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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 77 Number 39

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

FEBRUARY 22, 2023

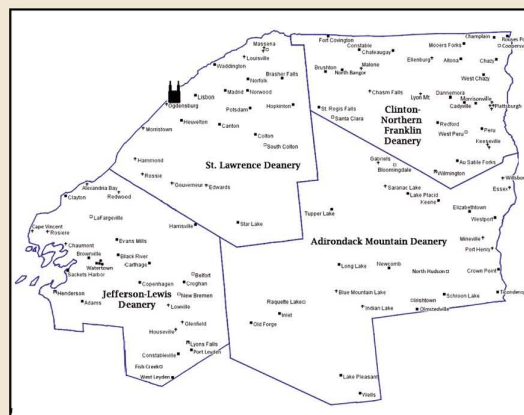
## PARADE PARTICIPANTS



PHOTO BY COLLEEN MINER/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Students from St. Bernard's School in Saranac Lake participated in the village's Winter Carnival Parade.

## NEW DEANERY CONFIGURATION



OGDENSBURG — Effective March 1, the Diocese of Ogdensburg will change the way its deaneries are structured. Bishop Terry R. LaValley approved the new structure, which reduces the number of deaneries from six to four and made changes to the role of the vicars forane, known locally as “deans.” A review of the structure was recommended by the Council of Priests, and Bishop LaValley formed a committee to complete the review.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

# Pope Francis: ‘We need to listen to Jesus’

By Hannah Brockhaus  
Catholic News Agency

In his message for Lent 2023, Pope Francis encouraged Catholics to listen to what Jesus wants to tell them through the Scriptures and through others.

Using the story of Jesus' Transfiguration as a launching point, Francis addressed both the journey of Lent and the Catholic Church's ongoing Synod on Synodality in the message released Feb. 17.

The pope recalled “the command that God the Father addresses to the disciples on Mount Tabor as they contemplate Jesus

transfigured. The voice from the cloud says: ‘Listen to him.’”

“The first proposal, then, is very clear: We need to listen to Jesus,” he said. “Lent is a time of grace to the extent that we listen to him as he speaks to us.”

“During this liturgical season,” he continued, “the Lord takes us with him to a place apart. While our ordinary commitments compel us to remain in our usual places and our often repetitive and sometimes boring routines, during Lent we are invited to ascend ‘a high mountain’ in the company of Jesus and to live a particular experience of spiritual discipline — asceticism — as God’s

holy people.”

Pope Francis said one of the ways Jesus speaks to us is through the Word of God, which we can hear at Mass.

But if one cannot attend Mass during the week, it is a good idea to still read the daily readings of the liturgy, the pope encouraged.

“In addition to the Scriptures, the Lord speaks to us through our brothers and sisters, especially in the faces and the stories of those who are in need,” he added.

Francis' second suggestion for Lent was to confront the difficulties of ordinary life remembering that Lent is a period that leads to

Easter.

“Do not take refuge in a religiosity made up of extraordinary events and dramatic experiences, out of fear of facing reality and its daily struggles, its hardships and contradictions,” the pope said.

“The light that Jesus shows the disciples is an anticipation of Easter glory, and that must be the goal of our own journey, as we follow ‘him alone,’” he said. “Lent leads to Easter: the ‘retreat’ is not an end in itself, but a means of preparing us to experience the Lord’s passion and cross with faith, hope, and love, and thus to arrive at the resurrection.”

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# It shouldn't make us miserable

I don't know what I was thinking.

It was years ago now, possibly a decade ago. I thought it would be very penitential and meaningful to give up coffee for Lent.

As a bit of background, you should probably know I drink a lot of coffee. I easily drink a pot of coffee every day, sometimes more.

It was certainly penitential. I was grumpy and irritable, especially in the mornings. I had frequent headaches. To put it bluntly, I was miserable. I was making the people around me miserable, too.

I ended the attempt long before Lent ended. I don't think I made it a week.

I was thinking about that Lent many years ago as I fielded a phone call asking me to take on a Lenten commitment that was overheard by a friend.



**Darcy L.  
Fargo**

"I just want to point out that you have a habit of committing to doing lots of things in Lent, and you make yourself miserable," my friend said.

I think I've been doing Lent wrong.

I often see Lent associated with prayer, fasting and almsgiving. It's supposed to be about prepar-

ing our hearts to enter into Jesus' passion and death, and to celebrate His resurrection. It's supposed to be solemn, but I don't think it's supposed to be miserable.

If we are spending time in prayer, time with our Lord, that shouldn't make us miserable.

If we are fasting, making room to move our attention from our needs to what the Lord wants for us, that shouldn't make us miserable.

If we are giving alms and helping others, that shouldn't make us miserable.

If we are growing in our relationship with the Lord as we prepare to celebrate His resurrection, it cer-

tainly shouldn't make us miserable.

While I'm still praying and hoping God will show me what He wants of me this Lent, I at least know it shouldn't make me miserable. Solemn does not mean sullen.

This is time to focus on our Savior.

I know I have a Savior who died and then rose from the dead to save me personally and each of you personally. I have a Savior who loves me that much.

How can that bring me anything but joy? It's joy I should be sharing with the world, especially during this time.

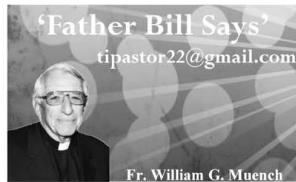
That feels like much better thinking.

## Ash Wednesday and Lent

Ash Wednesday and Lent – I am certain that you know all there is to know about Ash Wednesday and Lent. My task today is simply to convince you to do something for Lent. Lenten Prayer and fasting are important for us, Catholics. Each year Lent renews and transforms our whole life. It is an important time for us all.

As a priest, Ash Wednesday is a unique challenge. The distribution of ashes truly hits home to me. You can't believe how I notice each time I look into someone's eyes and say to them, "Remember you are dust and unto dust you shall return." I know only too well that I am waking up some to a reality that they think about often at this exact time as they have now reached an older age. I personally know that now that I am getting older that this message hits home to me. It is a time to begin accepting who I am and what this time of life is all about.

As you know, prayer becomes more sincere during the time of Lent. This is the



time to be more honest with our God. This is a time to invite the Lord to be more a part of our lives. For me, the best way to accomplish this is silent prayer – a calm time of silence before the Lord at home or at Church. I know that this is difficult on certain days – very busy days when so much is happening and our mind is racing over many matters. Those days demand the time, even a few moments to allow ourselves to concentrate on the presence of our Savior, who we know is always with us. We must make room for Jesus. We must empty ourselves to make room for the Lord. This is Lent.

That is why the Mass is such an excellent prayer opportunity, even on weekdays. Each time we prepare to participate at Mass, we are asked to consider our

lives and our failings so as to seek the Lord's forgiveness so that we can unite ourselves with the Lord, seeking the Lord's help to free ourselves from those distractions which might separate us from God's love and peace.

At Mass, we join ourselves with the Lord at the Eucharist. It is a time of gratitude for all the Lord has done for us, for all the gifts of God's love and especially for the Lord Jesus' Body and Blood. The reception of Holy Communion brings us ever closer to our God. The Masses of Lent allow us to unite ourselves with those original apostles who shared meals with Jesus everyday of their days with the Lord.

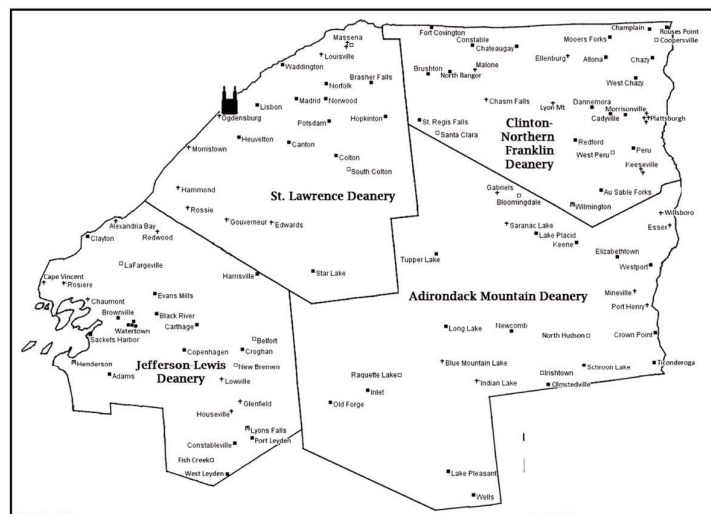
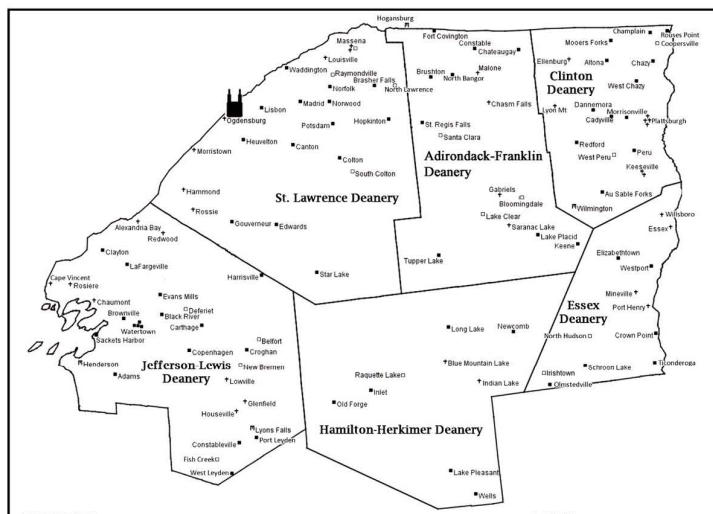
Lent leads us and encourages us to remember and renew the importance of the Sacred Scriptures for our spiritual renewal. The words of the Bible lead us to new and better relationship with our Lord and God. Some tell me that they do not understand the message of the Bible. My response is

to urge them not to give up. I believe that the words of Scripture have a sacredness in themselves. I experience myself that they bring the Lord to me in a new and special way, even now as I read them again, even though they have been a part of my life for many years.

