

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

U.S. bishops  
condemn 'Secure the  
Border Act' | Page 7

Nine-year-old boy  
creates Bible  
podcast | Page 9

The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 78 Number 6

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

MAY 17, 2023

## TO BE ORDAINED TO THE ORDER OF DEACON



Through the laying of hands by Bishop Terry R. LaValley, Douglas Schirmer, left, and Carter Pierce are scheduled to be ordained to the Order of Deacon on May 27 at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg. Also on that day, Deacon Lukas Gruber is scheduled to be ordained to the priesthood. Read about how Schirmer and Pierce are preparing for ordination and hear parts of their vocation stories in this edition. Deacon Gruber will be featured in next week's edition.

STORIES ON PAGES 3 & 4

## 2023 DEACON ASSEMBLY

PHOTO BY DARCY FARGO/NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

Deacon Kevin Mastellon, diocesan director of Permanent Deacons, welcomes diocesan deacons to the 2023 Deacon Assembly held May 8-10 at Edgewood Resort in Alexandria Bay. See a story and additional photos on Page 12.



## Pope: Birth rate is indicator of country's hope

By Hannah Brockhaus  
Catholic News Agency

(CNA) – Pope Francis said Friday a society's birth rate is a key indicator of the hope people have in the future.

The pope shared the stage on May 12 with Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni during a two-day conference on "The General State of the Birth Rate," held at Conciliazione Auditorium close to the Vatican.

"The birth of children, in fact, is the main indicator for measuring the hope of a people," Pope Francis said. "If few are born it means there is little hope. And this not only has repercussions from an economic and social point of view but also undermines confidence in

the future."

"The General State of the Birth Rate" is a conference for Italian political, business, and organization leaders to reflect on Italy's demographic crisis, caused by one of the lowest birth rates in Europe: 1.25 births per woman.

The event was organized by the Foundation for Births and the Family Associations Forum and supported by the Italian Ministry for Family, Birth, and Equal Opportunity.

This was the third annual conference and the second time Pope Francis attended. In 2022, he sent a message to be read at the event.

Italy hit a historic low number of births in 2022, with only about 393,000 children born in

the country.

The same year, the country saw 700,000 deaths, marking a dangerous decline in population.

The low number of births, Pope Francis said, "is a figure that reveals a great concern for tomorrow."

He lamented that childbearing and rearing is seen as the burden of families only, and the pressure this puts on young adults today, "who grow up in uncertainty, if not disillusionment and fear."

Young people "experience a social climate in which starting a family has turned into a titanic effort, instead of being a shared value that everyone recognizes and supports," he said.

The decline in communal living, together with an increasing self-reliance creates loneliness, Pope Francis said, and one consequence is that only the wealthy have the freedom to live the life they want.

"This is unfair, as well as demeaning," he added.

The pope also criticized a culture that places pets before human children.

He said at a recent audience, he went to greet a woman of around 50 years old – "like me," he joked – but was surprised to be asked to bless her dog, which she called, "my baby."

"I had no patience and scolded the lady," he said, pointing out the great number of hungry children in the world.

NORTH  
COUNTRY  
CATHOLICPO Box 326  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669  
USPS 0039-3400**Bishop Terry  
R. LaValley**  
President**Rev. Joseph A. Morgan**  
Vice President**James d. crowley**  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Darcy L. Fargo  
Editor &

Communications Director

Publish  
45 issues  
per year.  
Weekly except  
skipping every  
other week be-  
ginning July through August  
and skipping one week in  
December by the  
Diocese of Ogdensburg.  
622 Washington Street,  
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.**Editorial Office:**  
622 Washington Street,  
Ogdensburg, N.Y. 13669.**Telephone:**  
(315) 608-7556**E-mail:**  
news@northcountry  
catholic.org**Entered at the  
Post Office:**  
Ogdensburg, NY  
13669 and additional mailing  
offices as  
Periodical Postage.**Subscription:**  
**For one year:**  
In-Diocese Rate: \$27  
Outside of Diocese Rate: \$30Matters for publication  
should be addressed to  
PO Box 326  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669  
and should be received by  
Wednesday prior to  
publication. Paper is  
printed each Friday;  
deadline is Wednesday.  
Member, Catholic  
Press Association.**POSTMASTER:**  
Send address changes to  
North Country Catholic,  
PO Box 326  
Ogdensburg, NY  
13669-0326

# Invasion of the 'pod people'

I think of them as my "pod people."

While that makes them sound like characters in a bad horror movie, they're actually very positive and endearing.

For the past few years, I've been trying to develop the habit of gratitude journaling. I'll be consistent with it for a few days, then I don't think of it for months.

A few months ago, I thought I'd try a different strategy, and I found a gratitude jour-

aling app to download on my phone. It reminds me to log my gratitude every night. I've found that very helpful in cultivating the new habit.

**Darcy L.  
Fargo**

That app offers users the option to join "random pods," groups of strangers who can choose to share their gratitude entries with one another.

My pod is the best part of the app. It seems not every pod is as awesome. One of my pod people, sharing gratitude for the

pod, said was assigned to our random pod after leaving a couple negative pods. Our pod seems to have something special.

Reading about my pod people's gratitude improves my day. It helps me see things to be grateful for that I might not have thought of on my own. It warms my heart to know that random internet strangers I know by only their first names are growing, loving, exploring, learning, earning..., and they're thankful to be doing so. They're grateful for little things and big things. The majority of them fre-

quently thank God.

Being immersed in this pocket of gratitude has helped improve my overall outlook. It's helped me cultivate a desire to be grateful, a desire to look for things for which I can/should be grateful and a desire to look for God working in the world around me.

Now that I'm actively looking for those things, I find them in so many places. I see God working in the world all around me, and I see countless reasons to be grateful.

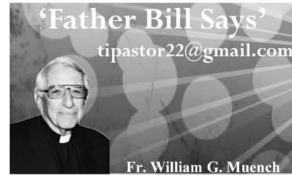
I now thank God for my pod.

# 'Holy Spirit leads and guides in love'

Each year as the Church's Liturgical year approaches Pentecost, I start writing to you something about the Holy Spirit. I realize that you all know a great deal that our Church teaches us Catholics about the Holy Spirit. My hope is that you have experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in your life. I pray that the Holy Spirit has guided you and lead you in many ways.

Recently, I attended our parish Mass for the Bishop's visit to confer the sacrament of confirmation on sixty of our high school students. So, I have been thinking a great deal about the Holy Spirit this week. My personal prayer at that ceremony was that this sacrament of confirmation with the gift of the Holy Spirit would have a powerful effect on the lives of these students. I prayed that these young people would make a difference in their part of the world even now.

I have taught many classes on the Holy Spirit over the years. In addition,



I remember well proclaiming many homilies on the gift of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit's readiness to transform each of us as disciples of the Lord. I am certain that each time I prepared, I have gone to the Gospels, especially the Gospel of St. John. I have no doubt that St. John had developed an intense love for the Holy Spirit.

St. John remembered well the words of Jesus at the Last Supper as Jesus taught the apostles the promise of the Holy Spirit coming to lead them and prepare them as they formed and built our Catholic Church. St. John writes in the chapters 14 to 17 of his Gospel, the words of Jesus at the Last Supper. This section of John's Gospel is called Jesus' Discourse at the Last Supper. St. John remembers for us Jesus words of

love and concern for his apostles and his promise of the Holy Spirit to them, this gift of the Holy Spirit to the peoples of all time.

John tells us of Jesus' great joy at the promise of the Holy Spirit and the Lord's challenge that we all would be a people of love. Here are the words of Jesus: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment to love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends."

