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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 76 Number 8

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

JUNE 2, 2021

## Three new priests



On Saturday, May 29, three new priests of the diocese, Father John K. Ojuok, Father Fernando V. Solomon Jr. and Father Matthew S. Conger, were ordained by Bishop Terry R. LaValley at St. Mary's Cathedral. Read Bishop LaValley's homily on Page 3 and see additional photos on Page 4.

## REMEMBERING MSGR. SNOW



Msgr. Harry K. Snow passed into new life on May 23, 2021 at the age of 70. A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Msgr. Snow, on May 27 at St. Andrew's Church in Norwood. Bishop Terry R. LaValley was the principal celebrant and homilist. Priests of the diocese concelebrated.

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## Pope: Darkness does not mean devil has won

VATICAN CITY (CNS) – Prayer is not a magic wand or a way to ask God to be at one's service, Pope Francis said.

Prayer is a humble dialogue with God to grow spiritually and discover his will for the world, the pope said May 26 during his weekly general audience.

"In prayer, it is God who must convert us, not we who must convert God," he said.

The audience was held in the San Damaso Courtyard

of the Apostolic Palace, where attendees were obliged to wear masks, but many ignored social distancing rules as they crowded along the barricades to greet and speak with Pope Francis.

The pope, who had taken off his mask, spoke at length with people, blessing them or objects they had brought, drinking maté, swapping zucchetos and signing books.

One of the many people the pope spoke with was

Belarus-born Lidia Maksymowicz, 80, who spent three years at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp after she was sent there when she was 2 years old. The pope kissed the prisoner number tattooed on her left arm and the two embraced.

In his main audience talk, the pope continued his series on prayer by looking at how people can be certain God really listens to their prayers.

"Sometimes our prayers seem to go unheard, what we have asked for – for ourselves or for others – is not fulfilled," he said.

"Why does he not respond to our requests?" the pope asked.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2735) asks people to think more deeply about why they demand to see the results of their petitions: "What is the image of God that motivates our prayer: an instrument to be used? or the

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?" it says.

The pope said this passage warns people to avoid "the risk of not living an authentic experience of faith, but of transforming the relationship with God into something magical."

"Prayer is not a magic wand," he said. "It is a dialogue with the Lord. Indeed, when we pray, we can give in to the risk of not being the ones to serve God, but of expecting him to serve us."

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# Taking the leap of trust and faith

If the weather and a few other circumstances cooperate, I'll be joining a friend Sunday to jump out of a perfectly good airplane.

I've already taken that leap before, but it'll be my friend's first time skydiving. We're jumping to celebrate an accomplishment.

As my friend and I discussed the logistics behind this adventure, I asked him if he was nervous.

"Not yet," he said. "I probably will be right before we get in the plane."

I immediately reminded him that we'll each have a well-experienced instructor

attached to our backs, and I reminded him that there are a handful of safety instruments and protocols intended to ensure we land safely on the ground.

Darcy L.  
Fargo

Apparently, I'm willing to put an awful lot of trust in another human – a stranger – and a bunch of instruments and metal clips.

We do that all the time, don't we? We put our trust in objects or other people pretty easily. I trust that my chair isn't going to

break and drop me on the ground. I trust my vehicle isn't going to fall apart while I'm going down the highway

at 65 miles per hour (probably faster, actually). I trust that my primary care provider has my best interest at heart and has the medical knowledge needed to help me be healthy and well. I trust that the flagger at the road work site is motioning me through only when it's actually safe.

Yet I have a difficult time putting my trust fully in the Lord. I can think of countless times when I've felt some urging or calling from the Lord, but I've rejected it thinking "I don't have time," or "I'm not capable of that." Trusting the Lord means knowing He'll give you the time and the resources you need if it's His will. Trusting

the Lord means saying "yes" those calls and urgings and cooperating with Him.

It seemed appropriate that I was reflecting on this idea of trusting and taking leaps on the same weekend that I had the opportunity to attend the ordination Mass for Father Matthew Conger, Father John Ojuok and Father Fernando Solomon Jr.

These three men took a giant leap of faith in answering God's call, and they trust God will provide all that they need in their ministries and lives moving forward.

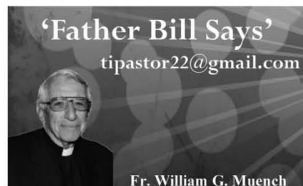
Please join me in praying for them as they live their vocations and praying that we all can turn our trust and wills over to the Lord.

## The sacrament of the Holy Eucharist

Today I would like to take some time with you to consider and remember the importance of the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist for us as Catholics. I want to begin by telling you that I believe in faith all that our Catholic Church teaches about the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. I believe that the Holy Eucharist is truly the Body and Blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

On Sunday, June 6, we, as the Church of Christ, celebrate the Feast of "Corpus Christi" – now called "The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ." This feast reminds us of how sacred and blessed is this Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is for us.

I believe that the Holy Eucharist was instituted by Jesus at the Last Supper. The Gospel writers describe for us the sacredness of that moment. Jesus wants to unite himself in a perfect way with his apostles. I believe that Jesus wants to continue to unite himself with us today through the reception of the Lord's Body and Blood in Holy Communion. I believe



Fr. William G. Muench

that Jesus is truly present in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

In John 6, Jesus says, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven... unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you."

Each time the Church celebrates Mass and the Holy Eucharist, we are all united with the Lord Our God in a very special way. The Eucharist that we celebrate is a time of gratitude. We express our gratitude to God for his place in our lives. We are grateful to this loving Savior, who unites himself to us in such a miraculous way. Jesus becomes one with us. We each become a different person. Each time we participate in the Mass, each time we unite ourselves with the Lord in Holy Communion, we are transformed ourselves. Each time we walk

into a church to join in the Mass, we become a different person. We leave that church transformed. We have to. How could we participate in such an experience without being transformed?

The Mass is a sacrifice. Jesus Christ, through the priest celebrating the Mass, makes present sacramentally his saving, sacrificial death on the cross by which he redeemed our sins. The offering of Christ unites the members of the Lord here on earth and those in heaven. The Mass is a sacred banquet that culminates in the reception of Holy Communion. Holy Communion increases our union with Christ. Holy Communion nourishes our spiritual life.

God has blessed my life with my ordination as a priest. I have been called to bring the Holy Eucharist to the people of God. During this time of the Church year, this season of Pentecost, many receive ordination as priests. These new priests are truly called, as I was, to say the words of Jesus at the altar, to consecrate the bread

and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus and to bring the Holy Eucharist to people in many parishes.

This experience has been mine. Like these newly ordained priests, I remember well and continue to thank God for my vocation to celebrate Holy Mass and to bring Jesus to the people of a parish through the sacraments of the Church.

