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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 76 Number 7

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MAY 26, 2021

## Update to coronavirus protocols, dispensation

Based on the new guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and New York State, and after prayerful consideration, Bishop Terry R. LaValley released new protocols surrounding parish life and worship on May 19.

Bishop LaValley also announced on Pentecost Sunday that the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass will be lifted on June 6, the Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.

"Our churches have proven to be among the safest places to come together, a great testament to the ongoing hard work of pastors, parish staffs and our parishioners," Bishop LaValley said.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

## ETERNAL REST, GRANT UNTO HIM



Father Richard S. Sturtz passed into new life on May 19 after a brief illness. He is remembered in a story and obituary on pages 4 and 5.

## SHARING OUR STORIES



Mary Enslow of Potsdam recounts how a car accident helped her faith become more personal and meaningful in this week's "Sharing our Stories; Sharing Our Faith," an ongoing series highlighting how lay Catholics are living out their faith here in the North Country. To nominate someone for this feature, contact Darcy Fargo, editor, at 315-393-2920 or [dfargo@rcdony.org](mailto:dfargo@rcdony.org).

FULL STORY, PAGE 10

## Pope: Say 'yes' to the Holy Spirit, 'no' to ideologies

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – The Holy Spirit's gift of comfort and solace is meant to unite all men and women and not take sides with any ideology, Pope Francis said on Pentecost.

Celebrating Mass May 23 at the main altar in St. Peter's Basilica, the pope said those who listen to the Holy Spirit are not "concerned with conservatives and progressives, traditionalists and innovators,

right and left."

If adherence to an ideology becomes "our criteria, then the church has forgotten the Spirit," he added.

The Holy Spirit "impels us to unity, to harmony, to the harmony of diversity. He makes us see ourselves as parts of the same body, brothers and sisters of one another," the pope said. "Let us look to the whole! The enemy wants diversity to become opposition and

so he makes them become ideologies. Say no to ideologies, yes to the whole."

With pandemic restrictions slowly easing, the Mass was celebrated in St. Peter's Basilica with an estimated 1,000 people, wearing masks and socially distanced.

Reflecting on the feast of Pentecost, the pope said the use of the word "Paraclete" is not only meant to describe the Holy Spirit as

an "advocate" but also as a "comforter," especially in "times of difficulty like those we are presently experiencing due to the pandemic."

The comforts of the world, he explained, are like a pain reliever that offers only temporary relief but does not "cure the illness we carry deep within."

"Only someone who makes us feel loved for who we are can give peace

to our hearts. The Holy Spirit, the love of God, does precisely that," the pope said. "He is the very love of God, who does not abandon us, for being present to those who are alone is itself a source of comfort."

In turn, Christians are called to "embody the comfort he brings" and to be near to others "not with trite words, but with prayer and closeness," he said.

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Box 326  
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**BISHOP TERRY  
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# A kind and outstanding priest

I've written about him at least twice in this column, but he wasn't named either time. The most recent time, he was referred to as "a kind priest." The previous time, he was referred to as "one of the many outstanding priests of our diocese."

Father Richard S. Sturtz was both of those things. He was a kind priest and an outstanding priest.

Father Sturtz entered into new life on May 19. A story and obituary can be found on pages 4 and 5 of

this edition. I first became acquainted with Father Sturtz when I had the opportunity to interview him after the death of his good friend, Msgr. Peter Riani. Father Sturtz's smile lit up my office as he recounted his adventures with his friends, and his eyes welled with tears as he spoke of his friend's strength through waning health.

His authenticity made it easy to like him. It was partly because of that authenticity

that I wasn't surprised when two of my friends suggested that Father Sturtz was kind and merciful when he heard confessions.

At the risk of offending some of the other wonderful priests I know, I'll note that my friends were correct: Father Sturtz was the best confessor!

In addition to being extremely kind and merciful, Father Sturtz saw good in every situation, and he offered support and helpful counsel. While I dwelled on my sinfulness and struggles, he highlighted all the ways God was at work in my life

and all the beauty in life, and he gave me practical suggestions for overcoming my struggles. He also gave me what I'd call "non-standard" penances, including several that were very, very helpful in growing my relationship with the Lord.

More than that, though, Father Sturtz embodied the peace and joy of Christ. Regardless of the situation, he always greeted me (and everyone I saw him greet) with a positive word and a contagious smile.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.



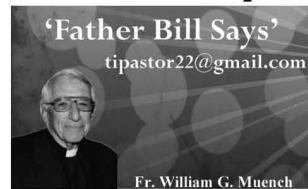
**Darcy L.  
Fargo**

## The ministry of the catechist

Each week, I enjoy listening to the podcast of John Allen. He reports on happenings and news in the Catholic Church and the Vatican. Allen offers insights in present day news of our Church including the recent activities of Pope Francis. I find it most informative and keeps me up to date on my Church.

Today, one of Allen's items mentioned that Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Letter making a "motu propria" formally instituting the new lay ministry of the catechist. Pope Francis writes that he has done this to "respond to the urgent need for the evangelization of the modern world, undertaken in a secular manner."

So, now we another official ministry in the Church. There is the ministry of the clergy: the ministry of bishop, the ministry of the priest and the ministry of the deacon. There are also the ministries of the lay men and women also. Lay persons are chosen and prepared to undertake certain recognized activities in the life of the Church. There is the ministry of the theologians. There are the ministries that



lay people carry out during the liturgy of the Church. Pope Francis now wants to include in these formal ministries the ministry of the catechist, the ministry of the teacher.

I know that many of you have served as catechists. Many of us have been taught in religious education programs by catechists. Pope Francis wants to make all of you catechists realize how important you are to the Catholic Church as ministers and teachers. Our Catholic Church is truly grateful for the support and involvement of such dedicated lay catechists.

Pope Francis writes: "It is necessary to recognize these lay men and women who feel called by virtue of their baptism to cooperate in the work of catechesis." He goes on to emphasize the importance of "genuine interaction with young people" as well

as the need of "creative methodologies and resources capable of adapting the proclamation of the Gospel to the missionary transformation that the Church has undertaken."

I have a great respect and gratitude for lay catechists. I was truly influenced greatly by the catechists who were my teachers when I was in high school. I attended a public high school, Fayetteville High School. Once a week during my high school days, I was involved in a religious education program led by lay catechists at the parish church, Immaculate Conception Parish in Fayetteville.

I remember well that the catechists in that program had a real influence on the formation of my vocation to become a priest. As a senior, we were expected to write a paper for English class. I remember talking it over with a catechist at Church. I was encouraged to read the writings of Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk. I wrote my paper about the life in a monastery and what I learned from this particular monk. I never became a

monk, but I did find a vocation as a parish priest.

In many places, where there is a severe lack of priests – like parts of South America and Africa – areas are served by lay catechists who are teachers and bridges of the people with the Church. In those places, communities may be visited by a priest only once a month. It is the lay catechist who brings the message of Jesus to the people of their community. They become a powerful influence on the people of that community.

Pope Francis writes: "clearly shows the effectiveness of the mission of catechists, who have devoted their lives to catechesis and instruction so that the faith might be an effective support for the life of every human being."

Pope Francis quotes the Second Vatican Council, "the role of the catechists is of the highest importance for the development of the Christian community."

I want to join our Pope in recognizing all you catechists and offer my gratitude for all you accomplish for your parishes.

# Updated COVID protocols in effect

*Editor's Note: Bishop Terry R. LaValley sent the following letter to diocesan priests and deacons on May 19.*

Earlier this week, Gov. Cuomo announced the easing of certain COVID Restrictions consistent with guidelines offered by the Center for Disease Control. The following Revised Guidelines for Parish Life in the Diocese of Ogdensburg reflect the changes, effective immediately. Hopefully, these steps will see us moving ever closer to a complete reopening of our parishes very soon. With this in mind, I encourage you and your parishioners to be completely vaccinated.

## Guidelines for the Celebration of Mass

- The general dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation will remain in effect at this time. See *letter at right*.

- Parishioners who are fully vaccinated are not required to wear a face mask at Mass.

- Children under the age of 12 who are not vaccine eligible and those under the age of 16 who have not been vaccinated, may accompany and be seated with a vaccinated adult.

- All who prefer to continue wearing facial covering and social distancing are free to do so.

- Those who are not fully vaccinated should observe social distancing of six feet from individuals not in their household. They are to wear a face mask at Mass except when receiving Holy Communion.

- Even if vaccinated, we

ask you to stay six feet away from others who are wearing a mask at Mass.

- It is no longer necessary to block off every other row of pews. Parishioners may be seated in a staggered fashion while respecting six feet of social distance, where required.

- Deacons, lectors, servers, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may resume their duties in the celebration of Mass. In the case of servers, this may not necessarily include all their former responsibilities. However, parishes are strongly encouraged to invite servers back to ministry.

- A cantor is permitted, and small choirs may resume.

- Weekday Masses should continue in the main church, rather than in a chapel.

- Ministers of Hospitality (greeters) and ushers may resume their duties but should not make physical contact with parishioners until the percentage of vaccinated persons increases.

- Priests, deacons, lectors, servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, ushers and sacristans should continue to follow prescribed handwashing and sanitizing practices.

- Offertory collections with baskets may be resumed by ushers. They should not make physical contact with parishioners.

- The Sign of Peace is optional and there should be no physical contact.

- Holy Communion should be distributed in the traditional manner and at the normal time.

## UPDATE TO MASS DISPENSATION

*Editor's Note: The following letter from Bishop Terry R. LaValley was released on May 23, Pentecost Sunday. Per the updated protocols released May 19 (see article on the left), the dispensation remains in effect at this time.*

### Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

Over a year ago, on March 17, 2020, I announced that all public Masses were suspended in the Diocese of Ogdensburg due to the Coronavirus. The faithful were dispensed from their obligation to participate at Sunday Eucharist. After consultation with public health officials, certain protocols were established in our parishes and the public celebration of the Eucharist resumed. Our churches have proven to be among the safest places to come together, a great testament to the ongoing hard work of pastors, parish staffs and our parishioners.

Our parishes have engaged in creative ways to foster worship during this health emergency. Livestreaming has permitted many of the faithful to watch the liturgy. As you know, while this has been a great benefit to so many, it can never replace our actual presence at Mass with our parish family.

