March 5 is Town Meeting Day this year in Vermont. I live in downtown Burlington at St. Joseph’s rectory and, while I’ve voted on Town Meeting Day, I haven’t had a chance to attend a Town Meeting. What I’ve heard from various people who have attended Town Meetings all over the state is that these meetings are “democracy in action” because any citizen of the town may speak to the matters within the meeting or even propose matters for discussion. Of course, there are restrictions, and proposals can be voted down and interventions can be limited in time and number. But the idea is that everyone present gets to hear what others have to say in order to come to some consensus about what the community, as a whole, should do.

This is why I am calling for our own Catholic Town Meetings to take place in January in six different places throughout the state (see sidebar). I will come to the meeting, begin with a prayer, offer a few remarks about where we are as a Diocese and the Church here in Vermont, and then I will listen and respond as I can to what other “citizens” of the Church have to say. The meetings will start at 6 p.m. and end at 7:30 p.m., and they are open to anyone to attend. Please feel free to attend any of the meetings, not just by location. The six sites are chosen based on ease of access and are not intended to be a geographic districting.

All of this is part of a continuing effort to promote full transparency about Catholic matters in the State of Vermont. We are already seeing the fruits of our efforts to be more transparent; for example, the Diocese of Burlington is one of only two Dioceses to receive a perfect score for our financial transparency in a nationwide survey of Dioceses and Archdioceses. In addition, a review committee of seven lay men and women is currently reviewing all clergy personnel files that contain a credible allegation of sexual abuse of a minor by clergy with the goal of publishing a list of the names of priest abusers. This is a significant endeavor as they are reading every file from cover to cover, not just a summary or excerpt. Finally, as the Diocesan Synod is concluding, I want to continue to be open and forthcoming about the outcomes of the synod process and the good direction in which we are moving as Catholics here in Vermont.

The operative frame for our discussion at the Town Meeting should be Christian charity and respectful listening focused on promoting the work of salvation in and through the Church. I think of St. Paul’s admonition in his letter to the Ephesians, “only the good things that men [and women] need to hear, things that will raise them up.” My hope is that those who come to the Town Meeting will speak in such a manner and that those who choose not to speak will listen with an open mind, as I will try to do. I hope you can join me as we engage in this form of “ecclesiology in action.”

God bless and Happy New Year.

Yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Bishop of Burlington

2019 Town Meeting Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, January 10</td>
<td>St. Mary, 45 Fairfield St., St. Albans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, January 22</td>
<td>Holy Family, 4 Prospect St., Essex Junction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, January 23</td>
<td>St. Theresa, 44 East St., Orleans</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, January 28</td>
<td>Sacred Heart, 238 Main St., Bennington</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, January 29</td>
<td>Christ the King, 66 South Main St., Rutland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, January 31</td>
<td>St. John Vianney, 160 Hinesburg Rd., S. Burlington</td>
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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 meetings 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|15 TUESDAY
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

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 Shriners, 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, 03 FRIDAY - SUNDAY
3-day Retreat for Students, Young Adult Professionals
St. 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

DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON CAREERS
Diocese: Facilities Manager
Diocese: Office of Evangelization and Catechesis Administrative Assistant
Diocese: Respect Life Coordinator
Diocese: Youth and Young Adult Ministry Administrative Assistant
For More Info: vermontcatholic.org/careers

To see more events or to submit your event to the diocesan calendar: vermontcatholic.org/events