I want to encourage you to remember that "laying down one's life" may mean dying for a few. Yet, for most of us, "laying down your life" will mean that as followers of Jesus we will be called to live for others just as Jesus did.

The Gospels make it clear for us that our association with the Holy Spirit changes our relationship with Our Lord Jesus. Jesus makes it clear that Holy Spirit leads and guides in love that Jesus

wants to be our friend, a friend to each one of us.

Here again from John 15, the words of Jesus: "You are my friends if you do what I command you. I have called you friends because I have told you everything, I have heard from my Father."

It seems almost too much for us to comprehend: the Lord Jesus wants to be our friend. Jesus wants us to be his friend. How this transforms our relationship with the Lord! St. John goes on to make it clear that it was Jesus who chose us and gives to us a new commandment: "This I command you - love one another."

Now, I must personally recognize that my challenge is to convince these newly confirmed young people that Jesus truly wants to be their friend and, as such, wants to lead them so that they follow Jesus and live well as his disciples and be examples of loving and concerned people, a guide to all they meet.

# 'For Christ and the Church'

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

As he prepares for ordination to the Order of Deacon, Douglas Schirmer said he's surprised at the level of peace he's experiencing.

"I'm feeling serene," he said. "That's a bit surprising. I naturally tend to be a bit anxious, but the last few months have been very peaceful."

He's found that peace in Christ in his preparations for ordination.

"I've been praying more and talking to other seminarians about ordination," Schirmer said. "And I've been spending meditating on the Office of Deacon. I'm also preparing to make a general confession with my spiritual director. You sort of go back through your life and dig in deeper. I've spent eight years in seminary, and I've learned more about what sin is and how it affects you. So you talk about sins for which you've already been absolved, but you dig deeper and look at the causes and effects."

That peace is also an extension of joy he's found in a portion of his future ministry.

"I've been taking a practice class in homiletics," he said. "It's been so lifegiving and joyful! I'm looking forward to testing that out, especially over the summer (in parish ministry). It's been a lot of learning how to preach to people - what they need to hear and what they want to hear. It's been learning to communicate not just scrip-



Douglas Schirmer

ture but also tenets of the faith in a way that's digestible and helpful. We work with a different priest each week, so we get lots of different perspectives and tools to use. I can't say it's come easy, but I've been surprised by the fact that I'm not scared at all when I preach. I count that as a grace. It's still an ongoing learning process - sort of broadening that gift. It's something I'll be doing the rest of my life."

Schirmer, 33, grew up in the Midwest, the son of an Anglican priest. His mother converted to Catholicism when he was a teen. Now residing in Ogdensburg, Schirmer said his family played an integral role in his being willing to be open to where God is calling him.

"I started looking at the Church when I was about 15 years old," he said. "Mom had come into the Church at that point. A huge part of me discerning whether I wanted to be Roman Catholic was the priesthood. I never have been able to say why, but I always felt it should be part of the conversation. My maternal grandparents were missionaries in Africa on and off for decades."

Additionally, Schirmer noted that his father is part of a "breakaway group," in his faith, and that provided him with inspiration, as well.

"My dad made life-altering decisions based on principles, truth and faith," he said. "I grew up in that environment. My parents have both been very supportive,

## THREE TO BE ORDAINED ON MAY 27

Through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley, Bishop of Ogdensburg will Ordain to the Order of Priesthood Deacon Lukas Hermann Gruber and to the Order of Deacon Mr. Carter Gabriel Pierce and Mr. Douglas Alexander Schirmer at 11 a.m. on May 27 in St. Mary's Cathedral, Ogdensburg.

A Reception will immediately follow the Liturgy downstairs in the Brzana Hall.

The ordination Mass may be viewed at [www.rcdony.org/ordination](http://www.rcdony.org/ordination). The Mass program will be available at the same link shortly before the liturgy.

While this week's edition features information on Pierce and Schirmer, next week's *NCC* will feature an article on Deacon Gruber.

and so have my brothers, Calvin and Joe. They've cheered me on whenever I was feeling down or annoyed. My brothers would basically help me to screw my head on straight and get back on the path."

Despite growing up in that environment, Schirmer said it took him a while after converting to Catholicism to truly start discerning God's call for him.

"After I was Catholic for two years, it was like the Lord hit me upside the head, and I realized how I'd been running from this vocation," he said. "I owe a debt of gratitude to Father Bryan Stitt and (former Campus Minister) Peter Mueller from Potsdam. They wouldn't let me shuffle these ideas off. With them, there was always a sense of 'keep asking the tough questions.'"

Even then, he had to overcome his own desires, Schirmer said.

"I realized a month ago that the hard part of my discernment has been letting go of the idea of marriage," he said. "This is the most adult decision and sacrifice I've made in my life, that I'll make in my life, most likely, but I

get to do that for Christ and the Church. After I realized that, everything was smoother."

As he's moved through his studies and toward ordination, Schirmer said the time he's spent in various parishes and meeting the people of the diocese have buoyed him in his vocation.

"It's been a joy to get to know people in the parishes over the years," he said. "It's given me a deeper joy in wanting to serve as a deacon and as a priest. It's one thing to discern a vocation. It's another thing actually ministering to real people with real gifts and real problems. It becomes very personal. I've started to feel that sense of fatherhood and friendship. The people of the North Country have given me that. It's not something I felt going in. I owe everyone in the diocese a pretty big debt there."

In addition to inviting the diocese to his ordination, Schirmer issued another invitation to the diocese.

"Please pray for Bishop LaValley, pray for the priests of our diocese, and pray for vocations," he said.

# 'So I may be happy in this life and the next'

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

"This is the right time," said Carter Pierce, 25, of Heuvelton, as he approaches ordination to the diaconate on May 27.

Pierce said he's dealt with some anxieties and uncertainties as he's discerned his vocation and progressed through his seminary studies, but those emotions seem to be behind him for the time being.

"I'm very excited, and I'm filled with a great sense of peace and anticipation," he said. "I've been counting down the days since around Easter. It's kind of surreal that we're getting this close. I'm more and more just feeling peace with where I am. There can be a lot of anxiety in discernment - anxiety about knowing what it is I'm getting into and knowing whether or not I'm ready. Through a lot of that time, I thought I needed a much greater sense of what I was going to be doing as a deacon and then as a priest. I was also hoping I'd also be a better person by this point in this process. But this is what God is inviting me to. This is what I want. This is the right time, both from my perspective and from the perspective of the Church. It's been a long six years in seminary, eight or nine years of discernment. It's been a roller coaster of doubts and questions and anxieties and joys and affirmations to get to this point. I've reached a point of freedom. I'm free, ready and willing to step into this adventure. I know I'm following God's invitation. It's not a summons;



Carter Pierce

it's an invitation. God is inviting me to this, and His invitation, when you hear it with a free heart, is irresistible."

Pierce said he has been completing both practical and spiritual preparation for his ordination.

"In terms of the practical things, I had to send out invitations and buy an alb," he said. "The first time I tried it on, it struck me that it was pretty fitting - both in terms of it fitting me physically and in terms of it just feeling fitting. It felt right. But the biggest thing I've done to prepare has been prayer. I asked a lot of people - professors, the current diaconate class at (Mount St. Mary Seminary) - how to prepare. First, they suggested continuing with my normal prayer and praying well. That included Liturgy of the Hours, daily Mass and spending time in silent prayer in the chapel before the tabernacle in a holy hour. I also tried to continue

with the rosary and personal prayer. My goal is to pray those with full commitment and pray them well. I've also tried to cater my prayer toward ordination. I went on a five-day silent retreat in January. I was given a booklet with the ordination prayers so I could pray with those prayers. I've been praying with and going over that, reflecting and journaling."

