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The Diocese of Ogdensburg Volume 78 Number 34

# NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

JANUARY 10, 2024

## Follow me: Update on diocesan reorganization

Bishop Terry R. LaValley offers an update on the Diocese of Ogdensburg's Chapter 11 reorganization.

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All State court lawsuits against the diocese, parishes and other Catholic entities are stayed. We are working to settle these lawsuits on a global basis as part of the mediation process in the reorganization case.

FULL STORY, PAGE 3

## TOGETHER FOR CHRISTMAS



Seminarians of the Diocese of Ogdensburg gathered for their annual Christmas dinner on December 27 at Wadhams Hall. Seminarians were presented with donations as gifts from Knights of Columbus. Pictured are, from left, Father Christopher Carrara, diocesan vocations director and vicar for Clergy, seminarians Dennis Ombongi, Kevin McCullough, Deacon Douglas Schirmer, Bob Heckman of Knights of Columbus and St. Mary's Parish in Clayton, seminarians Michael Lennox, Tyler Fitzgerald, Deacon Carter Pierce, (front row) and Michelet Boncoeur, Sister Mary Eamon Lyng, SSJ, diocesan vocations coordinator, and Bishop Terry R. LaValley

## GATHER AT THE TABLE



Elizabeth Pietropaoli, originally from Malone and currently a resident of Potsdam, reflects on how she came to love Jesus in the Eucharist, and how Jesus transformed her life and continues to transform it in this installment of our occasional series, "Gather at the Table."

FULL STORY, PAGE 4

# Pope: Jesus is beside you in your worst moments

By Courtney Mares  
Catholic News Agency

In life's worst moments, never forget that Jesus is beside you, Pope Francis said Wednesday.

In his first general audience of the new year, the pope set aside his prepared remarks to share a message from his heart: "Jesus never leaves us alone, never!"

"In our worst moments, in the moments when we slip into sins, Jesus is beside us to help us lift ourselves up," Pope Francis said in the Vatican's Paul VI Hall on Jan. 3.

"We must not lose this cer-

tainly: Jesus is beside us to help us, to protect us, and also to lift us up after we sin."

The pope underlined that Jesus came "to forgive and to save" and that the Lord can "forgive everything" when one comes to him seeking mercy.

Pope Francis commented that there are many people in today's society "who absolve themselves" and "who think that they are 'fine'" without the Lord's forgiveness.

"But we are all sinners, all of us. And a little self-examination, a little interior look will do us good," he said.

The pope said that the act of

self-examination prevents us from becoming "accustomed to the darkness and no longer knowing how to distinguish between good and evil."

"Let us regain this ability to ask for forgiveness. Each of us has so many things to ask forgiveness for: Each of us should reflect on this within ourselves and talk to Jesus about it today," Pope Francis said.

"We must all ask God for the grace to recognize ourselves as poor sinners, in need of conversion, keeping in our hearts the trust that no sin is too great for the infinite mercy of God the Father," he said.

Pope Francis' reflection on forgiveness and the spiritual struggle against temptations was part of his new weekly catechesis series on the topic of "vices and virtues."

"The spiritual life of the Christian is not peaceful, linear, and without challenges, but, on the contrary, Christian life demands a constant battle," the pope said.

"The saints are not men who have been spared temptation but rather people well aware of the fact that in life the seductions of evil appear repeatedly, to be unmasked and rejected," he added.

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# No wasted gifts

"Dude! You can sing!" I don't get to sit next to my son, Jake, in church often. Now 16, he's been an altar server since he was in third grade. Even if we attend funerals or weddings in a church, he typically offers to serve.

Jake enjoys serving. He'd much rather serve than attend Mass sitting in a pew.

But every once in a while, we enjoy visiting other parishes and attending Mass with friends or going to visit priests we know around

the region. When we're visiting other parishes, Jake doesn't always get to serve.

**Darcy L.  
Fargo**

It was during one such Mass that I heard Jake sing. He sings beautifully!

But other than singing very quietly at Mass and singing in an occasional car concert as we rock out with the radio, Jake doesn't sing. He doesn't

sing in the school chorus. He doesn't participate in choirs or school musicals. I've sort of been nagging

him about this a bit, encouraging him to participate in some musical endeavor.

"You really want me to do be in a school musical, don't you?"

"Not necessarily," I responded. "I just wish you'd find some way to use that talent. It feels to me like you're wasting a gift God gave you."

That conversation got me thinking about how I use the gifts God has given me. I don't always use them in the best ways. For example, God gave me a love of language, and talents in writing and communicating. While I some-

times use those talents in His service, I can also use them to cut people down or to angrily hurt others.

And there are talents and gifts I probably don't even know I've been given because my fears and insecurities prevent me from trying some new things.

"It feels to me like you're wasting a gift God gave you."

I'm trying to be more aware of how I use the gifts God has given me. I'm praying God helps me see them and use them well.

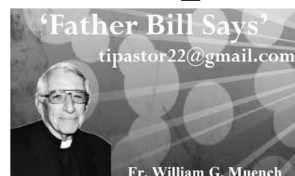
I don't want them to go to waste.

## The Baptism of Jesus

The liturgy of the Feast of the Baptism of Jesus by St. John the Baptist ends the Christmas Season celebration. The liturgical celebration of the Baptism of Jesus is the beginning of our Catholic Church's time when we consider the public ministry of Jesus in the Scriptures that are read at Mass. The Church leads us as we again consider the public ministry of Jesus and are drawn closer in our relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

I realize that you have heard the Baptism of Jesus story many times. Today I would like to again think of this story and discover our place in the story. St. John the Baptist is our teacher and preacher. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, he came to recognize his vocation in life and dedication: he was to prepare our world for the coming of Jesus. St. John the Baptist leads us to the way of finding the public ministry of Jesus.

St. John the Baptist chal-

**Fr. William G. Muench**

lenges us and challenged all those who listened to him speak to live a better life, a transformed life, changing what must be changed. St. John the Baptist wanted those people who heard him and accepted his word to remember that day, and so he would take them into the river, the river Jordan, and baptize them.

Jesus came to be baptized by St. John the Baptist. The Gospel of St. describes this testimony of St. John the Baptist: "I saw the Spirit come down like a dove from the sky and remain upon him. I did not know him but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, on whomever you see the Spirit come down and remain, he is the one who will baptize with the Holy

Spirit. Now I have seen and testified that he is the Son of God." (John 1:32)

On that day, Jesus came along and joined the crowd listening to St. John the Baptist. He then joins the line of those who are ready to change their lives, ready to dedicate themselves to personal conversion. This is Jesus, the Son of God, free from sin, who humbly accepts a place with those seeking forgiveness of sins and baptism from St. John the Baptist. Jesus wanted St. John the Baptist to recognize him. At the same time, Jesus wanted to demonstrate that he would always stand in support of those who were seeking a new life, a better life.