So, you see Lent is not just about doing something, however, am I truly doing something to bring myself each day closer to the Lord. I know that each day – especially during Lent – the Lord wants to come into our hearts in love and gratitude. May we recognize that the Lord wants to be with us in a relationship of happiness.

Lent is a time of joy and happiness, not a time of suffering. We give up something to give ourselves the joy of being more Christian, more alive in the Lord. It's a time to realize how blessed and loved we are by our God.

May you experience the joy of coming alive as you draw ever closer to the Lord – Our Savior.



A 2022 map of deaneries in the Diocese of Ogdensburg (left) shows six deaneries. Effective March 1, the diocese will reduce to four deaneries.

# Bishop announces new deanery structure

OGDENSBURG – Effective March 1, the Diocese of Ogdensburg will change the way its deaneries are structured.

Bishop Terry R. LaValley approved the new structure, which reduces the number of deaneries from six to four and made changes to the role of the vicars forane, known locally as “deans.”

A review of the structure was recommended by the Council of Priests, and Bishop LaValley formed a committee to complete the review.

“I appointed Father Garry Giroux to lead a committee to study this issue and to recommend what changes, if any, should be made,” Bishop LaValley said. “The other members of the committee are the current deans: Monsignor Dennis Duprey, Fathers Albert Hauser, Arthur LaBaff, Mark Reilly, Sony Pulickal, and John Yonkovic. The group has recommended a revised description of the authority and duties of

deans. I accepted the new job description proposed by the group.”

Effective March 1, the new deaneries will be:

- St. Lawrence Deanery, which will include the parishes served by a pastor residing in St. Lawrence County. Father Mark R. Reilly will serve as dean of this deanery.

- Jefferson-Lewis Deanery, which includes the parishes served by a pastor (or PLC) who resides in those counties. Father Arthur J. LaBaff will serve as dean of this deanery.

- Clinton-Northern Franklin Deanery, which is comprised of the parishes where a pastor resides in Clinton County, and the parishes of St. Regis Falls, Brushston, North Bangor, Fort Covington, Constable, Chateaugay, and Malone. Msgr. Dennis J. Duprey will serve as dean of this deanery.

- Adirondack Mountain Deanery, which includes the parishes in the former Adirondack Deanery (Saranac Lake, Lake Placid, Keene and

Tupper Lake), former Essex Deanery (Elizabethtown, Essex, Willsboro, Port Henry, Schroon Lake and Ticonderoga) and former Hamilton-Herkimer Deanery (Old Forge, Lake Pleasant and Wells, and Indian Lake). Father John R. Yonkovic will serve as dean of this deanery.

The deans of each deanery “have an important role in assisting the diocesan bishop in the service of the people of God,” notes the outline of “the authority and responsibility of deans,” essentially a job description for the role.

The deans promote and coordinate pastoral and/or diocesan activities within the deanery, including providing assistance in coordinating seasonal penance services, ministry to hospitals, nursing homes and/or Catholic schools, and participation in personnel and diocesan planning.

Additionally, the deans attend to the spiritual and physical welfare of the priests and deacons

within the deanery. They do so by developing and supporting “strategies which cultivate fraternity among the priests and deacons.” The deans are also asked to check in with priests – both active and retired – and deacons within their respective deaneries and “convene, on a regular basis, priests, deacons,

and those members of the lay faithful involved in Church ministry to foster greater collaboration.”

Deans are also responsible for annual reviews of sacramental registers and corporate minutes of parishes within their deaneries, as well as additional duties as requested by the bishop.

## JOB OPENING

**Saint Anne’s Shrine in Isle La Motte, VT is seeking an Administrator Position to oversee operations of this historic attraction situated on the shores of Lake Champlain.**

The Administrator is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Shrine, with a year-round staff of seven. The Administrator coordinates all mission-based programming in support of the Shrine’s Spiritual Director.

The Administrator plays a key role in fundraising and donor development with the Shrine Spiritual Director, as well as financial and strategic business planning.

A bachelor’s degree is preferred and experience in fundraising, organizational planning or hospitality would be beneficial.

This position is full-time year-round. Occasional weekend work is required. A competitive salary and generous benefits package supplement the beautiful surroundings and meaningful work.

Please send your resume and letter of interest to:  
Steve Karcher, Society of Saint Edmund, One Winooski Park,  
Colchester, VT 05439  
or to skarcher@sse.org

**Applications will be accepted until a new administrator is selected.**

# IHC students stage 'The Wizard of Oz'

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

WATERTOWN – North Country residents will have an opportunity to “follow the yellow brick road” with students from Immaculate Heart Central (IHC) as the school stages “The Wizard of Oz.”

The show will run for two performances, March 11 and 12, both at 7 p.m. in the school auditorium.

Tickets are \$5 and can be obtained at either the high school or intermediate school offices, or at the door.

IHC teacher Tara Petrillose is directing the show, the second since shows were suspended during the 2019-20 school year due to COVID.

“I wanted to pick a show that was familiar,” said Petrillose. “A familiar show tends to draw more interest from both the students and the community, and we wanted that appeal as we try to re-establish the (drama and musical) program. I think we’ll be doing well-known shows for the next 5 or 6 years, and then we’ll have the program built up to a point where we could still draw a cast and crew and an audience for a show that isn’t as



Immaculate Heart Central students are preparing to stage 'The Wizard of Oz,' the school's second show since the theater program was paused due to the pandemic, on March 11 and 12.

well known.”

Last year, the school staged “Aladdin.” Many of the students who participated in that show returned for “The Wizard of Oz,” and new students were also added to the cast and crew.

“We needed around 50 students,” said Petrillose, noting grades 4 through 12 participate in staging the show. “Some of our cast – maybe 30 to 35 of them – were in Aladdin last year. The returning stu-

dents now know what to expect, and they can help the new students. And the older students tend to help the younger students.”

Work on the production began with auditions in December. Rehearsals began shortly after.

In those early rehearsals, Petrillose worked with students in smaller groups, focusing on specific skills, songs and scenes.

For the last month or so, students have been

gathering as an ensemble cast after school each day to rehearse.

“They’ve worked really hard,” Petrillose said. “And we’ve had lots of help. We’ve had great support for parents, alumni and the community.”

It didn’t seem like work to the students, though.

“I just like the community we develop,” said Magdalena Johnson, 16, who is playing Scarecrow in the show. “And it’s really fun to be on stage and to take on a

different character.”

“I decided to do this mostly because it was something I could do with my younger sister,” said Katharina Probst, 18, who is playing Glinda, the good witch. “I’ve really enjoyed the process so far. It’s been fun. It’s really different and fun to have a bunch of little kids – munchkins in the show – dancing around me and singing a song.”

While she’s enjoyed the time with her sister, Probst said participating with family also has its drawbacks.

“She forgets her (script) book a lot,” Probst said, smiling. “Then she wants to use mine.”

Both teens said they don’t get much stage fright. Both have experience participating in IHC’s Speech and Oratorical program.

They noted the audience will also be able to better hear them delivering their lines this year.

“We got new microphones,” said Probst. “Especially the little kids will be easier to hear.”

The teens advised those in and around Watertown to come see the fruits of their labor in the March performances.

“Come see the show,” Johnson said. “I think it’s going to be a good one.”

## JOB OPENING

St. James Parish Gouverneur has an opening for a full-time secretary/bookkeeper who will work Mon.– Fri. 8a.m. – 3p.m., under the supervision of the Pastor. The secretary/bookkeeper will be responsible for both secretarial and financial aspects of the parish. Qualified candidates must have strong communication and computer skills. Knowledge of Microsoft Office 360 and QuickBooks software is preferred.

Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest and resume to: Rev. James Seymour at email: [jseymour@rcdony.org](mailto:jseymour@rcdony.org) or mail to 164 E Main, Gouverneur NY, 13642.


Call the parish office with any questions 315-287-0114



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# Walking where Jesus walked: A pilgrimage

By Robin LaBarge

It's funny how things happen sometimes. I was not looking for a trip to the Holy Land but somehow the trip found me, or I should say found my husband, Bruce, and me.

Thanks to Father Bill Gordon, our retired parish priest here at St. Alexander's in Morrisonville, we just got back from the most amazing pilgrimage to the Holy Land in Israel.

Father Gordon put us in touch with Christopher Cross, pilgrimage director and tour guide, who has led groups time and time again to the Holy Land since 1982. This was his 89th pilgrimage! Needless to say, he knows the lay of the land and all pertinent people in Israel to make these trips happen.

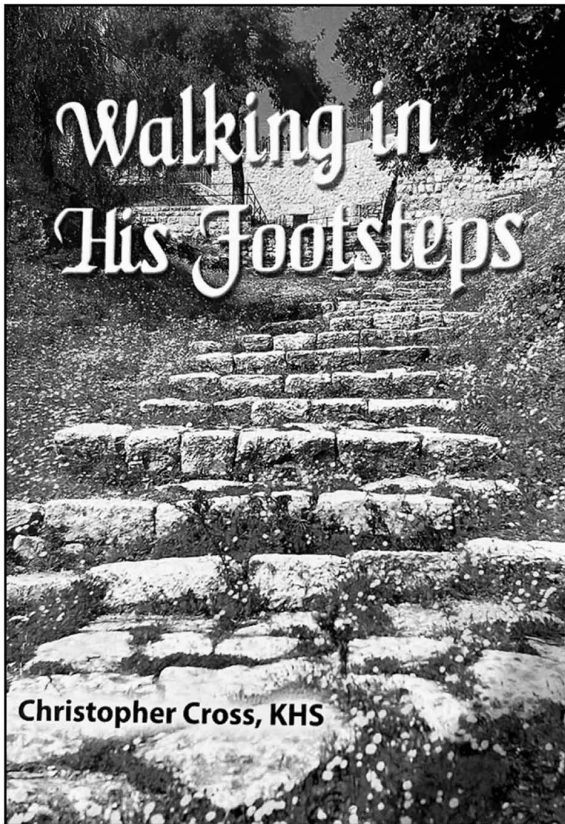
Cross graduated from Ausable Valley High School and was known to compete in bobsled competitions in Lake Placid.