Pierce noted that arriving at this point in his journey to the priesthood, God willing, wasn't a direct path.

"A lot of my life, I followed brothers," he said. "They went into engineering or the dairy industry. I share a lot of the same interests, but none of those particular disciplines called out to me or struck me. I broadened my search, but I struggled to find something that drew me to it. All the while, in the back of my head, there was something telling me 'let's consider all the options.' I knew

there was one option I was putting off: priesthood. Our bishop was my pastor growing up. He'd always joke, 'I have the perfect college for you,' and he meant the seminary. I never wanted to be a priest. I never anticipated it. I always wanted to be married and have a large family like my own. I respected priests, but I didn't want to be one."

It was a prayer taught to Pierce in first grade, a prayer he attributed to Father Timothy G. Canaan, that God used to open his heart to the priesthood.

"My first-grade teacher taught it to me," he said. "It was, 'Dear God, please help me to be what you want me to be so that I may be happy in this life and the next. Amen.' I was shown that I was asking God to show me my major, but I wasn't praying that prayer in the broader sense of asking God to what vocation I'm called. I knew I had to pray honestly and open myself up to all vocations. I sort of told myself I'd discern it, I'll know it's not for me, and I'll move on knowing I satisfied the nagging feeling."

While he participated in discernment groups and continued to discern, Pierce enrolled in Catholic University to study architecture and civil engineering. While studying there, he attended a retreat in New York City.

"I had a blast," he said. "I really grew in faith with the people on that retreat. These were people who were alive and on fire for the faith. The joy they had really struck me. It was something I had never

noticed before. I was struck with that same joy. I was proud to be Catholic and wanted to deepen my relationship with God. During that retreat, a priest approached me and told me, 'I really think you'd make a great priest.' I was dumbfounded. He said it to only me, and there were other guys on the trip. That turned everything upside down. I wondered what he saw in me. I was nervous about the whole idea of going to seminary and discerning the priesthood like that, but it was an idea I couldn't shake off."

He's continued developing that relationship with the Lord in seminary and working in his summer assignments around the diocese.

"The support I've received from our bishop and this diocese has been amazing," he said. "I get letters from people I've never met and parishes I've never visited. It's humbling. And I love mail. The prayers and sacrifices of others really have supported me, and they really are doing something. There's one lady who's been sending me a letter of encouragement every week for four to five years, and she's never met me. I owe so much of my vocation to my family, my parish and the people of this diocese."

He's looking forward to serving those same people in his future ministry.

"I'm making a firm commitment with my life to God and his people," Pierce said. "It's more of a general state of being than a thing I'll do. The rest will flow out of that."

## MAKING SENSE OF BIOETHICS

# Suicidal fears & authentic accompaniment

When we realize that someone we love may be suicidal, it can be complicated to figure out how best to respond. The threat of suicide from a friend or family member obviously needs to be taken seriously, and we need to respond with loving support and accompaniment.

Providing such help, however, will not necessarily be synonymous with granting every request or affirming every assertion they make.

Suppose that a friend shares that he has just lost his entire personal fortune in the most recent stock market crash.

He tells you know that he is going to commit suicide unless his investment accounts somehow get shored up to the same levels they were prior to the crash. Even though you wish to show compassion to him in his difficult situation, and would want to do everything you could to deflect his suicidal thinking, it wouldn't be appropriate to go along with his demands by replenishing all his accounts with your own funds.

That your friend is threatening suicide reveals that on some level, he has adopted a false understanding of himself, where he perceives himself as valuable only when he possesses substantial sums of money.

To support him authentically would mean assisting him to break free of this illusion, so he can grasp the liberating truth that his personal identity and self-

worth do not depend on his financial assets.

Clinical psychotherapist Lisa Marchiano shares another example: "If I work with someone who's really suicidal because his wife left him, I don't call his wife up and say, 'Hey, you've got to come back.' ... We don't treat suicide by giving people exactly what they want."

Instead a good psychotherapist helps a suicidal husband navigate his new situation by offering support and encouragement, and by assisting him to understand who he really is, despite the absence of his wife.

His suicidal thinking indicates he has not fully grasped the fact that his own identity and existence still remain objectively good, dignified and worthwhile even if his wife may have painfully walked away from their marriage.

Similarly, imagine a girl wants liposuction, despite the fact that she is thinner than a pencil from years of battling an eating disorder. She is very unhappy, an

and even suicidal, on account of her delusion that she is massively overweight. We could not encourage or consent to liposuction for her as an "affirmation strategy," but would need to support her in addressing the mental and personal issues that underlie her morbid fear of gaining weight and the disturbed perception of

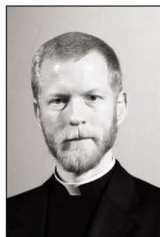
her own body.

Dr. Paul McHugh, formerly Psychiatrist in Chief of the Johns Hopkins Hospital Psychiatry Department, offers a parallel analysis for the situation of gender dysphoria.

He notes that the belief by a male that he is a female trapped inside a male body is similar to "the feelings of a patient with anorexia nervosa that she is obese despite her emaciated, cachectic [wasting away] state. We don't do liposuction

on anorexics. So why amputate the genitals of patients? ... We psychiatrists, I thought, would do better to concentrate on trying to fix their minds and not their genitalia."

Gender dysphoria is a particularly sensitive area that needs to be addressed with charity and truth-centered compassion. Those who struggle with gender dysphoria have significantly elevated rates of suicide compared to the general population. Regrettably, some physicians who prescribe puberty blockers or cross-sex hormones, or who perform transgender surgeries on young people, will use this higher rate of suicide to pressure parents to support so-called "gender-affirming" interventions for their children. The implication is that parents should do whatever their children ask for, to stave off a possible suicide.



Father Tad Pacholczyk, Ph.D.

In the case of a boy who declares he is actually a girl, if a parent expresses any hesitation about proceeding with surgeries to remove healthy sexual organs, some physicians have been known to ask, "What do you want? A dead son or a live daughter?" Such a query offers a false dichotomy, suggesting only two possibilities, while leaving out the third and most important option, namely a "live son" who is led away from his suicidality and false notions about his gender through professional supports, including appropriate psychotherapy, and through strong, loving familial and personal accompaniment.

When loved ones manifest an elevated likelihood of committing suicide, it makes no sense to adopt a posture of automatically yielding

to every request they make, nor is it reasonable to affirm untrue assertions they may be focused on or even obsessed with. Rather, we need to care for them in a more truthful way — accompanying, supporting, and helping them to address underlying personal and psychiatric issues — so they can begin to find real healing and experience a new wholeness and integration in their lives.

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

## Job Openings

St. Bernard's School, Saranac Lake  
has openings for a  
Classroom Teacher & School Counselor

**Classroom Teacher** - is seeking an enthusiastic teacher to join our team for the upcoming school year, starting in fall 2023. The ideal candidate will have a passion for teaching and a strong desire to inspire young minds while instilling Catholic values in our students.

**Counselor (Part-Time)** - is seeking an enthusiastic mental health professional to join our team. The ideal candidate will have a passion for helping students and families and a strong desire to inspire young minds while instilling Catholic values in our students.

For full job descriptions including responsibilities, requirements, and application information, please visit:  
[www.stbernardsschool.org/contact/employment-opportunities/](http://www.stbernardsschool.org/contact/employment-opportunities/)

**Environmental Stewardship****Energy dynamics**

The sun is the source of energy for all life. Green plants use sunlight to transform water and carbon dioxide into simple sugars. These sweet substances then serve as the basis for the plants' nutritional needs. Animals and organisms of decay rely on the energy of the sun in an indirect manner. Scientists examine the amount of energy and the ways it enters an ecosystem and flows through it.