I believe that each time I minister as a priest confessor, celebrating the Sacrament of Penance, Jesus joins in the line of those coming to confess, standing in support of each one as they come seeking the forgiveness of sin. Jesus comes ready to

help them dedicate themselves to a new life, a better life. I believe that the Lord is also there to give his support to each priest confessor, giving them the right words so they can bring God's love and forgiveness to each penitent. The support of the Lord Jesus to each priest may help bring the wisdom and love of God to lead them to make their life ever new - that they may truly live a better life.

St. John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins and about the same age - near 30 years old. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, St. John the Baptist came to realize that it was Jesus who was the long-awaited Messiah. St. John's Gospel tells us another St. John the Baptist story. St. John the Baptist was standing with two of his own disciples. We are told: "As John the Baptist watched, Jesus walked by. John the Baptist said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God.' The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus."

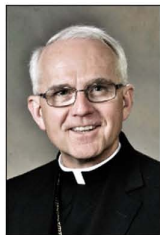
## FOLLOW ME

# Update on diocesan reorganization

Dear Friends:

I hope you've been enjoying a wonderful Christmas as we seek God's blessings this New Year. I wish to update you on the status of the Diocesan reorganization case. As I mentioned previously, the Diocese of Ogdensburg continues to operate and carry on our mission in the ordinary course. Parishes continue to operate their programs and activities.

All State court lawsuits against the diocese, parishes and other Catholic entities are stayed. We are working to settle these lawsuits on a global basis as part of the mediation process in the reorganization case.



**Bishop Terry  
R. LaValley**

The bankruptcy judge has ordered that all contested issues, including the Child Victims Act (CVA) cases, be resolved through mediation. The bankruptcy judge has appointed Judge Gregg Zive to serve as mediator. Judge Zive has been a bankruptcy judge for nearly thirty years. He has experience in mediation, including serving as co-mediator in the Diocese of Rochester reorganization case. We feel that the appointment of Judge Zive as mediator will be helpful in bringing about a fair and timely resolution of the CVA cases.

Our attorneys have been preparing for the mediation process by disclosing documents

with the Creditors' Committee and insurers. That process is progressing in a satisfactory manner. Our hope is that we can begin the mediation process soon after the passing of the bar date for the filing of claims in the reorganization case (January 18, 2024). We hope to begin negotiations in February with all parties at the table, including the CVA claimants (represented by the Creditors' Committee), insurance carriers, parishes, and the diocese. The parishes are represented by Mr. Jeffrey Dove, Esq. and a five-member parish steering committee (Father Demo, chair, and Fathers Morgan, Diesbourg, Robinson, and Hauser).

I ask for your continuing prayers that this matter move closer to resolution and that a

just outcome for all is reached in a fair and expeditious manner. We are committed to fairly compensating survivors of sexual abuse. We need to keep them uppermost in our thoughts and prayers as we continue our mission to serve the people of the North Country.

Thank you for your prayerful support. May God bless you and your loved ones throughout this New Year.

Faithfully yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Terry R. LaValley  
Bishop of Ogdensburg



## Project Compassion

### Are You or a Loved One Seriously ill?

There is a wide range of practical videos to support patients who are seriously ill and their families.

### Resources for Patients and Families

There is a wide range of videos to support patients who are seriously ill and their families.

### Resources for Professionals

To support those who care for the seriously ill patient, the website includes video resources, such as, *A Physician's Perspective on Providing Primary Palliative Care.*

### Pastoral Care Training

For Pastoral Care Ministers, Eucharistic ministers and others who visit the sick, the website also provides a 5-video pastoral care training program.

### End-of-Life Moral Medical Issues

To assist those making end-of-life moral decisions, the website offers a video that is an overview of Catholic End-of-Life moral teaching.

For more information, visit us online

[www.compassionandcope.org](http://www.compassionandcope.org)



Resources for  
Patients and Families

*Project Compassion was funded by a grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation*

# 'Get lost in the love of Jesus'

*Editor's note: The following is part of an occasional series highlighting individuals in our diocese who love Jesus in the Eucharist. To suggest someone to be featured in this series, email [dfargo@rcdony.org](mailto:dfargo@rcdony.org).*



## Gather at the table

**By Mary Beth Bracy, Consecrated virgin**  
Contributing Writer

Those who know Elizabeth Pietropaoli, a Malone native, often associate her with words like faith, family, friends and fun. After two decades of teaching theology and philosophy (most recently at McQuaid Jesu- it), Pietropaoli returned to the North Country and resides in Potsdam.

As part of the series on the Holy Eucharist, Pietropaoli reflected upon how she came to love the Real Presence of our Lord and how He transformed her life.

"I don't really remember a time when I wasn't aware of the Eucharist; I always wanted to receive Communion, and knew that it was the most significant part of Mass. I made my First Communion in my living room with my godfather (Father Albert Hauser) as the celebrant, and I remember feeling intense joy and love even now, decades later. My grandmother said that I turned to her during the Mass and said, 'It's Jesus, Memom! It's really Jesus!' So I think it was always-present for me, this love for Jesus in the Eucharist."

Pietropaoli, who has a bachelor's and master's degree in theology from John Paul II Institute, related, "The Real Presence is never something I doubted. I fought - hard - against many aspects of Catholicism that I felt had betrayed me or were hypocritical, but the Real Presence was (thankfully!) a constant. Even when I was seeking comfort in witchcraft, the occult, and other darkneses, I still went to church and I still sat in front of the Blessed Sacrament."

"I remember one particularly dark moment when I was 17 and living in the fallout of harassment and sexual assaults by the

nephew of a close family friend. Because I worked with him and our family relationships put us in close proximity, his abuses continued for months, and really cast me into abject darkness and feelings of utter worthlessness and despair," she recalled. "This summer of unsafety was accompanied by the potential 'freedom' of witchcraft, which seemed to offer a 'place' to a desperately lonely teenage girl who felt forever 'outside' the acceptable ways to be religious - especially in the North Country in the '90's! The persistent pull of the knowledge gained through trafficking in spirits and intense interest in the demonic, demonic possession, ghosts, and hauntings offered me a voice and power in a time where I felt alone and totally unprotected.

"Despite the lure of evil, right after a particularly ugly encounter with the abusive boy, I left work and walked to my church (St. André Bessette in Malone) and sat in front of the tabernacle and just cried. And I was given solace in that moment, and to Jesus I have returned again and again and again. Sometimes in tears. Sometimes in anger and frustration. Sometimes in fear and doubt. But to Him, always, I return. For without Him, I am nothing."

In fact, Pietropaoli's personal relationship with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist inspired her to be involved in parish work and retreats for the last 20 years and share His love with others.

This was the fruit of some of her powerful prayer experiences.

"I have always loved Eucharistic Adoration, and must give credit to Mary Beth Bracy for really introducing me to this wonderful way of experiencing the deeply personal encounter with

the forever-God," Pietropaoli said. "At 15, I went to a conference in Rochester, New York, with my youth group - run by Linda Bracy in Plattsburgh, New York - and had a profound experience of Jesus in the Eucharist during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, very like on the day of my First Communion. And, at 18, at a Youth 2000 conference (again, with Mary Beth!) in the midst of issues with boys and the occult involvement, I felt so closely the presence and healing love of Jesus."