After serving in the Army during Vietnam, he went to the Holy Land. He then felt a spiritual need to bring others to these sacred sites.

The very first day in the Old City of Jerusalem, we started off with Mass at 5 a.m. in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the tomb where Jesus was laid after being taken down from the cross.

I was caught off guard by the emotions this holy site evoked, and tears came out of nowhere.

Bruce and I received Communion in the tomb of Jesus. There are



**Christopher Cross, the pilgrimage director and tour guide used in Robin and Bruce LaBarge's trip to the Holy Land, authored a book, 'Walking in His Footsteps,' highlighting sites in the Holy Land and scriptural readings that are associated with them.**

not a lot of people who have had that privilege, but Cross, our guide, knows how to make that happen.

We also had Mass at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Calvary, where Jesus was nailed to the cross, and we prayed at the anointing stone where Christ was cleansed after being taken down from the cross. Neither of us knew about this stone.

In the Old City, we took the path of the Via Dolorosa or Way of the Cross (Stations of the Cross). We walked the same path that Jesus walked on his way to his crucifixion.

That was just the beginning of our journey.

To tell you everything we were able to do would take 10 more pages, so allow me to summarize a bit.

We not only toured Jerusalem, but we went to Bethlehem, Nazareth, Mount Tabor, Jericho and Capharnaum, and Tiberias, where we took a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. We were on the same waters that Jesus and his disciples were on over 2,000 years ago and stepped into the same cave where Jesus spent the night praying for guidance when choosing his 12 disciples.

Beautiful weather continued for an outside Sunday Mass at the Church of the Beatitudes, overlooking the Sea of Galilee. How blessed we were.

While in Tiberias, we were also able to visit the Church of The Wedding of Cana, the place where Jesus performed his first miracle turning water into wine needed for the wedding taking place there.

At this most beautiful church, we were able to renew our wedding vows, an emotional experience for both of us.

We had the chance to walk where Jesus walked when he was brought to the site of the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest in Jerusalem.

There, Jesus was tried and beaten and held in "The Sacred Pit." This pit is about 12 feet square. There is no door and no light. It's about 20 feet deep. Early Christians believed Jesus was lowered into the pit by ropes around his shoulders and across his chest and left tied up in darkness overnight before being handed over to Pontius Pilate.

You leave here with feelings I can't describe. Maybe it's intense sorrow.

All the churches we were able to visit were beyond beautiful, but if I had to pick one that I thought was most stunning, it was the Church of the Visitation in Ein Karem, Jerusalem.

This church, where we celebrated Mass, honors the visit by the Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. Both

were pregnant at the time. The artwork above the altar and at the back of the church is just magnificent.

In the church grotto, you will see the well where Elizabeth hid John the Baptist as a baby to keep him from being killed by Herod's soldiers.

I can't tell you in this short article how intense this trip was for me and Bruce.

The readings at Mass have now come alive and have more meaning for us. We have walked in the same path the Holy Family walked over 2,000 years ago. I would highly recommend a trip like this.

If you are able, consider giving yourself a gift in 2023 and go.

If you would like more information, you can call Christopher Cross at 704-274-2031 or e-mail him at Christophercross@gmail.com.

For more information about the trip and prices visit his website [www.catholicholyland.com](http://www.catholicholyland.com).

Cross' book "Walking in His Footsteps," available on Amazon, will give you an idea of what readings will be read at the various holy sites and what the trip is about.

I read it again on the plane ride home, so I could take the trip one more time.

*Bruce and Robin LaBarge live in Morrisonville. They have two married children and four grandchildren. Both are retired.*

## Environmental Stewardship

**First week of Lent:  
Healing ourselves first**

As followers of Jesus, we are encouraged to help others as much as possible. However, we must realize that oftentimes the most important place to begin with is ourselves. Before interacting with others, it is important to be in a space in which you naturally radiate the joy of being alive. This zest for living can be achieved, in part, by addressing the physical needs of your own body, eating well, getting daily exercise and adequate sleep and following the advice of your health care provider.

Within the context of Lent, we are encouraged to focus on our mental health as our view of life is greatly impacted by our frame of mind. To take a walk, especially through a natural setting, can be very renewing and relaxing. To read a book, learn a foreign language, or play a musical instrument that hasn't been touched in years are also ways to benefit the brain. And certainly, we can avoid exposing ourselves to excessive amounts of news that relates to politics or the state of world affairs.

Because of the interconnectedness of all life, as any one person's mood improves, the overall well-being of that person's community likewise increases ever so slightly. This, in turn, affects the natural environment.

It must be emphasized that attempting to improve your mood by artificial means is never helpful, especially during Lent. Using alcohol/drugs to escape current unpleasantness, or engaging in impulsive shopping to provide a distraction from challenges are harmful to efforts toward healing. Learning to embrace the facets of our existence helps bring true contentment and happiness. It is this joy for living that needs to be radiated to others, as it is the medicine that is essential to help heal others and our planet.

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**Feb. 22** – Noon – Ash Wednesday Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Feb. 23** – 9:45 a.m. – Episcopal Council Meeting at Bishop's Residence

**Feb. 26** – 2:30 p.m. – Rite of Election at St. Mary's Cathedral

## Rest in Peace

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

**Feb. 22** – Rev. Edward Tortel, O.M.I., 1901; Rev. Peter H.J. Ryan, 1930

**Feb. 23** – Rev. Leo Heinrichs, O.F.M., 1908; Rev. Edward Blanchard, 1922; Rev. André Payette, O.M.I., 1976

**Feb. 24** – Rev. George Belanger, 1932; Rev. William J. Murphy, C.S.C.O., 1959

**Feb. 25** – Rev. William Howard, 1888; Rev. P.J. O'Connell, O.S.A., 1895; Rev. James J. Duffy, 1912; Msgr. L. Kevin Conners, 1971

**Feb. 26** – Rev. Francis X. LaChance, 1916; Rev. John F. Wiley, 1984

**Feb. 27** – Rev. Ferdinand Grenier, O.M.I., 1872

**Feb. 28** – Rev. J. H. Tabaret, O.M.I., 1886

## Protecting God's Children

**The Diocese of Ogdensburg** has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration online is required. Participants may preregister at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). Upcoming sessions:

**Feb. 24** – 1 p.m. – Diocesan Offices, Ogdensburg

## To Report Abuse

**If you have a complaint of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact Victims Assistance Coordinator, Terrianne Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; [terrianneyanulavich@yahoo.com](mailto:terrianneyanulavich@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).**



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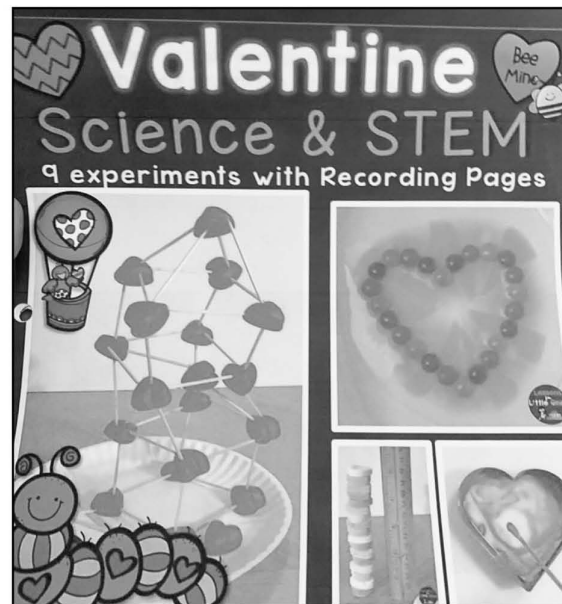
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Christine at  
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to make the  
change



Trinity's STEAM Maker Space gives students an opportunity to develop skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics.

## Trinity school focuses on STEAM

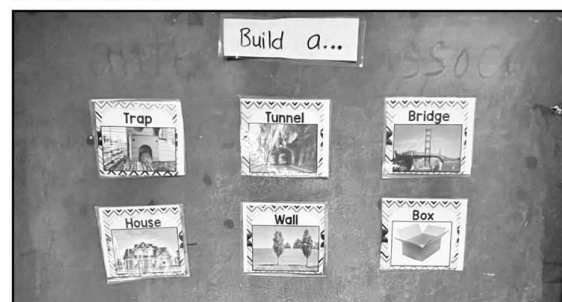
MASSENA – Trinity Catholic School is pleased to introduce its new STEAM Maker Space!

This new area, housed in room 307, is the brainchild of Sara Fregoe, kindergarten teacher, and Lena Mather, family support coordinator. Both dreamed of a space where our students could go for engaging Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics (STEAM) play.

The space includes various building supplies (blocks, playdough, pipe cleaners...) prompts for fun things to try to build with the items, a seasonal bin (most recently with Valentine's Day activities), and art supplies like markers, paint and crayons.

Teachers can sign-up to use the space with a class during free time, or the school counselor or other staff can take a small groups for quiet time or as a place to express themselves.

Trinity Catholic School is thankful to these teachers for their work and dedication to this project and to the students!



Trinity's STEAM Maker Space offers prompts for student activities.

## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

## We need Lent

Whether you consider this good news or bad news, Lent 2023 has begun. We will all agree that this winter has been up and down with cold weather and snow. And now, Lent! But remember, Lent marks the first sign of spring!

Why do we have Lent every year? Why penance? Why fasting? Why almsgiving? What does that have to do with me?

Many people fail to see the connection. "I'm not

a sinner" "I haven't done anything really bad since Christmas!" Except, maybe, to grumble about so many things.

So why Lent? We know the answer that the Church gives us, of course.

We have to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Easter. And the readings today should convince us that we really are sinners, and that it's pretty arrogant of us to deny it!