The time has come for Catholics to return to public worship at Mass on Sundays. **On June 6, the Feast of the**

**Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, I reinstate the obligation to attend Sunday Mass in the Diocese of Ogdensburg.** However, we remember that there are times when this obligation does not apply:

- If an individual struggles with serious health concerns or is physically or morally prevented from worshipping at Mass;

- If an individual, because of age or illness, believes that going into public places, including Sunday Mass, would place that person's health or that of their loved ones in serious peril; or

- If an individual is sick, has been in contact with someone who has been sick or is caring for a seriously ill person who requires their presence.



**Bishop Terry R. LaValley**

I urge our sisters and brothers who are unable to participate at Mass to make holy the Lord's Day by praying, reflecting on Sacred Scripture and performing works of charity.

Why is the obligation lifted now? Things have changed since St. Patrick's Day 2020. A vaccination for the virus has been found to be effective, safe and available. Our protocols have enabled our churches to be safe places to gather. Certain restrictions remain in place, thus providing a measure of comfort for those who attend Mass.

The Eucharist is the "source and sum-

mit" of our Catholic faith. The celebration of the Mass is the center of the life of the Church. At every Mass Christ continually nourishes and forms His pilgrim Church as she journeys towards the Kingdom. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that "the principal fruit of receiving the Eucharist in Holy Communion is an intimate union with Christ Jesus. While we each personally receive Holy Communion, it is not a private devotion. The reception of Holy Communion is an integral part of our worship as a community of faith. In receiving Holy Communion, we are united to Jesus and to one another."

Celebrating Mass takes us beyond a narrow concern for ourselves and moves us to promote the common good and to uphold the dignity of every human person. Tragically, even before live-streamed Masses, Catholics have been dramatically absent from Sunday Mass. With the lifting of this dispensation, we pray that more hearts will experience a renewed fervor and love for the Holy Eucharist and in keeping the Lord's Day every Sunday.

We all need divine medicine and heavenly food for the soul—See you at Mass!

**Faithfully yours in Christ,**

**Reverend Terry R. LaValley  
Bishop of Ogdensburg**

While in the Communion line, communicants should maintain social distancing from those not in their household.

- At this time, the Precious Blood should not be distributed to the faithful.

Guidelines for the Church Building and Liturgical Objects

- Because it has been demonstrated that the danger of contracting COVID from surfaces is less than previously thought, parishes should

focus on sanitizing bathrooms and other high traffic or high touch areas (e.g., light switches and doorknobs) rather than trying to sanitize the entire church after each Mass. Each church should be sanitized and cleaned daily.

- All Communion vessels should be properly cleaned after Mass with hot, soapy water (after being purified according to the rubrics).

- Hand sanitizer should be available at all

church entrances and in the Sanctuary where it can easily be used by celebrants, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and others serving or attending Mass.

- Holy Water fonts should remain empty at this time. Baptismal fonts should remain empty when not celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism.

- Parishes may use worship aids (e.g., missalettes, hymnals). All

# Remembering Father Richard S. Sturtz

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

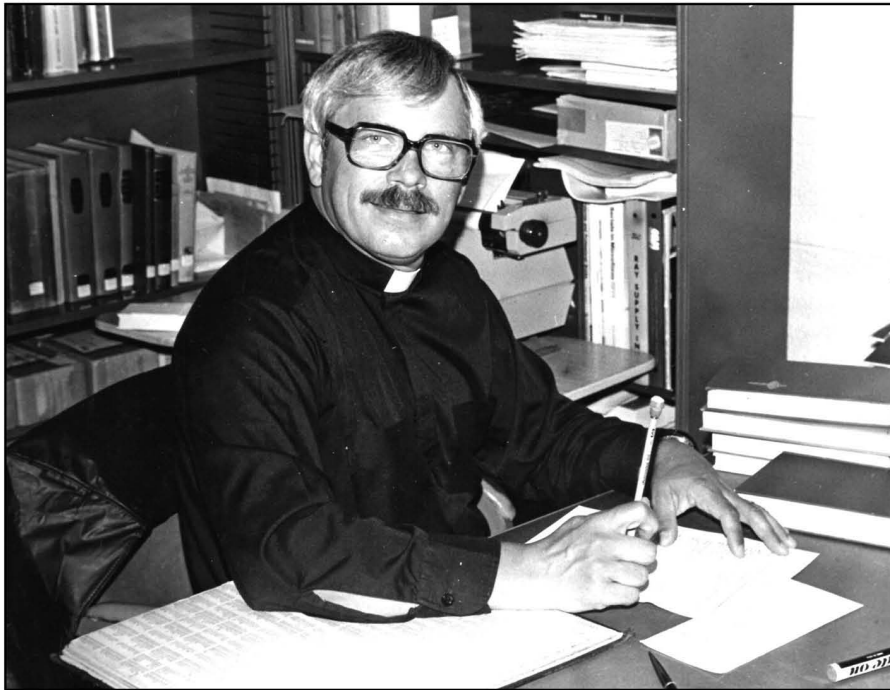
**OGDENSBURG**—While the bulk of his priesthood was spent at Wadhams Hall Seminary College, Father Richard S. Sturtz will be remembered also for his sense of adventure.

Father Sturtz died May 19 in Ogdensburg after a brief illness. A full obituary can be found on the next page.

"Personally speaking, Father Sturtz was a gift," said Father William G. Muench, a longtime friend of Father Sturtz. "From my point of view, he dragged me into a lot of things—like many of the trips we took. With a lot of the things we did, he was the one that motivated it, he was the one that was interested in it, and he dragged me into it. Even with skiing, he pulled me along. He was truly a gift, and he kept my life very active, that's for sure."

Father Muench said he and Father Sturtz became friends in the 1970s, when Father Sturtz encouraged Father Muench to join him and Msgr. Peter R. Riani skiing.

"They were both involved in Wadhams Hall,"



Father Richard S. Sturtz processes paperwork in the library he helped manage and grow at Wadhams Hall Seminary College.

Father Muench said. "Wadhams Hall used to sponsor a priest group to go up to Canada skiing, usually during the break in January. I got to know them both pretty well that way. Later, they invited me to go on some of their trips. That began our years of traveling."

In addition to journeys to skiing destinations, Father Muench joined Father Sturtz and Msgr. Riani for trips to New Zealand, Australia, China and various locations in Africa.

"We had a good, good friendship, and we had opportunities to see the world together," Father

Muench said.

While Father Sturtz took great joy in his years at Wadhams Hall, Father Muench noted he also loved his time as a pastor.

"(Father Sturtz) always liked that people knew he was involved in the formation of seminarians who would go on to become

priests," Father Muench said. "He became a pastor after his time in the seminary. He was well liked as a pastor. He really, really cared about his parishioners. He enjoyed working with them. He made many, many good friends in the parishes where he was assigned."

After retirement, Father Sturtz began ministering at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg.

"He loved every part of being a priest, but he really, really cared about those who were sick or ailing, and he wanted to be near them and comfort them," Father Muench said. "It was an important part of his ministry."

In general, Father Muench said Father Sturtz was a kind and compassionate man.

"He was easy to get to know and comfortable to be with. He had a good sense of humor," Father Muench said, laughing. "After we got to know each other, he could be challenging, as well. He was an interesting sort of person in his approach to life. People wouldn't expect how enthusiastic and involved he could be. He was great that way."

## Updated COVID protocols

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

who use such aides should sanitize their hands at they enter the church.

- Bulletins may be distributed at Mass and may also be distributed electronically.

### Sacramental and Parish Life

- Weddings and funerals should be held.

- Baptism should continue. Clean water must be

used for each individual Baptism.

- Parishes should hold regular Confessions. If confessionals have insufficient space or ventilation, another location in the Church may be used, respecting both privacy and social distancing requirements, where required.

- Anointing of the Sick should be done with utmost care, following the

protocols specified on the Thomistic Institute website.

- Visits to the homebound for Communion should resume with proper caution. Further, visits to parishioners and nursing homes should resume, respecting the protocols in place in those institutions (masks still required in nursing homes, healthcare facilities, schools, public transit,

homeless shelters, correctional facilities)

- Churches should be open for visitation, and Eucharistic Adoration may resume, using appropriate precautions and observing social distancing, where appropriate.

- Parish group activities may resume, including Bible studies, prayer groups, pastoral council meetings, and finance council meetings, follow-

ing appropriate protocols.

- Faith Formation classes should continue following the established protocols.

- Volunteers are encouraged to resume serving in parishes.

- All parish offices should continue to follow the protocols in place.

Updates will be made to these protocols as circumstances dictate. Thank you for your patient support.

# Funeral for Father Sturtz to be celebrated May 25

Father Richard S. Sturtz, age 90, passed into new life on May 19, 2021, his 65th anniversary of ordination, at St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg.

On Monday, May 24 at 2 p.m. Father Joseph Morgan, vicar general and cathedral rector, will preside over the reception of the body at Saint Mary's Cathedral. Calling hours will continue until 5 p.m. At that time, Deacon Anthony Pastizzo will lead Evening Prayer.

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley, bishop of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, will celebrate the Mass of Christian Burial on Tuesday, May 25 at 11 a.m., with the priests of the diocese concelebrating. Father Kevin O'Brien will offer the homily. Father Sturtz will be laid to rest in the family plot at Lowville Rural Cemetery.

Richard Sturtz was born on January 16, 1931, the son of John and Anna (Boliver) Sturtz in Lowville.

After graduating from Lowville Academy and Union Free School, he began his college career at Holy Cross College in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1948. He entered seminary at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg in 1949. After graduation, he attended Theological College at Catholic University in Washington, DC, graduating in 1956.

Bishop Walter P. Kellenberg ordained Father Sturtz on May 19, 1956 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. Father Sturtz continued graduate studies at Catholic University earning a master's degree in Library Science. His first summer after ordination, he served as parochial assistant at Immaculate Conception Church in

Brownville. The summer of 1957, he was named parochial assistant at St. Andrew's Church in Sackets Harbor.

In September 1957, he began a long and distinguished career at the diocesan seminary, Wadhams Hall, as Librarian and instructor in Religious Studies and English. While the high school seminary program existed, he taught Latin. Supporting the effort to have Wadhams Hall accredited to award degrees, he built the library from 3,000 to 50,000 volumes. He later taught philosophy and served as assistant spiritual director and spiritual director for the seminary. He oversaw two expansions of the library, growing the collection to nearly 100,000. Resigning as librarian, he taught Latin and Greek. In 1996, the library was named in his honor.