Recently, two of the priests of our Diocese of Ogdensburg, Father Richard Sturtz and Monsignor Harry Snow, died. Many of you know them, and they were your friends. They were exceptional priests. Father Sturtz was a faculty member at Wadhams Hall for a time and then became a dedicated pastor of several parishes. Father Snow was a wise director of the diocesan Office of Canonical Affairs and also a dedicated pastor to several parishes. I know their greatest joy as priests of the Lord Jesus was to bring the Lord Jesus to the people of their parishes through the celebration of the Blessed Eucharist at Mass.

## FOLLOW ME

# 'Imitate Christ in His total self-giving and service'

*Editor's Note: The following is Bishop Terry R. LaValley's homily from the ordination of Father Matthew Conger, Father John Ojuok and Father Fernando Solomon Jr. on May 29.*

Deacon Matthew, Deacon John and Deacon Fernando – each one of you has shown remarkable perseverance in your unique journeys of faith. Your faith-filled response to the challenges each of you has encountered on the way has led to this sacred moment in your lives and led to this most blessed occasion in the faith life of this local Church. Let me begin by acknowledging and thanking your parents, those present and loved ones unable to be here, for their inspiring witness of faith and support of your priestly vocations. Thank you, moms and dads, for your sacrifice.

As your bishop, if there is one theme, one message that I ask you dear brothers to take with you as you begin priestly ministry, it is to imitate Christ in His total self-giving and service. It is not just what we do, but our earnest desire to give of ourselves completely, which reflects Christ's endearing love for his flock. Such a life stance informs our way of thinking and acting, our way of relating to people. That is how we gain the great privilege of being called "Father." To be called "Father" implies an intimate, self-emptying relationship with God's people.

If we are to imitate Christ's gift of self, priests must live and act in ways that enable us to be close to all the members of the flock. We will want to spend time with them, no

matter their economic or social status, no matter their intellectual gifts or political leanings. We will eagerly share their joys and sorrows, not only in our thoughts and prayers but we will want to be in their company, so that through our presence and our ministry they can experience God's love.

If I am not readily available to all, the hurting will find it so difficult to approach me and to open themselves up and trust me. (JPII Address to Eucharistic Congress, Korea, 1989) As Pope Francis insists, we must smell of our sheep. "Keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock." The service to which priests are called must reflect the way God loves and continues to care for His people. In a recent ordination in Rome, Pope Francis referred to this as a "style of closeness, of compassion and a style of tenderness." We don't sit in our rectories, waiting for someone to call us, we go out, in all humility, as Christ reached out to others.

Now, of course without prayer, the priest will empty himself out. He will quickly become a machine that makes a lot of clatter as he rusts out. In order to help others, the priest must first ask for help from the Lord. It is the priesthood of Jesus Christ, not ours. Everything that is essential to our ministry cannot be the product of our personal abilities.

What do the people of God demand of their priests? St. John tells us: They want one thing only: "We wish to see Jesus" (Jn.12:21). Our people want priests to lead them to Jesus, to put them in touch with Christ. The

baptized want to see Jesus through their priests. They want to hear His Word. They want to see God. They want to learn how to pray. A priest who does not have Jesus in his heart can give nothing. No one can offer what he or she does not possess.

How can a priest lead community prayer if he does not remain constantly in intimate contact with the Lord by taking the time to live a disciplined prayer life? The Liturgy of the Hours, daily Mass, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, all provide close encounters with God. If the priest does not pray, little by little, the faithful go away because the well in which they hoped to find water has run dry. A most important element in our evangelizing efforts is the priest's persevering prayer.

Priests continue Jesus' presence on earth. Our hands, consecrated by the sacred chrism, are no longer our own. They are Christ's for the purpose of blessing, forgiving, and consoling. They must be open and pierced, like Jesus', so as to hold nothing greedily. Again, priesthood is defined by selflessness and humility.

Lay people expect priests to tell them – clearly, firmly, and with paternal concern – not our opinions, but God's teachings. A priest cannot, must not take advantage of his authority over the people of God to set forth his personal ideas, be it the way he celebrates the Mass, the lessons he teaches or the homily he preaches.

The mission of a priest is a challenging one: to make all Christians disciples who are willing to die for Christ and His Gospel. It is the priest's responsibility and privilege to give spiritual nourishment that strengthens faith.

Nothing substantial can be accomplished with the lukewarm and the half-hearted. Do not be priests who are men of routine. Our souls are made for heroism and not for comfortable half-measures.

But don't think that heroism is always spectacular. There is an everyday, silent holiness for which St. Joseph is the model. Brothers, your genuine prayerfulness will win people over to the Lord. (Cardinal Sarah)



**Bishop  
Terry R.  
LaValley**

The mystery that dwells within you can give you the strength to live in a society which is undermined by unbelief and religious indifference, even hostility. Your mission is not to save a fragile world. There is but one Savior. Your mission is to live out with fidelity and without compromise the faith you received from Christ. It is not a matter of influencing opinions. It is a matter of living the Gospel passionately. It's that simple. It's that difficult.

For a priest, the celebration of the Eucharist does not amount only to carrying out rites, of going through the correct liturgical motions. The celebration of the Mass presupposes that the priest enters with his whole being into the great gift of Christ to the Father, into the great "yes" of Jesus' self-emptying to His

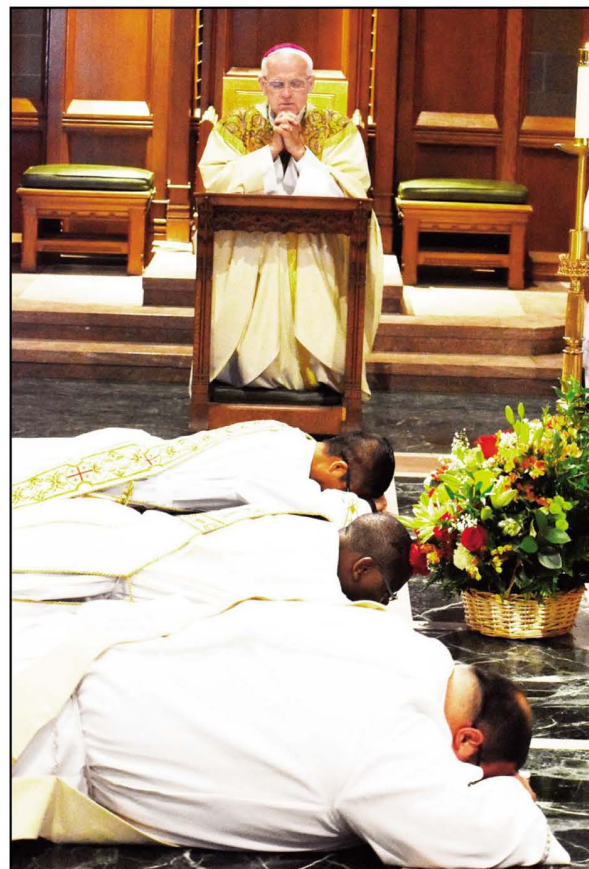
Father. Brothers, don't say Mass. Enter the event and pray Mass!