The importance of daily Mass and time with our Lord were crucial in Pietropaoli's life.

"Throughout college, which was also pain-hued and filled with darkness and despair and abusive relationships, I went to daily Mass at the Abbey Church at St. Anselm College and spent many hours before the tabernacle," she said. "I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that this deep awareness of the True Presence kept me alive during the worst moments of suffering and confusion; miraculously, no matter how awful I felt or how badly I was treated, I always knew that Jesus was there, in the Tabernacle, and I could, despite the failure of those around me, return to Him. Simply put, the awareness of Jesus in the Eucharist has propelled me forward when everything and everyone else says to give up or not take risks or give in to temptations."

Pietropaoli, who is very happy to be "home" in the North Country, offered some thoughts about how to grow in devotion the Holy Eucharist.

"My advice to others would be to take time to get lost in the love of Jesus and allow it to reflect who you are and the person you were made to be," she said. "It's not going to look the

same for everyone; our lived experiences, our scars, our attributes, and our talents are all so beautifully different! Give Jesus a chance to be part of your life and your loves. He wants a relationship with you, and He knows you and your heart. No matter what, you are not alone. You are not a mistake. You are not defective. Whatever has happened, or is happening now, Jesus is walking with you. Let Him hear your heart by spending time with him, even if it's a struggle some days to pray - and some days it is."

It isn't surprising that Pietropaoli, who loves hosting meals, good conversations, playing music with friends, and Adirondack adventures, notes the importance of having friends in high places too.

"Find saints whose lives resonate with you," she said. "The saints and the Eucharist are what kept me Catholic - and ask for their intercession. Men like Father Walter Cizek, Father Emil Kapaun, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Ignatius Loyola, the North American Martyrs, and women like St. Edith Stein, Chiara Petrillo, St. Josephine Bakhita, St. Kateri.... There are so many, and, astonishingly, sometimes their lives resemble our own messy experiences!"

One of Pietropaoli's most remarkable qualities is her ability to communicate the truth, person to person, reflecting God's love.

Drawing from her own experiences, Pietropaoli is able to walk with and inspire others on their faith journey.

"And it's not going to be easy or safe," Pietropaoli said. "Your life may look very, very different from the one you wanted or expected (mine certainly does) - but that doesn't mean you're not loved or precious or worthy or any of the other lies that you're told. Trust Jesus with your story. Regardless of how different the journey may be from the one you wanted, it will be the right one for you. After all: 'you are precious in my eyes and glorious...and I love you.'" (Isaiah 43:4)

# Project focuses on end-of-life, palliative care

By Darcy Fargo  
Editor

Father Charles Vavonese, a priest of the Diocese of Syracuse, said he was "haunted" by two responses he received frequently after presenting about end-of-life care and palliative care, and those responses inspired him and a physician friend to create a program addressing those issues from a Catholic perspective.

"Every time I do a presentation, I get one of these comments, usually more than one," Father Vavonese said. "The two responses are, 'I'm glad to know as a Catholic that I don't have to die in agony,' and 'I'm relieved after I've carried guilt around for x number of years after I had to make end-of-life decisions for (a loved one).'"

Father Vavonese, working with physician Dr. Paul Fiacco, created Project Compassion, [www.compassionandcope.org](http://www.compassionandcope.org), a website that includes a series of 19 free online videos intended to help patients diagnosed with serious illnesses, their families/caregivers, lay ministers, health care providers and the general public learn about palliative care and end-of-life decisions from a Catholic perspective.

The retired priest said he feels getting this information out is especially important now.

"People don't know much about end of life," he said. "They're scared of it. And in New York, it's only a matter of time before

we have physician-assisted suicide. If the Catholic community wants to counteract physician-assisted suicide, we have to have a viable alternative. Palliative care does that."

Father Vavonese said palliative care encompasses care received from the time an individual receives a serious medical diagnosis until hospice care or end-of-life.

"With current medicine and treatments, people can live for years with serious conditions for which there is no cure - things like COPD, congestive heart failure," he said. "We know we can't cure them, but there are treatments to manage symptoms and improve quality of life - medicines, physical therapy, counseling... That's palliative care. It's usually done in a primary care setting, since our primary care physicians know us best and are typically trusted."

While there are resources available that go over palliative care and end-of-life options, Father Vavonese and Dr. Fiacco wanted to present the information from a Catholic perspective and in an easy-to-access, comprehensive way.

"Patient resources are widely available on the internet, but, to our knowledge, not delivered all in one site in a format that is easily accessible," Father Vavonese said.

Project Compassion was born.

Funded by a grant from the Mother Cabrini Health Foundation,

Father Vavonese and Dr. Fiacco worked with former TV news anchor Dan Cummings to produce 19 videos.

"Dan brought such professionalism to the project," Father Vavonese said, noting Cummings provided introductions to videos and conducted interviews on some of the videos.

Some of the topics covered by the videos include:

- What is Palliative care?
- Catholic End-of-Life Moral Medical Issues.
- Spirituality for the End-of-Life.
- Guiding a family through the grieving process.
- Facing a terminal diagnosis.
- Pastoral care training videos which help address patients' emotional and spiritual needs.
- Videos from a physician's perspective of Primary Palliative Care.
- The Legal and Practical end of planning for your last wishes such as advance directives.

Father Vavonese noted that some of the videos include more Catholic content than others.

"While it's very Catholic, we also wanted to attend to the needs of someone who might not be Catholic," he said. "The language makes everyone feel included. We included a homily from a non-denominational minister. One video focuses entirely on Catholic end-of-life moral medical issues. All the videos are informed by Catho-

lic teachings."

Father Vavonese said he relied heavily on the medical principles shared by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the principles of Catholic health care set forth by USCCB. He also works regularly with the National Catholic Bioethics Center, and he recommends that organization to individuals who have more nuanced questions related to end-of-life care or other Catholic ethical issues.

"Anyone can call the National Catholic Bioethics Center and get answers," he said. "There are times when pastors call me, and I'm not comfortable with a moral situation, I give them the number to the bioethics center. They're a great resource."

Father Vavonese noted Project Compassion also offers resources for individuals who minister to people in palliative care, including those who bring Holy Communion to those who are ill or homebound.

"There's not a lot of training available for pastoral ministers, and usually people have to go someplace for train-

ing and are limited to when the trainings are offered," he said. "This is a training resource parishes or individual ministers can use for that ministry, and because it's online, people can do it when and where it's convenient for them."

Training topics include:

- What is pastoral care?
- Who we visit.
- How to have conversations with someone facing a serious illness, including preparing the sick for the sacraments.
- How to support a patient's family members as they cope with their loved one's illness.

Concluding, Father Vavonese said he thought it was especially fitting that Project Compassion originated in central New York, once home to St. Marianne Cope.