The first reading from Genesis goes back to ba-



**Monsignor  
Paul E.  
Whitmore**

**February 26**

**First Sunday of Lent**

READINGS

Genesis 2:7-9;3:1-7

Romans 5:12-19

Matthew 4:1-11

sics: the story of the sin of our first parents. Notice how Satan cleverly persuades Eve that God would be jealous if they "became like gods"?

Eve falls for it, and decides she knows better than God. To disobey God is pretty arrogant – and Adam is just as guilty as Eve – and so are we all! The saying, "Pride goes before a fall" is so

true.

We need Lent to get rid of our arrogance that we're really not sinners!

The second reading from St. Paul to the Romans tells us that "just as through the disobedience of one man (and one woman), the many were made sinners, so, through the obedience of the one, the many will be made righteous."

There it is! Righteousness is an ongoing process of entering more fully into the gift that comes through our sharing in the Passion and Death of Jesus.

The Gospel is the story of Satan's attempts to

trap Jesus into arrogance!

Satan tempts Jesus to throw himself down from the peak of the Temple. What a show! Everyone will know that He is really God! But Jesus has come to save us as a Man just like us. His divinity shows through later in the Resurrection. But for now, He must be obedient "even unto death."

It's later than we think for many of us. Through fasting, almsgiving, good works, and prayer, we will walk with Jesus on his way to Easter victory. That's why we need Lent every year.

## CALLED TO SERVE

## From Ti to Tupper Lake

Back in my former life as general manager of WWNY-TV in Watertown, I would occasionally get a call from a syndicator who wanted to visit.

A syndicator, that's what we called them, was attempting to sell a television show to the station. The salesperson might be offering the latest show that was available in our market for extended use, like M\*A\*S\*H or Wheel of Fortune or something.

If the station was interested in the product, we would negotiate – I use that word reservedly – a price.

This salesperson was usually from New York City or Los Angeles. They depended on a map to tell them how far one market (a television term that is synonymous with city) was

from another. The conversation on the phone would usually go something like this:

Syndicator: "Hey Kevin, how you doin'?"

Me: "Great, what's up?"

Syndicator: "I'm going to be in Plattsburgh/Burlington tomorrow and wondered if I could pop in to visit and show you some shows we are offering."

Me: "Sure, what time did you have in mind?"

Syndicator: "9 a.m. will work fine for me."

Me: "Are you leaving now or before the sun rises?"

Google Maps says there are three driving routes it recommends from Plattsburgh to Watertown, and they will all take more than three hours. Some map readers, like syndicators for

example, do not seem to understand distance and time.

We do, all too well.

You may have read elsewhere in this paper today that Bishop LaValley has accepted the recommendation of a special committee and reorganized one level of diocesan structure, the deaneries.

The new structure, which takes effect March 1, 2023, will reduce the number of deaneries from six to four. The largest of these geographically is the Adirondack Mountain Deanery.

When Father John Yonkovic, who will be the bishop's representative for parishes in that

area, calls a meeting, priests and deacons will come from Old Forge on the west, Lake Pleasant to the south, Tupper

Lake, Lake Placid and Saranac Lake to the north, Willsboro and Ticonderoga on the east and points in-between.

That's an area that is roughly, excuse my rudimentary calculations, about half of the 12,000 square miles of the diocese. It is a region that defines "you can't get there from here!" At least not easily.

But the reconfiguration had to be done. The new Adirondack Mountain Deanery merges the old Adirondack, Essex and Hamilton-Herkimer



**Deacon  
Kevin Mastellon**

Deaneries. That is the major news out of the announcement from the bishop last week.

It is part of the planning process. A process that faces the reality of fewer priests to pastor our parishes and efficiently bring the Good News to 450,000 plus people with a Catholic population of about 30% of them.

Bishop LaValley said it well in his letter, I thought. "Planning is a constant in our lives as pastors."

Put another way, how do I get from here to there?

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

FOR  
**LENT**  
FOR **LIFE**

PARA LA  
**CUARESMA**  
POR LA **VIDA**

**CRSRICE**  
CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES  
**BOWL**



[crsricebowl.org](http://crsricebowl.org) | [crsplatodearroz.org](http://crsplatodearroz.org)

#### About Catholic Relief Services:

Catholic Relief Services is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization;  
Donations to CRS are tax-deductible to the full extent allowable under the law.



Catholic Relief Services eases suffering and provides assistance to people in need in more than 100 countries, without regard to race, religion or nationality. We are the official overseas relief and development agency of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and a member of Caritas Internationalis.

All of the information here can be found at: [www.crsricebowl.org](http://www.crsricebowl.org)

For questions and inquiries please contact **Diocese of Ogdensburg Catholic Charities:**

**Deacon Patrick Donahue**  
Director  
[pdonahue@cathcharities.org](mailto:pdonahue@cathcharities.org)  
315-393-2255



#### WHAT IS ALMSGIVING?

We all want to be “good Samaritans.” When we see our sister or brother suffering, we are moved by compassion. We want to help. We are inspired to give.

Almsgiving is central to how we practice Lent. Almsgiving flows from prayer and fasting. We reflect on the needs of the world and how God is calling us to meet those needs through prayer. We make room for the needs of others—and for the Holy Spirit to work within us—through fasting. Through a recognition of the world’s needs and a personal commitment to act, we give alms.

What are alms? Alms are money or goods that are given to—or other acts of charity that are performed for—those in need. **Catholics look to the Catechism**, which says that almsgiving is “a witness to fraternal charity” and “a work of justice pleasing to God.”

#### GIVING ALMS

When we reflect on the charity of the good Samaritan, we sometimes miss the second part of the man’s almsgiving. He leaves the innkeeper with these words—and a few coins: “Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.” He gives freely and wholeheartedly in equal measure to the need of the one whom he serves. No reservations. No disclaimers.

This Lent, almsgiving is your way to become a “good Samaritan.” As we journey from Ash Wednesday through Holy Week to Easter, we invite you to consider CRS an innkeeper in your Lenten almsgiving.

#### HOW CRS USES ALMS

For more than 45 years, Lenten alms given through CRS Rice Bowl have supported programs that prevent hunger and poverty around the world, including the countries featured in the Lenten stories of hope. Seventy-five percent of gifts help support CRS’ work in more than 100 countries. Twenty-five percent of gifts remain in each U.S. diocese where they are given to support hunger and poverty alleviation efforts in those communities. Each diocese uses this differently. Contact your local **CRS Diocesan Director** to find out **how the local 25% is used** in your diocese.

#### LENTEN ALMS CHANGE LIVES

CRS Rice Bowl is the Lenten program of Catholic Relief Services, the official relief and development agency of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Through CRS Rice Bowl, faith communities in dioceses throughout the United States put their faith into action through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Lenten alms donated through CRS Rice Bowl support the work of CRS in more than 100 different countries each year. Twenty-five percent of donations to CRS Rice Bowl stay in the local diocese, supporting hunger and poverty alleviation efforts. Since its inception in 1975, CRS Rice Bowl has raised more than \$320 million.





## WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

### When does Lent begin and end?

Lent is a liturgical season that focuses on the three spiritual pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. This 40-day journey, beginning with Ash Wednesday and ending with Holy Week, is a time for sacrifice and spiritual reflection preparing us for the joyful celebration of Christ's resurrection on Easter Sunday.

### Bring Lent to Life at Home

Strengthen our domestic church and stay connected with our sisters and brothers around the world through traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving with your family at home. Use these resources throughout the 40-day journey and learn how you can help those most in need. Be sure to share your Lenten journey with us on your social media channels by using **#CRSRiceBowl**.

- If you don't have a CRS Rice Bowl, print the **DIY Rice Bowl label** and adhere it to a container.
- **Use the Lenten calendar** each day to practice the Lenten pillars of prayer, fasting and almsgiving.
- Put your Lenten sacrifices into your CRS Rice Bowl.
- Pray the Stations of the Cross using our **booklet** or by watching our **videos**.
- **Give your CRS Rice Bowl donation online** and make a difference in the lives of people in your local community and around the world!

Visit <http://www.crsricebowl.org/families> to learn more about the activities described above.

### Stories of Hope

This year, the CRS Rice Bowl Stories of Hope take us to Honduras, Kenya and the Philippines, where we'll learn how people are overcoming the causes of hunger and adapting to climate change. As you journey with us during Lent, remember that through **prayer**, God invites us to slow down in the silence and look for him around us—in nature and in people who need us most. Our **fasting** is an act of solidarity with people who are hungry—and it helps us feel a small part of what they are living day by day. It is in this spirit that our **almsgiving** is an act of love for God and neighbor. Through giving, there is no limit to what we can achieve together to serve people impacted by climate. [www.crsricebowl.org/stories-of-hope/intro](http://www.crsricebowl.org/stories-of-hope/intro)

### Want more Lenten reflections?

Sign up for our weekly emails at: [www.crsricebowl.org/about/how-to-practice-lent](http://www.crsricebowl.org/about/how-to-practice-lent)

Photos are of © Catholic Relief Services

### LOOKING FOR MEATLESS MEALS TO PREPARE THIS LENT?

Each Friday of Lent, we abstain from eating meat as a way to experience a little of the hunger that many experience daily. Journey with us around the world and incorporate these Lenten recipes into your meatless Fridays. Give the money you saved each week by not eating meat—about \$3 per person per meal—to your CRS Rice Bowl to feed those in need around the world.

Go to [www.crsricebowl.org/recipe](http://www.crsricebowl.org/recipe) to find many different meatless recipes like the one below from all around the world.

### Mukimo Recipe — Kenya

Makes 4 servings

#### Ingredients:

- 4 large potatoes, chopped
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1-2 cloves crushed garlic
- ½ tsp salt
- 3 cups of spinach or other leafy green, chopped
- 1 16-oz bag frozen corn
- 1 16-oz bag frozen peas
- 2 Tbsp fair trade olive oil

Place potatoes, onions, garlic and salt in a pot with water to cover the tops of the potatoes. Bring to a boil, then reduce to medium-high heat and simmer until potatoes are tender (about 20 minutes). Add spinach, corn and peas, and cook until water has completely evaporated (about 5 minutes). Add olive oil, salt and pepper to taste, and sauté until spinach is tender. Remove from heat and mash entire mixture until it resembles mashed potatoes.