Lay faithful: pray for your priests. Pray for vocations to the priesthood. It is precisely in the presence of the Eucharist that we understand and appreciate best the gift of the priesthood, for the two are inseparable. Your participation in the life of the Church and your commitment to live the Gospel are a great source of encouragement and hope for your priests and your bishop.

You not only inspire us, but you also create a fertile field where vocations to the priesthood, indeed all Church vocations, can grow in response to God's call.

Deacons Matt, John and Fernando, you have shown that you are not afraid to meet challenges that have been placed before you. Let the holiness of your lives be a delightful fragrance to Christ's faithful, so that by word and example you may build up the house which is God's Church. Carry out the ministry of Christ the Priest with constant joy. We have no room for listless spirits in the priesthood. Keep always before your eyes the example of the Good Shepherd who came not to be served but to serve, and who came to seek out and save what was lost. Through your faithfulness, your priestly life will experience a joy that no one will be able to deny you because you will know Jesus as your constant companion. Through your priestly ministry, May God be praised...forever may God be praised!

# AT THE ORDINATION



**Additional photos of the ordination will be featured in the next edition of the North Country Catholic.**

PHOTOS BY JESSE SOVIE & DARCY FARGO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

# 'A wonderful friend and a very devoted priest'

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

**OGDENSBURG** – For Msgr. Harry K. Snow, both his role as a diocesan judicial vicar and his role as pastor gave him opportunities to show Christ's love to others.

"He was such a good pastor and a very effective canon lawyer and judicial vicar," said Bishop Terry R. LaValley, a longtime friend of Msgr. Snow. "People trusted him, and they knew he cared for them. People approached him with difficulties or marriage issues, and he was there to hear them and offer insights and advice.

Msgr. Snow died May 23, 2021 at the age of 70.

Bishop LaValley said it was Msgr. Snow that first got him involved in the diocesan Tribunal and Office of Canonical Affairs.

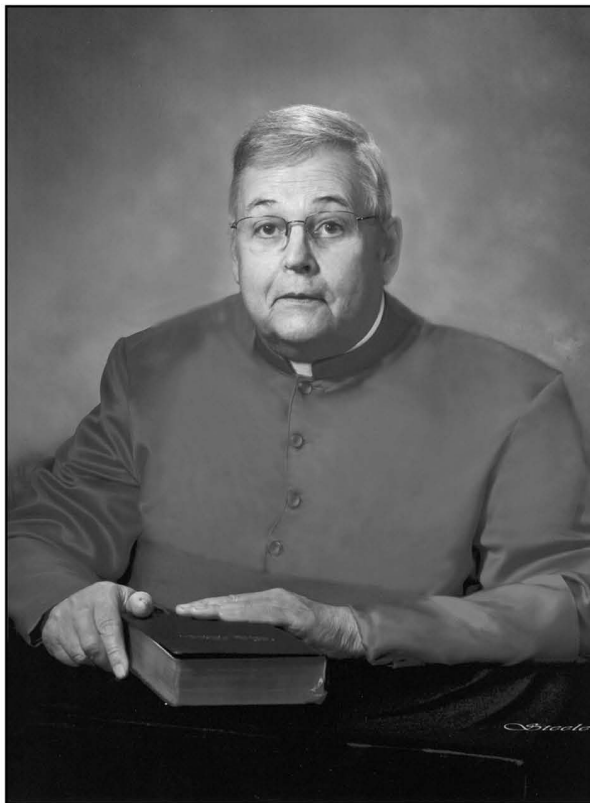
"I was a parochial vicar at Sacred Heart Church in Massena," Bishop LaValley said. "One day, (Msgr. Snow) asked if I would serve a day a week or two days a week in the Marriage Tribunal as associate secretary."

Bishop LaValley said that request came in either 1989 or 1990, and he and Msgr. Snow "worked together since."

"He was just a wonderful friend and a very devoted priest of the Church," Bishop LaValley said. "He provided entertainment during breaktimes at the Chancery. He was a great storyteller, and he was not afraid to embellish."

Msgr. Snow was also known as an ever-present pastor.

"He was a hard worker," Bishop LaValley said. "He was always present to his people. If they needed him, he was there. Day off or not, he was there for his people."



Msgr. Harry K. Snow

In addition to his roles with the Tribunal and with his parishes, Msgr. Snow was renowned for his dedication to the communities in which he served.

"He was very involved in the community," Bishop LaValley said. "He was a fire chaplain, and he was very involved in the fire departments, particularly in Morristown. He got to know his community, Catholic or not Catholic, and he was very well respected."

Bishop LaValley said Msgr. Snow was also well regarded amongst the priests of the diocese.

"He had a great rapport with his brother priests," Bishop LaValley said. "You could always count on a chuckle when you were around Msgr. Snow."

In an interview with the North Country Catholic

upon the 40th anniversary of his ordination and his retirement from the Matrimonial Tribunal and Office of Canonical Affairs in 2017, Msgr. Snow cited a particular canon – #1752 – as guidance for his life as a priest. It says:

"The salvation of souls, which must always be the supreme law of the Church, is to be kept before one's eyes."

*A complete obituary can be found on Page 6.*

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Msgr. Harry K. Snow distributes Communion at his ordination on April 30, 1977.

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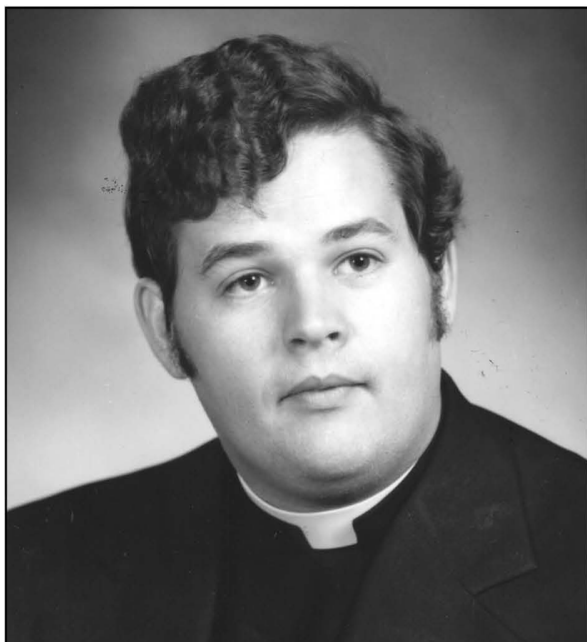
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(Left) Msgr. Harry K. Snow in a photo dated May 1980. (Right) Msgr. Snow, who grew up on a farm in Norfolk, never lost his love of animals. Before following God's call to the seminary, he had hoped to become a veterinarian.

