Teaching given by Father Arnaud, a priest of Our Lady of Life, as well as members of Our Lady of Life. (Passport or enhanced travel document needed.)  
FOR MORE INFO: and to register, Teresa at email@ourladyoflifeinstitute.org

02|02 SATURDAY  
Youth Ministry Training — Youth Ministry Institute  
Sacred Heart St. Francis de Sales, Bennington  
9 am - 3 pm  
This Youth Ministry Institute will be a comprehensive day immersion on key concepts in Youth Ministry, including: Youth Ministry 101, Ministry in the Style of St. John Bosco, Contemporary Moral Issues, Theology of the Body, Interactive Youth Ministry.  
FOR MORE INFO: and to RSVP, wgavin@vermontcatholic.org

02|02 SATURDAY  
K of C Bingo  
All Saints Parish Hall, Richford  
11:30 am - 5 pm  
Doors open at 11:30 am, games start at 1 pm. Refreshments and pull tickets will be available. Sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

02|02 SATURDAY  
K of C French Canadian Supper  
Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, Richmond  
5 - 7 pm  
Pea soup, meat pie, mashed potatoes, dessert, beverages, etc. Suggested donation $12, to benefit the charities of Rosary Council of the Knights of Columbus 4684.

02|10 SUNDAY  
Winter Rally 2019  
St. John, St. Johnsbury, 10:30 am  
St. Monica, Barre, 4 pm  
Attention all teens and parents! Join us for our Winter Rally at 2 locations again this February. We will be joined by national speaker and musician Taylor Schroll, Father Jon Schnobrich and the Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal. Come grow in faith, love and discover your mission in God’s plan of love!

DIocese of Burlington Careers

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diocese: Facilities Manager</th>
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<tr>
<td>Diocese: Office of Evangelization and Catechesis Administrative Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diocese: Respect Life Coordinator</td>
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<td>Diocese: Youth and Young Adult Ministry Administrative Assistant</td>
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For More Info:  
vermontcatholic.org/careers