"When she went to the islands to deal leprosy, she was dealing with the social, spiritual and emotional needs of the individuals afflicted. There was no cure. She was helping make their lives more comfortable. She was doing palliative care before that was the term for it."

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## Environmental Stewardship

## The value of bird feeders

Maintaining a bird feeder in winter is a good way for North Country residents to experience wildlife outside their window. It is also a means for people to assist those few species of birds that remain in the region year-round to acquire the food they need. Additionally, bird feeders provide an oasis for migrants venturing south.

Because seed-eating and seed-consuming birds are active only during daylight hours, it is believed by many that feeders become devoid of activity following sunset. This is often not the case as mice access numerous feeders well after dark. The presence of a reservoir of sunflower seeds hanging from a limb or wooden support is just as tempting to these small and abundant rodents as it is to squirrels. Squirrels are diurnal and can easily be seen as they attack a feeder, however mice are much smaller in size, darker in color, and instinctively confine their activities to the shadows.

On the ground below a feeder, where a layer of fallen seeds accumulates, voles and shrews commonly visit to find a meal. In areas near a lake or stream where mature hemlocks adorn the shores, the flying squirrel is yet another critter known to frequent bird feeders under the cover of darkness.

As climate change has reduced the severity of our winter, opossum have been expanding their range into the region. Like the flying squirrel, the opossum is great at climbing and tends to raid feeders at night.

One of the most rewarding endeavors an individual can engage in during winter to care for creation is to feed some of our feathered and furry residents as these creatures are an important part of our natural world.

By Tom Kalinowski  
St. Bernard's Parish, Saranac Lake, Faith & Ecology group

## Bishop's Public Schedule

**Jan. 10** – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Jan. 11** – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Jan. 12** – Noon – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Jan. 13** – 4 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral

**Jan. 15-19** – New York State Bishops' Retreat at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Retreat Center in Venice, Florida

## Protecting God's Children

**The Diocese of Ogdensburg** has scheduled sessions for Protecting God's Children for Adults. Pre-registration is required. Preregister at [www.virtus.org](http://www.virtus.org). Upcoming sessions: **Jan. 30** – 10 a.m. – St. Peter's Parish, Massena

## Rest in Peace

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

**Jan. 10** – Rev. Christopher C. Poulin, 1904; Msgr. James O'Driscoll, 1913; Msgr. Frederick P. Diviney, 1961

**Jan. 11** – Msgr. John Andrew Cotter, 1964; Msgr. Anthime D. Charbonneau, 1976; Most Rev. Walter P. Kellenberg, 1986

**Jan. 12** – Msgr. Francis Joseph Maguire, 1978; Rev. J. Roger McGuinness, 2022

**Jan. 13** – Rev. Eugene Derome, 1951

**Jan. 14** – Rev. John M. Neenan, M.S.C., 1879; Rev. Benedict Scharff, O.F.M. Conv., 1964; Deacon Francis Bradley, 2000

**Jan. 15** – Msgr. James Joseph Lacey, 1942

**Jan. 16** – Msgr. James Alexander Fix, 1969; Rev. Herbert Skurski, O.F.M. Conv., 1996

# Schedule and speakers announced for National Eucharistic Congress

As the multi-year National Eucharistic Revival inches closer to its milestone moment within the movement, the executive team for the 2024 National Eucharistic Congress releases the highly-anticipated five-day schedule for this summer's Indianapolis event with exciting new additions to the speaker lineup.

With single-day and weekend pass options officially available for purchase online, prospective attendees will have a clear day-by-day breakdown of the full Congress experience taking place July 17-21, which now includes a special worship session with contemporary Christian singer and songwriter Matt Maher.

Tickets, schedule and speaker information can be found at the National Eucharistic Congress website, [eucharisticcongress.org](http://eucharisticcongress.org).

"God is renewing His

## 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](mailto:terrianeyanulavich@yahoo.com) Phone: 518-358-3145, Ext. 7179 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)**

Church, and we have seen it happening across the country in powerful ways during this year of Parish Revival," said Tim Glemkowski, Chief Executive Officer of the National Eucharistic Congress, Inc. "It is with great excitement that we have turned the calendar to 2024, and this historic event that has been years in the making is finally within sight. It is our sincere hope that no matter how many days you are able to join us in Indy, the National Eucharistic Congress will be a profound festival-type experience of fellowship, worship, healing, and formation."

The format for this summer's National Eucharistic Congress will be one of Encounter, Equipping, and Experience:

• In the morning, attendees will Encounter Christ within their pre-selected impact session, designed to form them according to their stages in life, cultural background, and individual faith journeys. It will set the tone for the day with moments of prayer, small group discussion, and inspiration from notable Catholic speakers such as Bishop Robert Barron, Dr. Mary Healy, and Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers.

• The afternoon is geared toward Equipping attendees for mission, as individuals and groups are provided unique opportunities to be the hands and feet of Christ. Attendees are encouraged to participate in service projects, view the National Shroud of Turin traveling exhibit, and interact with Catholic vendors in the expansive exhibit hall where there will also be food and live

music.

• The plenary evening sessions will offer attendees a unique Experience of Revival. Thousands will gather together in Lucas Oil Stadium for Eucharistic Adoration, powerful moments of deep prayer and celebration, and inspiring talks from Cardinal Christophe Pierre, Fr. Mike Schmitz, Gloria Purvis, Sr. Josephine Garrett, and many more.

Above all, those who attend the National Eucharistic Congress will have a multitude of opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. "Amidst the tremendous programming that's been thoughtfully planned along with mountaintop moments of celebration we look forward to sharing together as a Church, a highlight will be the many opportunities for confession offered throughout the Congress at the Indianapolis Convention Center and at St. John the Evangelist parish," said Bishop Andrew Cozzens, Chairman of the National Eucharistic Revival. "Additionally, Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration will be offered at St. John for private prayer time, and the apostolic penitentiary is issuing a decree granting a plenary indulgence to anyone who participates in the Congress or in one of the four legs of the pilgrimage."

Passes are now available for purchase on the Congress website. Single-day passes range from \$49-\$95 depending on the day, and weekend passes are \$125. Day passes are eligible for an additional 10% discount in the month of January with code EMMANUEL.

JANUARY 10, 2024

# March for Life marks 51st anniversary this month

By Joe Bukuras  
Catholic News Agency

The 51st annual March for Life will kick off in Washington, D.C., later this month under the theme “With Every Woman, For Every Child.”

The March for Life, which calls itself the world’s “largest annual human rights demonstration,” takes place every year in January to mark the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the 1973 landmark Supreme Court case that legalized abortion nationwide.

More than 60 million unborn children have been killed since the court’s ruling in Roe, which was finally overturned in June 2022 with the Supreme Court’s decision on the Mississippi abortion case *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*.

The abortion landscape in the United States has dramatically changed since then. As many states passed legislation to protect life, others approved measures to fatally endanger the unborn.

At the announcement of the March’s theme in November, March for Life President Jeanne Mancini said “we hold that choosing life is empowering and that love saves lives.”