Father Sturtz returned to parish life in 1983 to serve as pastor of Holy Name Church in Au Sable Forks and St. Matthew's Church in Black Brook. In 1988, he relocated to lead St. Alexander's Church in Morrisonville and in 1991 also began serving as pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Treadwell Mills. In 1994, Father Sturtz spent a short time as administrator of St. Henry's Church in Long Lake and St. Therese Church in Newcomb.

During a six-month sab-

batical in 1995, he pursued scripture studies in Israel, Egypt, Turkey and Jordan. He served as pastor of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Schroon Lake and St. Joseph's Church in Olmsteadville from 1995 until his retirement in 2014.

After retiring, Father Sturtz returned to Ogdensburg, living at the rectory at Notre Dame and later St. Mary's Cathedral. Throughout retirement he served as chaplain to the residents and staff of St. Joseph's Home. Being unable to minister through the COVID-19 lockdown of nursing homes pained him greatly.

Father Sturtz described himself as an avid skier, so-so golfer and a world traveler to over 25 countries, visiting every continent beside Antarctica.

Father Richard Sturtz is predeceased by his parents and brother and sister-in-law John and Margaret Sturtz. He is survived by three nieces and their families, Anne Sturtz, Katherine and Patrick Morris; and their children Megan and Caitlyn, and Claire and Stephen Poulin; and their children Christopher and Nicholas; along with grandnieces and nephews and cousins.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be offered in Father Sturtz's honor to St. Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg.



Father Richard S. Sturtz

## THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

— PRAYER SUGGESTION —

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name a priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own dispositions and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul; take over his entire personality and life.

Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always. O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (...)

Amen.

**JUNE 2021**

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# Three to be ordained to priesthood May 29

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

**OGDENSBURG** – The Diocese of Ogdensburg will have three new priests on Saturday, May 29, as Bishop Terry R. LaValley will ordain three men, Deacon Matthew Conger, Deacon John Ojuok and Deacon Fernando Solomon Jr., to the priesthood at St. Mary's Cathedral.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, limiting the seating capacity in St. Mary's Cathedral, the ordination can be watched via livestream at [www.rc-dony.org/ordination](http://www.rc-dony.org/ordination) at 11 a.m. The ordination Mass program will be available at the same link shortly before the ordination.

## Deacon Matthew Conger

"In some ways, it's sort of surreal, I suppose" said Deacon Conger of the upcoming ordination. "I've been in seminary for nine years now. I've always had to get ready for school in August. Now, I'll be staying in a parish, and I'll be a priest. It's a very exciting time, but I'm a little nervous. This will be a whole different way of life, a whole different part of who I am and who I'm becoming. Everything I've been working toward, everything I've felt called to is coming to fulfillment."

Deacon Conger said his last year of seminary and especially his work in a parish has helped prepare him for his priesthood.

"I've learned quite a lot," he said. "I was fortunate enough to be assigned to Our Lady of Victory Basilica in Buffalo. That experience taught me a lot – the different things priest face, the questions that come at you when you least expect them. And it

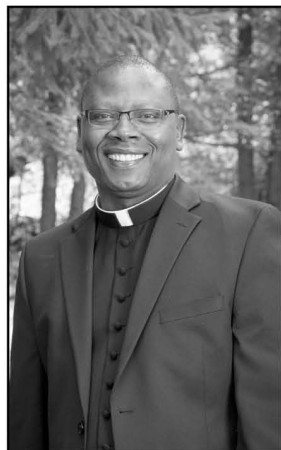


Deacon Matthew Conger

taught me a little bit about being a priest in the world today. Being a transitional deacon, not everyone knows you're not 'father' yet. They ask questions. The questions are amazing! I don't always have the answers. Something I've learned, though, is that I can look them up, and I can try to give good answers. I've also learned that doing a lot of Masses can be tiring."

Deacon Conger said he's looking forward to his future ministry and life as a priest.

"The big thing I'm looking forward to is finally being able to say Mass," he said. "And I'll be able to bring all the sacraments to people. As a deacon, I can baptize, bury and marry, but now I'll be able to celebrate Mass and bring Christ to people in the Eucharist. It's overwhelming when I think about it. When I'm there at Mass, especially as a deacon when I'm kneeling during the words of Consecration, that's going to be me in X amount of months or, now, X amount of days. It's overwhelming, but it also brings me a lot of peace, and it's fulfilling."



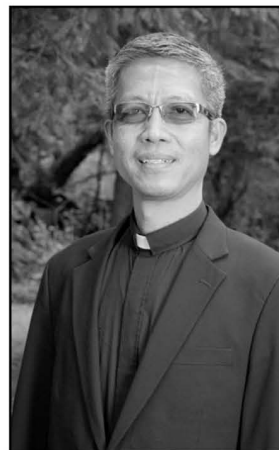
Deacon John Ojuok

He also looks forward to bringing Christ's mercy to others in the sacrament of reconciliation.

"It's also a little nerve wracking," Deacon Conger said. "I'll be the one sitting behind the screen and hearing somebody pouring their heart out to Christ seeking forgiveness. I'll be the mediator bringing that peace and forgiveness to them. Christ didn't come to judge. He came to bring mercy. I'm not there to judge, either. I'm there to bring mercy. It's so important."

Deacon Conger said he looks forward to growing in his priesthood as he moves through his first assignment as parochial vicar at Holy Family, St. Anthony's and St. Patrick's in Watertown.

"I'll be transitioning from seminarian to being Father Matt," he said. "I'll be learning how to serve a parish. We go to parishes every summer as seminarians and deacons, but it'll be different now as a priest. Before, I could say, 'go talk to father.' Now, I will be 'father.' Instead of being involved in a parish for two to three months, I'll get to grow with the com-



Deacon Fernando Solomon Jr.

munity and suffer with the community – experience all parts of life in a parish. I'll be learning my role as a priest."

Deacon Conger said he looks forward to working with Father John M. Demo in Watertown and getting to know that community better.

"I'm looking forward to serving, and I'm ready to serve the people of the North Country and be their priest" he said. "I'm ready to take on my ministry. I come to serve and not be served."

Deacon Conger said he appreciates the support he's received from the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

"The people of the North Country and the Diocese of Ogdensburg are the most supporting and loving people you'll ever meet," he said. "As seminarians, they pray for us, support us and are so generous with their time, money and everything. It's wonderful and it's my honor to give back to them in the future."

Deacon Matthew Conger is a life-long resident of Ogdensburg. He recently completed his last year of theology at Christ The King Seminary in the Diocese of Buffalo.

## Deacon John Ojuok

"It's a good feeling, a really good feeling," said Deacon Ojuok as he approaches his ordination date. "The call to the priesthood started for me when I was still a little child. It has taken a while to get here. From minor seminary to now, it's been almost 14 years. It's exciting! All my gratitude to God! His timing is the best. I always cherish that. It might not be my time, but it's God's time."

Deacon Ojuok said he enjoyed his time serving as a deacon in Nativity of Our Lord Parish in Orchard Park, New York.

"It was really, really good ministry," he said. "I did four baptisms. The infants were incredible! In some of the photos, they were smiling at me. Some cried, and their parents were really good. I managed to bring two guys at the baptism ceremonies back to the Church. They later thanked me, and they are now going to church."

He also had the opportunity to officiate at a wake and burial.

"The guy was Kenyan, and he came here a long, long time ago," Deacon Ojuok, also a native of Kenya, said. "He told his people he wanted a Kenyan deacon or priest. They found me, and I participated. It was really good."

But Deacon Ojuok's favorite part of his time as a deacon was proclaiming the Gospel.

"It is Christ speaking in your tongue," he said. "That was the best part."

Deacon Ojuok said he looks forward to this next phase of his life and ministry, especially celebrating Mass.

"I'm looking forward to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

# Catholic Charities offers local grants

Catholic Charities of Ogdensburg is now accepting applications for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), a local grant program formed by the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Unlike the other services the agency currently provides, such as direct assistance to individuals, the campaign for Human Development grant program provides small grants to human service agencies, churches, food pantries

and other organizations who address and face the issues of poverty.

Johanna Cubi, deputy director of Catholic Charities Diocese of Ogdensburg, will lead this year's grant program. She stated, "We are happy to give back to the community and help another organization do the same for theirs. I believe working as a team is what we need to strengthen our communities and restore the faith we so greatly need in

these challenging times."

Funds are made available by the Diocese of Ogdensburg and administered through Catholic Charities.

Grant applications should outline how the funds will be used to help reduce the underlying causes of poverty. In addition, proposals should include projects that are a new initiative or an enhancement of an established project. The sponsoring group must be

a non-profit, 501c3 organization. Approved projects will be those that demonstrate potential for continued funding after the CCHD funds have been expended. Although grant applicants do not have to be Catholic; strategies must be consistent with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Past recipients have been community food pantries, food distribution programs and soup kitchens. We are looking for a wide

range of businesses looking to give back.

Approved grant amounts range from \$500 to \$2,000, and applications are available now. See below to apply today.

Catholic Charities Diocese of Ogdensburg  
214 Caroline Street  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669  
(315) 705-8218  
jcubi@cathcharities.org

Grant applications just be submitted to Catholic Charities by June 7, 2021.

# Ordained to the priesthood

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

celebrating the sacraments as a priest," he said. "I'm excited and overwhelmed about presiding at my first Mass. It's really exciting and overwhelming to be a priest. I offer gratitude to God for making it happen."

Deacon Ojuok also looks forward to continuing to grow in his ministry as a parochial vicar at Holy Cross Parish in Plattsburgh.

"I worked in Morrisonville for summer assignment," he said. "All the shopping is in Plattsburgh. I'm familiar with the area. I feel like I'm going back to where I worked. I'm excited to be going back to where I was before and not a new place."

The deacon is eager to get to know the people of Plattsburgh and his new role.

"I'm an open guy," Deacon Ojuok said. "I'm ready to learn. I'm going out there to learn a lot. As a new priest, I still don't know a lot. I'm grateful God gave me the gift of being open to learn. I'm

going there with that and to learn about what priesthood is about. I'm grateful to be with Father Kevin, who has experience in so many areas. I'm excited to meet the people there – the deacons, parishioners, Father Tojo."

He said the people of Plattsburgh can look forward to him being "a jovial priest."

"I'm joy-filled and ready to help in any capacity," he said. "I'm available. I'm ever-smiling. I hope to play soccer and volleyball with parishioners, people at the school or college students. I want to share joy and give people something to relate with."

Deacon Ojuok has been in the diocese since 2016. He has spent time in St. Bartholomew's in Old Forge and St. Alexander's in Morrisonville. His home base is St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. He recently completed his last year of theology at Christ The King Seminary in the Diocese of Buffalo.