As humans, we are physical creatures and are dependent upon the sun's energy in an indirect way to maintain the complex chemical processes of life within us. However, we are also spiritual beings. This requires a source of spiritual energy to maintain this non-physical component. Just like the sun, God radiates His divine energy and graces to everything in order to sustain their existence. We take in these spiritual goods – compassion, forgiveness, generosity, mercy and love – through our hearts. This is why we must always keep our hearts open, just as a plant must keep its leaves oriented toward the sun.

Living entities in nature do not choose food sources. For example, deer instinctively forage on specific types of leaves, grasses and plants; mosquitoes prefer animals that have warm blood and thin skin.

We have choices with what energy we allow in our bodies and hearts. Junk food may be enticing but not healthy for our physical well-being. Likewise, feelings of bitterness or bigotry can be very appealing to our ego but can become harmful blocks to allowing letting the light of Christ's love permeate. May the Holy Spirit guide us to make choices that invite the Divine energies of the Son's love into our whole being. (377)

By Tom Kalinowski  
Saranac Lake

**Protecting God's Children**

**The Diocese of Ogdensburg** is able to schedule sessions of the training, Protecting God's Children for Adults. To arrange for training, call 315-393-2920 or email jgrizzuto@rcdony.org

**Rest in Peace**

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

**May 18** – Rev. John B. A. Legrand, 1891; Rev. Richard J. Cotter, 1928, Rev. Augustus J. Dumont, 1949

**May 19** – Msgr. Arthur M. Leary, 1968; Deacon Vincent J. Frattali, 2003; Rev. Richard S. Sturtz, 2021

**May 20** – Rev. Eugene Noury, O.M.I., 1961; Rev. P. Andrew L'Esperance, M.S.C., 1962

**May 21** – Msgr. John Pendergast, 1998

**May 22** – Msgr. Claudius Gobet, 1961

**May 23** – Deacon Richard A. Menke, 2003; Msgr. Harry K. Snow, 2021

**To Report Abuse**

**If you have a complaint** of suspected misconduct involving diocesan clergy, religious, employees or volunteers, contact **Victims Assistance Coordinator**, Terriane Yanulavich, Ph.D., LMHC, 5050 Route 374, Merrill, NY 12955; terrianeyanulavich@yahoo.com Phone: 518-651-2267 days; 518-569-0612 evenings; or Father Christopher Carrara, the Episcopal Vicar for Clergy; 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.

**Bishop's Public Schedule**

**May 17** – 10:30 a.m. – Priests Personnel Board Meeting at Bishop's Residence

7 p.m. – Confirmation at the Catholic Community of St. Peter and St. Mary and St. Hedwig (at St. Peter's Church) in Lowville with St. Stephen's Church in Croghan, St. Francis Solanus Church in Harrisville, St. Mary's Church in Constableville and St. Mary's Nativity Church in West Leyden

**May 18** – 7 p.m. – Confirmation at The Catholic Community of Constable, Westville and Trout River with the Catholic Community of Burke and Chateaugay in Chateaugay and St. Mary's Church in Fort Convington

**May 19-21** – Formation for Ministry Retreat at Wadhams Hall in Ogdensburg

**May 21** – 3 p.m. – Confirmation at St. Alphonsus-Holy Name of Jesus Parish with St. Agnes Church in Lake Placid and St. Bernard's Church in Saranac Lake

**May 22-24** – Presbyteral Assembly at the High Peaks Resort in Lake Placid

**May 24** – Council of Priest Meeting at the High Peaks Resort in Lake Placid - Time TBD

**FIRST COMMUNION**

On May 7, six youth at St. Cyril's of Alexandria Bay made their First Communion. Father Douglas Comstock celebrated the Mass with the help of Deacon Bernie Slate and Deacon Neil Fuller. The youth were accompanied by their Religious Education Director Trina Henry. A celebration followed the Mass. Pictured after receiving their First Communion (from left) are Alice Gentner, Landyn Martin, Brantley Derrigo, David Gentner, Jonathan Pawlikowski, Father Douglas Comstock, Nora DeRosia.

Follow Pope Francis on  
Twitter!

[www.twitter.com/Pontifex](http://www.twitter.com/Pontifex)

 #Pontifex



*Support And Pray  
For Vocations*

**PILGRIMAGE to the SHRINES of FRANCE**

11 Days: November 6 - 16, 2023

LOURDES \* NEVERS \* TOURS \* LOIRE VALLEY  
\* CHARTRES \* MONT ST. MICHEL \* BAYEUX  
\* NORMANDY \* CAEN \* LISIEUX \* PARIS

Hosted by:

**FR. ANDREW J. AMYOT**

**\$3979 From Montreal \***

\*Air/land tour prices is \$3329 plus \$650 government taxes/airline surcharges

For more information please contact:

**Fr. Andrew Amyot**

Tel: (315)-384-4242

Email: fraamyot2@gmail.com



**SPACE IS LIMITED! SIGN UP TODAY!!!**

# U.S. bishops condemn 'Secure the Border Act'

By Peter Pinedo  
Catholic News Agency

Bishop Mark Seitz of El Paso issued an open letter to Congress on May 5 strongly condemning the Secure the Border Act of 2023 as "extreme" and expressing the U.S. bishops' position that the bill's passage "is beyond justification."

As chairman of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration, Seitz is a hardline advocate for the rights of immigrants and has been highly critical of efforts to restrict immigration by both Republicans and Democrats.

The Secure the Border Act of 2023 is sponsored by Republican Reps. Mario Diaz-Balart and Tom McClintock and supported by House Speaker Kevin McCarthy.

The bill proposes to crack down on the record number of migrants who have been crossing the border under the Biden ad-

ministration. The bill's proposals include resuming construction of the border wall, ending the policy of "catch and release," increasing the number of Border Patrol agents, and more.

According to Seitz's letter, "this legislation contains such a combination of harmful measures that we [the bishops] believe its passage, on the whole, is beyond justification."

Seitz claims that if passed the bill would "fundamentally weaken our nation's decades-long commitment to humanitarian protection ... endanger unaccompanied children and inflict harm on other vulnerable persons, decimate access to asylum, mandate damaging detention and removal practices, restrict access to legal employment, limit - and potentially eliminate - federal partnerships with faith-based and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), undermine the rule of law, and more."

The bishops' letter also condemns resuming construction of the border wall.

"We have long opposed the construction of a wall spanning the entire U.S.-Mexico border, especially with the dangers it poses to human life and the environment" and that this "bill would effectively undermine constitutional property rights and further abrogate the rights of those living near the border by prioritizing federal land acquisition above such rights," the bishops' letter reads.

Because of these issues, the bishops encourage members of Congress to oppose the Secure the Border Act of 2023.

"The provisions discussed," wrote Seitz, "underscore the extreme nature of this bill, its incompatibility with Catholic social teaching, and its inconsistency with our nation's broadly bipartisan commitment to humanitarian protection."

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## FBI offers reward in pro-life pregnancy center vandalism

The FBI's Omaha, Nebraska, field office is offering a major reward to anyone who can help identify the individual or group who vandalized a pro-life pregnancy center in Des Moines, Iowa, in June 2022. The request comes following a yearlong string of attacks on pro-life pregnancy centers across the nation, which began after it was reported in May 2022 that Roe v. Wade would be overturned. The bureau is offering \$15,000 to anyone providing information leading to the identification, arrest, and conviction of the individual or group who broke windows and left graffiti on the Agape Pregnancy Resource Center. "Fake clinic," "Stop lying," and "This place is not safe" were a few of the phrases spray-painted on the exterior of the clinic. The clinic was vandalized on both June 3, 2022, and June 4, 2022, in the early hours of the morning. There have been more than 60 attacks on pro-life pregnancy centers since May 2022, and six reported arrests.