She said there is a “false narrative around abortion” that suggests the killing act is “empowering and necessary.” She added that this “fear-based messaging tries to convince women who are facing unexpected pregnancies that they’re alone, that they’re incapable, that they are ill-equipped to handle motherhood.”

## Speakers

Several speakers for the March for Life have been announced, including

Jean Marie Davis, a woman who runs a pregnancy resource center in Vermont and who is a former sex-trafficking victim.

Other speakers at the March for Life include former NFL tight end Benjamin Watson; Pastor Greg Laurie and Cathe Laurie; Antiochian Orthodox Bishop John Abdalah of the Diocese of Worcester and New England; Aisha Taylor, a pro-life author who speaks about her experience choosing life despite being pressured to abort her twins; Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family; Mancini; Christian musician Danny Gokey; and Antonio Carlos Tavares de Mello, who runs an organization that cares for abandoned children, many disabled from botched abortion attempts.

## The schedule

The March for Life is a three-day event starting on Wednesday, Jan. 17.

· Wednesday, Jan. 17:

The March for Life Expo will be held at the Westin D.C. Downtown Hotel and is free to attend for all marchers.

The day is an opportunity for participants to connect with other marchers, visit different booths run by pro-life organizations, and volunteer with certain pro-life ministries.

The Expo will be open from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Rock Creek Ballroom, on Thursday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. in the same place, and on Friday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

· Thursday, Jan. 18:

On Thursday, attendees can participate in a free workshop on how to engage in pro-life lobbying of one’s elected representatives. Marchers will also hear from a panel of “top pro-life lobbyists and pol-

icy experts.” To register for the workshop, visit the March for Life website here.

On Thursday evening from 7:30 p.m. to 9:45 p.m. the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, is hosting its annual Life is VERY Good event for high schoolers from across the country. The event, featuring inspirational speakers, music, and prayer, is open to all. The venue is at EagleBank Arena in Fairfax County on the campus of George Mason University.

· Friday, Jan. 19:

March for Life participants are invited to attend “Life Fest” before the march. Sponsored by the Sisters of Life and the Knights of Columbus, the event begins at 6 a.m. and ends at 11 a.m.

Life Fest is a morning of worship with Mass, music, and testimonies at the D.C. Armory.

Participants can register and purchase tickets for the event here.

Also on Friday morning from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m., the Life is VERY Good event, sponsored by the Diocese of Arlington, Virginia, will take place in Fairfax, Virginia. The event includes a morning rally with speakers Chris Stefanick and Katie McGrady, along with Mass.

The March for Life begins with a pro-life rally at noon on the National Mall featuring pro-life speeches. The rally includes a concert, which will be livestreamed on the March for Life website, Facebook, and YouTube channel.

Participants will begin marching at about 1 p.m. starting between 12th and 14th Streets, NW, heading up Constitution Ave., and ending at the steps of the U.S. Capitol building.

# CATHOLIC WORLD AT A GLANCE

## Appeals court: ER doctors not required to provide abortions

(CNA) – A federal appeals court on Jan. 2 rejected the Biden administration’s argument that emergency room doctors should be required to perform abortions under federal medical law. The legal advocacy group Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) said on Tuesday that the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 5th Circuit ruled that “the Biden administration cannot illegally use federal law to force emergency room doctors to perform abortions.” U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra had said in July 2022, shortly after the Supreme Court repealed *Roe v. Wade*, that under the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA) an emergency room doctor “must provide” abortions to pregnant women if it is determined that abortion constitutes a “stabilizing treatment” under EMTALA, a federal act that dictates to Medicare-participating hospitals that “all patients receive an appropriate medical screening examination, stabilizing treatment, and transfer, if necessary,” regardless of ability to pay, according to Becerra. In August 2022, a U.S. district court halted the Biden administration’s guidance, with the court ruling that Becerra’s order “goes well beyond EMTALA’s text.” On Tuesday the appeals court affirmed the lower court’s ruling. The court pointed out that EMTALA’s text “requires hospitals to stabilize both the pregnant woman and her unborn child” and that the federal law “does not provide an unqualified right for the pregnant mother to abort her child especially when EMTALA imposes equal stabilization obligations.”

## Franciscan Friars of California file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy

(CNA) – The Franciscan Friars of California announced this week that they have filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy over dozens of sexual abuse allegations filed against the religious order. The Franciscans of the Province of St. Barbara, founded in 1915 in Oakland, California, said on their website on Tuesday that they had filed a Chapter 11 petition “to address 94 child sexual abuse claims” leveled against the friars. Friars from the Province of St. Barbara, one of seven such OFM Franciscan entities in the United States, serve in California, Arizona, Oregon, and Washington, and in a number of Native American nations in the Southwest as well on mission to Mexico, Russia, and the Holy Land. The order said the dozens of claims came about due to California “state laws that allowed abuse survivors to file decades-old complaints that were otherwise time-barred or expired under the state’s statute of limitations.” The state of California passed legislation allowing a three-year exemption to the statute of limitations on sexual abuse lawsuits. The window began Jan. 1, 2020, and ended Jan. 2, 2023. A similar legal window was opened in 2003, but it did not allow for retrospective lawsuits against hospitals and schools where abuse was alleged. All of the claims in question, the friars said, “occurred at least 27 years ago,” with some dating back to the 1940s. “Almost all of” them were filed in California, and “most of the friars named in the claims” are deceased.

## VIRTUAL EVENTS

## PRIESTHOOD DISCERNMENT

Are you a single Catholic man who is hearing the Lord's call to the Priesthood? Consider joining others virtually who are listening and seeking to respond.

**Date:** Jan. 28, Feb. 11, Feb. 25, Mar. 10, Mar. 24, Apr. 14, Apr. 28  
**Time:** 4 p.m. to 5  
**Place:** On-Line

**Features:** High school age men and older are invited to join fellow discerners and Father Howard Venette to discuss this vocation.

**Contact:** You must register in order to attend, please go to [www.rcdo-ny.org/priesthooddiscernment](http://www.rcdo-ny.org/priesthooddiscernment)

## ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN

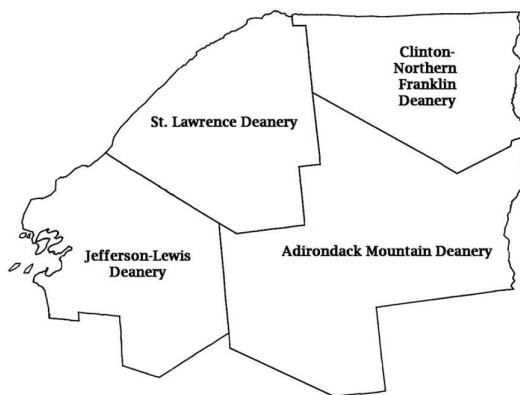
## FRIENDSHIP VOLUNTEER TRAINING

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

**Date:** Jan. 18  
**Time:** 9 a.m. to 3:30 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. Lunch will be provided.