**Deacon** **Fernando Solomon Jr.**

"I really cannot believe

it's happening," said Deacon Solomon about his upcoming ordination. "Of course, I'm a little bit nervous. Sometimes, I tell myself, 'OK, Fernando! Calm down! You will be fine!' The nervousness is normal. It's a big responsibility. I pray, 'God, you put me here. Be with me till the end.'"

Hailing from Quezon City, Philippines, Deacon Fernando Solomon, Jr. is serving a pastoral year in the parishes of St. Patrick's in Port Henry, Sacred Heart in Crown Point and Church of All Souls in Mineville with Father Albert J. Hauser.

"I really learn a lot from Father Al," he said. "Physically, spiritually, emotionally and mentally – I learned from him. I was really touched by the people here in Port Henry. They are so nice, so kind. I wish they would assign me here for a couple years. I'm really preparing myself. I will miss this place, Father Al and the parishioners. I really had a great experience here."

Deacon Solomon, who has experience ministering to the deaf and indi-

viduals with developmental disabilities, hopes to continue drawing on those experiences as he moves forward in his ministry.

"I'm looking to try to be a successful priest by serving the diocese," he said. "Of course, I'm planning to employ my faculties with American Sign Language to assist the deaf and those with special needs here in the North Country. I want to serve this diocese for the rest of my life."

Deacon Solomon said he hopes to continue to grow in his ministry in his first assignment as parochial vicar at St. André Bessette Parish in Malone.

"I'm really a bit nervous," he said. "It's really a big responsibility to say the Mass. That's the big thing I need to learn more. I keep practicing and learning. I want the people in Malone to know that I'm a friendly person, a welcoming person. I try to be friendly to all. I try to be with the people, talk to people."

Deacon Solomon said he was first introduced to

the Malone area back in 2012, when he first toured the diocese while serving with an order.

"Back in 2012, when I started to know and meet some of the places of the diocese, Father Bryan (Stitt) gave me a tour of the diocese, and I saw Malone then," he said. "It's like I'm going back to where I started."

He also noted that he looks forward to learning under Father Steven M. Murray.

"I need guidance from the expert," Deacon Solomon said.

Before coming to the diocese, Deacon Solomon earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy and master's degree in divinity in the Philippines.

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## Environmental Stewardship

## Profound, yet simple

This Sunday, we celebrate the incredible mystery of the Trinity. What thoughts come to your mind when you think about this mystery? You may recall the vision of St. Augustine, who had spent more than 30 years writing his treatise endeavoring to conceive an intelligible explanation for the mystery of the Trinity.

It is told that St. Augustine was walking by the seashore one day contemplating the mystery of the Holy Trinity when he saw a little child using a shell to carry water from the large ocean and pour it into a small pit that he had made in the sand. Then Augustine asked him what he was doing. "I'm going to pour the entire ocean into this hole," the boy replied. Augustine said to him. "That is impossible, my child, the sea is so great and the shell and the hole are so little."

"That is true," the boy said. "It would be easier and quicker to draw all the water out of the sea and fit it into this hole than for you to fit the mystery of the Trinity into your little intellect; for the Mystery of the Trinity is greater and larger in comparison with your intelligence than is this vast ocean in comparison with this little hole." And then the child vanished.

We may identify with St. Augustine's desire and frustration to trying to understand more fully the mystery of the Trinity. Pope Francis shares a very profound yet simple revelation contained in this mystery. Pope Francis writes: "Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity" (240). This revelation touches every aspect of our life, since we are all interconnected as branches on the tree. The awareness can give us new ways of looking at the world. It can wake us up to see that the smallest action can have either a positive or negative effects on the whole. For more thoughts and suggestions for action, join the three evenings this week for the Diocesan virtual Event - LET US DREAM: THE PATH TO A BETTER FUTURE. Register at [rcdony.org/dream](http://rcdony.org/dream)

For more information: Marika Donders at [mdonders@rcdony.org](mailto:mdonders@rcdony.org).

# 'A lot of uncertainties' in Latakia

At the Chrism Mass in 2017, Bishop LaValley announced a "twinning relationship" with the Diocese of Latakia, located in western Syria. The Diocese of Latakia is led by Bishop Antoine Chbeir and has a Catholic population of approximately 45,000 who are served by 27 priests and 27 consecrated religious. Syria has been suffering through a

civil war for more than 10 years. Additionally, the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus has added layers of hardship and suffering to our brothers and sisters in Latakia.

In a recent communication to Bishop LaValley, Bishop Chbeir expressed deep gratitude on behalf of his flock for the concern and prayerful support shown by the people of Ogdensburg.

"I am deeply touched for your thoughtful concern and prayers," wrote Bishop Chbeir. "Life goes on amid a lot of uncertainties".

While Latakia has directly experienced the horrors of the war, Bishop Chbeir considers the people of Latakia to be lucky because they experience bombings and rocket attacks "infrequently". The Diocese of Latakia has

seen an influx of people displaced by the terrors of war. "We are not directly affected by the Turkish invasion to northern Syria," Bishop Chbeir writes. "We received some displaced people coming out of the blue, some of them having little". The Diocese of Latakia has worked to help these displaced people, most of whom are not Catholic. They are simply neighbors in need.

Syria has been devastated by lack of gasoline, a ruined economy, high inflation, and devaluation of their currency. Bishop Chbeir reports that the economic situation in Syria is worrisome, as the currency is devalued daily. Syrian currency began to collapse in 2019, and currently the Syrian pound is trading at one-third its official value. In 2011 the exchange rate for the Syrian pound was 47 pounds for \$1 US. Currently the rate is 3,000 pounds for \$1 US.

"Syrians nowadays have to get by on less than \$60 per month due to the devaluation and inflation rate," says Bishop Chbeir.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that the cost of food has increased by 111% in Syria. WHO reports that income in Syria cannot keep up with the double whammy of inflation and currency devaluation.

"[Monthly salaries] have increased from 20,000 Syrian pounds in 2011 to 40,000 Syrian pounds in 2019," but the buying power of Syrians has taken a big hit. WHO reports that the buying power of the average Syrian went from the equivalent of \$400 per month in 2011 to \$55 dollars per month in 2019.

Bishop Chbeir reports

that the financial assistance given by the Diocese of Ogdensburg helps with the education of five seminarians, pays salaries to his priests so they can feed their families, and allows the diocese to look after the needs of displaced persons who come into the Diocese of Latakia seeking shelter, food and safety. Funds were also used to pay for medication and care for 198 patients (\$10 US each), and 15 surgeries (which cost \$100 US each) and subsidies for 90 families living under the threshold of poverty.

"Thanks to you [the people of the Diocese of Ogdensburg], we deep down feel providence at work in our lives and in church," writes Bishop Chbeir. "We cannot help but to thank you and praise the Lord for his gifts and grace."

Bishop Chbeir also writes about how our support helps provide ministry for the young people in Latakia.

"Summer is a busy time with missionary camps to promote Christian life among youth and children. We projected the need for five camps but had to add two more. Different parishes asked for help of our seminarians and the priests in charge," he added.

The Church wants to provide programs for the young people in order to help them deal with the stressful situations they face.

Bishop Chbeir expressed gratitude for the support, especially the prayers, offered by the people of the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

"Thank you for your unwavering support," writes Bishop Chbeir. "You are all in our thoughts and prayers."

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**May 26** – Noon – Memorare Mass at Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg followed by lunch at St. Mary's Cathedral (Brzana Hall)

**May 27** – 9:45 a.m. – Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence

**May 28** – 5 p.m. – Dinner with Deacons Matt Conger, John Ojuok and Fernando Solomon, Jr. and Parents at Bishop's Residence

**May 29** – 11 a.m. – Ordination to the Priesthood of Deacon Matthew Stanley Conger, Deacon John Kennedy Ojuok and Deacon Fernando Valdez Solomon, Jr. at St. Mary's Cathedral

**May 30** – 8 a.m. – Mass at St.

**June 1** – 3:30 p.m. – New York State Catholic Conference Executive Committee Conference Call

## 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-  
anneyanulavich@yahoo.com](mailto:terri-<br/>anneyanulavich@yahoo.com)  
Phone: 518-651-2267 days; 518-  
569-0612 evenings; or Father  
Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal  
Vicar for Clergy;  
[ccarrara@rcdony.org](mailto: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](http://www.ReportBishopAbuse.org).

## Rest in Peace

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

**May 26** – Rev. Thomas J. Kelleher, 1889; Rev. Steven H. Gratto, 2012

**May 27** – Rev. J. Rosario Jalbert, O.M.I., 1938; Msgr. Wilfred Allen Nugent, 1991; Rev. Andrew R. Mulvaney, 2013

**May 29** – Rev. Hervé Racette, O.M.I., 1948

**May 30** – Rev. J. Heliodore Valois, 1952

**May 31** – Rev. John J. Dean, 1930; Rev. Eugene T. Desnoyers, 1993

**June 1** – Rev. Tobias M. Glenn, 1907; Rev. Charles B. Cotter, 2001

## Protecting God's Children

**The Diocese of Ogdensburg** uses the training, Protecting God's Children for Adults. There are no live trainings scheduled. If you need to complete VIRTUS training, contact Jean Grizzuto, [jgrizzuto@rcdony.org](mailto:jgrizzuto@rcdony.org) or 315-393-2920 x 1413.



# Respect Life collection grants awarded

By Colleen Miner  
Diocesan Respect Life Co-Chair

The Respect Life second collection is held in our parishes each January. This year, 15 grants were awarded to support and encourage efforts that affirm and promote the respect of human life. The collection total was \$45,872 the lowest it's been since 2005, the year it began, but it was still a generous amount during a pandemic! Thank you to all who contributed.

Six Gabriel Projects were awarded the full amount of the total requested. This will help many moms and babies in the parish-based apostolate. For example, in Massena, 34 babies were

born, 38 new mothers signed up for the program and they assisted 148 families throughout the year. In Potsdam, five new moms signed up, although they had several one-time assistances due to the pandemic and job loss. Our Lady's Parishes in Ogdensburg were able to help 14 pregnant mothers and 39 others as the pandemic made it difficult for them financially. St. Patrick's in Brasher Falls offered drive-thru pick-ups after families put in their orders for what they needed: clothing, diapers, formula, baby food. They offered direct service to 80 mothers. Catholic Charities Pregnant and Parenting Program in Malone, an-

other recipient of a grant, helped 38 families and six pregnant women delivered healthy babies in 2020.