# National Archives signs pact to ensure free speech

By Tyler Arnold  
Catholic News Agency

When several people in Washington, D.C., for the March for Life visited the National Archives Museum last month they were taken aback when staff told them to cover up the pro-life messaging on their clothing or leave the building.

Today, National Archives administrators signed a legal agreement to ensure that such an incident won't happen again and offered the plaintiffs a tour of the National Archives Museum as well as a personal apology.

Whether this agreement heads off litigation against the federally-funded museum remains to be seen. The plaintiffs had filed a suit Feb. 8 with the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, charging the National Archives with violating their First Amendment and Fifth Amendment rights as well as the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

In signing a "consent decree," the National Archives agreed to make clear that visitors are free to express their religious and political beliefs at the museum, which is home to original copies of the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the Declaration of Independence.

"The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) represents that its policy expressly allows all visitors to wear T-shirts, hats, buttons, etc., that

display protest language, including religious and political speech," the agreement reads.

NARA also promised to communicate this policy "to all NARA security officers who interact with the public at every NARA facility, including the National Archives."

In addition, NARA agreed to extend a personal apology and a personal tour to two of the plaintiffs who, the agreement stated, intend to pay a visit to the museum in the future.

NARA declined to comment on the agreement when contacted by CNA.

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), the legal firm representing the plaintiffs, issued a statement saying this is "a great first step and a win for our clients."

"This doesn't mean the case is over, as we will continue to get answers for our clients as to why it happened in the first place, and what corrective action the defendants will be taking to ensure that it never happens again to anyone wearing expressive religious and pro-life apparel at the National Archives. No one should be targeted by the federal government for their Christian and pro-life views," the ACLJ statement said.

After the ACLJ announced its lawsuit earlier this month, the National Archives responded almost immediately with an apology: "As the home to the original Constitution and Bill

of Rights, which enshrine the rights of free speech and religion, we sincerely apologize for this occurrence," read the Feb. 10 statement.

In their press release today, the lawyers for the pro-life advocates said they weren't satisfied with the museum's apology.

"While the National Archives had previously issued an apology for the Jan. 20 incident, it had not provided any evidence of the existence of a policy or of sufficient training of its employees and officers with the apology sufficient to ensure that a repeat violation would not occur. As a result, the ACLJ's clients remained fearful about returning to the building," they said.

The law firm said that they then prepared a motion for a temporary restraining order against the museum.

The prospect of that order, they said, paved the way to today's agreement.

In a statement, the ACLJ noted that the signed agreement "is necessary here because two of our clients have plans to return to the National Archives soon — one as early as the end of this week — and we want to ensure that they are not targeted, humiliated, and silenced again during their visits."

The two clients planning the visit were specifically named in the agreement and promised a tour of the museum along with a personal apology.

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Vatican archbishop visits Catholics in Syria and Turkey

(CNA) — A Vatican archbishop visited Catholics in Syria and Turkey as they continue to help those affected by the result of multiple devastating earthquakes. Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti is the new prefect of the Dicastery for the Eastern Churches. He traveled to Syria and Turkey from Feb. 17-21. A Feb. 16 press release said Gugerotti undertakes the trip "to express the Holy Father's closeness to the people severely affected by the recent disastrous earthquake and to meet with bishops, Caritas workers, and other agencies committed to bringing aid to the suffering." The trip takes place as Pope Francis continues his appeals for both prayers and concrete aid to the suffering people of Turkey and Syria, reeling from the aftermath of the multiple strong earthquakes on Feb. 6. Reuters reported that an estimated 42,000 people have been killed and over 100,000 people have been injured in the disaster. Approximately 2.4 million people are displaced from their homes.

## Court to reconsider Connecticut transgender athlete case

(CNA) — A federal appeals court announced Feb. 13 it will rehear a lawsuit filed by female athletes who say they were deprived of honors and opportunities in athletic competitions because biological males who identified as female were allowed to compete with them. The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' decision will allow a legal challenge to Connecticut's Interscholastic Athletic Conference policy that allows males who identify as female to compete in girls' athletic events. It comes two months after a three-judge panel for the appellate court ruled against the girls, who are now adults. The suit was filed by four girls who competed in high school track and field contests in Connecticut. In suing the Connecticut Association of Schools, they claimed they missed out on certain achievements, such as championship titles and opportunities to advance to next-level competition and records, which could play a role in scholarships.

## Pope Francis says he believes pope's ministry is for life

(CNA) — Pope Francis addressed once again the question of whether he will resign the papacy in two conversations with Jesuit priests in Africa this month. "I believe that the pope's ministry is 'ad vitam.' I see no reason why it should not be so," the pope said Feb. 2 during a private conversation with 82 Jesuits in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Francis met the group of priests at the apostolic nunciature in Kinshasa, where he was staying during his Jan. 31-Feb. 3 visit to the DRC. The conversations were reported in the Jesuit-run journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*. "Think that the ministry of the great patriarchs is always for life," Pope Francis said. "And the historical tradition is important." Pope Francis also said that if the Church listened to the gossip it should change popes every six months.

# Man says he was 'pressured' to euthanize wife

By Terry O'Neill  
Catholic News Agency

Richard Leskun remained at his wife Marilyn's side nearly 24 hours a day after she was admitted to Abbotsford Regional Hospital, the result of a fall from her wheelchair.

Over the next several days Leskun found himself not only caring for his 71-year-old wife but also fending off efforts by medical staff to let her die, before they offered to do the job themselves.

The Sunshine Coast widower is sounding the alarm over what he says is a shocking and dangerous bias in the medical system toward the promotion of death for sick and elderly patients.

Leskun, 75, made the charge after he said medical staff at the Abbotsford hospital "pressured" and "badgered" him to allow his wife of 50 years, Marilyn, to die, and then suggested that he let her be euthanized.

Already fragile from the debilitating effects of dementia, Marilyn, 71, entered the hospital after falling from her wheelchair and breaking vertebrae in her neck.

Leskun told *The B.C. Catholic* in an interview that over the course of eight days staff asked him five times whether they could place a do-not-resuscitate (DNR) designation on his wife.

He said he strongly objected each time and also made his pro-life views known at a family conference with hospital staff.

"I was very clear: I'm a Catholic and I'm absolutely against medically assisted dying," he recalled saying. "I'm against euthanasia. I want my wife to live. We've had a good life for 10 years, even though she has dementia. I was very clear."

As his wife's condition

continued to deteriorate, a hospitalist – a physician – asked Leskun if he would agree to medical staff euthanizing Marilyn.

"The hospitalist is the one who came to me, quite late in the evening, on the night before she died," Leskun said. "I was absolutely worn, frazzled, completely worn out. I was there every day, almost 24/7, and he said to me, 'You know, I have written orders for medically assisted dying.'"

"I was probably too tired to jump down his throat or whatever. I said no, for sure. I was too tired to feel anything. But I was saying no, absolutely not." Hours later, when it was clear to him that Marilyn was dying, he told a nurse he would finally agree to a DNR order.

"The nurse said to me, and this shocked me, the nurse said, 'Oh, it's OK, the doctor has already put a DNR on,'" Leskun said. "I never gave consent until that moment. [But] she said, 'It's already on there. It's already on the chart.'"

Marilynn Rita Marie Leskun died soon after, in the early morning of Dec. 8, 2018. She was survived by her husband and their two adult children.

Leskun, a retired accountant, wanted to share his experiences after reading *The B.C. Catholic's* reports on its investigation into the pro-Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) policies of the Fraser Health Authority, under whose jurisdiction the Abbotsford hospital falls.

He said he is concerned for the welfare of other families whose loved ones may end up in hospital in an era when assisted suicide is being offered.

"Now that the health system offers both death and life, you must speak strongly and clearly if you want life," he said. "Ensure that your primary care doctor believes in your

principles and is willing to act powerfully to negotiate for the care you need."

The Church teaches that assisted suicide is immoral in all circumstance but does not have formal teaching regarding DNRs. Rather, a patient or a patient's legally designated decision-maker can decide on its application in light of the patient's condition and circumstances.

Leskun said he is not bitter over what happened and did not launch a formal complaint but did convene a "debriefing" meeting with seven members of the hospital medical staff on March 5, 2019, at which he laid out his concerns.

"I remember one comment that the hospitalist in charge of Marilyn's care made to me: 'Mr. Leskun, we have to look at the big picture.' I did not know what he meant by that, but it shows how little he valued her individual life," he said.

Leskun said he now has a clearer idea of what that doctor's comment meant: that the state-run medical system has its own utilitarian ethics centered on funds and other medical resources.

"Institutional ethics are appropriate for institutions but are often in conflict with individual ethics," Leskun said. "I cannot fault the individual doctors for the 'sins' of the institution."

*The B.C. Catholic* asked the Fraser Health Authority a series of questions related to the Leskun case but did not receive answers before deadline.

Canada's leading anti-MAiD activist, Alex Schadenberg, executive director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, says Leskun's story is all-too-typical these days.

"We have received multiple calls from people with exactly the same story," Schadenberg told *The B.C.*

Catholic. "It's the constant badgering about MAiD or euthanasia."

He said he is currently trying to help a woman who wants information on what legal provisions exist to force medical staff to stop asking for MAiD approval.

Schadenberg said it is wrong for health care staff to pester someone to agree to a DNR order and then secretly override their wishes. "People have the right in law to decide," he said. "We shouldn't be badgered."

The situation points to a large and growing problem, he said.

"When the culture will not respect our values and beliefs, then we have a serious problem. Then it stops being about my needs but what the state believes is important."

Schadenberg said human life is being devalued across Canada, and although troubling incidents took place before the legalization of MAiD in 2016, the situation has worsened since.