**Contact:** There is no cost, but registration is required. To register, 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.



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.

## CLINTON NORTHERN FRANKLIN

## 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.

**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 ministry of hospitality for those seeking time to listen to our Lord, browse in the library, or visit the "Gift Shop". Flexible schedule.

**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 Chaplet will be observed the first Sunday of the month.

**Date:** Jan. 7

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

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

**Contact:** 315-348-6260

## SPAGHETTI &amp; MEATBALL DINNER

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

**Date:** Jan. 13

**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

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

## PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Carthage - Pancake breakfast to be held to benefit Augustinian Academy.

**Date:** Jan. 14

**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

**Features:** Event is sponsored by Carthage K of C, Father John Cosmic #291 and Ave Maria Circle.

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

## RESPECT LIFE PRAYER VIGIL

Watertown - Liferight is sponsoring their annual Respect Life prayer vigil.

**Date:** Jan. 22

**Time:** 6 p.m.

**Place:** Watertown Municipal Building

**Features:** Please dress warmly and join us for prayer, reflection, and worship songs. Refreshments to follow at St. Patrick's Church.

## ST. LAWRENCE

## MONTHLY BRUNCH

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

**Date:** Jan. 14

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

**Place:** Father 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.

## ADORATION

Ogdensburg - Adoration to be held every Wednesday.

**Time:** 3 to 6 p.m.

**Place:** Deacon Winter Chapel at St. Mary's Cathedral, enter

through the glass doors on the Green Street side.

**Features:** A sign up book will be in the front entrances of St. Mary's Cathedral and Notre Dame Church, however you may attend without signing up.

## CATHOLIC PARENTING

Potsdam - A series of workshops from the Franciscan University Catechetical Institute to be held on Catholic Parenting.

**Date:** First Sunday of the month from Oct. to April

**Place:** St. Mary's Rectory, second floor

**Features:** Attend all or only those that interest you.

**Contact:** For more information contact Mike Neaton at 315-335-6302 or Liz Tarbox at [formation-stp@gmail.com](mailto:formation-stp@gmail.com)

## HOLY HOUR

Canton - Holy Hour for Vocations to be held.

**Date:** Every Tuesday

**Time:** 4:10 p.m.

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

**Features:** Holy hour followed by Mass at 5:15 p.m. and confessions at 5:45 p.m.

## ROSARY FOR LIFE

Canton - Rosary for life to be held.

**Date:** Every Sunday

**Time:** 4:25 p.m. preceding the 5 p.m. evening Mass

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

## ADORATION

Norwood - St. Andrew's Church to offer Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Friday.

**Time:** After 8:30 a.m. Mass

until Noon

**Features:** Sign up is not needed.

## DIOCESAN EVENTS

## HEALING MASS

Potsdam - Bishop LaValley has scheduled a Healing Mass on Divine Mercy Sunday.

**Date:** April 7

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

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

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# Actor Shia LaBeouf enters Catholic Church

By Joe Bukuras

Catholic News Agency

Hollywood star Shia LaBeouf was received into the Catholic Church with the sacrament of confirmation by Winona-Rochester, Minnesota, Bishop Robert Barron on Sunday evening.

The Capuchin Franciscans-Western American Province announced LaBeouf's confirmation on their Facebook account Tuesday.

"We are thrilled to share that our dear friend Shia LaBeouf has fully entered the Church this past weekend through the sacrament of confirmation," the statement said. "The Capuchin Franciscan friars are overjoyed to welcome him into the fold and witness his deep commitment to his faith journey."

LaBeouf's confirmation sponsor, Capuchin friar Brother Alexander Rodriguez, told CNA Wednesday that the actor wants to become a deacon "sometime in the future."

Rodriguez said that LaBeouf began entertaining the idea of the diaconate during his recent film "Padre Pio." In that film, LaBeouf played the titular St. Pio of Pietrelcina and Rodriguez played the role of

a friar.

"He just spontaneously said, 'I want to become a deacon,' and he still feels that way," Rodriguez said.

The sacramental ceremony took place at Old Mission Santa Inés Parish in Solvang, California, the same Capuchin parish that LaBeouf first went to train for his role as a Franciscan friar in the "Padre Pio" film.

In Barron's previous assignment as auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, he oversaw the region containing Old Mission Santa Inés. Rodriguez said the two met during Barron's tenure as auxiliary bishop.

LaBeouf, 37, made headlines in August 2023 after he revealed in an 80-minute-long interview with Barron that his on-screen portrayal of Padre Pio led him to a love of the Catholic faith.

In the interview, he said that he was agnostic before finding God. He said he had a bar mitzvah as a 13-year-old boy but never embraced the Jewish faith.

Despite his successes as an actor in big-screen films such as "Transformers," "Fury," "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," and

"Holes," his life was in turmoil. In trouble with the law multiple times, LaBeouf currently faces a lawsuit filed by his ex-girlfriend accusing him of being physically abusive.

Estranged from his mother because of his downward spiral, LaBeouf told Barron he had reached the point where he despaired of living, saying: "I don't want to be here anymore."

LaBeouf in the interview with Barron said he believes God used his eagerness to resurrect his lagging movie career to put him on a path to healing and personal peace.

He hit a turning point when he was offered to play the lead in Abel Ferrara's film "Padre Pio." He leapt at the chance.

The actor spent an immense amount of time with Franciscan friars at Old Mission Santa Inés to prepare for the role, which made him increasingly curious about the faith that inspired Padre Pio.

He began diving into Scripture and the works of important Catholic writers.

In his interview with Barron, LaBeouf spoke about his view of Jesus prior to his having read the Gospels as someone who is "soft, fragile, all-loving, all-listening" but with "no fe-

rocity, no romance." What he encountered in the Gospels was a very different, masculine Christ, he said.

After the film's completion, LaBeouf told CNA that playing the role of the saint while being immersed in his monastery and town added to the intensity.

"It's enormous pressure, but it only served the film," he said. "There are scenes where we're running Mass and these aren't actors in the seats. These are God-fearing people who love Pio and you feel it, and it only adds to the stakes."

Despite the pressure, LaBeouf said that "I have never, in the course of my entire career, been on a set where the film felt easier to make."

LaBeouf told ChurchPOP in a May 2023 interview after the film was completed that he was in RCIA, taking weekly classes, and was on track to be confirmed in seven months.

Asked what's next for LaBeouf, Rodriguez said that his "main priority" is taking care of his newborn daughter Isabel.

LaBeouf is currently working on a film about the 1963 assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

## Pilgrims walking Camino de Santiago broke record

By Francesca Polio Fenton

Catholic News Agency

Pilgrims walking the famous Camino de Santiago have reached a new record. In 2023, nearly half a million people from around the world hiked this historic route.

According to the statistics released by the pilgrims office, 446,035 pilgrims arrived at the Spanish pilgrimage site. Nearly 200,000 of the pilgrims were from Spain, primarily from the southern region of

Andalucia.