Other hands-on ministries received grants - Birthright of Plattsburgh and Plattsburgh Pregnancy Center both received funds to further their work. Birthright has increased its promotion to college students to not only make them aware of the services but to seek volunteers. Two Plattsburgh State University nursing majors are now volunteering weekly. While Plattsburgh Pregnancy Center has had a change in leadership and fundraising opportunities ceased during the pandemic, they continue to

offer free ultrasounds, pregnancy testing and counseling. PCC's grant will help pay for rent of their office located next to Planned Parenthood. Both ministries welcome visitors.

Light of Truth Catholic Radio in Lake Placid received a grant to further their educational programming on Human Sexuality and Respect Life issues. Grants were given for two new ministries in our diocese to help with training: Sidewalk Advocates for Life (sidewalk counseling) and Life-Giving Wounds (divorce healing). The Natural Family Planning office received a grant for NFP awareness month materials and The Respect Life office for

USCCB Respect life month packets for pastors.

A grant was also given for high school and college students to attend the Students for Life National Pro-Life Summit the day after the DC March for Life in January.

Thank you to everyone who donated to the Respect Life Collection. Special thanks to the Grant Board: Father Martin Cline, Stephen Tartaglia, Angelo and Suzanne Pietropaoli, and John and Colleen Miner. And thank you to Bishop Terry R. LaValley for allowing this collection, which benefits many in our diocese. Let's all continue to pray for, encourage, educate and work to build a Culture of Life.

## St. Joseph is our benefactor

By Mark Bennet

The importance of Saint Joseph is sometimes overlooked or taken for granted.

It is true that Joseph never authored a Theological treatise or even had any words attributed to him found in the Bible. However, his place in the Communion of Saints is second only to the Blessed Virgin herself. He is the foster Father of the Son of God and the spouse of Mary who told St. Bernadette, "I am the Immaculate Conception." St. Joseph is a man with a profound faith in God coupled with a strong and quiet demeanor. Upon hearing the words of the angel in St. Matthew's Gospel, he did not argue or question God's directive. Rather he took Mary into his home. From that moment on, and throughout his life, Mary and



### St. Joseph's Corner

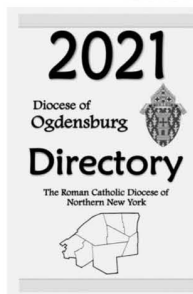
Jesus became the center of Joseph's life. St. Joseph was selfless. He always placed the safety and welfare of Jesus and Mary above his own. He was not a man of words, but we can see by his actions that he was just, loving and faithful.

Saint Joseph is our benefactor. He is the patron saint of fathers, husbands and workers. He is also the patron saint of the Universal church. Everything that Joseph did for Jesus, he now does for the Church and

during these difficult times Bishop LaValley has consecrated our diocese of Ogdensburg to this humble and faith-filled saint.

Let us reflect on Saint Joseph – a just man, an obedient man and a loving leader. Let us reflect on his silence, his example, and his intercession on our behalf and that of the entire Church. Finally, may we, the people of the diocese ask for the intercession of Saint Joseph the invaluable helper of Jesus and Mary.

## Diocesan Directories now available!



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# 'I didn't have to go; I wanted to go'

*Editor's Note: The following article is part of an ongoing series highlighting the ways lay Catholics are living out their faith here in the North Country. To nominate someone to be featured in this series, call Darcy Fargo, editor, at 315-393-2920 or email [dfargo@rcdony.org](mailto:dfargo@rcdony.org).*

**By Jonathan Monfletto**  
Contributing Writer

POTSDAM – Mary Enslow made her faith her own at the moment she realized she had been given a second chance at life and wanted to share the gift of life with others.

In January 1978, Enslow – who lives in Potsdam and attends St. Mary's Church – was involved in a serious car crash, "which could've gone the other way," she said. She was sore from the bumps and bruises and everything else, but three days later she was getting ready to go to church.

"Just growing up Catholic, it was always instilled in me, you went to church on Sunday," Enslow said.

Still, her mother told her she didn't have to go to church.

"I know I don't have to go to church. I want to go to church. I want to thank God I'm alive," Enslow recalled her response to her mother.

In the crash, her car skidded on a patch of ice and then she slammed on the brakes before hitting another vehicle. The way she hit the other vehicle, she noted, she was lucky to come out with only minor injuries.

At the time, Enslow and her family attended Mass at the Newman Center at SUNY Potsdam. She doesn't remember anything about the homily that day, she said, "all I know is it was funny because it hurt to laugh."



Mary Enslow

But she does remember a poignant moment from that Mass.

"Going up to Communion, I'm hobbling up," Enslow said. "As I come to go away after receiving, (the priest) just says to me, 'Mary, I'm glad you're here.' If I had not gone to church, I would never have gotten that statement from him."

Her brother was helping out around the center and had called the priest to tell him what was going on. That meant the priest knew who to look for when she went up to receive Communion.

"I was so close to tears after he had said that," Enslow said. "Why did somebody like him say that to me and not my family? That was really instilled: I didn't have to go; I wanted to go."

Six months after the crash, Enslow learned the center was looking for people to help with Communion or to be readers at Mass. She immediately decided she wanted to become a Eucharistic minister, so she attended

training – basically a talk from the priest – and received a commissioning – essentially a blessing from the priest.

"I'm sitting there and thinking, 'I basically got a second chance at life. Let's take this one step further and repay that,'" Enslow said of becoming a Eucharistic minister. "That's when I decided that becoming a Communion minister would be me giving someone else life through the Eucharist."

Shortly after her commissioning as a Eucharistic minister, Enslow attended a Mass when she noticed the priest needed help, so she jumped right in with her new training.

"I didn't even think about doing it. I just went up and did it, and I've been doing it ever since," she said.

And Enslow hasn't limited serving as a Eucharistic minister to the physical church building; she brought the Eucharist to her parents when they were still alive, and she has spent nearly 20 years bringing the Eucharist to



those who can't get to church.

In 2002, two years after her mother died, she began bringing Communion to residents of a local nursing home and patients of a local hospital.

"This is a great way to extend that (gift of life) for those who just can't get to church, especially the ones in the nursing home and the hospital," Enslow said. "When my parents were both living, it was difficult for them to get out and go to church, so after Mass I would bring them both Communion. And I've done this for other people too. Being able to share that with them has been many times an awesome experience."

Because of the pandemic, though, it is an experience she has not been able to enjoy in recent months. A new experience she has been enjoying, on the other hand, is virtual prayer with a couple of groups.

Enslow said she has been saying morning prayer along with Father Bryan Still through his Facebook page. She has also been saying evening prayer with a group of nine women who are both from the diocese and from outside the diocese.

those who can't get to church.

"It's been a wonderful experience, even if it's just half an hour with these women, just to laugh and share our day and what's going on next week with us or whatever," she said. "Just praying with other people. ... This has been a wonderful thing to have, there's actually somebody here that I can talk to

Her faith, Enslow said, has gotten her "through some very difficult times ... through some very wonderful times." Like she did more than 40 years ago, she encourages people to make their faith their own – not by having to go to church but by wanting to go church, even if that means adjusting to one's comfort level.

"This is a difficult time for a lot of people, but if you can get back to church, get back to church," she said. "If you don't feel comfortable going to your weekend Masses, go to your daily Masses. If you feel comfortable going to another church that's bigger than yours, then go to that church. You have to quote-unquote bite the bullet and just do it."

# Peace requires equality, Palestine official says

ROME (CNS) – While the current cease-fire between Israel and Hamas brings a much-needed halt to violence in the Holy Land, true peace can only be achieved if both sides are recognized as equals, said the Palestinian ambassador to the Holy See.

Ambassador Issa Kassissieh, speaking to Catholic News Service May 21 from his home in Jerusalem, said the road to peace begins with returning to a two-state solution within the borders established before 1967.

However, the establishment of Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories and the "Israeli occupation" must end, he said.

"We need a road map to reengage, with the support of the international community and through the Quartet (the United Nations, United States, European Union and Russia) for real and substantive talks between both sides, to reach – within a timeframe – the endgame. And the endgame here is carrying

out the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions as well as U.N. General Assembly resolutions with regard to the Palestinian question," he said.

The issue of Israel establishing settlements in Palestinian territories has long been an impediment to the peace process. The West Bank, which along with the Gaza Strip was captured by Israel in 1967, forms part of the area offered to Palestine by the U.N. for the establishment of a prospective state.

However, under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli government has doubled down on the establishment of settlements, claiming that the West Bank, known in the Bible as Judea and Samaria, historically belonged to the people of Israel.

The Trump administration's 2019 decision to no longer recognize the illegality of Israeli settlements in the West Bank further complicated the already fragile peace process.

"I hear many times that (both) sides must sit and reengage in negotiations," Kassissieh said. That is "fine, but people often forget that we are not equal. You have the occupier and the occupied, the people under occupation."

The international community, he continued, must ensure that there is an "equilibrium in the conflict" and that each side "carry out their agreements."

"This has not been done," he said, especially "during the times of Prime Minister Netanyahu and supported and backed fully by the Trump administration. Those people destroyed completely the hope for peace in the region and for coexistence."

Kassissieh expressed his gratitude to Pope Francis and for the pope's call for peace in the region.

He also told CNS that he believes the pope and the Vatican have an important role to play in achieving peace in the Holy Land.

"I still believe the Holy

See (and) His Holiness have the moral power, and it is part of his responsibility toward the Holy Land – where Jesus Christ was born and crucified – to intensify his voice, his peaceful voice with the international community, mainly with this American administration, with President Biden, as well as the Quartet, to ensure that the cease-fire will take us to a credible process to end the occupation and to destructure the apartheid system in Palestine."

Recalling the 2015 Vatican agreement, which recognized Palestine as a state and endorsed the two-state solution, Kassissieh said the international community must follow suit and recognize Palestinian statehood in order to move the peace process forward.

International recognition of the statehood of both Israel and Palestine with "the borders of 1967" is necessary "so that both sides will know the lines of their borders and those who have the appetite of expan-

sionists will know that their limit is there," he said.

Despite the recent violence, which has claimed the lives of 230 people – including 65 children – in Palestine, and 12 people – including two children – in Israel, Kassissieh told CNS that "peace is possible," but it cannot be achieved by signing agreements while "ignoring the roots of the conflict of the region, which is the occupation, apartheid Palestinian question."

"Fraternity comes when we are equal as human beings," he said. "Fraternity cannot work when you have one oppressing the other, one ignoring the other, one pushing the other out of his town and of his house."