## Pope welcomes program to spiritually adopt struggling teens

Pope Francis has given his blessing to a program started in Poland to spiritually adopt struggling teenagers and pray for them by name. Krzysztof Gawrysiak and his wife, Aneta, spent more than two hours with Pope Francis at his Vatican residence on May 4. During the visit, they were able to introduce their new online initiative, pray4teens.org, which they started after learning more about the rates of depression - and suicide attempts - among adolescents around the world. "We strongly believe [the prayers are] helping," Aneta Gawrysiak told CNA last week. "We've got a lot of examples, a lot of testimony that prayer is very powerful." Krzysztof Gawrysiak said Pope Francis blessed their prayer initiative and said he would speak about it at World Youth Day 2023, which will be in Lisbon, Portugal, Aug. 1-6. Pray4teens.org is currently in four languages: Polish, English, Italian, and Ukrainian.

## Canada replaces crosses in new Royal Crown

King Charles III has approved the Canadian government's new heraldic Royal Crown design that swaps out its crowning cross for a snowflake and replaces other crosses with maple leaves. The Canadian Royal Crown redesign was recommended by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and is based on the bejeweled St. Edward's Crown used at King Charles' coronation held on Saturday, May 6, as well as the slightly different Tudor Crown symbol. However, the stylized Canadian emblem drops the crosses and the fleurs-de-lis present on these crowns, instead incorporating "elements emphasizing the Canadian identity of the monarchy," the governor general of Canada's website says in its heraldry section. The Canadian Royal Crown emblem is "an important symbol of the sovereign's authority, the Canadian monarchy, and the power of the state acting in the sovereign's name," according to the office of the governor general of Canada, who represents King Charles III in his role as king of Canada.



Enjoy the renewal of spring with a subscription to the *North Country Catholic*, the newspaper for the Diocese of Ogdensburg.

## Welcome Spring!

Visit our website at [www.northcountrycatholic.org](http://www.northcountrycatholic.org) to pay by Credit Card for immediate delivery.

OR Send this coupon with payment to:  
North Country Catholic

PO Box 106, Canajoharie, New York, 13317

\*\*Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery when mailing in your renewal\*\*

Inside Diocese \$27  Outside Diocese \$30  
I want to be a Patron:  \$35  \$50  \$100  \$250  
 New Subscription  Renewal

Please send my subscription to my e-mail address:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Parish \_\_\_\_\_

## VIRTUAL EVENTS

## FRIENDSHIP GROUPS

You are invited to take part in a Friendship Group that will provide you with dynamic reading and personalized formation to grow in holiness with others online.

**Date:** Thursdays starting June 15

**Time:** 7 p.m.  
**Place:** Zoom

**Features:** The first book we will read is *Overcoming Spiritual Discouragement* by popular author Fr. Timothy Gallagher, OMV. Book summary: With warmth, understanding, and pastoral skill, Father offers a hopeful invitation to all who struggle to overcome the greatest obstacle in the spiritual life – discouragement. It is a call to solace in times of suffering and will empower you to stand tall in times of affliction. Oblate priest Fr. Bill Brown will join us for the first meeting, share about the liberating spirituality behind this book, lead a discussion, and answer participants' questions. You will learn how to enter into the sublime peace and joy that our Lord promises.

**Contact:** To sign up, visit: <https://mailchi.mp/sophia institute/friendship-groups> For more information, please contact Mary Beth Bracy at [mbracy@sophia institute.com](mailto:mbracy@sophia institute.com)

## ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

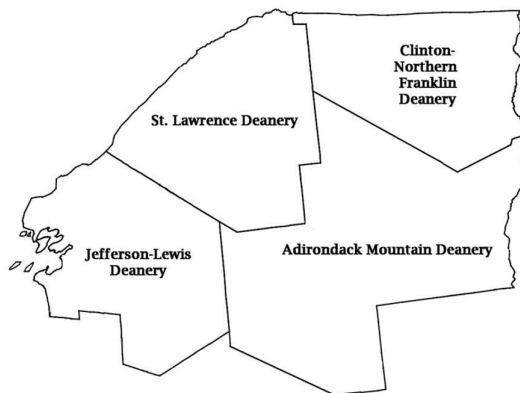
## FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING

Lake Placid - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks is recruiting new volunteers and has scheduled a Friendship Volunteer Training Program.

**Date:** May 24

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

**Features:** New Volunteers will join Mercy Care's more than 100 Friendship Volunteers from Lake Placid, Saranac Lake, and Tupper Lake and surrounding areas who are helping their elder neighbors stay connected to their communities and helping to make their lives a little easier and happier. Volunteers of all faiths are encouraged



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

e-mail [news@northcountrycatholic.org](mailto:news@northcountrycatholic.org).

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

and invited to participate. There is no cost for the training but registration is required. Complementary lunch will be provided.

**Contact:** To register for the training, please visit Mercy Care's website at [www.adkmercy.org](http://www.adkmercy.org) or contact Lexi Bevilacqua, Mercy Care's Program Director at [abevilacqua@adkmercy.org](mailto:abevilacqua@adkmercy.org) or call Lexi for more information at 518-523-5446.

## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

## MERCY CARE EDUCATIONAL FORUM

Paul Smiths - Mercy Care for the Adirondacks will hold its annual Educational Forum co-hosted by Paul Smith's College.

**Date:** June 7

**Time:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Cost: \$25, includes networking lunch

**Features:** The 2023 Forum will focus on the urgent topics of Ageism and development of the Master Plan for Aging in New York. Speakers will be Ann Monroe, Greg Olsen and Adam Herbst.

**Contact:** Registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. To register for the Forum, please visit Mercy Care's website at [www.adkmercy.org](http://www.adkmercy.org) or contact Karen Rodriguez, Mercy Care Project Manager at [krdriguez@adkmercy.org](mailto:krdriguez@adkmercy.org) or call her at

518-523-5685.

## JEFFERSON-LEWIS

## HOLY HOUR AND DIVINE MERCY

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

**Date:** June 4

**Time:** Following 11 a.m. Mass  
**Place:** St. Hedwig's Church

**Contact:** 315-348-6260

## HEALING MASS

Clayton - St. Mary's to have their annual Healing Mass and Antoine Tetrault Memorial Service.

**Date:** June 10

**Time:** 11 a.m.

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

**Features:** Celebrants will be Father Arthur LaBaff and Father Corneille Boyeye. During Mass, anointing of the sick is offered. Immediately following Mass will be prayer teams to pray for individual needs. A social time with refreshments will take place in the parish center following the Mass.

**Contact:** For more information, contact St. Mary's parish office at 315-686-3398 or [claytonsec@rcdony.org](mailto:claytonsec@rcdony.org) or visit [stmarysclayton.org](http://stmarysclayton.org).

## ST. LAWRENCE

## MONTHLY BRUNCH

Norfolk - Parish of the Visitation

and St. Raymond's will have their monthly Knights of Columbus Brunch.

**Date:** June 11 (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

## GUGGENHEIM CLEAN-UP DAYS

Saranac Lake - Come lend a helping hand to prepare the Guggenheim Center.

**Dates:** May 19 at Noon until May 21 (come for a few hours or the whole weekend)

**Features:** Projects include: Washing the kitchen and preparing it for use; Cleaning the grill; Pressure washing building exteriors; Pressure washing kayaks and other watercraft; Deep cleaning the oven; Washing windows; Cleaning interior walls, floors and furniture; Moving equipment to the beach; Cleaning trails; And a myriad of other tasks! Youth are welcome, but must be accompanied by parents.