In terms of foreigners, pilgrims from the United States ranked highest - with 32,063 - followed by Italians with 28,645 and Germans with 24,342.

Other countries that ranked high included Portugal, France, the United Kingdom, Mexico, South Korea, Ireland, Australia, and Canada.

The major age groups represented were 18- to 45-year-olds, with 10,181 pilgrims, and there were 10,096 pil-

grims between 45 and 65 years old. Women pilgrims also outnumbered males.

Despite the Camino being a traditional Catholic pilgrimage, 23.3% of those who walked the route completed it for nonreligious reasons.

The Camino de Santiago, also known as "The Way of St. James," is a 1,000-year-old pilgrimage route through Spain, Portugal, and part of southern France that leads to the Cathedral of Santiago located

in the Archdiocese of Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain. The cathedral is traditionally held to be the burial place of St. James the Apostle.

After the discovery of the relics of St. James the Great in the ninth century, the Camino became a major pilgrimage site from the 10th century onward. The Camino was officially declared one of the "three greatest pilgrimages of Christendom," along with Jerusalem and the Via Francigena



# Being a modern-day Andrew

Who is your hero? Do you have a hero? Just about anyone can be a hero, maybe not a recognized one, but perhaps a hero in the eyes of someone else.

If you are a child of the 40s, perhaps you were a bobby soxer swooning over Frank Sinatra; perhaps, if you are a child of the 50s and 60s, you couldn't wait to watch American Bandstand so that you could see the latest star, your latest idol. If you are a child of the 60s, were the Beatles number one in your life? After we hit the 70s, there are more and more music heroes.

No matter who our heroes are or were, we like to share those heroes with others. We want others to share in our enthusiasm for our latest hero. Remember when Pope John Paul visited different countries, including the United States for World Youth Day, he received praise and excitement from thousands of young people, praise that

could only be matched by the enthusiasm that some express for the latest movie or music star.

Well, in today's Gospel, we have a couple of disciples of John the Baptist who are caught up in Jesus. They immediately start following him. One of the two was Andrew who eventually became an apostle. Andrew was the brother of Peter. Andrew was so enthusiastic about this Jesus that he invites Peter to come and check out this teacher, Jesus.

When we are caught up with someone or some cause, we want others to share in our enthusiasm. We want to convert them to see our hero as we see our hero.

But, look at the results. If Andrew had not introduced Peter to Jesus, Peter may never have become the rock on which Jesus built his Church.

This Andrew was very active as a follower of Jesus. When there was a large crowd following Jesus, and there was no

January 14

Second Sunday  
in Ordinary Time

READINGS

1 Samuel 3:3b-10, 19

1 Corinthians 6:13c-15a, 17-20

John 1:35-42

*This homily is offered  
courtesy of a priest of  
the Diocese of Ogdensburg.*

food for them, Andrew brought the boy with the loaves and fish to Jesus. If Andrew had not done that, the people would have gone home hungry, and the Gospel would have been without one of its most inspiring miracles.

Andrew, in another part of the Gospel, brings the Greeks, the non-Jews, to Christ. If Andrew had not done that a vast segment of the world may never have met Jesus.

Wouldn't it be great if there were a little bit of Andrew in each one of us? What would happen if each one of us were filled with enthusiasm

for Christ, an enthusiasm that mirrored the highest level we have ever achieved? After all, who else in our lives is more powerful than Jesus? Who else promises eternal life to his followers? Who else has given a plan that, if practiced, would bring peace to the lives of individuals and peace to the world?

But, then, to this enthusiasm we need to add the desire to share, as did Andrew. We all have family members, friends who are inactive in their faith. Often, we hear stories of inactive Catholics who are brought back to the faith because of a friend's invitation. Since they are not in church to hear the Good News that Jesus wants us to hear, we have to tell them about it.

Excuses about not practicing the faith abound. However, a simple comment might help. Ask them if what they are doing that keeps them from practicing the faith is ultimately better than what Christ has to offer. If they

have gone to a different Church, remind them about the body and blood of Christ that we can receive in the Eucharist. If they are too busy with study, ask them if their studies will bring the same rewards as hearing the word of God.

Being a modern-day Andrew, we must exercise prudence and respect. To reach out to people who are not ready to receive the Good News is a waste of time. But not to reach out to people who are ready is to deprive them of the greatest gift one human being can give to another: the gift of Jesus Christ.

In today's first reading, a whispering voice of invitation was addressed to Samuel. Try to be that whispering voice to someone in your life. Samuel answered eventually, as we did in responsorial psalm: "here I am Lord, I come to do your will."

*Lord, teach us that here on earth we are, indeed, your hands; we are your voice; we are your heart.*

## CALLED TO SERVE

# 'This column still needs a subject'

Happy New Year. This is my first column of 2024, and I am pleased to report I have written or typed 2024 every time the year is appropriate to enter. It usually takes me all of January to not write the prior year number, so I am ahead.

Of course, I likely cast a spell on myself and will print 2023 from here-on when I mean 2024. It will be what it is.

During the week off, a number of topics occurred to me as potential column material.

For instance, I finally decided I understood, not condoned mind you, but understood people who slip into road rage. You can only shake your head in disbelief so many times when another car runs a light or stop sign, or passes in a no-passing zone, or, my favorite, chooses to play chicken with on-coming traffic.

"Maybe I will write about that," I mused. "No," I decided.

Then I had a nostalgic moment about semi-colons.

I noticed the monks or

the authors of the various psalms and antiphons in our morning and evening prayer books use semi-colons a lot. I used to use them too; then I became a broadcaster. I was taught to only write simple declarative sentences so as not to confuse the listener. Good-bye semi-colon.

Some of you have never even heard of a semi-colon. Grammarly, an online source of things related to the English language, says of them "semicolons are not interchangeable with commas or periods. Instead, they are somewhere in between: stronger than a comma but not quite as

divisive as a period."

A great tool for writers who do not want to use and or but to connect independent thoughts, but useless in the simple declarative sentence.

I decided that was too snobbish. I rejected the idea.

This column still needs a subject. My editor is expecting something.

Then it struck me that a number of priests in our diocese, including some pastors, have suddenly taken ill or suffered a fall in the last month or two. They will get better, we pray, but their absence has put a noticeable strain on things.

The diocese is already

hurting for priests. There are plenty of parish communities that could use a parochial vicar or a deacon assistant if one became available. God bless the men who are in seminary training and the guys in deacon formation. We need them and we need more.

But you probably do not want to read about those problems to start 2024.

How about I end the way I started? Happy New Year!

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



Deacon  
Kevin Mastellon



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

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith  
Sister Mary Ellen Brett, SSJ, Director

622 Washington St., Ogdensburg, NY 13669  
(315) 393-2920; fax 1-866-314-7296  
mbrett@rcdony.org

# Christmas freed from 'slave labor'

It is a Christmas full of praise and thanksgiving to God experienced by Catholic families who, in Pakistani Punjab, were freed from the condition of slavery... working in brick kilns.