"We have to talk about our interests, our future, the future of our children; how to take the region from this wretched dynamic of extremism to moderation, to hope," he added. "Hope is what is needed now."

## Vatican revises synod process

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Approving the revision of the entire process of the Synod of Bishops, Pope Francis has asked that it begin with serious, widespread consultations with laypeople on the diocesan level.

"In reality, without this consultation there would be no synodal process, because the discernment of pastors, which constitutes the second phase, emerges from listening to the people of God," Cardinal Mario Grech, secretary-general of the Synod of Bishops, told Vatican News May 21.

The cardinal's office issued a statement that day explaining how the next general assembly of the Synod of Bishops would work, noting that the

broader consultation on the diocesan, national and regional levels would mean that the gathering of representative bishops from around the world would take place at the Vatican in October 2023 rather than in 2022, as previously scheduled.

The theme chosen by Pope Francis for the gathering is: "For a synodal church: communion, participation and mission."

The pope will formally open the synod process at the Vatican Oct. 9-10 this year, the synod office said. And the bishop of every diocese will open the process in his diocese Oct. 17.

The diocesan phase will go through April 2022, fea-

turing a consultation with local Catholics discussing a preparatory document and questionnaire that the synod office will send out along with guidelines for how the consultation should work.

"For a long time, there was talk of communion as a constitutive element of the church," Cardinal Grech told Vatican News. "Today it is clear that this communion is either synodal or it is not communion at all."

However, he said, for there to be true communion within the church everyone must participate, "each according to his or her own function: people of God, College of Bishops, bishop of Rome."

"Perhaps in the past there

has been so much insistence on the 'communio hierarchica' (communion of the hierarchy) that there arose the idea that unity in the church could only be achieved by strengthening the authority of pastors," Cardinal Grech said. While that may be an important emphasis when faced with dissent, "that cannot be the

ordinary way of living ecclesial communion, which requires circularity, reciprocity, journeying together with respect to the various functions of the people of God."

"The Second Vatican Council teaches that the people of God participate in the prophetic office of Christ," he said.

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# Court case brings abortion issue front and center

WASHINGTON (CNS) – When the Supreme Court decided May 17 to take up a challenge to a Mississippi abortion law, it brought abortion back to the front burner months before the court will hear oral arguments about it this fall.

The court's announcement was not unexpected. For months, people on both sides of the issue have been wondering when the court would take up the Mississippi appeal and speculating about why there was a delay.

The case initially came to the court in 2020. The justices repeatedly rescheduled, reviewing it until this past January, and then they still considered it 12 more times before announcing they would take it up next term.

Their agreement to hear the appeal means at least four of the nine justices found it had merit.

The case, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, is an appeal from Mississippi to keep its ban on abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy, which was struck down by a federal district court in Mississippi in 2018 and upheld a year later by the New Orleans-based U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit.

In announcing they would take this case, the Supreme Court justices said they would only review one of the three questions presented to them: "Whether all previability prohibitions on elective abortions are unconstitutional."

The viability aspect, when a fetus is said to be able to survive on its own, is key here because the Supreme Court has consistently ruled that states cannot restrict abortion before the 24-week mark. The ban on abortions after 15

weeks is more restrictive than current law.

Although the Mississippi case is not asking the court to overrule *Roe v. Wade* – the 1973 court case which legalized abortion – people on both sides of the issue are expressing either alarm or elation that this could happen.

If the court sides with Mississippi, it would be the first time the court would allow an abortion ban before the point of viability and could lay the groundwork for other abortion restrictions which other states could follow or it could push states to enact more abortion restrictions.

Besides Mississippi, 15 other states have tried to ban abortions before viability, but they have been blocked in court, according to the Guttmacher Institute, which conducts research on abortion and reproductive health.

In a May 19 opinion piece in *The Wall Street Journal*, Clarke Forsythe, senior counsel at Americans United for Life, said: "Many Americans might be surprised to know that since *Roe* in 1973, the Supreme Court hasn't addressed an actual abortion prohibition that applied before fetal viability." He also said many scholars "on both sides of the abortion issue agree that the high court has never given an adequate rationale for its viability rule."

Kat Talalas, assistant director for pro-life communications at the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said this is the biggest abortion case to come before the court in almost 30 years. She was referring to the court's 1992 decision in *Casey v. Planned Parenthood*, which affirmed *Roe* and also stressed that a state regula-

tion on abortion could not impose an "undue burden" for a woman "seeking an abortion before the fetus attains viability."

Talalas said the justices in the Mississippi case could establish criteria other than viability, such as fetal pain, to restrict abortions or they could "overturn *Roe* and *Casey* (decisions) completely."

A brief submitted to the court from the Mississippi Catholic dioceses of Jackson and Biloxi urging the justices to take this case similarly stressed the need to consider fetal pain. It said the court should "find that the state's interest in protecting unborn children who have the capacity to feel pain is sufficiently compelling to support a limited prohibition on abortion."

The brief also urged that a "sense of morality, and indeed, logic, must prevail in the courts on this issue. How is it that Mississippi law recognizes that an unborn baby can be a victim of a crime, and can have property rights, and yet the label of personhood at 15 weeks gestation is denied them?"

What the court will do, of course, remains a mystery. Many legal experts and advocates on both sides of the issue expect the court will away from the *Roe* decision.

In anticipating this could eventually happen, 10 states have what are called "trigger laws," which in effect that would automatically ban abortions in the first and second trimesters if the *Roe* decision is overturned.

This is the first abortion case before the court since the appointment of Justice Amy Coney Barrett, and many see her as anti-abortion.

## CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

### Gov. Abbott signs Texas 'heartbeat' abortion law

AUSTIN, Texas (CNS) – The new Texas "heartbeat" abortion law "will save thousands of lives and is a vital step on the road to abolishing all abortions in Texas," said Texas Right to Life after Gov. Greg Abbott signed the measure into law. The law, which is to take effect Sept. 1, bans abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detectable, which could be as early as six weeks of pregnancy. The law, one of the nation's strictest abortion measures, has an exception for medical emergencies but not for rape or incest. "Our creator endowed us with the right to life and yet millions of children lose their right to life every year because of abortion," Abbott said before signing the bill May 19. "In Texas, we work to save those lives. That's exactly what the Texas Legislature did this session." He later tweeted: "The heartbeat bill is now LAW in the Lone Star State. This bill ensures the life of every unborn child with a heartbeat will be saved from the ravages of abortion." Abbott thanked the two Republican state lawmakers who were the lead sponsors of the measure in their respective legislative chambers: Sen. Bryan Hughes and Rep. Shelby Slawson. It is the first "pro-life priority bill" to be signed into law.

### U.S. bishop echoes call for prayers for the people of China

WASHINGTON (CNS) – The chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on International Justice and Peace invited Catholics in the United States to offer prayers for the people of China and the well-being of the Catholic Church in that country May 23-30. Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Illinois, supported the week of prayer, as called for March 14 by Cardinal Charles Bo of Yangon, Myanmar, who asked that prayers be offered for the protection of all people of China because of the continuing coronavirus pandemic. The week is an expansion of the annual Worldwide Day of Prayer for China on May 24, the feast of Our Lady Help of Christians, as designated by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007. "Recognizing China's growing global power, Cardinal Bo has expressed his hope that through these prayers China 'may become a force for good and a protector of the rights of the most vulnerable and marginalize in the world,'" Bishop Malloy said in a statement released May 20 by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. "Similarly, Pope Francis has also affirmed his prayers for Catholics in China, acknowledging their difficulties, assuring them of his daily prayers, and exhorting them to be good citizens, 'to make a prophetic and constructive contribution born of their faith in the kingdom of God,'" Bishop Malloy said.

### Nuncio to Mexico says abuse cases previously 'covered up'

MEXICO CITY (CNS) – Mexican church officials previously "covered up" cases of clerical sexual abuse, a situation the Vatican ambassador to Mexico said has changed as Catholic leaders increasingly follow a zero-tolerance policy promoted by Pope Francis. Archbishop Franco Coppola, apostolic nuncio, told the Spanish news agency EFE that 271 cases of alleged sexual abuse committed by clergy have been investigated over the past decade. Of those cases, 103 priests have been removed from their positions, 45 priests have been suspended and 123 cases are still open. "I seriously think there were people who covered up (cases) with bad intentions," Archbishop Coppola told EFE May 19. "I want to think there were also people who covered up (cases) without realizing the seriousness of it." An official with the nuncio's office in Mexico City told Catholic News Service the comments published by EFE were correct. The nuncio's comments offered a candid acknowledgment of the crimes of clerical abuse committed against children in Mexico – long downplayed as a problem by the bishops' conference.

## ADIRONDACK

## CORPUS CHRISTI DAY OF REFLECTION

Saranac Lake - The North Country Cursillo is sponsoring a day of reflection on the Eucharist.

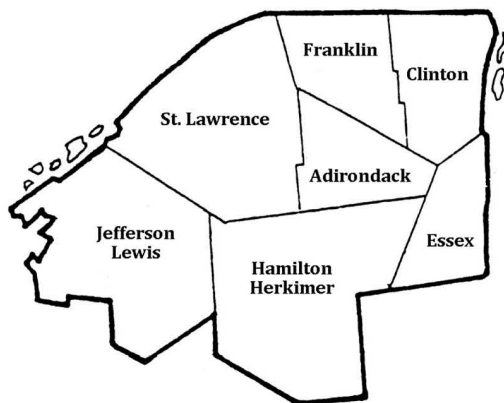
**Date:** June 6

**Place:** St. Bernard's Church

**Schedule:** Noon - arrive/registration; 12:30 p.m. - Welcome and opening Prayer (perhaps a Litany of the Most Blessed Sacrament); 1 p.m. - talk #1 - Marika Donders; 1:30 p.m. - music / silent prayer / break 1:45 p.m. - talk #2 - Ken Racette; 2:15 p.m. - music / silent prayer / break; 2:30 p.m. - line up for Procession (outside, around the building, back inside for Adoration); 3 p.m. - Preached Eucharistic adoration (Father Al Hauser) - with opportunities for confession; 4 p.m. - Break; 4:30 p.m. - Mass with Bishop LaValley

**Features:** Everyone is welcome to join us in prayer and fellowship as we celebrate the gift that is Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist. As we say in Cursillo: Make a Friend, Be a Friend and Bring a Friend to Christ.