## Funeral Mass celebrated for Msgr. Harry Snow

NORFOLK—A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated for Monsignor Harry K. Snow, on May 27. Bishop Terry R. LaValley was the principal celebrant and homilist. Priests of the diocese concelebrated.

Following the Mass, Msgr. Snow was laid to rest at Visitation Cemetery in Norfolk.

Msgr. Snow, age 70, a resident of Saint Joseph's Home in Ogdensburg,

passed into new life on Sunday, May 23, 2021 with his family at his side.

Born in Potsdam on May 6, 1951 to the late Harry K. and Lucy (Small) Snow Jr., Harry Snow graduated from Norwood-Norfolk Central School in 1969. He went to Ogdensburg to begin his seminary formation at Wadhams Hall Seminary, graduating in 1973. He pursued his theology studies and formation at

Christ the King Seminary on the campus of St. Bonaventure University and later East Aurora.

Most Reverend Stanislaus J. Brzana ordained Father Snow to the priesthood on April 30, 1977 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. Father Snow served as assistant pastor at St. Patrick's Church in Brasher Falls and then at St. Peter's Church in Lowville. In 1980 he was appointed Secretary of the Tribunal Office and Chaplain to Mater Dei College in Ogdensburg. He also served as Chaplain at the Ogdensburg Correctional Facility.

Father Snow returned to graduate school attending the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C. and St. Paul University in Ottawa, Ontario leading to a Licentiate in Canon Law. In 1985 he resumed his service as Tribunal Secretary and was appointed Pastor of St. John the Evangelist

Church in Morristown and Our Lady of Grace in Briar Hill. In 1988, Father Snow was named the Judicial Vicar of the Diocese, a position he would hold under five bishops and nearly three decades. He was named Prelate of Honor by Pope John II in 1995.

In 1997, Msgr. Snow was named rector of St. Mary's Cathedral, and in 2003 he returned home to serve at St. Andrew's Church in Norwood. He was also appointed Dean of the St. Lawrence Deanery. Msgr. Snow became pastor of St. Mary's Church in Waddington and St. John's Church in Madrid in 2012 where he remained until his retirement in 2017.

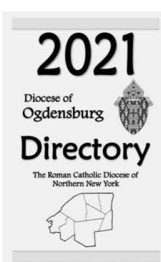
Msgr. Snow found time to enjoy gardening, reading and playing cards. He was a past member of the Brasher-Winthrop, Morristown and Norwood Volunteer Fire Departments and was the past Chaplain of the St. Lawrence County Fire Chiefs Association

and was active in the Canon Law Society of America.

Msgr. Snow is survived by a brother, James Snow, Norfolk; a sister, Jean Gang, Norfolk; his five beloved nieces and nephews, Jamie Snow and her companion Joshua Casey, Youngsville; Michael Snow, Massena; Jennifer and Amddo Incera, Las Vegas; Andrew Gang and his companion Abigail Remington, Parishville; Joseph and Shaylyn Gang, Norfolk as well as great nieces and nephews. Msgr. Snow was pre-deceased by his parents.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial donations be offered in Msgr. Snow's honor to St. Joseph's Home; his last parishes, St. John's Church, Madrid, St. Mary's Church, Waddington; or his home parishes, St. Andrew's Church, Norwood or Parish of the Visitation and St. Raymond, Norfolk.

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Knights of Columbus from around the Diocese of Ogdensburg gather for Mass at St. Anne's Shrine in Isle LaMotte, Vermont at a previous pilgrimage. This year, the Knights will gather at the shrine on July 18.

## Knights prepare for July pilgrimage to Vermont

On Sunday, July 18, Knights of Columbus from throughout the Diocese of Ogdensburg will participate in their 73rd annual pilgrimage to St. Anne's Shrine in Isle LaMotte, Vermont.

Bishop Terry R. LaValley will celebrate mass at 12:15 p.m.

Knights and their families can enjoy lunch in the shrine cafeteria or they can bring a lunch to enjoy on the shrine's beautiful grounds.

### 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.

St. Anne's Shrine is located on the shores of Lake Champlain, only a few miles from the Rouses Point Bridge.

For more information, please call pilgrimage Coordinator Peter Keenan at 518-643-9241.

### 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

### To Report Abuse

**If you have a complaint** of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terri-  
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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 Serv-  
ice** at 800-276-1562 or  
[www.ReportBishopAbuse.org](http://www.ReportBishopAbuse.org).

### Bishop's Public Schedule

**June 2** – Noon – Mass at Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg

**June 3** – 9:45 a.m. – Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence

**June 4** – 6:30 p.m. – Deacon Candidate Class at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

**June 5** – Noon – Mass in celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Knights of Columbus at The Roman Catholic Community of Cape Vincent, Rosiere and Chaumont (at St. Vincent de Paul in Rosiere) followed by a Reception at the Knights of Columbus Hall

**June 6** – 10 a.m. – Confirmation at St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid

12:30 p.m. – Day of Reflection sponsored by the Cursillo Movement at St. Bernard's Church in Saranac Lake concluding with Mass

4 p.m. – Mass at St. Bernard's,

**June 7** – Noon – Mass at Notre Dame Church in Ogdensburg

**June 9** – 7 p.m. – Confirmation at St. Paul's Church in Black River with St. Mary's Church in Evans Mills

### Environmental Stewardship

#### How close can one get?

When we ponder the mystery of the Eucharist, it seems incredible that the Creator's desire to be near us would cause Him to take on the very flesh and blood of us humans! Yet that is exactly the mystery we celebrate this Sunday on the feast of Corpus Christi. This act not only made God close to us, but it also made him intimately connected with the elements of the earth from which his body came and was sustained throughout His life. How close can our Creator get to us "earthlings"?

In Eucharist, when we are nourished spiritually by the Body of Christ, our bodies are also nurtured by the physical bread we eat. The act of eating connects us with the world. Thomas Merton says "From the moment you put a piece of bread in your mouth you are part of the world. Who grew the wheat? Who made the bread? Where was it grown? You are in relationship with all who brought it to the table. We are least separate and most in common when we eat and drink."

Our celebration of Eucharist Pope Francis sees as "... also a light and motivation for our concerns for the environment, directing us to be stewards of all creation." (236) So, our celebration of Mass and reception of the Holy Eucharist that unites us intimately with Christ doesn't end there. What about the rest of our day? How will we bring this presence to illuminate our interactions with our neighbors and the environment?