**Contact:** Register at <https://www.rcdony.org/GuggyCleanUp>; For more information, call 315-393-2920 or email [jcrowley@rcdony.org](mailto:jcrowley@rcdony.org) or [mrocker@rcdony.org](mailto:mrocker@rcdony.org).

## THE LETTER

Join us for a viewing and discussion of *The Letter: A Message for our Earth*. The Letter is a documentary about how spiritual values call us to take action on the ecological crisis.

**Schedule:** May 20: Brushton St. Mary's Parish Center

**Time:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**Features:** The Letter follows six invited leaders from around the world who were invited to the Vatican by Pope Francis to speak about the effects of climate on their communities. We will screen the 80-minute movie in three segments interspersed with discussion. Simple lunch and refresh-

ments included.

## 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:** 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 Harden Fehner, Ph.D. Lunch will be provided.

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

## ORDINATION TO THE ORDER OF THE PRIESTHOOD AND DEACON:

Through the laying on of hands and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, the Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley, Bishop of Ogdensburg will Ordain to the Order of Priesthood Deacon Lukas Hermann Gruber and to the Order of Deacon Mr. Carter Gabriel Pierce and Mr. Douglas Alexander Schirmer.

**Date:** May 27

**Time:** 11 a.m.

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

**Features:** A Reception will immediately follow the Liturgy downstairs in the Brzana Hall. The Ordination Mass may be viewed at [www.rcdony.org/ordination](http://www.rcdony.org/ordination). The Ordination Mass program will be available at the same link shortly before the Liturgy.

## RACHEL'S VINEYARD

Saranac Lake - Rachel's Vineyard After Abortion Healing Retreat to be held.

**Date:** May 26 to 28, Memorial Day Weekend  
**Place:** Guggenheim Lodge

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9



# Nine-year-old boy creates Bible podcast

When "The Bible in a Year" podcast hosted by Father Mike Schmitz shot to the top of the charts at the start of 2021, it inspired millions of people to dive more deeply into the Bible. One Michigan third grader was not content to merely listen, though - he wants to be a podcasting priest like Schmitz when he grows up. And he's well on his way to making that dream a reality.

Teddy Howell, 9, is the creator - with the help of his parents, Stephani and Sean - of the "Kid's Bible in a Year with Teddy" podcast, which launched on March 12. In each episode, released Sundays and Wednesdays, Teddy leads a prayer and then reads a passage from the Great Adventure Kids Catholic Bible Chronicles, a book from publisher Ascension that provides 70 Bible stories arranged in the same timeline order that the "Bible in a Year" podcast uses.

Teddy's mom Stephani said her son, the oldest of six siblings, already loves learning about and sharing his Catholic faith with others. She said he often stays up at night reading

the Bible under the covers with a headlamp and recently started serving at the altar at the family's parish in southeast Michigan.

"He's always had a love for the Church and the priesthood. Kind of of his own accord, he decided he wanted to go to daily Mass over the summer," she said.

When asked directly what he wants to be when he grows up, Teddy didn't hesitate - he wants to be a priest. He said his favorite part of the Mass is the Liturgy of Eucharist, though given his love for the Bible, the Liturgy of the Word also touches him deeply. He said his favorite parts of the Bible are the Gospel passages about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

Teddy's podcasting ambitions were sparked almost wholly by the example of Schmitz, the popular Minnesota priest who, in his podcast, reads through the entire Bible in 365 daily episodes, plus a prayer and reflection. Teddy's parents would often put on "The Bible in a Year" for the family in the car, but turned it

off if Schmitz issued any warnings about material unsuitable for children, as he occasionally does throughout the series. The interruptions perturbed Teddy, who craved a Bible podcast he could listen to in its entirety.

It was this desire, along with the prayers offered by Schmitz at the end of each "Bible in a Year" episode, that really inspired Teddy to want to create his own podcast.

He told his parents he wanted to give it a try, reading the Kids Catholic Bible Chronicles aloud. Stephani contacted the publisher of the book, Ascension, to see if they'd be willing to allow him to read the words from the book on-air. Ascension agreed (although Teddy always reads a disclaimer noting that Ascension doesn't endorse or review the episodes).

Teddy begins each episode with a self-written prayer, then reads a passage from the book related to a Bible story, and then offers a reflection. He writes the scripts himself on his parents' computer and then does the recording, editing, and posting of the episodes with

their help. Teddy uses a microphone attached to his parents' computer to get the job done.

The technical aspects of creating the podcast have been a learning experience for Teddy's parents as well. Sean said he asked around among his friends about how to start a podcast, and his friends recommended the online platform Anchor, which allows listeners to subscribe and listen on just about any podcast app.

As of early May, Teddy has posted a dozen episodes, with no plans to slow down. His podcast has already garnered several thousand listens across several countries, with a growing number of five-star ratings. Ascension has even taken notice, sharing episodes from Teddy's podcast on social media.

Beyond being a great learning experience for the budding young priest, Teddy has genuine hopes that his podcast will touch people's lives.

"Hopefully a lot more people who are not Christian will become Christian by the end of this year by listening to my podcast," he said.

## Around the diocese

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

**Features:** If you or a friend are hurting after abortion loss, please consider attending a Rachel's Vineyard healing retreat. You aren't alone, help is available.

**Contact:** Registration is online at [www.rcdony.org/pro-life](http://www.rcdony.org/pro-life) or by contacting the Respect life office at [cminer@rcdony.org](mailto:cminer@rcdony.org). A list of retreat locations outside of our diocese is available at: [www.rachelsvineyard.org](http://www.rachelsvineyard.org).

### GUGGENHEIM SUMMER CAMP

2023 registration is open. New this year is a mini session for youth 11-13 years old along with the annual sleepaway camp weeks for ages 11 to 18. Dates: The season starts July 5th and ends Aug. 11th.

Cost: Mini session is \$200 and the weeklong sessions is \$425 per camper. Meals and accommodations are included in the registration fee.

**Features:** Arts and crafts, Project Adventure, Liturgy, rappelling, hiking, basketball, or soccer. Guggenheim has its very own beach where you can swim, use watercrafts and play watersports. Evenings at camp are packed with fun activities like a bonfire, dance, outdoor movies, and camp games.

**Contact:** To sign up, visit: [rcdony.org/youth/camp](http://rcdony.org/youth/camp) or call, Jeanne Grizzuto at 315-393-2290 ext. 1413

**LIFE GIVING WOUNDS RETREAT**  
Ogdensburg - Retreat for adults

whose parents separated or divorced and also for those who grew up in single-parent families.

**Date:** Aug. 11-13

**Place:** Wadhams Hall

Cost: \$200 for a shared room or \$250 for a single room.

**Features:** Financial assistance is available...do not let cost prevent you from experiencing the healing you deserve.

**Contact:** For more information or to register for the retreat, please contact Steve Tartaglia at [startaglia@rcdony.org](mailto:startaglia@rcdony.org) or 315-393-2920.

### FAMILY GUGGENHEIM

Saranac Lake - Family Guggenheim registration is open.

Schedule: Aug. 17-20; Aug. 24-27; Oct. 6-8

**Features:** Family Guggenheim welcomes families of all dimensions to come enjoy a special weekend in the beauty of the Adirondacks. Expect fun family workshops and activities that will have you working, laughing and praying together. Celebrate Christ's presence in your lives!

**Contact:** For more information and to register, go to [www.rcdony.org/family-life/fg.html](http://www.rcdony.org/family-life/fg.html) or contact Steve Tartaglia at 315-393-2920, [startaglia@rcdony.org](mailto:startaglia@rcdony.org).