**Contact:** Registration is requested for planning purposes. Register at <https://www.rcdony.org/corpus-christi>. For more information, contact Marika



The North Country 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, 315-394-0670;  
e-mail [news@northcountrycatholic.org](mailto:news@northcountrycatholic.org).

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

Donders at [mdonders@rcdony.org](mailto:mdonders@rcdony.org) or  
315-393-2920 ext. 1380

## ESSEX

## LATIN MASS

Port Henry - Extraordinary Form Latin Mass to be held each Sunday.

**Schedule:** May 30 at 9:15 a.m.

**Place:** St. Patrick's Church

**Features:** The traditional Latin Mass celebrated according to the 1962 Missal of St. John the XXIII.

## ST. LAWRENCE

## PRAYER AND ADORATION

Massena - Commissioned Lay Ministers are invited to gather for Adoration and Rosary.

**Date:** Every third Wednesday of the month (June 16)

**Time:** 6:30 p.m. to 7

**Place:** Sacred Heart Church

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

## LET US DREAM

Virtual presentations to address and discuss our responsibilities to SEE + CHOOSE + ACT for a better future on God's Earth.

**Date:** May 25, 26 and 27

**Time:** 7 p.m. to 9

**Place:** Via Zoom

**Features:** This is a joint project of the Laudato Si' Committees of the Roman Catholic Dioceses of Ogdensburg and Syracuse.

**Contact:** Register online at [www.rcdony.org/dream](http://www.rcdony.org/dream) For more information, email Marika Donders at [mdonders@rcdony.org](mailto:mdonders@rcdony.org)

## DAY OF REFLECTION

Virtual presentation about putting forgiveness into practice.

**Date:** June 19

**Time:** 9:45 a.m. to Noon

**Place:** Zoom

**Features:** We all know from the Scriptures that we are called to forgive others and ourselves as well. We also

know the challenge this call can be in our daily encounters. This reflection day will consider the dynamics of forgiveness, obstacles often experienced in becoming a forgiving person, and aids from Catholic tradition. It includes presentations, personal prayer and opportunities for sharing. The speaker will be Sister Bethany Fitzgerald, SSI.

**Contact:** There is no cost to attend.

To register go to [www.rcdony.org/reflection](http://www.rcdony.org/reflection) Zoom link will be emailed as date approaches.

## SIDEWALK ADVOCATES FOR LIFE

Experience Sidewalk Advocated for Life's new virtual basic training 2.0.

**Features:** Sidewalk Advocates for Life employs peaceful, prayerful, loving, and law-abiding outreach outside abortion centers to aid mothers and connect them with resources in the effort to save their children and end abortion. This effort has witnessed over 9,000 women turn around at abortion centers and CHOOSE LIFE!

**Contact:** To get started, YOU'RE INVITED to fill out the brief application at [sidewalkadvocates.org/trainingapp](http://sidewalkadvocates.org/trainingapp). Upon receipt, we'll be in touch with next steps for accessing the online training.

NOW SHOWING  
PROFILE

**NEW YORK (CNS)** - In 2015, a French journalist who now calls herself Anna Erle published the memoir "In the Skin of a Jihadist."

It recounted her effort to infiltrate the online recruitment process by which ISIS drew Europeans to join their campaign of terror in the Middle East. The project eventually proved so perilous that Erle not only had to change her name but still lives under 24-hour police protection.

In co-writing the script for his screen version of Erle's book, penned in collaboration with Britt Poulton and Olga Kharina, director Timur Bekmambetov shifted the action to Britain but left much else intact. The result is an intelligent, if flawed, thriller suitable for a broad audience of grown-ups.

Erle's stand-in is investigative journalist Amy Whittaker (Valene Kane). Strapped for cash and anxious to make a professional splash, Amy has come up with the idea of using a fake online identity to pose as "Melody," a recent - and vulnerable - Muslim convert open to radicalization.

In short order, Melody is contacted by London-bred but now Syria-based militant Bilel (Shazad Latif) and her alter ego sets to work to study his modus operandi. Even as Bilel uses standard psychological techniques to lure her into joining the far-off fight, however, Amy discovers that he is surprisingly personable.

He's a cat fancier who likes to play soccer with his comrades. He also has a compelling story about the widespread prejudice that

soured him on life in the U.K. And then there's the fact that he's handsome and a hunk. Gradually, Amy's feelings about Bilel begin to become conflicted.

Bekmambetov tells Amy's story entirely through the activity on her computer, an approach - or gimmick - known as Screenlife. In this case, doing so helps to build suspense as Amy struggles to conceal her real-life relationships with her soon-to-be live-in boyfriend, Matthew (Morgan Watkins), and her hard-edged editor, Vick (Christine Adams), from the dangerous killer she's trying to dupe.

Yet the degree to which Amy falls under her adversary's sway ultimately seems far-fetched. A secular Westerner, she is presumably opposed to

everything Bilel holds dear - his ends as well as his means. And is it really that easy to forget that, after the beautiful game, his second-favorite pastime is probably beheading infidels?

If not always believable, however, "Profile" is at least never boring.

Bekmambetov depicts the acts of barbarous cruelty that were ISIS' trademark with restraint, though he teases viewers by showing the preliminaries of such behavior without following through on them. The audience is thus, for better or worse, chilled without being revolted.

By avoiding anything more graphic, Bekmambetov may be shying away from reality - perhaps in order to make Amy's ambivalence toward Bilel more credible. But he also keeps

the proceedings acceptable for those in search of thoughtful, but not harrowing, drama.

The film contains discreetly portrayed but potentially disturbing violence, a cohabitation theme, at least one use of profanity and a milder oath, considerable rough language and a handful of crude terms. The Catholic News Service classification is A-III - adults. The Motion Picture Association rating is R - restricted.



## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

# Celebrating the Mystery of the Trinity

Today is the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. It celebrates the most awesome of all mysteries. The Scriptures for the Mass guide us through the story of its revelation to God's people.

The first reading from Deuteronomy is all about Moses reminding the Israelites of just how great this One God has been to them ever since He revealed Himself to Abraham many years before. More recently, he has performed incredible miracles in delivering the people from Egypt's Ruler. The



**Monsignor  
Paul E.  
Whitmore**

number *One* as in "God," has been indelibly branded in their minds and hearts! (This accounts for some later confusion and reluctance on their part to accept the teaching of Jesus about the Trinity).

The final passages of Matthew's Gospel are read this Sunday. In them, we find Jesus revealing the great Mystery which has left us speechless for two thousand years – and the mystery is this: He, Himself, is the Son of God, and He is *equal* to God the Father! How can this be?

**May 30**

**Feast of the Most Holy Trinity**

READINGS

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

Romans 8:14-17

Matthew 28:16-20

Two separate "Persons" in the *One God*? We may well ask, "Why do we need a *third* person?"

Today's second reading from Paul's letter to the Corinthians casts much light on the mystery (but not enough to solve it completely). Paul talks about the Holy Spirit as the *love connection* between Father and Son. This love is so powerful that in is the Holy

Spirit. In fact, it connects the very distant idea of a Creator God, with the still very awesome idea of the *Word* of God taking on human flesh. He has been given the divine-human name of Jesus, the Anointed One (*Christ*).

So, the third person of the Trinity is really the Holy Connection between Father and Son. St. Basil called this Spirit of God the Divine Being who is totally contained in every baptized and confirmed Christian. Now the catch! He gives his Power to the whole universe, and *to those individuals "who are worthy, acting in each according to the measure of*

*his faith.*" This makes God much closer than we realize. This third person makes holy all those persons who will allow Him to do so. We ourselves share in the connection between "Father" and "Son."

We need not be disturbed by the fact that we'll never solve the mystery of three Persons in one God – all we have to do is to live by the Spirit who is the Great Connector, and realize that we have been given the immense privilege of being a living temple of the Holy Trinity, sharing in its power, its truth, and the incredible delights of its love life, joy, and everlasting happiness!

## CALLED TO SERVE

# How does your garden grow?

Would you like to have your remains scattered on a bunch of petunias growing in the local Catholic cemetery? The people who run the cemetery will make sure your remains deteriorate properly, although the decomposition will be sped-up a bit. And the process will include a final pulverizing to make sure there are no vestiges of your human form left. Then you can be fertilizer.

I hope that raised your eyebrows a bit. There is so much wrong with that concept, it should make a Catholic shudder.

Yet here it is. A bill proposed by a St. Albans, New York State Senator "relates to the creation, operation, and duties of natural organic reduction facilities as cemetery corporations." St. Albans, incidentally, is in Queens near the Nassau County border on Long Island. Cemetery land is

scarce in metro areas like New York City. So, the search for creative ways to bury our dead is understandable.

For Catholics, the core understanding, found in the Order of Christian Funerals, "for the final disposition of the body, is the ancient Christian custom to bury or entomb the bodies of the dead; cremation is permitted, unless it is evident that cremation was chosen for anti-Christian motives." According to the Church's cremation guidelines, cremated remains must be buried and not scattered.

The title of the new legislation is a bit misleading, talking about legal corporate mumbo-jumbo. The bill gets a bit scary when you read the fine print in the bill.

The bill proposed in the Senate by Leroy Comie (D) introduces a new phrase to

the not-for-profit corporation law: "natural organic reduction." NOR means the contained, accelerated conversion of human remains to soil. That's a key word for us Catholics: accelerated.

Here is what the Sierra Club, a very large environmental group, says about natural organic reduction, the NOR: "Human composting has emerged as an eco-friendly alternative to traditional methods of burial and cremation, which tend to be environmentally destructive and pricey. During the NOR process, a corpse's remains – not unlike your banana peels and coffee grounds – are broken down in a cylinder alongside organic materials like wood chips and straw. Meaning that within

months, your loved one can become soil for your garden."



**Deacon  
Kevin Mastellon**

A quick read of Senate bill 5535 suggests cemetery corporations run by religious corporations, there are seven in the Diocese of Ogdensburg, or cemeteries operated by religious corporations, there are dozens of cemeteries in the diocese run by parishes, are exempt from the bill. However, the New York State Catholic Conference has raised its voice in opposition to the bill because "this process does not provide for proper reverence and respect due to bodily remains."

The Catholic rites following the death of a loved one give us, the mourners, an opportunity to grieve, to remember the de-

ceased's time with us and to pray for his or her soul as it continues this journey to Christ. We bury our dead in the hope they will rise again, as Jesus did.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church expresses our view beautifully. "The Christian meaning of death is revealed in the light of the Paschal mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ in whom resides our only hope."