One action that could have a positive impact both on our health and on the health of the earth is to check your cleaning closet and/or your gardening shed. Check the labels for ingredients to see how these products will affect the quality of the water, the purity of the air. The "greener products" may cost a little more now, but they will have long-range positive effects on the planet we leave behind for our children's well-being. We could view it as an investment in a healthier future for those we love.

# USCCB president explains how planned discussion on Eucharist was set

After receiving an unprecedented letter from 67 bishops appealing for a delay in a discussion during the bishops' upcoming spring general assembly on whether to prepare a teaching document on the reception of Communion, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' president explained in a memo the procedure followed in bringing the question to a vote during the June 16-18 virtual meeting.

The back-and-forth messages follow an increasingly public debate among the bishops about Catholic politicians who support keeping abortion legal and whether they should be denied access to the Eucharist.

In a May 22 memo to fellow bishops, Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles explained that the USCCB Administrative Committee approved a request from Bishop Kevin C. Rhoades of Fort Wayne-South Bend, Indiana, for the discussion on drafting a document to examine the "meaning of the Eucharist in the life of the church."

The Administrative Committee includes conference officers and all of the committee chairmen. It set the spring assembly agenda during its meeting in March.

Bishop Rhoades chairs the bishops' Committee on Doctrine, which would draft the document if approved by the full assembly.

Archbishop Gomez's memo came in response to a May 13 letter, which was obtained by Catholic News Service, to him from

67 bishops who asked that any discussion on "eucharistic coherence" be removed from the assembly agenda.

The Pillar, a news and analysis website covering the Catholic Church, first reported on the bishops' letter, which cites May 7 correspondence from Cardinal Luis Ladaria, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican, to Archbishop Gomez.

The bishops wrote that "we respectfully urge that all conference-wide discussion and committee work on the topic of eucharistic worthiness and other issues raised by the Holy See be postponed until the full body of bishops is able to meet in person."

Four cardinals are among those signing the letter: Cardinal Blase J. Cupich of Chicago, Cardinal Wilton D. Gregory of Washington, Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley of Boston and Cardinal Joseph W. Tobin of Newark, New Jersey.

Archbishop Gomez said USCCB rules require that the body of bishops first be asked whether to issue a document on a particular topic. Bishop Rhoades took such a step by asking the Administrative Committee to include time on the spring agenda to discuss such a question. The committee agreed.

The process, the memo explained, involves the creation of an "Action Item" for the bishops to consider.

"Importantly, the Action Item does not ask the body to approve a final statement, but only

whether drafting of a text may begin," the memo said.

It added that if the action is approved, the doctrine committee would begin its work, subject to the conference's "usual process of consultation, modification and amendment" when presented for consideration at a future general assembly.

"As you will note, the focus of this proposed teaching document is on how best to help people to understand the beauty and mystery of the Eucharist as the center of their Christian lives," the archbishop wrote.

Archbishop Gomez's memo included a draft, dated May 14, of an outline of a possible document with the proposed title "The Mystery of the Eucharist in the life of the Church: Why It Matters."

It outlines three parts, subtitled "The Eucharist, A Mystery to be Believed," "The Eucharist, A Mystery to be Celebrated" and "The Eucharist: A Mystery to be Lived."

Each part has three topics that would be addressed including, respectively, the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in Communion, unity, beauty and identity as the "fount and apex of the whole Christian life," and moral transformation, eucharistic consistency and missionary discipleship.

The letter from the bishops was sent on letterhead of the Archdiocese of Washington. The archdiocese did not respond to a CNS email seeking comment.

## CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

### Survey: Faith seems to be 'buffer' against pandemic stresses

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The COVID-19 pandemic took a toll on participation in religious services just as it did on workplaces, but a new survey indicates strong emotional resilience from those who consider their faith vital to their existence. That was part of the findings of a survey conducted late last year of 1,600 adults, mostly from Washington, Maryland and Virginia. Nearly 40% of the respondents identified as Catholic. Survey results were discussed during a May 21 webinar hosted by Catholic University's sociology department and the Institute of Human Ecology. Respondents who reported a decline in religiosity since the pandemic had more than twice the odds of feeling isolated and lonely than respondents who did not report such a decline. "Religiosity seems to be a buffer against negative stresses," said Brandon Vaidyanathan, chair of the sociology department and an associate professor of sociology. Fewer than 20% of the sample said their mental health had worsened, he added.

### Pope names English archbishop to lead worship congregation

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Francis named English Archbishop Arthur Roche to lead the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, the Vatican said. The 71-year-old archbishop succeeds Guinean Cardinal Robert Sarah, 75, who led the congregation from 2014 until his Feb. 20 resignation. The Vatican announced the appointment May 27. The congregation is charged with promoting the celebration of the Mass and the sacraments and fostering their correct celebration, including by overseeing the approval of the translations of liturgical books and texts. Born in Yorkshire in 1950, the new prefect led the Diocese of Leeds until his appointment as secretary of the congregation in 2012 by Pope Benedict XVI. While head of the Leeds Diocese, then-Bishop Roche also served as chairman of the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, which was responsible for the current English translation of the Roman Missal, the book of prayers recited at Mass.

### USCCB president, committee chair decry anti-Semitic attacks

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the prelate who chairs the USCCB's Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs decry a recent rise in anti-Semitic attacks in the United States as "contrary to who we are called to be as the people of God." "We cannot remain silent when we witness our brothers and sisters suffering on account of being Jewish, and we will never tire of our commitment to decry every form of hatred, especially those formed in contempt of faith," said a May 26 statement by Archbishop Gomez and Bishop David P. Talley of Memphis, Tennessee. "The recent rise in anti-Semitic attacks across the nation is deeply troubling," they added. "Any attack on a community or individual on the basis of faith or otherwise is contrary to who we are called to be as the people of God." Citing the pope's 2020 encyclical "Fratelli Tutti," the two bishops said: "Pope Francis continually reminds us of our duty to build a culture of encounter by building bridges that transcend differences and divisions. In doing so, we must denounce violence unconditionally and take up dialogue." Archbishop Gomez and Bishop Talley said, "We remain steadfast in the promise of the Second Vatican Council to decry 'all hatred, persecutions and manifestations of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time by anyone,'" quoting from the Vatican II document "Nostra Aetate," the Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions.