These families[...] contract a debt with a rich landowner, the owner of the brick factory. To repay the debt, an entire family, from the elderly to children, is employed in clay mining and brick making for what can last a lifetime. Thanks to the generosity of donors, Father Emmanuel Parvez, parish priest in Pansara, in the territory of the diocese of Faisalabad, redeems these people, settles their debts and gives them freedom.

[...] "When we manage to free them, these faithful are filled with gratitude to God and the Church. They participate fervently in the liturgical assembly. The women come to church every day and recite the rosary. During Advent, in the community of Pansara, we organized special prayers and days of penance with the sacrament of reconciliation. More than 2,000 faithful came to benefit from this gift," he said.

During the Christmas preparation period, Father Parvez began visiting the 38 villages scattered around his parish, where there are small Christian communities of five or six families, in predominantly Muslim villages. "We celebrate the Eucharist in the house of one of these families. It is a very intense moment of intimacy with God and fraternity. For them, it is a great Christmas gift, it is the presence of 'Emmanuel, the God-with-us,'" he observes.

The families who have regained their freedom, to whom we also try to give something and a land to cultivate for their subsistence, are among the most devoted. These people, the poorest, the most vulnerable, the most deprived and without any education, deeply appreciate and understand the experience of God as liberator, as companion of life, as the One who never abandons us."

Although forced labor was banned in Pakistan and abolished in 1992, the practice continues and has even increased in recent years due to the worsening economic crisis. Pakistan has around 20,000 brick kilns. The Global Slavery Index (GSI), compiled by an Australian-based NGO, estimates that around 3 million people in Pakistan are caught in debt slavery.

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

## OBITUARIES

**Alexandria Bay** – Francesca Spiotta Loy, 53; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 3, 2024 at St. Cyril's Church.

**AuSable Forks** – Patricia Agnes (Laundry) Brousseau, 84; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 3, 2024 at Holy Name Church; burial in Holy Name Cemetery.

**Brushton** – William Richard Keddy, 72; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 3, 2024 at St. Mary's Church.

**Canton** – Deborah L. (Cashman) Darou, 65; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2024 at St. Mary's Church; burial in Parish Cemetery.

**Carthage** – Linda A. (St. Louis) Intorcchia, 82; Funeral Services Jan. 5, 2024 at Bezanilla-McGraw Funeral Home; burial in Old St. James Cemetery.

**Constable** – Joyce J. (Fish) Dumas, 89; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 27, 2023 at St. Francis of Assisi Church; burial in St. Francis of Assisi Cemetery.

**Fort Covington** – Jean A. (Collett) Davis, 92; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 4, 2024 at St. Mary's of the Fort; burial in St. Mary's Cemetery.

**Gabriels** – Carlton Anthony "Tony" King, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 4, 2024 at Church of the Assumption; burial in Union Cemetery, Vermontville.

**Keeseville** – Susan Marie LeCuyer, 65; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 29, 2023 at St. John's Church; burial in Immaculate Conception Church.

**Long Lake** – Lew A. Plumley, 88; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 13, 2024 at St. Henry's Church; burial in Long Lake Cemetery.

**Lyon Mountain** – Frank L. Woodward III, 74; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 8, 2024 at St.

Bernard's Church.

**Malone** – Marie (Lamica) LaBrake, 91; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 23, 2023 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Notre Dame Cemetery.

**Malone** – Alyssa M. LaFlesh, 32; Funeral Services Dec. 22, 2023 at Frary Funeral Home.

**Massena** – Kim T. Martin, 57; Funeral Services Dec. 27, 2023 at Donaldson Funeral home; burial in Calvary Cemetery.

**Morrisonville** – Aimee Lynn (Giroux) McLane, 50; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 5, 2024 at St. Alexander's Church.

**Ogdensburg** – Barbara V. (LaFlair) Johnson, 90; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 28, 2023 at Notre Dame Church; burial in Pine Hill Cemetery.

**Ogdensburg** – Michael D. Morley, 59; Memorial Mass Dec. 30, 2023 at St. Mary's Cathedral.

**Ogdensburg** – Barbara I. (Roscher) Sheppard, 88; Funeral Services Jan. 1, 2024 at the Fox & Murray Funeral Home.

**Plattsburgh** – Joanna R. (Schoonmaker) Boule, 82; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 3, 2024 at St. Peter's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**Peru** – Mary Jane (Buckley) Nelson, 83; Funeral Services Jan. 3, 2024 at the Hamilton Funeral Home; burial in Jay Central Cemetery.

**Plattsburgh** – Thomas S. Senecal, 61; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2024 at St. John's Church.

**Rouses Point** – Marc-Andre M. Payette, 37; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2024 at St. Patrick's Church.

**Sackets Harbor** – Barbara J. (Bourgoin) McKeever, 78; Funeral Services Jan. 5, 2024 at D.L. Calarco Funeral Home, Inc.

**Saranac Lake** – William L. O'Reilly, 81; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2024 at St. Bernard's Church.

**Saranac Lake** – William J. Wallace, 75; Funeral Services Jan. 5, 2024 at the Fortune-Keough Funeral Home.

**Star Lake** – Phillip H. Bryant, 78; Mass of Christian Burial May 18, 2024 at St. Hubert's Church; burial in Oswegatchie Cemetery.

**Theresa** – Mary Alice Fortune Wood, 99; Funeral Services Jan. 8, 2024 at Frederick Bros. Funeral Home; burial in Childs Falls Sunrise Cemetery, Philadelphia.

**Watertown** – Thomas P. Costanzo, 79; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 23, 2023 at St. Anthony's Church.

**Watertown** – Dona (Davis) Keenan, 83; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2024 at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart; burial in Black River Cemetery.

**West Chazy** – Mary E. (Fountain) Clar, 67; Mass of Christian Burial Dec. 30, 2023 at St. Joseph's Church; burial in parish cemetery.

**West Chazy** – Albert LaVigne, 63; Mass of Christian Burial Jan. 6, 2024 at St. Joseph Church; burial in St. Joseph's Cemetery.



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# FACES OF FAITH



Parishioners from St. Joseph's in Olmstedville, St. Mary's in Indian Lake, and St. Paul's in Blue Mountain Lake recently gathered to celebrate the 90th birthday of their pastor, Father Philip Allen. The standing room only celebration was held at in St. Mary's parish hall and featured a roomful of delicious pot-luck foods and a beautiful birthday cake. In addition to parishioners from the three parishes Father Allen serves, also in attendance were Father Howard Venette, Father Sony Pulickal and Father Lukas Gruber, pictured below with Father Allen.



PHOTO BY MARY BETH BRACY/ NORTH COUNTRY CATHOLIC

A choir of singers from around the Champlain Valley gathered at St. John's Church in Plattsburgh on December 17 to perform in the Festival of Lessons and Carols.



On Christmas Day, parishioners at St. Hubert's Church in Star Lake watched as angel Ava and shepherd Hudson walked the infant Christ figurine to the manger. Monsignor John Murphy talked, sang, and prayed with all at the creche.