The Church teaches entombment of our bodies or cremated remains must occur in cemeteries or other sacred places. Senate bill 5535 permits something very different and should be opposed by Catholics.

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



## The Pontifical Mission Societies of the Diocese of Ogdensburg, Inc.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669

(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296

mbrett@rcdony.org

# Catholics share meals with Muslim officials

The country of Pakistan has always had deep religious divides, but in this article from the FIDES missionary news service of the Pontifical Mission Societies, we see people putting aside their differences to show compassion and love:

"We must show our love and solidarity to all the those who carry out their civic service and work during Ramadan, the month of Islamic fasting. Due to their work commitments, they cannot reach their family members to break the fast; many of them are officials of the security forces present on the streets and committed to protecting people.

We wanted to show them a sign of unity of purpose, appreciate their courageous good works, and promote and strengthen interreligious harmony in the city."

With these words Mansha Noor, Executive Secretary of Caritas in Karachi tells Fides the spirit that animates Catholic volunteers who are committed to serving free Iftar meal to about 150 Muslim officers and civil servants on duty in the street.

Officials receive a box with the "Iftar" meal, the one with which the Muslim faithful break their daily fast in the evening, containing dates, rice, juices and other foods and drinks. Mansha Noor says, "for the second consecutive year in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, we are reaching out to the security forces and civilian military officers serving in the surrounding areas of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Karachi. These operators appreciate our initiative, which we carry out with the help of Christian volunteers, but also Hindus and Muslims."

In addition, Mansha Noor informs Fides: "This year also partner organizations Master Peace Karachi, Antim Yatra Seva Samaj, Ahsas Insaniat Welfare Community Services and Salvation Army Church have supported our initiative. The Islamic month of Ramadan is a favorable time to share love with our Muslim brothers and reach them with initiatives of spiritual and material closeness, in full solidarity, to give a sign of coexistence in society and build a better Pakistan." (AG-PA) (Agenzia Fides, 12/5/2021)

Please remember "The Society for the Propagation of the Faith" when writing or changing your Will.  
[rcdony.org/mission](http://rcdony.org/mission)

## OBITUARIES

**Altona** – Donald F. Mitchell, 88; Mass of Christian Burial May 17, 2021 at Holy Angels Church; burial in parish Cemetery.

**Black River** – Ruth Irene (Carroll) Robl, 96; Mass of Christian Burial May 27, 2021 at St. Paul's Church; burial in Black River Cemetery.

**Cape Vincent** – Bonnie L. (Reff) Higgins, 71; Mass of Christian Burial May 19, 2021 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Chateaugay** – Beverly Ann (DeCoteau) Chartier, 83; Mass of Christian Burial May 19, 2021 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in Brainardsville Cemetery.

**Chateaugay** – Hugh P. McCann, 90; Mass of Christian Burial May 21, 2021 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

**Ellenburg** – Anne E. Trombley, 83; Mass of Christian Burial May 17, 2021 at St. Edmund's Church; burial in Ellen-

burg Mausoleum.

**Fort Covington** – Noella L. (Castonguay) Charlebois, 90; Mass of Christian Burial May 27, 2021 at St. Mary's Church; burial in the new St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Fort Covington** – Marty J. Dupra, 38; Mass of Christian Burial May 25, 2021 at St. Mary's Church.

**Malone** – Joan E. Ashline LaPlante, 78; Mass of Christian Burial May 28, 2021 at Notre Dame Church.

**Massena** – Claudette Anita (Rugiero) Hammond, 87; Funeral Services May 20, 2021 at the Donaldson Funeral Home; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Wayne S. Hamilton, 85; Funeral Services May 17, 2021 at Frary Funeral Home; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Marguerite C. Huot, 92; Mass of Christian Burial May 20, 2021 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre

Dame Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Mary Elizabeth Taylor, 67; Mass of Christian Burial May 20, 2021 at Notre Dame Church burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** – Frederick Joseph Walter, 91; Mass of Christian Burial May 19, 2021 at St. Peter's Church.

**Waddington** – Edward C. Kahrs Sr., 70; Funeral Services May 21, 2021 at Phillips Memorial Home.

**Watertown** – Teri (Cean) Augliano, 53; Mass of Christian Burial May 22, 2021 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

**Watertown** – Dorothy G. "Dottie" (Schreiber) Byrnes, 95; Mass of Christian Burial May 21, 2021 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church; burial in Black River Cemetery.

**Watertown** – Wanda H. (Narel) Siver, 86; Mass of Christian Burial May 18, 2021 at St. Anthony's Church.

# ABC feature explores Native American Catholicism

**NEW YORK (CNS)** – A wide-ranging survey of the interaction between the indigenous peoples of the New World and the Catholic Church is provided in the informative documentary "Enduring Faith: The Story of Native American Catholicism."

Produced by the Knights of Columbus, the film is currently being shown on ABC affiliates, primarily on Sundays, through a partnership with the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission. A schedule of airtimes can be found at: <https://www.kofc.org/en/news-room/enduring-faith/schedule.html>.

Narrated by actor Larry Omaha, the movie reaches back to the Age of Exploration to examine the impact the Catholic faith has had on Native people from Mexico northward to

Canada. It also celebrates the contributions their dedication has made to the church.

Filmmakers David Naglieri and Tim Moriarty examine the varied attitudes displayed by colonists from Spain, France and Britain. Catholic newcomers from the first two countries tended to have a greater interest in evangelizing indigenous North Americans, a fact which also led them to treat those they sought to convert with greater dignity than did the British.

The film highlights the work of the Franciscan, Dominican and Jesuit orders in bringing the Gospel to the Western Hemisphere. It also showcases the trailblazing role played by such individual missionaries as the indefatigable

Flemish-born Jesuit Father Pierre-Jean De Smet (1801-1873).

"Enduring Faith" does not shy away from some of the more disappointing episodes in the history it recounts. These include the way in which at least some Catholic Americans of European descent adhered to the misguided policy of the U.S. government that sought to "civilize" Native Americans by rooting out their languages and traditions.

Yet the overall tone remains optimistic. Summing up his hopes for the future of the relationship between Native American Catholics and the church at large, Anderson, who also served as the film's executive producer, looks forward to "a true reconciliation, a true incorporation and a true unity."

## MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

# Vaccine mandates and Catholic colleges

In a recent statement from the National Catholic Bioethics Center on COVID-19 vaccines, we noted that the Catholic Church “neither requires nor forbids” the use of vaccines, but instead urges people to “form their consciences and to carefully discern the moral and prudential issues involved.”

A 2020 Vatican statement offers a similar conclusion: “vaccination is not, as a rule, a moral obligation,” and “therefore, it must be voluntary.”

That’s why, when Catholic colleges and universities mandate COVID-19 vaccines as a condition for enrollment, as several have recently done, important ethical conflicts and prudential concerns arise.

Vaccine mandates run counter to the wisdom of encouraging individuals to make careful and case-specific determinations regarding their personal health needs. Such mandates bolster the idea that the judgment of a higher authority, say a university president or a politician, should be substituted for their own free and informed consent.

In general, when I become sick, I ought to function as the decision-maker regarding my medical treatments, even as I work closely with my health care providers to receive the information I need to make the best decision. Similarly, if I am healthy, but face the risk of exposure to a new disease, I must weigh the benefits and burdens of prophylactic measures like vaccines.

Early in a pandemic, there can be a lot of questions and uncertainty because of shifting sets of medical data or a growing sense of alarm and panic. We may be tempted to think we can or should sideline ethical or prudential concerns.

Yet it is at precisely such a time that our ethics and prudential judgments become paramount, as we seek to temper urgency with due diligence, and to confront our fears with reason and discernment. It is in such a crisis moment that calm, careful, and case-by-case discernment becomes crucial.

Mandating vaccines for everyone involves a flawed assumption that there are only benefits, and no significant burdens, associated with getting vaccinated. The history of vaccine development reminds us how vaccines, which constitute a breakthrough through technology and life-saving remedy in the battle to improve public health, are nevertheless not a risk-free endeavor.

Some individuals have allergies to vaccine ingredients. Others have immune systems that cannot tolerate vaccines. Some vaccine recipients encounter unanticipated reactions and side effects, whether it’s headaches, muscle aches, several days of exhaustion or nausea, anaphylaxis, or the rare blood clots seen among those who received the Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccine.

When deciding about vaccinations, other considerations besides safety and side effects also come into play.

There are ethical concerns about the way certain COVID-19 vaccines are connected to cell lines derived from abortions.

Certain populations, sta-

tistically speaking, will face low risk from diseases like COVID-19, including otherwise healthy college-age students and children, many thousands of whom have tested positive but most of whom have experienced only mild symptoms or may have been entirely asymptomatic. Those who have been previously exposed to COVID-19 may decide to delay or decline vaccination, since they already have acquired some immunity.

For those, meanwhile, who are more vulnerable to the coronavirus and its potentially damaging effects, like those who are elderly, obese, diabetic, or facing other comorbidities, it makes sense for them to consider the potentially safer path of vaccination, rather than risking a harmful (or deadly) encounter with the virus itself. The same would hold for young people who are obese or diabetic, or have regular contact with vulnerable groups like the elderly.

Finally, mandates can sometimes have an effect opposite to what is intended. People can stubbornly dig in their heels when certain behaviors are compelled.

Jonah Berger, a marketing professor at the Wharton School has noted that there is some evidence

that telling people what to do can backfire, as with “Just Say No” style anti-drug campaigns that may actually increase drug use among certain subgroups of young people.

“People want to feel like they’re in control of their choices,” Berger says.

He notes, however, that once people have described what they care about and believe others have addressed those concerns, it’s much harder for them to push back merely for the sake of resisting: “They’re [now] a participant in the process rather than being forced to do something.”

Especially at Catholic universities and colleges, where we are seeking to form the next generation of society’s leaders and thinkers, instead of imposing the requirement to get vaccinated, leaders would do better to share and explain to students the benefits and risks of vaccinations — scientific and ethical — to help them decide.

By offering evidence-based information and moral principles, rather than mandates, college students will be helped to clarify their own processes of intellectual and personal discernment, and acquire the habit of making more prudent and informed choices.

*Rev. Tadeusz Pacholczyk, Ph.D. earned his doctorate in neuroscience from Yale and did post-doctoral work at Harvard. He is a priest of the diocese of Fall River, MA, and serves as the Director of Education at The National Catholic Bioethics Center in Philadelphia. See [www.ncbcenter.org](http://www.ncbcenter.org) and [www.fathertad.com](http://www.fathertad.com).*



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