**ADIRONDACK**

**CORPUS CHRISTI**

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

**Date:** June 6

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

**Schedule:** Noon— arrive/registra-tion; 12:30 p.m. - Welcome and open-ing 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 opportuni-ties for confession; 4 p.m. — Break; 4:30 p.m. — Mass with Bishop LaValley

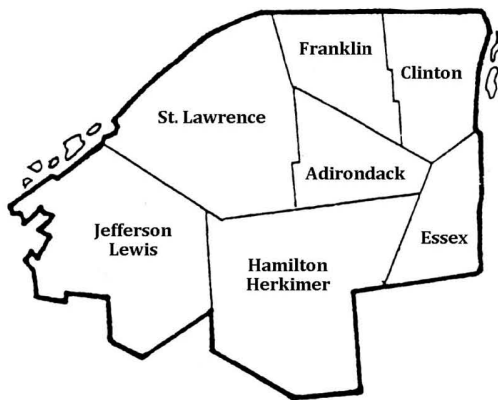
**Features:** Everyone is welcome to join us in prayer and fellowship as we celebrate the gift that is Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist.

**Contact:** Registration is requested for planning purposes. Register at <https://www.rcdony.org/corpus-christi>. For more information, contact Marika Donders at [mdonders@rcdony.org](mailto:mdonders@rcdony.org) or 315-393-

**ESSEX**

**LATIN MASS**

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



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, 1-866-314-7296;  
 e-mail [news@northcountrycatholic.org](mailto:news@northcountrycatholic.org).

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

**Time:** 1 p.m.

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

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

**FRANKLIN**

**ROSARY NOVENA WALK**

Malone — St. André Bessette Parish Rosary will host a Novena Walk and Eucharistic adoration for the intentions of an end to violence against human life, for conversions, and for parish priests.  
**Date:** June 16, 23, 30; July 7, 14, 21,

28; Aug. 4, 11

**Time:** 6 p.m.

**Place:** Notre Dame Church

**Features:** The Rosary will begin in the church processing outside around the block. For those unable to join the procession, there will be Adoration and the recitation of the rosary inside of the church.

**ST. LAWRENCE**

**FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY**

Ogdensburg — The Legion of Mary will recite the rosary with first Saturday

prayers.

**Date:** June 5

**Time:** 8 a.m.

**Place:** Notre Dame Church

**Features:** Everyone is invited to join in this devotion which has been re-vealed to the church by Our Lady of Fa-tima. Books are available.

**FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY**

Massena — First Saturday Rosary to be held.

**Date:** June 5

**Time:** 3:15 p.m.

**Place:** Sacred Heart Church

**Features:** The Rosary will be prayed. Confession will be available starting at 2:45 p.m. and Saturday Mass Vigil is at 4 p.m.

**DIOCESAN EVENTS**

**DAY OF REFLECTION**

Virtual presentation about putting for-giveness 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 for-giveness, some obstacles often experi-enced in becoming a forgiving person, and some aids from our Catholic tradi-tion. It includes presentations, time for

personal prayer and reflection with op-portunities for sharing. The speaker will be Sister Bethany Fitzgerald, SSJ.

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

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

**FORMATION FOR MINISTRY**

Looking to grow in faith and service? God continues to call everyone to use their gifts in service to others. Forma-tion for Ministry registration is open!

**Contact:** For more information

about the two year program, go to [www.rcdony.org/formation/candidate](http://www.rcdony.org/formation/candidate) or contact Cathy Russell at 315-393-2920 or email at [crussell@rcdony.org](mailto:crussell@rcdony.org). Registration deadline is July 15th. "Be not afraid" of God's invitation!

**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 of abortion centers to aid mothers in cri-sis and connect them with life-affirm-ing resources in the effort to save their reborn children and end abortion.

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

**NOW SHOWING**

**CRUELLA**

**NEW YORK (CNS)** — Adults who want nothing more than to watch two gifted actresses camp it up will likely be satisfied with director Craig Gillespie's glossy romp "Cruella" (Disney). Parents on the lookout for safe family fare, not so much.

In crafting a live-action origin story for the villain of Dodie Smith's 1956 children's novel, first seen on screen in the 1961 animated adaptation "101 Dalmatians," screenwriters Dana Fox and Tony McNamara seem to want to let their ethically schizo-phrenic protagonist, played by Emma Stone, go over to the dark side yet keep her sympathetic. As a

result, the film never finds its moral footing.

An aspiring fashion designer in 1970s London originally called Estella, Stone's character is thrilled to be taken under the wing of the Baroness (Emma Thompson), the ruthless reigning queen of the rag trade. But plot develop-ments involving an heir-loom and a family tragedy lead her to assume the titular persona and work se-cretly to bring on her mentor's downfall.

She's aided in this project by her two long-standing best friends, Jasper (Joel Fry) and Horace (Paul Walter Hauser) and by a more recently acquired pal, transvestite clothing store

owner Artie (John McCrea).

Before her big break, or-phanned Estella used to make ends meet by helping Jasper and Horace pick pockets and rob homes. Though this aspect of her story can be sloughed off as belonging to the long cinema tradition of the lighthearted heist, her later drive for revenge is more problematic.

As she works to upstage — and thus undermine — the Baroness, Cruella drifts away from the devotion to the memory of her mother, Catherine (Emily Beecham), and the loyalty to her thiev-ing amigos that were once her trademark personality traits.

Jasper and Horace justly

accuse Cruella of giving in to egotism and ingratitude. Yet all the while, there's a sense that the audience is meant to see her newfound wickedness — which, in re-ality, only amounts to being tiresome — as some-how fabulous.

The occasional humor — like the elegant interiors, costumes and cars more consistently on display — can only carry the picture so far. As cuddly as a spotted puppy this production is not. Unsuitable for im-pressionable viewers, it may be mildly diverting for grown-ups who can choose to ignore the unreliable moral compass by which it's guided — or, rather, set adrift.

The film contains skewed values, including a benign view of homosexuality and cross-dressing, a vengeance theme, some stylized violence and a couple of mild oaths. The Catholic News Service clas-sification is A-III — adults. The Motion Picture Associa-tion rating is PG-13 — par-ents strongly cautioned. Some material may be in-appropriate for children under 13.



## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

# We adore, receive and become

In 1979, I was privileged to be part of a Corpus Christi processions in Rome. Pope John Paul II had restored the procession of the Blessed Sacrament through the streets. Houses were all decorated with flowers, and people were weeping for joy as the pope passed by. All were singing hymns as the pope carried that heavy monstrance from St. John Lateran to St. Mary Major. It was a public testimony that the Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith.