### WOMENS HEALING RETREAT

Ogdensburg - Our Lady of the Rosary Healing Retreat for Women to be held.

**Date:** Oct. 5-8  
**Place:** Wadhams Hall

Cost: \$275 per person, \$100 Deposit

**Features:** Retreat for women 18 years or older. Registrations begin July 1, 2023

**Contact:** For more information call Kathleen Nichols 518-651-6895. Donations accepted to by payable to OLRHR and sent to Wadhams hall.



## SCRIPTURE REFLECTIONS

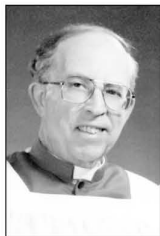
## Waiting for 'the promised Paraclete'

As the days passed after the Resurrection of Jesus, the Apostles were getting used to their fleeting glimpses of the Risen Christ, appearing here and there so dramatically. He had pretty much cured their depression following the horrible crucifixion on Calvary by finally convincing them that he was alive!

They never knew when he would appear next with new commands to preach the Good News everywhere. Now, he suddenly ascends into the air before their

eyes, and is lost to sight in the clouds. They must have thought in dismay, "He's left us again!" So, what did they do? It was one thing to label themselves followers of the Christ when he was not too far away. It was quite another to think of facing the Jewish leaders without his earthly presence.

Still shaken at his seeming abandonment, they withdrew together to that upper room to pray and ponder what He had taught them. Wisely, they kept near his mother, Mary, in those



Monsignor Paul E. Whitmore

May 21

Seventh Sunday of Easter

READINGS

Acts 1:12-14

1 Peter 4:13-16

John 17:1-11a

nine days of waiting for the Holy Spirit.

They must have remembered what Jesus had said to them: "If you really love me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father." In other words, I have a better way to remain with you. I will live in you and in the Church through my Spirit and in my Vicar.

And did they remember his wonderful farewell address in that

same upper room just a few weeks before at that strange, sacred meal the night before He died? Did they now understand the reason for his institution of the Eucharist, that He might remain with them always?

And so, they gather in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in the Cenacle that held such precious memories, there to await the promised Paraclete.

He will teach them everything they need to know to spread the Good News to all the world. The Spirit will also fill them with the courage to be bold and fearless, ready for whatever will await them,

even for martyrdom.

Like the Apostles, we need to prepare ourselves this week for a renewal of all those gifts we received at our confirmation. We must not act as though he were present. He is present.

His being present in the Spirit is far more powerful than his earthly presence would have been. We must go simply and deliberately into our souls daily - into the core of our being - and there listen to Him in silence.

Then, strengthened by His grace, we can confidently go about our Mission. We need that grace more than ever in these critical days of rebuilding our Church.

## CALLED TO SERVE

## You have been found worthy

May 27, 2023, will be a festive day for the Diocese of Ogdensburg. Deacon Lukas Gruber will be ordained to the Order of Priesthood by Bishop Terry R. LaValley.

Carter Pierce and Douglas Schirmer will be ordained to the Order of Deacon by Bishop LaValley at the same Mass.

The ordination is important to each man because it marks a plateau in his quest and formation to serve God and the Church.

It is important to Bishop LaValley because only a bishop, a successor of the apostles,

can administer the sacrament of holy orders. This sacrament bestows an unrepeatable, indelible character upon the person ordained.

It will be a festive day for the priests and deacons of the diocese who will witness the ordinations and welcome their new brothers.

It will mark a significant event in the life of the Church of Ogdensburg, each of the parishes and the thousands of members of the church in the North Country who will benefit from the men receiving ordination.

We should give thanks to God for calling these men to a clerical order and pray for their health and success in ministry.

All parishes should mark the occasion by including a prayer for these men in the Prayer

of the Faithful at Mass that weekend.

Father Gruber will begin his priestly ministry as a parochial vicar in a parish. His formation will continue as he lives the life of priest. Gone are the classes in priesthood as theory. That is a polite way of saying, "Welcome to the real world,"

A priest friend said the other day, "I learned how to be a priest after seminary." He has been a priest for a long, long time.

In fairness to seminaries, and all education institutions, we learn and are exposed to a lot "in school" before we apply what we learned practically. Sometimes we apply what we

learned and can't figure out how we knew that. The answer is usually, "in school."



Deacon Kevin Mastellon

Miraculously, or maybe by osmosis, we learned something in our formation days and then were able to repeat that learning later in life. How we were able to recall that

information is surprising, especially since we don't recall learning the fact in the first place.

Deacon Schirmer and Deacon Pierce who hope to become priests in a year or so, with the grace of God, will have a summer assignment in a parish to expose each to everyday life in a parish. In his assignment, each deacon will assist his pastor and the priests

of his parish in liturgy, preach occasionally, help out in other ways.

The ordination ceremony at St. Mary's Cathedral in Ogdensburg on May 27 will truly be a festive occasion. For the three men to be ordained, "Ancora imparo." That is an Italian phrase meaning "Yet, I am learning." It is often attributed to the great Renaissance genius, Michelangelo, supposedly observed by him at the age of 87.

The rest of us should keep Lucas Gruber, Douglas Schirmer and Carter Pierce in our prayers.

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

**BARSTOW**  
AN AMERICAN REVOLUTION GMC SUBARU  
For More Information, Visit Our Web Page at: [www.barstowmotors.com](http://www.barstowmotors.com)  
MARKET ST., POTSDAM, NY 4 (315) 265-8800  
Your NNY Regional GM & Subaru SuperCenter

MAY 17, 2023

## OBITUARIES

**AuSable Forks** – Eugene J. Novajosky, 76; Mass of Christian Burial May 10, 2023 at Holy Name Church.

**Brasher Falls** – Laura H. Amo-Finnie, 86; Private Services; burial in Visitation Cemetery.

**Brushton** – Irene Mary (Henderson) Woods, 91; Mass of Christian Burial May 11, 2023 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Sunnyside Cemetery.

**Carthage** – Thomas P. Latham, 72; Funeral Services May 19, 2023 at the Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home; burial in St. James Cemetery.

**Carthage** – Helen M. Pais, 68; Funeral Services May 12, 2023 at the Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home; burial in St. James Cemetery.

**Champlain** – Carmelita Linda (St. Andrew) Babbie, 78; Mass of Christian Burial May 16, 2023 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Parish Cemetery.

**Chateaugay** – Joey A. Jones, 43; Mass of

Christian Burial May 13, 2023 at St. Patrick's Church.

**Clayton** – Scott A. Kittle, 62; Mass of Christian Burial June 7, 2023 at St. Mary's Church.

**Croghan** – David J. Neddo, 71; Funeral Services May 12, 2023 at Scanlon Funeral Home; burial in St. Stephen's Cemetery.

**Gabriels** – Rouse Sr. and Bethyl Fountain; Mass of Christian Burial May 13, 2023 at Church of the Assumption; burial in Mountain View Cemetery.

**Keene** – Beverly Purdy Gregory Greenwood, 89; Memorial Services in Spring at St. Brendan's Church.

**Louisville** – Lorraine (Stearns) DiNapoli, 63; Mass of Christian Burial May 11, 2023 at St. Lawrence Church; burial in St. Lawrence Cemetery.

**Lowville** – Edward J. Finn, 79; Mass of Christian Burial May 13, 2023 at St. Peter's Church; burial in Lowville Rural Cemetery.

**Massena** – Leona M. (Laraby) Kocienski, 87; Graveside Services May 11, 2023 at Calvary Cemetery.

**Mineville** – Randall Lee Gadway, 76; Mass of Christian Burial May 13, 2023 at Ss. Peter and Paul Church; burial in Ss. Peter and Paul Cemetery.