"Today, it seems that the concept of wanting treatment is coming, to some medical staff, to be seen as absurd – that you actually want treatment and not death," he said. "You're now being seen as terrible for wanting to be treated. You're costing the system. Everything turns upside down once you start killing."

Leskun said he believes there is an effort to lead people toward MAiD in some circumstances. "I believe it is at a point when the system figures that there is too much cost and effort. I believe that the system has a motivation towards moving those kinds of people towards medically assisted dying."

That realization greatly upset him.

"I initially wanted to get back at the system, but I no longer want to do that,"

he said. "I just want to make sure that people are aware that they have to be very careful when they are getting care that they speak for themselves and that they understand that the system, I think, has a leaning towards getting rid of the bad cases, the hard cases, the expensive cases. And they have to be aware of that."

The Fraser Health Authority says it has enacted programs to help its staff cope with the emotional and moral distress that can result from participation in the provision of assisted suicide.

Dixon Tam, a consultant with the authority's communications and public affairs office, said in an email that, since the legalization of Medical Assistance in Dying in 2016, Fraser Health has encouraged "staff to access support and resources as required, such as reaching out to their manager, as well as accessing internal and external employee counseling services."

The authority also facilitates "discussions with staff members to explain their right to conscientiously object and not participate in the direct provision of medically assisted deaths, while ensuring that eligible patients have access to this service," he said.

Tam's statements were in answer to a series of questions sent to his office by *The B.C. Catholic* after the authority gave the newspaper previously secret documents showing that implementation of MAiD sparked staff opposition and discomfort throughout the system. *The B.C. Catholic* reported on these concerns in its Jan. 23 edition.

That story was the latest in a series that began in March 2021 after several FHA patients complained they were pestered about agreeing to MAiD.

## ADIRONDACK-FRANKLIN

**FIRST FRIDAY PRAISE AND WORSHIP**

Lake Placid – Monthly praise and worship to be held.

**Date:** First Friday of the month

**Time:** 7 p.m.

**Place:** St. Agnes Church

**Features:** Music led by Joey and MC Izzo. Time for fellowship and snacks afterwards. Will be livestreamed as well on St. Agnes Facebook page.

**CHICKEN AND BISCUIT DINNER**

North Bangor – The Communities of St. Augustine and St. Mary's will sponsor a take-out Chicken and Biscuit Dinner.

**Date:** Feb. 25

**Time:** 3 p.m. until gone

**Place:** St. Augustine's Parish Center

**Cost:** \$11.50

**Menu:** Chicken and Biscuits, Mashed Potatoes, Vegetable, Cranberry Sauce, Dessert.

**Contact:** May preorder Feb. 24, 9 a.m. until noon, or Feb. 25, 9 a.m. until all served. Call 518 483 6674.

**DEVOTION AND HOLY HOUR**

St. Regis Falls – All are invited to the monthly first Saturday Devotion and Holy Hour for Vocations.

**Date:** First Saturday of the Month

**Time:** Following the 4:30 anticipated Mass

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

**Features:** Prayer after Mass, Night Prayer, Prayer for All Souls and the Holy Souls, Novena in Honor of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Chaplet of Divine Mercy, The Reparation Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary with private meditation on the 15 Mysteries of the Rosary, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament reposed in the Tabernacle, and Prayers for the Holy Father and his intentions.

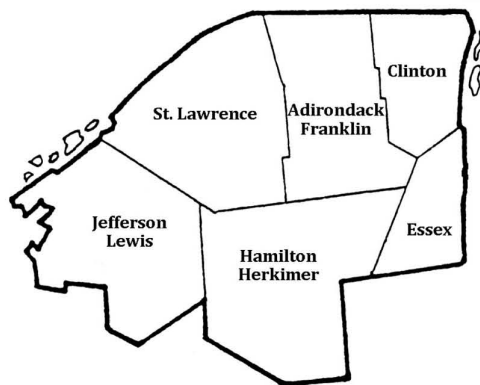
## CLINTON

**BREAKFAST**

Altona – St. Ann's and Holy Angels Church to have a breakfast prepared by the Ladies of St. Ann.

**Date:** Feb. 26

**Time:** 9 a.m. to noon



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@northcountycatholic.org.

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

**Place:** Holy Angels Hall  
**Cost:** Adults, \$12; Children 5-12, \$7; under 5, Free

**Menu:** Juice, Coffee, Tea, Eggs, Sausage, Bacon, Pancakes, Cinnamon Rolls, Home Fries

**Contact:** For more information, please call the Parish Office 518 236 5632

**PREPARATION FOR PARISH NURSING**

Plattsburgh - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks will offer preparation for the role of Parish Nurse.

**Date:** Beginning March 10

**Place:** St. Joseph's Outreach Center

**Features:** This course is open to registered nurses and others who are interested in health ministry in their parishes or with Mercy Care. Parish Nurses (Faith Community Nurses) assist the members of their faith community to maintain or regain wholeness in body, mind and spirit. There is no charge for this course, but registration is required. It is 36 contact hour course offered on Fridays and Saturdays in March.

**Contact:** For further information, please contact Alexandria (Lexi) Bevilacqua, Program Director at abevillacqua@adkmercy.org or 518-523-5446.

**ADORATION**

Ellenburg - Our Lady of the Adiron-

dacks warmly invite you to join them for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament during Lent.

**Schedule:** Fridays starting Feb. 24 to March 24

**Time:** 3 p.m. to 5

**Features:** Enjoy these quiet times of enriching prayer, worship, and communion with our Lord and Savior

**FIRST SATURDAY DEVOTIONS**

Ellenburg – Our Lady of the Adirondacks invite you to First Saturday Devotions.

**Schedule:** March 4, April 1, May 6, June 3, Aug. 5, Sept. 2, Oct. 7, Nov. 4 and Dec. 2

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 10 a.m.

**LENTEN TAIZÉ PRAYER**

Plattsburgh – Gather around the cross for prayer this Lent!

**Date:** March 28

**Time:** 7 p.m.

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

**Features:** Taizé Prayer includes song, silence and Sacred Scripture in an atmosphere of quiet reflection. The music is simple, with brief refrains repeated in the manner of the mantra of the Eastern Church or the rosary of the Western Church.

**FISH FRY**

Chazy – Sacred Heart Church to have a Fish Fry.

**Date:** March 31

**Time:** 4:30 p.m. to 7:30

**Place:** Parish Center

**Cost:** Adults, \$15; Children 5-12, \$9; All take-outs, \$15

**Menu:** Fried Perch, Homemade Macaroni and Cheese, French Fries, Cole Slaw, rolls, beverage and dessert.

**Contact:** For more info, contact Noreen at the rectory 518-846-7650 or email sacredheart@westelcom.com

**ADORATION**

Plattsburgh – Adoration to be held weekly.

**Date:** Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays

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

**Place:** St. John's in the Holy Family Basement

**Features:** Come to an out of the way place and rest awhile in Jesus' Presence. Experience His healing power, grace, love and mercy for yourselves and loved ones. Pray for the sick, suffering, vocations, our priests, country and peace in the world.

**Contact:** For more information, to become a substitute or to sign up for an hour, please contact 518-563-3773.

**HOUSE SITTERS**

Ellenburg Center – Our Lady of the Adirondacks House of Prayer is looking for many Volunteer "House Sitters".

**Time:** The responsibility is to arrive by 10 a.m. on your chosen day(s) and remain on premises until 4 p.m. to welcome visitors.

**Features:** Lunch and snack items on hand along with tea, coffee, soda, and bottled water. Training will be provided on the history of the House of Prayer, its mission, and the various ways to carry out this gentle ministry of hospitality for those seeking time in a home of Mary to listen to our Lord, browse in the library, or visit the "Gift Shop". Flexible schedule (and hours) are fine.

**Contact:** If interested in volunteering for one day a month, or week, or more, please call Sarah Anderson at 518-534-9976.

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

**HOLY HOUR AND DIVINE MERCY**

Houseville – A Holy Hour of Adoration with the Divine Mercy Chapel will be observed the first Sunday of the month.

**Date:** March 5

**Time:** Following 11 a.m. Mass

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

**Contact:** 315-348-6260

**SPAGHETTI & MEATBALL DINNER**

Evans Mills – The Indian River Council 7471 Knights of Columbus will be having a spaghetti & meatball dinner.

**Date:** March 11

**Time:** 4 p.m. to 7

**Place:** St. Mary's Parish Center

**Cost:** Adults, \$9; Seniors, \$8; Children 12 and under, \$5; under 5, Free; Quart of sauce, \$6

**Contact:** For more information call 315-629-4678

**PANCAKE BREAKFAST**

Carthage – The Knights of Columbus will be sponsoring a monthly Pancake Breakfast to benefit Augustinian Academy.

**Date:** March 12

**Time:** 8 a.m. to Noon

**Place:** St. James Community

Room

**Cost:** Adults, \$9; Seniors, \$7; Children under 10, \$4; Family of 4 or more, \$27

**Menu:** Scrambled Eggs, Pancakes, French Toast, Ham, Sausage, Baked Goods, Juice, and Coffee

**Contact:** For more information call 315-493-3224.

**WOMEN'S PRAYER & HEALING RETREAT**

Watertown – The Department of Faith Formation will be having a Women's Prayer and Healing retreat.

**Date:** March 31

**Time:** 6:30 p.m. to 8:30

**Place:** Sisters of St. Joseph Hearthsides Room

**Cost:** \$20

**Features:** The retreat will be run by Sister Mary Michael Fox, OP, a member of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia in Nashville.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

**Contact:** To register go to, [www.rcdony.org/healingretreat](http://www.rcdony.org/healingretreat)

### ST. LAWRENCE

#### MEAL DRIVERS NEEDED

The St. Lawrence County Office for the Aging is seeking drivers for home delivered meals in Brasher Falls, DeKalb, Canton, Gouverneur, Morristown, Ogdensburg, Potsdam and Star Lake.