**Monsignor  
Paul E.  
Whitmore**

Jesus, after all, becomes

sacramentally present at every Mass in our own home-town church. Jesus remains in the elements after Mass as well. The ancient practice of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament has been encouraged by all recent popes to support of the practice of Holy Hours and Benediction,

Feasts are established by the Church to strengthen faith. This feast is no exception. The readings for today's Mass describe the ritual actions of Moses pouring blood on the people. Why? To help them remember

**June 6**

**Feast of the Body and Blood  
of the Lord**

READINGS

Exodus 24:3-8

Heb. 9:11-15

Mk 14:12-16, 22-26

God's commands. The second reading speaks of Jesus pouring out his blood on all people through His death on the Cross. This priestly act effectively redeemed the world from the Father's displeasure. Then, the Gospel narrates how Jesus established the sacrament of Eucharist as the means of continuing His saving death. "Do this in remembrance of Me," He told His

apostles. We firmly believe this is the true Body and Blood of the Lord.

There is tremendous meaning in the word "communion," which describes our reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus. Just as Jesus at the Last Supper passed around the one chalice, so too we share the one bread and the one cup at every Mass. First, we adore, then we receive, then we become the food we have received. We are truly one body in Christ. Strengthened and transformed in love, truth, and joy through the Spirit, we are ready to share the fruits of love, compassion, forgiveness, service, and all the rest of the great

fruits of the Spirit with our brothers and sisters.

We are so privileged whenever we receive the Holy Eucharist, for we become what we have received. Incredible! That carries with it responsibilities. It is important for us to prepare by prayer before receiving Eucharist, and to make a suitable Thanksgiving after we have received the Eucharist. Our bodily gestures should reflect faith, reverence, and awareness of what has just transpired. Reflect back several times during the day on this gift God has given us. By this awareness, we may receive some inspiration of just how we will share the Lord this day.

## CALLED TO SERVE

## Called to continue the mission

A statue of our Blessed Mother holding the child Jesus adorns a side altar at St. Andrew's Church in Norwood.

Directly below that statue is the beautiful marble baptismal font. The cover of that font is capped by cast figures of St. John pouring baptismal water over the head of that same child, now a fully grown man, Jesus, the Nazarene.

On a day in May, to the right of those symbols, at

the crossing of the center and front aisles, was the coffin bearing the body of Msgr. Harry K. Snow. Next to the coffin stood the lighted Easter candle.

In the sanctuary, dozens of priests, brothers in Christ of Msgr. Snow, joined Bishop Terry R. LaValley as he chanted, "Through Him, with Him and in Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever." Bishop elevated the host, the body of Christ and Deacon John Levison held the chalice, the blood of Christ. And we all, laity and clergy, responded in song, Amen!

The entire scene, for its simplicity and beauty, overwhelmed me. I found my gaze shifting from Mary to the coffin in the light of Christ symbolized

by the Easter candle, to the dozens of priests joined in the memory of Msgr. Snow to praise and thank the Lord, to Jesus' baptism, and thoughts of Harry Snow's baptism 70 years to the day of his funeral and burial.

Harry Snow was welcomed to the Church in baptism and then spent 44 years working for the "salvation of souls" according to Bishop LaValley as an "approachable" priest.

Msgr. Snow was the second priest of the diocese to be buried last week. Earlier in the week, people went to St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg to pray for Father Richard Sturtz. He was a priest who loved his work,

whatever the assignment, and believed every assignment was blessed by God. One had the sense from the words of Father Kevin O'Brien in his homily and Bishop LaValley's closing remarks that Richard Sturtz enjoyed his work, the people he met and the challenges placed before him. Father Sturtz died on the day of his 65th anniversary of ordination as a priest.

Bishop LaValley reminds the newly confirmed that confirmation is a sacrament of initiation, not graduation. Carrying the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a life-long mission. We may not all become priests like Msgr. Harry Snow or Father

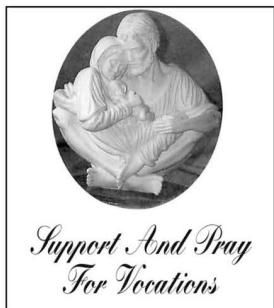
Richard Sturtz. The gospel is available to all people, lay man or woman, clerical or consecrated, married or unmarried.

Three men moved from transitional deacon to priest at a liturgy late last week at St. Mary's Cathedral. Father Matt Conger, Father John Ojuok and Father Fernando Solomon were ordained by Bishop LaValley. Our prayer is for them to have the same joy of ministry that Father Sturtz and Msgr. Snow had. The salvation of souls is possible when we recall God the Father's words at the baptism of Jesus by John. "This is my beloved Son, listen to Him."

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



**Deacon  
Kevin Mastellon**



*Support And Pray  
For Vocations*



## 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

# Laudato Si in Nigeria

Here we can see how some of our Catholic brothers and sisters in Nigeria prepared for and spent the week of Laudato Si's anniversary.

"We will celebrate the Laudato Si anniversary to show how much things have changed for the good," says the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM) Program Manager for Africa Father Benedict Ayodi, a member of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin, on the occasion of Laudato Si Animators (LSA) online training course. Following Pope Francis' invitation to all Catholics and people of good will to take part in Laudato Si' Week slated for May 16-25 to mark the sixth anniversary of the Encyclical letter, the global event will "celebrate" the improvements made so far towards nurturing the environment.

Among the initiatives dedicated to Pope Francis' Encyclical on ecology, in Kenya the GCCM-Africa organized a webinar focused on its impact on the continent led by GCCM, Association of Members of Bishops' Conferences in East Africa and Symposium of Episcopal Conferences in Africa and Madagascar, as well as another webinar on "Living Laudato Si in our daily life as Christians" organized by GCCM-Africa and Daughters of St. Paul (FSP).

The week, under the theme "For we know that things can change," has various organized webinars to enlighten the people on ecological conversion including among others critical opportunities in 2021 to create change, call for an integral path, dialogue on education, dialogue on energy and fossil fuels, sowing hope for the planet care prayer network and global action day for our common home.

The document sent to Agenzia Fides shows that the week will also be a time to reflect on what Covid-19 pandemic has taught us and to offer a roadmap for the future with hope.

"Even though we know that much still needs to be done, we rejoice and celebrate because in the last six years, the Church has made significant progress in the ecological conversion journey," said Father Ayodi addressing about 200 LSA.

During the week, the GCCM "will present to the whole Church living testimonies of Laudato Si transformations so far and offer tools that will help everyone in the next step of the journey". (Article from FIDES missionary news service of the Pontifical Mission Societies)

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

## OBITUARIES

**Adams** – Joshua Patrick Sullivan, 23; Mass of Christian Burial May 28, 2021 at St. Cecilia's Church.

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

**Brushton** – Nancy Hazel (Hourihan) Warner, 84; Mass of Christian Burial May 24, 2021 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Carthage** – Diane M. (Bezanilla) Ames, 77; Memorial Services May 28, 2021 at St. James Church.

**Hogansburg** – Louise Kawennahente Gray, 71; Mass of Christian Burial May 26, 2021 at the Donaldson Funeral Home; burial on Cornwall Island.