**Norwood** – Evelyn L. Goodrich Johnston, 84; Graveside Services May 6, 2023 at Calvary Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** – Karen (Giambruno) Burdo, 68; Mass of Christian Burial May 12, 2023 at Our Lady of Victory Church; burial in St. Peter's Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** – Martha (Igoe) Gulley, 71; Mass of Christian Burial May 24, 2023 at St. Peter's Church.

**Plattsburgh** – Regina W. (Bushey) Miller, 89; Mass of Christian Burial May 13, 2023 at St. Peter's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Port Henry** – Lonnie James Bobbie, 66; Mass of Christian Burial May 8, 2023 at St. Patrick's Church; burial in St. Peter and Paul

Cemetery, Moriah.

**Port Leyden** – Shirley Joan (Connelly) White, 92; Private Mass of Christian Burial at St. Martin Church.

**Rosiere** – John Louis Hubbard, 91; Mass of Christian Burial May 6, 2023 at St. Vincent de Paul Church; burial in St. Lawrence Cemetery.

**Ticonderoga** – Donna J. Blowers, 74; Graveside Services May 19, 2023 at Valley View Cemetery.

**Ticonderoga** – Judith Anne McLaughlin, 82; Graveside Services May 20, 2023 at St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Watertown** Mary M. (Loftus) Leonard, 87; Mass of Christian Burial May 15, 2023 at Holy Family Church; burial in Glenwood Cemetery.

**West Leyden** – Elinor Marie (Dietz) Fiorenza, 90; Mass of Christian Burial May 12, 2023 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Ava Cemetery.

## Archdiocese investigating 'God is Trans' exhibit

By Joe Bukuras  
Catholic News Agency

The Archdiocese of New York is investigating a Catholic parish in Manhattan for hosting an art exhibit called "God is Trans: A Queer Spiritual Journey."

The exhibit, which "maps the queer spiritual journey" and claims that "there is no devil" has upset some parishioners at the Church of St. Paul the Apostle, while others are supportive, the New York Post reported.

An archdiocesan spokesperson told Newsweek that it only learned about the exhibit, which is displayed next to a side altar in the church, through media reports.

"We had no knowledge of it beforehand," the spokesperson told the outlet.

"If media reports are accurate, then we would have concerns. We are investigating and looking to speak with the pastor of the parish to get more information," the spokesperson said.

CNA reached out to the archdiocese and the pastor of the church, Father Rick Walsh, for comment on Tuesday but did not receive a response before publication.

Parishioners have been divided on the exhibit. The New York Post reported that an "irate" parishioner said "enough is enough."

"It seems like they

are trying to force the agenda on others," the parishioner said. "Also, when a friend asked a priest about this they didn't answer. You can't put this out on the altar and then hide."

"That's what gets the church in trouble," the parishioner said.

However, Cherri Gosh, 80, who supports the exhibit, told the New York Post that she loves the church because it is "very liberal."

"I don't understand the art, but this church is very liberal, which is why I love this church," she said. "They are really in the present when others are not."

The "God is Trans" exhibit by Adah Unachukwu "maps the

queer spiritual journey by three significant points: Sacrifice, Identity, and Communion," according to a description of the artwork, pictured by the Post.

"The painting Sacrifice and its complementarity act in the film speak to the need to shed an old life and personhood in order to be able to focus on your spiritual need. There is no devil; just past selves," the description said.

Bill O'Connor, 79, who supports the exhibit, told the New York Post that the "queer community has been accepted here for a long time now."

The church, which is run by the Paulist Fathers, runs a ministry

called "Out at St. Paul," which the parish's website says is "our ministry and outreach to the Gay, Lesbian, Bi, Trans, and Queer community."

The ministry has a website and a Facebook page. "The love of God affirms trans kids, protects trans kids, listens to trans kids, fights for trans kids, delights in trans kids," reads the description of one featured photo.

In one Facebook post on March 3, 2022, the ministry celebrated International Transgender Day of Visibility and said it "intends to host events that will feature panel discussions on trans-affirming theology and health care very soon."

# Deacons gather for Assembly

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

Deacons of the Diocese of Ogdensburg gathered at Edgewood Resort in Alexandria Bay from May 8 to 10 to share opportunities for learning, faith, fellowship and fun at the annual Deacon Assembly.

The event included workshops, prayer and social gatherings for both deacons and their wives. Diocesan Vicar for Clergy Father Christopher C. Carrara presented on "The New Program for Priestly Formation," diocesan Director of Evangelization presented "Proclaim Salvation Through Jesus Christ," Bishop LaValley met with the deacons and their wives, and the deacons met in deanery groups. The each day of the Assembly included the Liturgy of the Hours and social gatherings, and Mass was celebrated with the gathered deacons and wives on May 9.

The Assembly featured three presentations and a question-and-answer period with keynote speaker Deacon William Ditewig, a retired Navy commander who has served as a deacon in the military and in parishes in Illinois and Iowa. He's also served in roles in the Archdiocese of Washington, the USCCB and the Diocese of Monterey, and as a professor at Saint Leo University in Florida and Santa Clara University in California. He currently resides in Florida and travels speaking on the diaconate while continuing to teach.

Deacon Ditewig focused on the following themes throughout the course of the gathering:

- Why does the Church have deacons?
- How do we serve in a synodal Church?
- What do we do? Expanding our imagination of the Diaconate.

"There's no such thing as a one-size fits all diaconate," he said. "It can be the most flexible of the orders. We see that in our history."

Deacon Ditewig noted that many seem to be under the impression that the diaconate was "restored by the Second Vatican Council," he said.

"'Restored' implies it was something, it went away and then it came back again," he said. "The diaconate has never not been part of the Church. Ever. It's morphed into other forms. For a while, it was this thing called 'the transitional diaconate.' That's like saying before he was bishop, Bishop Terry (LaValley) was a transitional priest. It doesn't sacramentally hold water."

As he concluded his opening address, Deacon Ditewig returned to that first theme.

"Why does the Church have deacons? Let me share this quote from Lumen Gentium (one of the principal documents of the Council)," he said, posting the following quote on a screen:

"For the nurturing and constant growth of the People of God, Christ the Lord instituted in His Church a variety of ministries, which work for the good of the whole body. For those ministers, who are endowed with sacred power, serve their (brothers and sisters), so that all who are of the People of God, and therefore enjoy a true Christian dignity, working toward a common goal freely and in an orderly way, may arrive at salvation."



## PILGRIMAGE BIBLICAL TURKEY

12 Days: October 9 - 20, 2023

ISTANBUL \* ANKARA \* CAPPADOCIA \* PAMUKKALE  
\* EPHEBUS \* IZMIR \* PERGAMUM \* CANAKKALE

Hosted by:  
**FR. DONALD A. ROBINSON**

**\$2999 From New York\***

\*Air/land tour prices is \$2499 plus \$500 government taxes/airline surcharges

For more information please contact:

**Fr. Robinson**

Tel: (315)-782-1143

Email: donrob4@twcnj.rr.com



SPACE IS LIMITED! SIGN UP TODAY!!!



PHOTOS BY DARCY FARGO & GAYLE FRANK

(Top) Deacon Michael Allan and his wife, Kathleen, listen to Deacon William Ditewig deliver his keynote address during the 2023 Deacon Assembly at Edgewood Resort in Alexandria Bay May 8-10. (Bottom left) Diocesan Chancellor Deacon James Crowley delivers a birthday dessert to Deacon Gary Frank of Clayton, who celebrated his 75th birthday at the Assembly. (Middle right) Bishop Terry R. LaValley welcomes deacons to the Assembly. (Bottom right) Deacon Thomas Yousey of Lowville listens to the keynote address.