**Features:** These drivers deliver hot, nutritious meals to older adults. Many are homebound and receive a lunchtime meal Monday through Friday. A critical component of this program is the daily wellness check that is provided by this service. Drivers receive a mileage reimbursement. Typical deliveries take place between 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Routes can be between one hour and two hours. You can volunteer for one day a week or several.

**Contact:** If you are interested please contact Danielle Durant at 315-386-4730.

#### BINGO

Canton – The Knights of Columbus will have BINGO.

**Dates:** Feb. 20, 27

**Time:** Doors open at 4:30 p.m., first game is at 7 p.m.

**Place:** K of C Hall

**Features:** Bring a friend or your family. Snack bar available.

#### LENTEN FISH FRY

Gouverneur – Lenten Fish Fry to be held every Friday during Lent.

**Date:** Starting Feb. 24

**Time:** 4:30 p.m.

**Place:** St. James School

**Cost:** Adults, \$12; Children under 5, Free

**Features:** Dine in or take-out

**Contact:** Local deliveries available by calling 315-287-0130

#### 40 CANS FOR LENT

Canton – The Knights of Columbus in Canton invite you to participate in the "40 Cans for Lent" program as part of your Lenten journey.

**Features:** Simply donate one can of food or a non-perishable

item for each of the 40 days of Lent. Donations can be made at any of the doors at St. Mary's Church 68 Court St. in Canton.

#### ROSARY WITH DEVOTIONS

Ogdensburg – The Legion of Mary will pray the rosary with devotions for First Saturday.

**Date:** March 4

**Time:** 8 a.m.

**Place:** Notre Dame Church, Ogdensburg

**Features:** Rosary with devotions

#### FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY

Massena – Sacred Heart Church to have first Saturday Rosary Devotion.

**Date:** March 4

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

**Features:** First Saturday Rosary Devotion to OUR Lady of Fatima. Confessions will be available. Saturday Vigil Mass at 4 p.m.

#### MEN'S PRAYER GROUP

Massena – First Saturday of the month, men's prayer group to meet for Mass and Adoration.

**Date:** March 4

**Time:** 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.

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

**Features:** Coffee and donuts after service in the parish center

**Contact:** Bob Brothers at 315-842-2886

#### MONTHLY BRUNCH

Norfolk – Parish of the Visitation and St. Raymond's will have their monthly Knights of Columbus Brunch.

**Date:** March 12 (Second Sunday of each month)

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

**Place:** Fr. Amyot Parish Center

**Cost:** Adults, \$10; under 12, \$5; under 5, Free; Omelets, add \$3; Take-outs available

**Contact:** For more information contact Grand Knight Gil Gonthier 315-212-5166.

### DIOCESAN EVENTS

#### SURVIVING DIVORCE

The Family Life Office is offering the Surviving Divorce Program, starting late February in Gouverneur, Canton and

Potsdam/Colton.

**Dates:** Facilitators at each site will contact registrants to establish exact dates and times for the meetings.

**Cost:** \$25

**Features:** Surviving Divorce features twelve video presentations that cover topics such as shock and grief, anger and forgiveness, money issues, dealing with children and a former spouse, and annulment and remarriage. This program is for the newly separated and divorced and those still struggling with issues many years later.

**Contact:** Register online at [www.rcdony.org/survivingdivorce](http://www.rcdony.org/survivingdivorce). For more information contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920 or [startaglia@rcdony.org](mailto:startaglia@rcdony.org).

#### RITE OF ELECTION

Ogdensburg – The Rite of Election (ROE) this year will be held the first Sunday of Lent. All parishioners are invited to come to the Cathedral to experience this liturgy and offer prayer and support to the Catechumen and Candidates preparing for full initiation into the Catholic Church this Easter.

**Date:** Feb. 26

**Time:** 2:30 p.m.

**Place:** St. Mary's Cathedral

**Contact:** Anita Soltero at [asoltero@rcdony.org](mailto:asoltero@rcdony.org) or 518-310-3669 with questions.

#### YOUTH LENTEN RETREAT

Lenten Retreats for youth in grades 7 to 12 to be held.

**Schedule:** March 4 at Sacred Heart Church (Dostie Hall), Watertown 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. with Mass at 4:30 p.m.; March 18 at St. Peter's Church (Emmaus Room) 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. with Mass at 4 p.m.

**Features:** Lent is a perfect time for all of us to think about how we can be more like Jesus in our homes, at school, and in our communities. During this retreat, youth will be able to have some fun while putting together their "Best Lent Yet" plan! This compact retreat will contain moments of fun, reflection, conversation, and workshops.

Drinks and snacks will be provided. There is no fee to attend and, retreatants are encouraged to attend the Mass offering.

**Contact:** Registration is required to attend. The deadline to register is: March 1. To register visit: [www.rcdony.org/lentenretreat](http://www.rcdony.org/lentenretreat) For more information, contact Tom Semeraro @ 315-393-2920 ext. 1415

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT

Massena – The Vocation Office and the Office of Youth Ministry is sponsoring a Middle School Retreat (Grades 6-8) in the St. Lawrence/Franklin region of the Diocese.

**Date:** March 22

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Place:** St. Mary's Social Hall

**Features:** The purpose of a Middle School Retreat is to guide young women and men to prayerfully consider what God's plan is for their lives. This invitation is open to students in Grades 6-8 both in the Catholic schools and public schools. This is a Retreat Day for the students and is considered a legal excused absence.

**Contact:** Contact your pastor, Catholic school principal, or Religious Education Coordinator for a registration form.

#### CHRISM MASS

Ogdensburg – All the faithful of the Diocese of Ogdensburg are invited to join Bishop LaValley in the annual Renewal of Priestly Commitment, the Blessing of the Holy Oils, and the consecration of the Sacred Chrism for use in all the churches of our Diocese.

**Date:** March 30

**Time:** 11 a.m.

**Place:** St. Mary's Cathedral

**Features:** This ritual symbolizes that we are one family in Christ.

The Chrism Mass will also be livestreamed at <https://www.rcdony.org/livemass>.

#### DAY OF REFLECTION

Ogdensburg – The Department of Faith Formation will be hosting a Day of Reflection.

**Date:** April 1

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**Place:** Wadhams Hall

**Cost:** \$30, lunch is included

**Features:** Sister Mary Michael Fox, OP, a member of the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia in Nashville will present "Blessed, Broken, Given: Living Eucharistia!"

**Contact:** To Register go to [www.rcdony.org/dayofreflection](http://www.rcdony.org/dayofreflection)

#### YOUTH RALLY

Lake Placid – "We are Jesus in the World" Youth Rally to be held for Middle and High school age students.

**Date:** April 22

**Time:** 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with Mass to follow at St. Agnes Church

**Place:** High Peaks Resort

**Cost:** \$35, includes full day pass, lunch, snacks, games and giveaways.

**Features:** A presentation from Monet Souza and a concert from Catholic recording artist, Joe Melendrez. Closing Mass will be offered by Bishop Terry R. LaValley.

**Contact:** To register please go to [www.rcdony.org/youth/rally](http://www.rcdony.org/youth/rally) If you have any questions please contact Jeannie Grizzuto at the Youth Office, 315-393-2920.

#### LOVING AUTHENTICALLY

All are invited to attend this free seminar, Loving Authentically: Sex, Happiness and Catholic Teaching designed to deepen our understanding of how Church doctrine on sexual morality connects with our happiness.

**Schedule:** 2 different times and locations to attend. April 22, 2023 at St. Bernard's Saranac Lake 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.; May 20, 2023 at St. Mary's Ticonderoga 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Features:** Program will be a showing of "Unprotected: A Pope, the Pill, and the Perils of Sexual Chaos." With Q & A led by Natural Family Planning Directors, Angelo and Suzanne Pietropaoli and Catholic Theologian, Maura Hearden Fehlner, Ph.D. Lunch will be provided.

**Contact:** to register go [www.rcdony.org/lovingauthentically](http://www.rcdony.org/lovingauthentically). For more information contact Stephen Tartaglia at 315-393-2920 or [startaglia@rcdony.org](mailto:startaglia@rcdony.org)

NOW STREAMING  
**JAMES THE LESS**

By Francesca Pollio Fenton  
Catholic News Agency

What happens when an atheist looking for a job meets a girl wanting to become a nun? That is the premise of a new EWTN web series titled "James the Less," which premiered Feb. 13.

The EWTN exclusive five-episode web series is available on EWTN's YouTube channel and via the network's website at ewtn.com/tv/shows/james-the-less.

Each episode is approximately four to nine minutes long.

James Little is fresh out of college and in desperate need of work. Walking around town, he bumps into a girl outside of a church who asks him if he's attending Mass. James is an



PHOTO COURTESY OF EWTN'S YOUTUBE CHANNEL  
The EWTN web series 'James the Less' premiered Feb. 13 and is now available on YouTube.

atheist. However, a help wanted sign on the church bulletin board catches his eye and en-

times him to interview for the position: handyman. He accepts the position at St. James the Less Church and starts to encounter Catholicism. Soon, James finds

his ideals challenged by the no-nonsense pastor Father Lambert Burns and through his romantic pursuit of parishioner Anne-Marie.

Director of Studio Operations for EWTN Stephen Beaumont called the result of the series "both comic and moving." "The narratives provide an opportunity to attract people who might not otherwise watch Catholic pro-

grams," he said. "Our hope is that Catholics and non-Catholics alike will find the show entertaining and that atheists will gain insight into what Catholics believe."

Beaumont worked with EWTN producers Michael Masny and Greg Hendrick to develop the scripts for the five-part romantic comedy.

James is played by Catholic artist and missionary Tanner Kalina. He has been a part of ministries such as FOCUS, Ascension Presents, NET, and others. He also hosts a podcast with several of his friends called "Saints Alive."

Carol Jeong takes on the role of Anne-Marie. She says her faith and Korean-American upbringing taught her the importance of compassion, and she strives to bridge divisions through acting.

The series will not be broadcast on television. Watch exclusively on EWTN's YouTube channel and website at <https://www.ewtn.com/tv/shows/james-the-less>.

**THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS**

WOULD YOU PRAY FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY?

— PRAYER SUGGESTION —

Eternal Father, we lift up to you these and all the priests of the world. Sanctify them. Heal and guide them. Mold them into the likeness and holiness of your Son, Jesus, the Eternal High Priest. May their lives be pleasing to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen  
(With ecclesiastical approval)

Mass  
Rosary  
Fasting  
Day Offering  
Eucharistic Adoration  
Offering of Sufferings  
Divine Mercy Chaplet  
Or whatever the Lord inspires you to offer Him

**MARCH**  **St. Joseph**

DIocese OF OGDENSBURG, NY 2023

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A donation to help support THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS will be appreciated. The Monthly Prayer Request for Priests is graciously underwritten by:  Diocese of Ogdensburg  Vocations Society [www.myvocation.net](http://www.myvocation.net)



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Sr. Mary Ellen Brett, SSI, Director

622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669

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

mbrett@rcdony.org

## Small things with great love

Catholics in one of the poorest countries in the world want to help victims of the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria. In the past, the people of Bangladesh have themselves repeatedly been hit by the severe effects of typhoons, floods and natural disasters and have been recipients of international assistance. Therefore, after hearing about the immense devastation caused by the earthquake in the Middle East, the country's Catholic communities wanted to "return the aid received" and make their own small contribution. At the Mass on Sunday 12 February, an appeal for donations was launched in all the parishes and dioceses of the country, and numerous communities prayed for the victims and their families, who entrusted the wounded to the Lord and organized an extraordinary collection to be sent to the churches in the affected countries.

Father Subrato B. Gomes, parish priest of the parish of the Holy Rosary in the Tejgaon area of Dhaka - largest Catholic community in the country - invited the faithful and families to pray the rosary every evening for the victims of the earthquake: "Brothers and sisters in Turkey and in Syria," he said, "are suffering immensely. Let us remember them in our prayers and entrust them to the loving hands of the Virgin Mary so that they may find consolation and overcome this terrible situation." One of the faithful of the same parish, Subir Corraya, expressed solidarity and closeness with the people in Turkey and Syria, stressing: "With my family we prayed for the victims. Although the two countries are far from each other, in spiritual communion feel their pain and suffering. Almighty God bless them and give them the strength to endure this situation and slowly recover."

Meanwhile, Nirmol Rozario, president of the Bangladesh Christian Association, reports on the commitment of the Christian association both on a spiritual level (with a prayer vigil and a special prayer request for the earthquake victims) and in the context of appeals for donations.

A fundraising campaign was also launched at the "Uttorbanga Christian Bohumukhi Samabay Samity," a small financial institution in Bangladesh run by the Christian Tarcisius Palma: "With all the employees and people of good will who belong to different religions, we prayed and stayed in silence for a few minutes, lighting candles and remembering the thousands of people who lost their lives as a result of the earthquake. We will not fail to help in every little way."

— Article from *FIDES* missionary news service of the Pontifical Mission Societies.

## BUYING COATS FOR KIDS



**Knights of Columbus Council 308, Malone, recently donated \$500 to Catholic Charities for the purchase of winter coats for children in the Malone area. Joelle Lamica, center, Director of Catholic Charities of Franklin County, accepted the check from local Grand Knight David Petrelli, right, and Deputy Grand Knight Angelo Pietropaoli.**

## OBITUARIES

**Alexandria Bay** — Dorothy F. (Senecal) Beach, 91; Memorial Services in spring at St. Cyril's Church.

**Alexandria Bay** — Mary Rose (Scanlon) McAloon, 92; Memorial Mass Feb. 16, 2022 at St. Cyril's Church.

**Brownville** — Alberta May (Gladle) Touron, 102; Mass of Christian Burial May 6, 2023 at Immaculate Conception Church; burial in Dexter Cemetery.

**Evans Mills** — Emily Helen (Treffler) Franz, 99; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 10, 2023 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Oakwood Cemetery.

**Copenhagen** — Cecelia (Bickford) Hebert, 92; Mass of Christian Burial in spring at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Copenhagen** — Eugene E. Thesier, 87; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 16, 2023 at St. Mary's Church; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Croghan** — Glenn J. Buckingham, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 17, 2023 at St. Stephen's Church; burial

in St. Stephen's Cemetery.

**Dannemora** — Loretta M. (Dubrey) Boyd, 96; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 15, 2023 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Lake Placid** — Ella (Stone) Wood, 94; Private services to be held.

**Lowville** — Sophie (Zubrzycki) Samsa, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 14, 2023 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Lowville Rural Cemetery.

**Massena** — Bethellen (Smith) Murray, 73; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 14, 2023 at Church of the Sacred Heart; burial in Calvary Cemetery, Norwood.

**Mooers Forks** — Yvonne M. (Bulriss) Bordeau, 85; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 17, 2023 at St. Ann's Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

**Peru** — Diesel Allen Cook, 2; Funeral Services Feb. 17, 2023 at St. Augustine's Church.

**Peru** — Katelynn Devin Brooke Damour, 23; Funeral Services Feb. 17, 2023 at St. Augustine's Church.

**Peru** — Robert Donlad Velie, 21; Funeral Services Feb. 17, 2023 at St. Augustine's Church.

**Plattsburgh** — Augustine Eclipse (Baker) Giroux, 90; Funeral Services Feb. 13, 2023 at the Heald Funeral Home; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** — Tristan Carlton Hallock, infant; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 18, 2023 at St. Peter's Church.

**Saranac Lake** — Jewel Ann (Boardman) Foley, 80; Memorial Mass Feb. 19, 2023 at St. Bernard's Church; burial in St. Paul's Cemetery, Bloomingdale.

**Ticonderoga** — William Joseph Tausinger, 44; Funeral Services Feb. 15, 2023 at the Wilcox & Regan Funeral Home.

**Tupper Lake** — Stephen Paul Whitely, 34; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 21, 2023 at St. Alphonsus Church.

**Tupper Lake** — George J. Young, 86; Mass of Christian Burial Feb. 15, 2023 at St. Alphonsus Church

## KNIGHTS SUPPORT SEMINARIANS



Thousand Islands Knights of Columbus Council #350 conducted a campaign, Pennies from Heaven, this past summer to support Diocese of Ogdensburg seminarians. Each weekend through summer, Knights collected money after Mass at St. Mary's Church in Clayton. These church contributions, combined with council members' contributions and funds from the K of C Supreme Council's Support Vocations (RSVP) program, enabled the Council to donate \$9,000 to the Diocese of Ogdensburg's seminarians. On December 28,, Grand Knight, Robert Heckmann attended the Annual Seminarian Christmas Gathering and presented \$1,000.00 checks to each seminarian. Pictured are, from left, seminarians Dennis Ombongi, Kevin McCullough, Tuan Vuong, Venes Laine, Grand Knight Robert Heckmann, seminarians Tyler Fitzgerald, Deacon Lukas Gruber, Douglas Schirmer and Michael Lennox. Not pictured is seminarian Carter Pierce.

# Archdiocese of New York to close 12 schools

By Joe Bukuras  
Catholic News Agency

The Archdiocese of New York announced Wednesday that 12 of its schools will close at the end of the 2022-2023 school year, citing "detrimental" financial instability "due to shifting demographics and lower enrollment made worse by the pandemic."

"It is never a good day when we announce closures to any of our beloved schools, but the goal is always to strengthen the remaining institutions and preserve Catholic education in New York for decades to come," Cardinal Timothy Dolan, archbishop of New York, said in a Feb. 15 press release.

In addition to the school's closures, four additional schools will merge into two. The archdiocese also announced that three schools will eliminate their sixth through eighth grades.

"We are doing everything we can to minimize the impact this will have on families and will provide both educational guid-

ance and pastoral support to all those affected to ensure all children will be warmly welcomed into a nearby Catholic school. We are all in this together, and with hard work and God's blessings, we will come out on the other side," Cardinal Dolan said.

The statement said that the archdiocese will welcome any families affected by the closures into nearby Catholic schools. Financial support such as scholarships and financial aid will be available for those affected families as well.

The schools that will not reopen are Academy of St. Paul and St. Ann in Manhattan; Ascension School in Manhattan; Guardian Angel School in Manhattan; Holy Family School in the Bronx; Immaculate Conception School in Manhattan; Immaculate Conception School in the Bronx; Our Lady, Queen of Martyrs in Manhattan; Santa Maria School in the Bronx; St. Angela Merici School in the Bronx; St. Brendan School in the Bronx; St. Christopher School in Staten Island; and St. Margaret

Mary School in the Bronx.

The statement noted that there are two schools named Immaculate Conception in the Bronx and that the one on 151st Street is not closing.

The archdiocese said St. Francis Xavier and St. Clare of Assisi in the Bronx will merge, as will St. Gabriel School and St. Margaret of Cortona in the Bronx.

Most Precious Blood School in Walden, St. James the Apostle in Carmel, and St. Columbanus in Cortlandt Manor — all north/northwest of New York City — will eliminate their sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, according to the archdiocese.

The archdiocese said it will work with families to answer any questions they may have about concerns of enrollment, transportation, or tuition. Updates will appear on this page.

"We understand these are challenging times for many families, and this is indeed a sad day for everyone in our Catholic schools community," Michael Deegan, the archdiocese's superintendent of schools, said in the

statement.

"I personally mourn the loss of every one of our great schools. However, as we process this news, we must resolve that the great tradition of Catholic education in New York will continue, and we will assist all students who are seeking to carry on their Catholic education to find a seat at another excellent school in the archdiocese."

As America continues to struggle with the negative effects from the COVID-19 pandemic, the education system has become a focal point of conversation because of the many children who are behind in their academic development.

Student learning in both the American Catholic and public school systems suffered negative effects from the pandemic. However, the pandemic's negative effect on learning was more pronounced among fourth- and eighth-graders at public schools than among their Catholic-school counterparts, according to a 2022 report from the U.S. Department of Education.