**Lake Placid** – John F. Roach Jr., 58; Mass of Christian Burial May 27, 2021 at St. Agnes Church.

**Massena** – Donald W. Gambaccini, 45; Funeral Services May 24, 2021 at Donaldson Funeral Home; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Brasher.

**Massena** – Betty Ann (Golden) Pelle-

grino, 90; Mass of Christian Burial May 28, 2021 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Massena** – Thomas W. Pratt, 85; Mass of Christian Burial June 7, 2021 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Morrisonville** – Jean L. (Merrette) Sklenarik, 89; Mass of Christian Burial May 26, 2021 at St. Alexander's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Shirley Marie Recore, 89; Mass of Christian Burial May 24, 2021 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

**Peru** – Gilbert G. Liberty, Sr., 82; Funeral Services May 24, 2021 at the Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Dannemora.

**Potsdam** – Annette M. (Tyler) Evans, 51; Mass of Christian Burial May 25, 2021 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Bayside Cemetery.

**Potsdam** – Dr. Lonel Woods, 53; Mass of Christian Burial May 23, 2021 at St. Mary's Church.

**Raymondville** – Jeanette M. (Widrick) Spencer, 86; Mass of Christian Burial May 25, 2021 at St. Raymond's Church; burial in Visitation Cemetery.

**Rouses Point** – Jacquelyn Jennings Ducharme, 87; Mass of Christian Burial May 26, 2021 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Patrick's Cemetery.

**St. Regis Falls** – Ann K. (Mackey) Falvey, 77; Mass of Christian Burial May 28, 2021 at St. Ann's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Watertown** – Geoffrey M. "Eli" Eliopoulos, 44; Mass of Christian Burial May 27, 2021 at Holy Family Church; burial in Brookside Cemetery.

**West Chazy** – Yvonne M. (Duffany) Miller, 101; Mass of Christian Burial May 28, 2021 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Westport** – Madeline (Weitlauf) Huchro, 91; Mass of Christian Burial May 27, 2021 at St. Philip Neri Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Willsboro** – Ella (Doyle) Coonrod, 89; Graveside services May 28, 2021 at Calvary Cemetery.

## CANS FOR A CAUSE



The students at St. Agnes School in Lake Placid collected bottles for a service project to go along with Earth day. They collected over \$200 worth of bottles

## GET TO KNOW CURSILLO

## Sharing thoughts on struggles in small group

By Michael Neaton  
North Country Cursillo

Welcome back to our world of Cursillo. I'd like to share a particularly enlightening experience I had with my Cursillo Small Group. One of the group members had shared that it was particularly upsetting that an area nursing home facility had been ravaged by COVID, and the resulting deaths were just devastating. Compounding the fact that these poor souls were not able to be comforted by visiting family in the end was the sadness and guilt that those family members might suffer with for being away from their loved ones. By the end of our group meeting that night, we had made a few resolutions. First was that there was something we could do about it. We could pray! We didn't stop there, though. We resolved to have a special Small Group session the following week, to celebrate the lives of those lost and include their loved ones in this special prayer event. Each of us pledged to contribute in whatever way we saw fit, and we set up to reconvene exactly a week later.

I spent most of that next week waiting for the time where the Holy



Spirit would bring me the words I wanted to say. The Spirit did not fail me, and I sat down one night and recorded the following reflection, which the members in my group suggested I share in the North Country Catholic in the North Country Catholic articles.

#### My Reflection:

As I approached this task of being part of a very reverent occasion, praying for the souls we lost on this earthly world due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, I struggled to find my own personal reflection. But on the eve of our service, I found myself overwhelmed by the presence of Jesus with a specific message for me.

Let me set the stage: it was another typically busy day in the life of Mike when I finally got home with my son Xavier in tow. Immediately the task was to whip up a dinner and eventually bring in the end of the

day with our traditional nightly prayer litany. Fortunately, that regularly calms us down for the evening. However, I had just had another medical testing procedure done and was feeling a little sorry for myself in the midst of this medical concern of mine, which is making me evaluate my own struggle with the fragility of life. As typical after my son is in bed, tasks continued. I grabbed my daily mail and started going through the numerous solicitations for contributions I receive almost daily. It's always an exasperating experience as there are so many causes, but I struggle to figure out which I should donate to (if any). I then opened one from the Franciscan Friars which solicited MY special prayer intention. That caused me to pause and reflect. It wasn't long before I was moved to make a donation in the name of a friend and neighbor struggling with Stage 4 cancer. The signs didn't stop there because the next mailing I faced was the *North Country Catholic* paper which I knew had a "Sharing our Stories" series featuring yours truly. I had already read it a couple times, but new things seemed to come out of it with each read through. I didn't get to it this time, as I started by reading the Editors Note by Darcy Fargo, a Cursillo friend of mine.

Say what you will about her weekly writings, but I look forward to her whimsical style and she did not disappoint. Her article hit upon a central theme of life that I had been contemplating for some time. If you didn't read it, she used as an example the story of a man who wanted to observe the emergence of an Emperor Moth from its cocoon. However, as he witnessed the moth struggle, he attempted to help by cutting of the cocoon away and ended up interfering with the process in which the struggle itself brought about the release of essential fluids to the wings of the moth. The interference evidently caused the death of the moth.

So, if you think my story has no point, let me bring you back to the word "struggle." It came up, sometimes intentionally, throughout this reflection already. It was what I had hoped to be the focal of the article written about me, and then it appeared in Darcy's column. The message sent me was clear. THE STRUGGLE! It's what we are born out of and it will be what we will all die of, for we are truly born to die.

We are here today to reflect and pray for the many who have struggled so drastically with the end of life due to this Pandemic called COVID; a virus that has dominated our lives for almost a year

now. Of course, there are those that have passed. They lost their fight. More than noteworthy, though, is the struggle before their loss. Frightening to all of us is the prospect of knowing a loved one is dying, and we can't be with them through the process. These are the struggles we are commemorating in this simple but important service tonight. Our prayers are desperately needed, and we have gathered for just that. Things cannot be undone, but we can pray here for those lost and those grieving those losses. We of course also say prayers of gratitude that we currently are not experiencing either of those perspectives of struggle and loss. We have all experienced the loss of the regular or ordinary aspects of life this past year. But we are blessed by knowing that Christ is with us through it all. He is also with every Covid victim and every friend and family member of Covid victims, so we rest assured that the peace of God's love will come.

Finally, as I sat at the "Our Lady of Lourdes" table at my Pilgrim Weekend of Cursillo in July of 2018, and as her commemoration is upon us, let us pray now to entrust the sick and dying to Mary, Mother of Mercy, and our Lady of Lourdes, by praying together the Hail Mary. Hail Mary full of grace.....



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